HISTORIC TOWN OF EATONVILLE, FLORIDA
COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, July 16, 2026, at 6:30 PM

Town Hall (Council Chambers) – 307 E. Kennedy Blvd

SPECIAL NOTICE: These meeting minutes are presented in an abbreviated format intended as a public record discussion of stated meeting according to the Florida's Government-in-the-Sunshine law. Meetings are opened to the public, noticed within reasonable advance notice, and transcribed into minutes for public record. ***Audio Recording are available through the Town's website on the Board Agenda Page.*

CALL TO ORDER – Chair Ruthi Critton called the meeting to order at 6:34p.m.

ROLL CALL – Quorum was established through roll call by Ms. Bellenger.

PRESENT: **(7)** Chair Ruthi Critton, Vice Chair Angela Thomas, Director Wanda Randolph, Director Donovan Williams, Director LaDwyana Jordan, Director Tarus Mack, Director Linder Greathouse.

STAFF: **(3)** Marissa Bellenger, **Records Coordinator;** Greg Jackson, **Attorney;** Michael Johnson, **CRA Executive Director**

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Critton led the invocation through a Moment of Silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION:

Ryan Novak – I have three questions concerning financial oversight. First, tonight's packet is going to ask you to approve March to May financials. The public packets did not include the financials. The resolutions state that the Board is reviewing these reports for fiduciary responsibility. Mr. Novak commented that financials were provided on short notice before the meeting. He also made a statement on this years' TIF budget, CRA finances (salaries and benefits). The Town is approved to extend the CRA, but Orange County has yet to participate. The CRA is relying solely on grants on loans to do redevelopment projects. Has staff prepared a financial model showing the CRA without County participation? Finally, I would like clarification on the engagement of David Smith. The contract states that he is not an employee. The Executive Director has described the relationship as a 1099. Is Mr. Smith an independent contractor under his agreement or an employee?

Michelle Fort – In a conversation with community residents, we were talking about the beautification mission of the CRA. They come to the CRA and are told to go to Orange County. The money from the Paint, Pave, and Plant program was taken out. She asked the Board reinstate the plan. I have ten people who have paid their taxes and have not been able to utilize the program. There are people struggling out there economically.

Joyce Irby – I wanted to address something that happened last week. Director Greathouse's comments were a little misdirected. Attorney Jackson had nothing to do about what Director Greathouse was upset about. (Ms. Irby is referencing the penalty debt) I also noticed that Mr. Johnson never answered you as to why the RFP was changed. Citizens and I would appreciate it if you demand accountability and excellence.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Before the vote, Vice Chair Thomas stated that she had a resolution for Board Discussion. Chair Critton – The construction of the agenda is the responsibility of staff. I have heard that a number of members ask that we limit the number of walk-on items. My ask to the Board if you have something, I do not want to impede on your ability to bring something for discussion or decision. I would like enough time to digest information given to us. I accept your resolution, Vice Chair, I would ask that we add it to Discussion then Decisions.

Chair Critton MOTIONS to APPROVE the Consent Agenda**; moved** by Vice Chair Thomas, **second** by Director Jordan. **Comments:** Vice Chair Thomas asked that Items 1-3 be moved to Discussion or Decisions. **Chair Critton restated the Motion with Amendments (move the Approval of March, May, and April Financials to Discussion then Decisions); AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES 7/0.**

BOARD DISCUSSION:

