

TOWN OF BROOKER
REGULAR MONTHLY COUNCIL MEETING
FEBRUARY 13, 2024

Present: Joe Tolleson, Steve Acree, Linda Bennett, Gene Melvin, Chris Caldwell, Charlene Thomas, John Maines – Zoom meeting.
Community: Terry Thomas, Brad Million and Annie Nock – Reddish & White, Andy Easton-CDBG

Meeting called to order by Gene Melvin, Mayor.
Pledge of Allegiance!

A motion was made by Steve Acree to approve the minutes as presented from the January 9th Meeting. Seconded by Joe Tolleson. Motion passed.

Annie Nock – Reddish & White – audit ending 09/30/23

Financial Statements and Independent Auditor's Report was passed out for review. She reported we had a successful audit. We had a strong balance sheet, stayed within budget and was actually under budget. She found nothing unusual to report. We were required to do a Single Audit due to SCOP grant and ARPA funds. She found no issues to report on. She commented on the good job Charlene Thomas, Accounting Clerk, does on keeping the books balanced. This makes her job easier. She mentioned under Operating Income (Loss) is due to the amount of water rate increase each year is not enough but what we do each years does help.

Andy Easton – Grant Administrator

The Town is interested in applying for a CDBG housing grant. He presented an overview of the CDBG program. A 2024 CDBG calendar was given out showing the dates we would need to have meetings. Also, a flowchart of process showing the steps we would need to take. We are not going to have a Citizen's Advisory Board due to it not being required. The total grant is \$600,000.00. This amount is based on our population. Grant can be used for homes or mobile homes. To repair a house we would have to bring the whole house up to code not just one item. We can demolish and rebuild. This amount will only fix about 3 or 4 houses. The cycle to apply has not been announced yet. It was suggested we go ahead and start the paperwork so when cycle opens up we are ready to apply. We will need a Grant Administrator and Housing Specialist. Permits will be needed.

A motion was made by Steve Acree to go ahead and apply for a CDBG housing grant. Seconded by Linda Bennett. Motion passed.

Report John Maines – Attorney:

He mentioned that a CDBG can be a lot of work especially when we can only do 3 or 4 houses.

Fire Department – Joe Tolleson:

- I. Charlene Thomas mentioned to council that Ben Carter, Chief of Fire Rescue, did fill out the paperwork required by analyst in the Governor's Office of Policy and Budget. His office is in the process of monitoring funding requests moving through the legislative appropriations process. Our funding request we submitted to the House and Senate is

being reviewed. A local Fire Equipment Project Information form needed to be filled out. We appreciate Diane Andrews and Ben Carter for working on this on our behalf.

Charlene Thomas – Town Clerk:

1. Terry Thomas did fix the leaning gate at the Water Department.
2. We had two meters that were leaking before the meter, which is on our side. I called Swamp Cutters and he came and repaired the line.
3. Spoke with Ben Carter on January 2nd concerning modular building they donated to Town. He is going to see if the County and Town can sign something and have the modular building demolished. The county would demolish it. He will get back with us.
4. Heard from Vince Robinson on January 26th and new doors for the community center will cost \$4400.00. We did set aside \$3000.00 from ARPA to purchase doors. I told him to go ahead and order new doors. I changed the ARPA amount for the doors from \$3000.00 to \$4400.00. I am not sure how much it will cost to have Vince install the doors. Right now we have \$913.78 left in ARPA funds.
5. Spoke with Mary Gavin on January 24th concerning a meter grant. She said the latest HUD data sheet shows the Town of Brooker not meeting the LMI for a CDBG. Talked with Andy Easton and he said she is going by the census. Andy said we need a USDA grant. I did contact Mary again on February 7th to see if she has found us a grant. Haven't heard from her yet.
6. DEP will conduct an inspection on our Drinking Water system on February 29th. Bernard will meet with them.
7. The Mayor contacted me about us needing diesel in our generator. It is half full. I contacted Bradford Fuel but his number is no longer in service. I contacted Hampton to see who they use and Josh Davis recommended Almond Oil out of Gainesville. I have to set up an account with them. The Mayor is signing the paperwork tonight.
8. I met Andrew Greene, Florida Rural Water, on January 26th to discuss Assistant Program from Florida Rural Water on DEP required Lead Service Line Inventory. The Town of Brooker does not qualify for the assistant program funding. The Town's medium income is \$65,000.00. We have too many people that fall into this medium income category. But, Andrew talked with Florida Rural Water and they are going to let Brooker slide through with the funding. Which means we want have to pay for this. Bernard will be in charge of this.
9. We received a thank you note from the Tommy Cox family.
10. I sent Corporal Glenn Ward an email on January 19th asking him to give me an update on Annette Castner's place. I told him I was told she has to have it cleaned up by February 14th. If it was not cleaned up her power will be turned off. He responded back saying the camper needs to be removed or no one using it as a residence. He said the property is considered a nuisance property. He will still work somewhat with cleanup but if the camper is not vacated or removed, I have no recourse. He said they have made several good faith gestures to work with them.
Annette Castner did come by Town Hall on Friday, February 9th. She said the camper trailer is emptied. She needs to find someone with a fifth wheel to come and move it off property. She said they could have it if they want it. Also, the shed is being sold to someone so it will be removed. She is interesting in selling the property. She wants

