



HISTORIC TOWN OF EATONVILLE, FLORIDA

COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, October 17, 2024, 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 Randolph called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL – Quorum was established through roll call by Town Clerk.

PRESENT: (7) Chair Wanda Randolph, Vice-Chair Donovan Williams, Director Tarus Mack, Director Rodney Daniels, Director Theo Washington, Director Ruthi Critton, Director Angie Gardner

STAFF: (4) Veronica King, **Town Clerk**; Greg Jackson, **Attorney**; Nichole Washington, **HR Specialist**; Officer Fletcher Boone, **EPD**

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION – (1) – There was an email received to be read into the record as part of the citizen participation period. The email was sent and read on behalf of Joyce Irby. Good evening, Mayor and council, I humbly respect that you each, have been selected with an honor by the people of the historic town of Eatonville and carry a fiduciary duty to act in the best interest of the town and its people. Eatonville has a strife political history, filled with misuse, misappropriation, poor judgment, and people lining their pockets, and facilitating their friends and family at the expense of the people Eatonville, and our collective shared future. As a concerned private citizen and 4th generational member of this community, I have had the opportunity to look over the resumes of the candidates for the CRA position which you are about to vote on. I was pleasantly surprised that there appears to be more than one qualified candidate. The town's history of political malpractice by former mayors and Council members has been tragic. The behavior of a long line of administrations and councils has been, and remains, spiritually violating to the people who's blood, sweat, foresight and thoughtfulness, embodied an ideal, and made manifest on this sacred land a place of safety and opportunity, for those who'd been denied, and considered "less than" simply based on the color of their skin. And throughout our town history, it seems politically, that we...with the same skin, continue to work against each other. I'm hoping today will be different. I'm hoping this will stop today. Eatonville has been, like an abused child who keeps being handed over to the known molesting uncle over and over again, while those who know better look away, or make excuses for this behavior. I'm asking you NOT to be those people. I am asking you to do your duty, use your best judgement and be your highest selves to make sound business decisions in the best interest of the town and its citizens, and based on facts, evidence, and logic, not based on your personal friendships and preferences. Respectfully, Joyce Irby

BOARD DECISIONS:

Selection of Candidate for the Executive Directors Position - (Chair Randolph) Each director has had the opportunity to review all the qualifications to make a fair and honest assessment. Today is the opportunity to make your final selection. (Nichole Washington, HR Specialist) This is the final process of the selection process

for the Executive Director position for the Town of Eatonville Community Redevelopment Agency. On Thursday, October 3rd, 2024, a special meeting was held for the purpose of providing an opportunity to interview available candidates. Due to last-minute changes, two candidates were not available. The remainder four candidates out of six were interviewed and given the opportunity to demonstrate their qualifications. No voting took place at this meeting. This will be an open process due to the sunshine. The chair will present the names of all the interviewed candidates to the board members, board members will be asked to cast their vote for the candidate of their choice. If any candidate gets four votes, that candidate will be selected by majority vote. If by chance there is a tie, the chair will present each tied candidate individually to be voted on by the board members. Board members will select an Executive Director by majority vote chair.

ACTIONS BY THE BOARD:

Chair Randolph motion to APPROVE Onya Bates as the candidate selected for the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Executive Director's position; **moved** by Chair Randolph; **second** by Director Daniels; **AYE: Director Rodney Daniels, Chair Wanda Randolph; NAYE: Director Ruthi Critton, Vice Chair Donovan Williams, Director Tarus Mack, Director Theo Washington, Director Gardner; MOTION FAILS.**

Chair Randolph motion to APPROVE Lavon Bracy Davis as the candidate selected for the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Executive Director's position; **moved** by Director Critton; **second** by Director Mack; **AYE: Director Ruthi Critton; NAYE: Director Rodney Daniels, Chair Wanda Randolph, Vice Chair Donovan Williams, Director Tarus Mack, Director Theo Washington, Director Gardner; MOTION FAILS.**