Discussion of Vice Chair Thomas' Budget Capital Improvement Projects Resolution – Vice Chair Thomas – I had a few questions and I worked with the Attorney to put this together. It was in regard to the auditors' comments that all of the funds are in one account. We should have an itemized budget of each budget. I would like a breakdown of the Seacoast advancement--how you are going to use this money. Director Williams – I understand your concerns, but we were going to put an RFP out. If we are giving information concerning each project, it may end up in the wrong hands. I do not think we should get information until the RFP is complete. Attorney Jackson received an email from CAO Daniels and there were some questions about the RFP and it has not been sent out yet. Mr. Johnson – There were some errors. Director Mack – Why are we just now finding this out? Mr. Johnson – When the original RFP went out, there were questions from the contractors which pointed out several errors in the plans. We had to go back to the guy who did the plans to fix those plans because we cannot release inaccurate information. There were no questions brought to our attention before when we sent out the original RFP. I do not control that, nor does procurement, it is the architectural engineer. Director Jordan – When did you know? Mr. Johnson – It was after our meeting. Director Jordan – We are talking about transparency and lack of communication. A simple one line, an FYI, should have happened. Mr. Johnson – That is a procurement process, not me. I needed to give procurement the time to cure the problem. Attorney Jackson – The email with that information came in on the 14th. Mr. Johnson was not included on that email; it went to Ms. Gibson. Director Jordan – Attorney Jackson, with all due respect, we should have been notified. Mr. Johnson – I should have asked (made the directive) for you to be informed. Director Mack – There is a great separation between the CRA and the Town. It will continue to be a conflict if we continue down this path. Chair Critton – This conversation is not about the resolution that is on discussion right now. Director Randolph – The last time we met on this issue, the errors were identified. Everything should have been corrected. Mr. Johnson confirmed. The problem was not the recommendations to correct the errors; it was the plans that were flawed. Director Greathouse – My concern that this RFP has been sent out twice. If we are going to be professional about what we do, can we just send it; make sure everyone reviews it before we send it out? Mr. Johnson – It is separate. The RFP has nothing to do with the plans. Director Greathouse - An outsider should not have to tell us that we made a mistake. Chair Critton – Can you clarify? Mr. Johnson – An engineer corrected the mistake. Chair Critton – Is there someone on staff that would have the capability of seeing plan errors before they go out? Mr. Johnson – When the engineer seals the plans, I cannot change that. The only person who can is the engineer and designer. The engineer was out of town and has not resealed it yet. We have to get the information right before it goes out. I am sorry for the delay and lack of information, but the issue was out of our control because we are not engineers. Chair Critton resumed discussion on the Line of Credit, Capital Improvement Projects Resolution. Vice Chair Thomas – What are you tracking if there are no numbers coming to us? Mr. Johnson – I provided the CIP tracking last week (Friday). When the bidders bid, they need to do a breakdown. It is required for the RFP. That information you're seeking will come as you see the bids. Vice Chair Thomas – So, I will have their information, but you do not have any numbers? How did you know if items were too expensive? Mr. Johnson – We went through the process in 2025, so we were able to compare. Vice Chair Thomas – Do you plan on breaking it down or will you continue to give us estimates? As for the advancement, you have not given us a breakdown. Mr. Johnson – In 2025, those decisions were already made. In 2026, we are moving from project manager structure to RFP structure. You also have a term sheet that is a confidential document until we close. Vice Chair Thomas – If we do purchase contract with qualified buyers, we do not have to use any of the Line of Credit? Mr. Johnson – No. Vice Chair Thomas – I still think we need an itemized budget of what is going to get down. We need to approve the itemized budget before money is spent. Mr. Johnson – The CIP tracking is an internal operation document for auditing purposes. Vice Chair Thomas – What is the 1.7 million for? Mr. Johnson – To cover the cost of development. Vice Chair Thomas stated that she will come by Mr. Johnson's office to talk about costs for the project. Director Williams – From a vendor perspective, the original plan that we had would have allowed us to make money. Now we are changing that, and we might lose money. Vice Chair Thomas – Did the Board give approval for that? Mr. Johnson – Everything we have done the Board has given approval for. Director Williams – What we are doing now does not make any sense. Director Jordan – The lowest bidder does not mean the best work. Mr. Johnson – We are bound by law to go to the lowest bidder who meets all the qualifications of the RFP (Attorney Jackson confirms this statement). Vice Chair Thomas – The $1.7 million is only spent on the homes? Mr. Johnson – Per the term sheet. Chair Critton – When I was a director on this Board, there were a number of things that were discussed. We did not like the results that came from the RFP. Mr. Johnson requested permission from the Board to move in a different direction. Per procurement, we had fulfilled the responsibilities of the procurement process. As a Board, we were in agreement with the employment option of a project manager with specifications to assist in the Single Family Homes project. I would not say that the CRA is in the business of profiting, but with this project we were intentional on trying to make money because we had taken on debt with the Senior Center. We were talking about the Senior Center project; we discussed ways we could offset that debt, which was the Single Family Homes project. It is a disservice to the work of the former Board when we back track. Chair Critton spoke to the actions of the Executive Director, who was working with permission of the Board. When there were questions about debt, the Executive Director went and found funding. Chair Critton asked clarifying questions about the resolution to Vice Chair Thomas. Attorney Jackson responded. Mr. Johnson – The capital improvement is a budget; it is just not itemized. The original plan was to do one house at a time, but then the Board asked if there was another way to do this. The solution was the line of credit. It is important that we honor the opportunity with the bank so we can build a trusted relationship. Vice Chair Thomas – When the auditor came, there were six errors, and one was that the capital improvement projects were not itemized. Mr. Johnson – The CIP is for auditing purposes; it is a not a budgetary document. The CIP format is the same that the Town uses. The CIP is broken down the way the auditor mandated it. Director Mack – I would like to table this item until Vice Chair Thomas has a meeting with Mr. Johnson to clear some things up. Vice Chair Thomas – I agree with that. Chair Critton – We can definitely pull this from decision for a later time. Chair Critton asked Vice Chair to clarify her request in the resolution. Director Randolph – What is the Resolution number? Chair Critton – It was a walk on item. Vice Chair Thomas requested that the resolution be on the next meeting.