- \$16,000.00 but would let Town buy it for \$15,000.00. I told her I would mention this to the Town Council. If the Town did buy it they would be responsible for removing burned up trailer and cleaning up the property. A motion was made by Steve Acree for Charlene Thomas to contact Annette Castner letting her know the Town was interested in purchasing the property from her. Seconded by Chris Caldwell. Motion passed.
11. Met with L.J. Forsgren about leaking roof at Community Center. He found several places that are causing the leaks. He came by today and fixed the leaks. He said sealant wasn't placed above screw heads.
 12. Past due water report was passed out. Still out \$401.79. Several have paid after this report was printed. Two meters were cut-off for non payment but were turned back on.
 13. We will swear in Linda Bennett and Chris Caldwell at the March meeting. Also, election of Mayor and Vice-Mayor.
 14. The Toxic Roundup for Bradford County will be on Saturday, February 17th. Terry is going to take all the old paint left in Park Building for the Town.

Charlene Thomas – Accounting Clerk:

1. She went over Revenue and Expenditures for the month of January 2024.
2. We received two checks from DOT for Final payment to Whitehurst and reimbursement to Town. The check total was \$217,010.35. The Town was owed \$20,183.06. Whitehurst was owed \$198,156.51. After paying Whitehurst the \$198,156.51 it only leaves a total of \$18,853.84 for Town's reimbursement. The reason the Town is not being reimbursed the full amount is due to the Engineering cost was more than the SCOP grant allowed for per Andy Easton.
3. The office will be closed on Friday, February 16th. I will be working on Thursday to cover my hours.
4. She mentioned to the Town Council that since the Town is planning on filling out an application for a CDBG grant that she would like to be paid for the extra work and hours. The pay cannot come from the CDBG. I have already worked several hours getting everything ready for this meeting. I would like to be paid \$20.00 an hour. I can keep a time sheet showing my hours each month. A grant like this requires a lot of extra work along with my regular duties. A motion was made by Steve Acree to pay Charlene Thomas \$20.00 an hour for hours worked on CDBG. Seconded by Linda Bennett. Vote called for. Gene Melvin abstained from voting. 4 – Yes votes. Motion passed.

Gene Melvin – Water Department:

1. He mentioned he had spoke with Bernard Carter and we have a leak at back-up well #2. Josh Davis, Swamp Cutters, was contacted and he said it was a packing gland causing the leak. He will repair.

Joe Tolleson – Road/Streets:

1. Gene Melvin mentioned he is waiting on County to come out and put a concrete apron around culvert on Michigan Avenue.

Sanitation, Ground Maintenance/Mowing, and Community Center -Nothing to Report.

Chris Caldwell – Council:

1. He mentioned the awning is flapping and making a lot of noise when we have high winds at the old K&Z store across from his home. He has called Diane Andrews on this but no answer. The county owns this building. Linda Bennett said she would be glad to get in touch with Diane concerning this.

Old Business:

1. Limbs at corner of Melvin/Ward. Gene Melvin said he picked up most of them.
2. Also, the county did bring the dirt for holes outside of ballpark fence.

Checks approved: GF 8265-8287, WF 5997-6010

A motion was made by Steve Acree to pay the bills. Seconded by Chris Caldwell. Motion passed.

Gene Melvin, Mayor, made a motion to adjourn. Time 8:25p.m.

Cecil E. (Gene) Melvin, Mayor

Charlene Thomas, Town Clerk