Chair Randolph motion to APPROVE Michael Johnson as the candidate selected for the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Executive Director's position; **moved** by Director Mack; **second** by Director Critton; **Comment:** (Director Gardner) Expressed concerns with how the previous Executive Director was treated and the behavior of the board, bringing up matters that are no longer issues such as the RSM report and the \$71,000 payout, in which both were invested by a third party with final conclusions, it is a misuse of power to keep misleading people into thinking that there is something wrong going on with the CRA, need to be truthful to the residents with matters that have been confirmed and documented, hoping that the relationships that have been built are not sacrificed; a favorable vote will be based upon two conditions, that the Main Street board consist of the chosen stakeholders in the town with restrictions and the other condition is doing business in this town outside of the CRA, that there is an agreement indicating that there is no work with any other employment or another municipality, if you have a position in the town, that there is no contractual work with entities that are tied in, this would be the only way to give a yes vote, these two things would have to be fixed (Councilman Mack) would like to see a supermajority (Councilman Washington) the Executive Director should not be under contract, it should be on an employment status, the contract status gave people the rights to do outside business; have a letter from the State Department on their findings on the payout and a copy will be provided to the board. (Councilman Daniels) inquired to Attorney Jackson that the RSM report show what you may have done wrong, the findings indicate whether it was right or wrong, it is up to the agency to correct (In response, legal confirmed that this interpretation is correct); the board approved the person's contract without it being reviewed by the attorney; one signature does not give the authority to pay out a \$71,000 check (Chair Williams) let us move forward, cannot continue to operate in the reverse. (Chair Randolph) understand all the concerns raised, but we need to get through this process (Director Gardner) tonight we vote for the candidate, then we present the offer. **AYE: Vice Chair Donovan Williams, Director Tarus Mack, Director Theo Washington, Director Gardner; NAYE: Director Ruthi Critton, Director Rodney Daniels, Chair Wanda Randolph; MOTION PASSES. Notes:** Director Gardner expressed a favorable vote with conditions, (Legal) it has to be reconciled at some point in time if the conditions are met, your answer is yes even if the conditions are not met because tonight is the approval, (Director Gardner) was trying to get the approval based on the

conditions, a majority vote on the offer stating those conditions. (Director Mack) my conditions would be the supermajority vote. (Legal) could do the vote with amendments to the condition of hire, but then that presents a potential dynamic to the other votes, were there other conditions with the other candidates that may not have been mentioned, a yay vote should whether or not the conditions are met, (Director Critton) if the opportunity to impose some conditions is only available for this candidate or the next candidate not knowing that there was an opportunity to impose conditions for the other candidates is not fair; the Main Street condition is connected to the one candidate but doing business for the town applies to everyone, there is already in place under our personnel policy that you have to get permission in order to do any type of outside work other than the town. (Chair Randolph) today is the vote for a candidate, either it is going to be yay or nay, if we have conditions for employment, which can be worked out after this process is over. (Legal) will draft the letter (offer) to the candidate if directed by the board to do so; let the vote of yes be without conditions because you have a candidate who has conditions that no other candidates do not have. (Councilman Daniels) The Florida Community Corporation was doing business as Eatonville Main Street; the monies that was giving was going into his nonprofit.

Chair Randolph motion to APPROVE Meredith Meyers as the candidate selected for the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Executive Director's position; **moved** by Director Critton; **second** by Director Daniels; **NAYE:ALL; MOTION FAILS.**

The Executive Director selected for the Community Redevelopment Agency is Mr. Michael Johnson and confirmed by Attorney Jackson. Either the executive director is going to be an employee or contracted, if it is a contract, legal will draft the contract to have the appropriate language, if it is going to be an employee, relationship, then legal will assist HR at the directive of the board; (Nichole Washington) The selected candidate will be an "at will" employee which could be terminated by the board, the employee would abide by the town's personnel policies and procedures, there will be a conditional job offer with conditions set by the board and conditions that the town does, the conditional offer includes a background check, a drug testing and the onboarding is dependent upon the candidate. (Director Gardner) the only stipulation is already in the party, the other conditions are preferences that were not voted on, want to come to a resolution about Main Street, want it address through an agreement; legal expressed that the board can help to set the agenda of the executive director on how to reengaged Main Street, it could be a condition that the board would like for the executive director to undertake and move forward. Next would be the acceptance of offer and then the confirmation.

