



HISTORIC TOWN OF EATONVILLE, FLORIDA

COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, August 20, 2026, at 6:30 PM

Denton Johnson Center – 400 Ruffel Street, Eatonville, FL 32751

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 6:35p.m.

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

PRESENT: (6) Chair Ruthi Critton, Vice Chair Angela Thomas, Director Wanda Randolph, Director Donovan Williams (arrived late), Director LaDwyana Jordan, Director Tarus Mack. **ABSENT:** Director Linder Greathouse.

STAFF: (4) Veronica King, **Town Clerk;** Marissa Bellenger, **Deputy Town Clerk;** 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:

Michelle Fort – Ms. Fort gave the Board a handout. The reason for financial oversight is due to the last year of comments. On October 22, the CRA had a meeting and during staff comments the Executive Director made comments that the RFP had changed. Four weeks later, a contractor was signed by the Executive Director, with David Smith. It was an independent contractor agreement. On the payment for services section, I ask that you all look at the amount. The Director was fired in March, but the contractor was still getting paid. Ms. Fort referenced minutes regarding Smith's work and payment.

Ryan Novak – Referenced the purchasing policy and vendor payments. He asked for the Board review all the red lines. Who oversees the day-to-day of the Executive Director? None of you, at least not directly. Mr. Johnson is your CEO, and a CEO does not answer to anyone except the Board. You need to make sure your policies and bylaws are tightened up. The CEO carries out your directives. I disagree with oversight on the CEO's day-to-day duties.

Angela Johnson – During the workshop, it was stated that the Exec. Director could not report to the Town CAO, but he can administratively if reflected in your bylaws. I challenge you to figure out what direction you want to go in. Regarding the David Smith contract, I ask you to look at the purchasing policy that the payment to the vendor is on an annual process. Regarding the Economic Impact Manager, I ask that is moved from decision to discussion. What is the contractual agreement with Ms. Bradshaw? What is her hourly rate and how many hours? If she is going to assume the role of Shak's position, how does a person pick up another 40 hours a week if they are already working 30?

CONSENT AGENDA:

Chair Critton **MOTIONS** to **APPROVE** Consent Agenda Approving Resolution CRA-R-2026-36 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes for Special CRA Meeting July 7, 2026 and Resolution CRA-R-2026-37 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes July 16, 2026; **moved** by Director Mack, **second** by Director Randolph.

Comments: Director Randolph asked if workshop discussion on the bylaws could be part of the discussion. Chair Critton restates the question. **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES 6/0.**

BOARD DISCUSSION:

TOECRA Bylaws (continued from Workshop) – Chair Critton briefly recapped the discussion in workshop. Ms. Bellenger announced that Director Williams had arrived. Director Randolph asked who the Executive Director reports to? Attorney Jackson – He is the CEO of the agency under the Board. He would fall under the direct oversight of the Chair of the TOECRA. Director Randolph asked for clarification on 3.4.5. Attorney Jackson stated it reflects what is in the Town Charter. Director Randolph referenced the language which stated that the Board would need to vote to give the Executive Director orders. Chair Critton gave Attorney Jackson some context from the workshop discussion. Attorney Jackson – Board members cannot direct day-to-day duties. They can, however, ask for information, but the Executive Director does not need to drop everything to fulfill their request. Director Randolph asked a clarifying question on the Board's directives. Attorney Jackson – If you look at the Town Charter, the language is basically identical in regard to administrative interference. Chair Critton – This is just a reminder that there is a difference between legislative and administrative. Vice Chair Thomas asked why it would be taken from the Charter. Attorney Jackson – This language can be applied appropriately. Just like the procurement policy, the CRA uses the Town's policy, but it does not make it under the Town. Director Randolph had a question regarding 3.4.2. Chair Critton – There was a concern about a potential delay or a period of time the agency would be without an Executive Director due to no signed resolution. There was a recommendation to skip the resolution. I do agree with Randolph that we want to ensure the agency always has direction. Director Randolph – I believe it was something that we voted on, that if the position was not filled in 120 days that the Board could select someone. Attorney Jackson – I do recall. On a temporary basis, it is okay for the Chair to serve as Executive Director, but I would like to do some research. Chair Critton – There was a discussion about former Mayor Gardner serving as Interim Executive Director. Then there was conversation about Ms. Washington being brought in as Executive Director on an administrative basis. Attorney Jackson – There is nothing in the bylaws about emergency hiring. However, if it was done under the bylaws provisions, then it was done correctly. If the Interim Executive Director hired an Executive Director, then that should not have been allowed. Chair Critton clarified that Gardner was in an administrative coordinator role. Chair Critton asked the Board about the resolution needed for the Chair to become the temporary Executive Director. Mr. Johnson – I would caution the Board to hold until Attorney Jackson investigates it. Chair Critton filled in the Board on workshop discussion on who the Executive Director should report to. The Board agreed that he should report to the Chair or in their absence, the Vice Chair. Vice Chair Thomas asked if the Capital Improvement Project sheet is updated, that the Board is made aware. Chair Critton summarized comments made by Director Randolph in the workshop requesting the General Ledger be included in their monthly meeting packets. There was also a request for project minutes and resolutions approved by the previous Board. Director Randolph – On section 3.3, we were discussing the Vice Chair filing in for the Chair. If the Vice Chair is not available, I think the Board should have an emergency meeting. Mr. Johnson stated statutorily that is not possible. Chair Critton asked the Attorney to define a senior board member. Attorney Jackson – If the Chair, Vice Chair were absent, the role would turn to the most senior board member.