BOARD DECISIONS:

Approval of Resolution CRA-R-2026-29 Approving the March 2026 Financials – Ms. Bellenger read the preamble. **Chair Critton MOTIONED for APPROVAL; moved** by Director Randolph, **second** by Director Mack. **AYE:** Chair Critton, Director Randolph, Director Jordan, Director Mack, Director Greathouse, Director Williams. **NAY:** Vice Chair Thomas. **MOTION PASSES, 6/1.**

Approval of Resolution CRA-R-2026-30 Approving the April 2026 Financials – Ms. Bellenger read the preamble. **Chair Critton MOTIONED for APPROVAL; moved** by Director Mack, **second** by Director Randolph. **Comments:** Director Mack clarified that the Board has had the financial information. **AYE:** Chair Critton, Director Randolph, Director Jordan, Director Mack, Director Greathouse, Director Williams. **NAY:** Vice Chair Thomas. **MOTION PASSES, 6/1.**

Approval of Resolution CRA-R-2026-31 Approving the May 2026 Financials – Ms. Bellenger read the preamble. **Chair Critton MOTIONED for APPROVAL; moved** by Director Randolph, **second** by Director Mack. **AYE:** Chair Critton, Director Randolph, Director Jordan, Director Mack, Director Greathouse, Director Williams. **NAY:** Vice Chair Thomas. **MOTION PASSES, 6/1.**

STAFF REPORTS:

Marissa Bellenger – Records Coordinator (Clerk Office) – No report.

Attorney Greg Jackson – I consider us to be in an active RFP process, so these meetings would be the appropriate time to ask questions. I was not trying to slight anyone. I have been asked to give a presentation to Town Council about a potential property tax law. If this Board is interested, I would encourage you to attend that meeting.

Executive Director – Michael Johnson – Tomorrow will be Ms. Jones' last day with us. She has done an excellent job for this agency and building relationships. I will send an email when I know when she will be at Town Hall, so you all can say your goodbyes. We did submit our interest of indicator for the Tourism Development Tax for the Eatonville Heritage District. It has a value up to $30 million of the request. We have another equal rights grant that is due which is just waiting on signature. We will be submitting to the Federal Park service organization. There is a whole other history in Eatonville that is tied to civil rights. We are constantly exploring other funding mechanisms to accomplish our goals. When you start to have a discussion about roles and responsibilities, look at the plan so we can keep it consistent. In the future, you will receive a general ledger. Ms. Bradshaw and I will ensure that everything is consistent.

BOARD REPORTS:

Director Donovan Williams – No report.

Director Linder Greathouse – No report.

Director Tarus Mack – Thank you for coming out and engaging in Town business. Who wouldn't suggest a grant or apply for it if it is free? This is a historic and unique town. This is a close knit community and we have been surviving for 140 years. If we can get resources by any means, I am all for it. Mr. Johnson only moves with the directives we give him. Thank you, Mr. Johnson, for your professionalism. Let's get some things done in this town.

Director LaDwyana Jordan – Thank you to the residents. And thank you Mr. Johnson and Attorney Jackson for your clarity. I appreciate the fact that you consistently go out and find funding. Thank you for your patience with me trying to understand the process. Director Jordan asked about the Club Eaton project. Mr. Johnson – We are working with the state and an architectural team. The permitting fees have been paid. On Tuesday, the fencing will go up and construction will begin. We are trying to work ahead, so the draw request to the state has already been submitted. Mr. Johnson explained the phases of the project. Director Jordan – What was the conclusion of the 1887 Night Market? I noticed they did not do it on People Street. Mr. Johnson – He (Julian Johnson) compromised. That was done on the town side. Director Mack – If I may add, Ms. Jones did a terrific job.