BOARD REPORTS:

Town Clerk - No Report

Attorney (Greg Jackson) – watching the radar and saw that a band of wind was expected to hit the Town of Eatonville, glad that it was not as bad as expected.

Vice Chair Donovan Williams – as we sit up here and talk about different things, tell the whole truth, do not tell what you want people to hear, tell everything. Someone paid for an outside company from another state to come into this little town looking for something, they did not get what they were looking for, there were two findings that were fixed, let us move on.

Director Ruthi Critton – do not take lightly the privilege to sit on this board, hoping that this is an opportunity to move forward and those pattern behaviors seen in the past on both sides of this agency, being the board and its employees, is a new leap, hoping that we do not continue to see personal agendas, lack of professionalism, and all the drama dealt with, looking for an opportunity to do something new, will address matters whether it is a contract, an employee, appointment, or a board member, there is a responsibility to our constituents and a plan to be responsible in this position. Thank everyone for giving me the opportunity to serve the community in this capacity.

Director Tarus Mack – we are privileged to have a CRA and we are coming up on the end of the contract that will require getting an extension, it is important and vital for this community in terms of just moving forward and turning a leaf to new things, congratulations to all the candidates who apply for the executive position, this is historic having about 30 applicants. This is a business with two entities within itself, you cannot have the CRA without the town, but you can have the town without the CRA, we are responsible for the actions taken, we have a great board that is going to do the right thing in making sure that the CRA is afloat and doing things advantageous to moving forward, the right choice was made in picking this individual, he is from Town of Eatonville and did a sensational job while he was here before, and knowledgeable of the CRA process, it was a choice getting someone that really knows their craft and the scope of work that the CRA need. Congratulations.

Director Rodney Daniels – Duly noted, there will be receipts and the story will be told, down to the construction of a three member board when it should have been five, to a check that was signed with one signature when the procurement policy says it should be two signatures, and when money was sent to an individual's nonprofit, I will continue to fight for Eatonville.

Director Angie Gardner – experience was not the only reason that the candidate received my final vote, do not want to subject anyone else to the mess, this particular candidate knows what they are stepping into; there are certain goals and objectives that need to be met in order for the CRA to be sustained past the sunset date, Ms. Mundy has been doing some heavy lifting and the knowledge that this candidate has should he come on board, together they will be a powerhouse, it is for the good of the town, we do have to keep the personal things out.

Director Theo Washington – when you enter a hostile environment, it brings tension, this guy never had the opportunity to do the right thing, he was not allowed to talk to people, come to meetings or come in the building, developers were told not to talk to him, he was locked out, with a different administration, he can come in right. Mr. Johnson comes, he was able to bring one million dollars to the club and would have brought money to HostDime; I will provide a copy of the ethics complaint letter pertaining to the check signing, will give all the paperwork to show that the findings were not found.

Chair Wanda Randolph – thanks the board for your participation in this process, thank all the candidates that came forward, it was the board's decision on the selection and I am willing to work with anyone, my personality will be the same and will treat them with the most dignity and respect, when this person comes on board, everything will be turned over to Mr. Johnson so that we can move forward with this CRA, congratulations to him; The FRA conference is next week in Tampa and signed up to attend; with the Club Eaton we are trying to get a reasonable place to accommodate the people, because of the early voting, there was no space and the library was available up until 6:30pm, there will be a meeting on the 30th at St. Lawrence AME Church at 5:30pm; Thank you for my time, efforts, and things that I wanted and tried to do in overseeing the CRA until we were able to get a director, thank God that we do have someone that have been selected, we are moving on.

ADJOURNMENT Chair Wanda Randolph Motions for Adjournment of Meeting (**Moved** by Director Mack; **Second** by Director Washington; **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES. Meeting Adjourned at 7:38 P.M.**

Respectfully Submitted by:

APPROVED

Veronica L King, Town Clerk

Angie Gardner, Chair