BOARD DECISIONS:

Approval of Resolution CRA-R-2026-38 Approving Economic Impact Manager Job Description – Ms. Bellenger read the preamble. **Chair Critton MOTIONED for APPROVAL; moved** by Director Randolph, **second** by Director Mack. **Comments:** Vice Chair Thomas asked for clarity on the position. Mr. Johnson – At the last meeting, I told the Board that I would combine the positions. Vice Chair Thomas requested each job description. Mr. Johnson stated that the Board approved the previous positions. Vice Chair Thomas requested all the applicants' qualifications (resume). Chair Critton clarified that this resolution is just the approval of a job description. Selecting an applicant is an administrative duty. Director Randolph asked for clarification on the position creation and questioned the large responsibilities. Director Williams stated that the job description

is the responsibility of TOECRA administration. Chair Critton – Per the bylaws, it is part the Executive Director's day-to-day duties. The Board discussed the position. Director Randolph asked if the position would be advertised. Mr. Johnson – No. I am just consolidating two positions into one. **Chair Critton restates the question.** **AYE:** Chair Critton, Director Jordan, Director Mack, Director Williams. **NAY:** Director Randolph, Vice Chair Thomas. **MOTION PASSES, 4/2.**

Approval of Resolution CRA-R-2026-39 Approving Amended Bylaws changes as submitted by Attorney Jackson – Mr. Johnson recommended tabling the item. **Chair Critton MOTIONS to TABLE; moved** by Director Mack, **second** by Vice Chair Thomas. **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES 6/0.**

STAFF REPORTS:

Executive Director – Michael Johnson – We are moving forward on an interlocal agreement with Orange County. He later continued his report by thanking Ms. Wilder and Ms. Shakeila Jones for her support on the TDT presentation (and project).

Attorney Greg Jackson – I would like to congratulate this Board and Mr. Johnson for a great TDT presentation. It shows that this agency and Eatonville is serious about redevelopment. No one thought we could get through this process. For the first time in history, this Town looks like it might have its own Heritage Tourism District. I want to commend this agency that has been under the direction of Executive Director Johnson.

Marissa Bellenger – Records Coordinator (Clerk Office) – Those who did not receive Michelle Fort's handout will receive a copy in their mailbox or can come by Town Hall to receive it. Announced that the Historic Marker Task Force applications are open.

BOARD REPORTS:

Director Donovan Williams – Kudos to Mr. Johnson and his staff on the TDT presentation. It is a great accomplishment. I hope we get to see the creation of the district.

Director Tarus Mack – Thank you everyone for coming out this evening and being part of CRA business. Mr. Johnson, I cannot express enough how much it means to see the positive direction of this community. Congratulations on a great TDT presentation. We are a historic town, and the project is long overdue. Director Mack stated his support of the Economic Impact Manager position and the qualified employee who fills it. He also shared his support for the Deputy Town Clerk and the Historic Marker Task Force project.

Director LaDwyana Jordan – I want to send my condolences to Director Greathouse. Thank you to Ms. Wilder and the Eatonville Chamber of Commerce because it was instrumental in moving the Heritage Tourism District forward.

Director Wanda Randolph – These past two weekends have been very busy. I would like to honor the Town and CRA for putting together their TDT presentation. I would like to thank the Mayor, Council, TOECRA Board, and Mr. Johnson for your diligence and commitment to the process. This past weekend, St. Lawrence just celebrated 145 years, and it was a very educational event. We had the oldest bell of the Town on display. I want to thank the Mayor for being there as well as the presentation of a proclamation.

Vice Chair Angela Thomas – For all those who say they love the Town, please tell me if it looks like hate.

Chair Ruthi Critton – Congratulated Town and TOECRA for the TDT presentation. To be able to witness and have input in the collaboration between the Town and TOECRA was great. With the potential sunset of the CRA, to be able to pitch projects we are passionate about, it is a good feeling. I also want to thank Adrienne Jackson who was our delegate on the TDT committee and advocated for us. We are very optimistic about the

direction. Encouraged the Board to spread the word about the Historic Markers Task Force. Thoughts and prayers to Director Greathouse for her loss.

ADJOURNMENT Chair Critton **MOTIONS** for Adjournment of Meeting (**MOVED** by Director Mack, **SECOND** by Vice Chair Thomas; **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES.**) **Meeting Adjourned at 8:09 P.M.**

HANDOUTS: Q&A from Executive Director Johnson regarding TOECRA projects; Angela Johnson Public Comment; Handout from Michelle Fort

Respectfully Submitted by: Marissa Bellenger

ATTEST

APPROVED

Veronica L King, Town Clerk

Ruthi Critton, Director