Director Wanda Randolph – Thank you everyone for coming tonight. Thank you, Mr. Johnson, for clarifying some things. I did attend the TDT meeting Downtown and it was very interesting. There were budget cuts to the Orange County CRA. Since we sunset in January, we will no longer get funds from Orange County? Attorney Jackson confirmed. Director Randolph – We need to move forward and doing our budget ahead of time instead of waiting until the last minute. We still have an obligation for blight. Mr. Johnson – By December 31st, we already know that we're getting $350,000 ($350,500) no matter what. We (me and Chair Critton) will meet with Orange County once Mr. Daniels returns. The property tax issue will not affect the CRA in FY2027. Director Randolph – Where are we with ADP? Mr. Johnson – I will yield to the Chair. Director Randolph – Just keep blight on your mind. Director Johnson – In 2025, we did a housing resource fair. We tried to assist residents in gathering their application materials for programs, but we cannot force them. Regarding the Paint, Pave, and Plant program, if it is not in our plan we cannot do it. It is not in our plan (1997), so we cannot do it. Director Randolph – We need to communicate better with our residents. They go to the County and are able to get their answers, but on the Town side we do not have enough staff to assist them.

Vice Chair Angela Thomas – The Chitlin Circuit grant was extended? Mr. Johnson signed an extension; there are no further extensions to be had. Vice Chair Thomas – We are going to get the full funding? Mr. Johnson – Yes. That is why we are trying to speed up the construction process. Vice Chair Thomas – Do we have to put up $250,000? Mr. Johnson – The Chair and I have discussed it. I have to talk with the state. Vice Chair Thomas asked more questions about the Club Eaton project and the RFP timeline.

Chair Ruthi Critton – There was a public comment about making available documents that are provided to the Board, I have spoken to the Town Clerk and there is not a legal requirement to make things available online and it is done as a courtesy. I am discussing documents being available to both the Board and public. I would just ask Board members to get their items in before the packet goes out. We are working on getting things accessible at a reasonable time. Moving on, if you take a look at the 1997 plan, there are charts showing what we would receive yearly (TIF funds). I do not have anything to report to the Board regarding CRA funding yet. I am working with the Finance director to see if we can handout preliminary information. If you have the last meeting minutes where the 2015 draft plan was voted on, please send it to the Board (to Mr. Johnson). There are a number of programs that the TOECRA has envisioned taking on that are not in compliance with the 1997 plan, and there are a number of alternatives that we have offered to our residents. When Mr. Johnson came back we took a look at the programs under Director Rhodes. In regard to the CIP, the CRA is supposed to compliment the CIP. If we want to be intentional about the programs we bring, I would encourage to look at the Town's CIP. That is how the FRA encourages us to act as directors. The objectives that Mr. Johnson has asked us for, we should take some initiative to get those out. I invite you all to check out the FRA website to find out what exactly a CRA should be doing. In regard to Ms. Jones, she is definitely a loss to this agency. I have not met anyone like Ms. Jones. Thank you for your contribution. The budget for the FY25-26 was approved in September 2025 in time for the audit. Please be prepared to sit in on budget workshops, which start next month (Town side). I want to encourage you all to make yourself available for a workshop before CRA meetings to discuss the Bylaws. Director Randolph, we discussed ADP in our workshop. Mr. Johnson has received a quote from ADP. He can inform you and bring you up to speed. The 1887 Night Market: there were some administrative roadblocks which were discussed and admin offered to bring them back to Town Hall for July. Mr. Johnson did reach out to see if there was a working path. Any MOUs or agreements will come back to the Board. 1887 will be speaking to residents as well. I know they are planning for their August market at Town Hall. Lastly, I am excited to announce the CRA was invited to a conversation with Fast Signs about redesigning the historic markers for the Town. Also, Executive Director Johnson and I had a conversation about TDT funding.

ADJOURNMENT Chair Critton **MOTIONS** for Adjournment of Meeting (**MOVED** by Director Mack, **SECOND** by Director Williams; **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES.**) **Meeting Adjourned at 8:37 P.M.**

HANDOUTS: CRA Meeting Minutes May 21, 2026; CRA Special Meeting Minutes June 8, 2026; CRA Meeting Minutes June 18, 2026; Budgeting for Capital Improvement Projects Resolution (Vice Chair Thomas)

Respectfully Submitted by: Marissa Bellenger

ATTEST

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Veronica L King, Town Clerk

APPROVED

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Ruthi Critton, Director