



# HISTORIC TOWN OF EATONVILLE, FLORIDA

## REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

### MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, August 5, 2025, at 7:30 PM  
Town Hall – 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 Council Agenda Page.*

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### CALL TO ORDER AND VERIFICATION OF QUORUM:

Mayor Gardner called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and a quorum was established by Mrs. King.

**PRESENT: (5):** Councilman Tarus Mack, Councilwoman Wanda Randolph, Councilman Rodney Daniels, Vice Mayor Theo Washington, Mayor Angie Gardner

**STAFF: (6)** Demetrius Pressley, **Chief Administrator Officer**, Veronica King, **Town Clerk**, Katrina Gibson, **Finance Director**, Lt. Felicita Hernandez, **EPD**; Clifford Shepard, **Attorney**; Tara Salmieri, **Town Planner**

### INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Invocation through a moment of silence led by Mayor Gardner followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

### APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

**Mayor Gardner Motions** to **APPROVE** the meeting agenda with the amendment to move Item #2 (Resolution 2025-15 – Directing the Finance Department to Provide Monthly Financial Statements, to the Town Council Each Month ) to Council Decision; **moved by** Vice Mayor Washington; **second by** Councilman Daniels; **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES 5/0.**

### CITIZEN PARTICIPATION – (5)

Kelvan Franklin – An ambassador for the Eatonville Chamber of Commerce presenting a statement from LaVonda Wilder, president of the Eatonville Chamber of Commerce thanking the Town of Eatonville and GCI for providing an opportunity for the Chamber to work with the Mayor's Business Development Academy. We enjoyed the experience. The graduation was amazing. Nineteen business owners completed the academy and video remarks from Congressman Maxwell Frost and Mayor Demings were played congratulating the class. Representative Anna Eskamani also attended the event. The Eatonville Chamber Welcome Center in partnership with Community Nook is excited to be chosen as the recipient of a Zimbabwe Friendship Benches. We are proud of Jack Warner and Troop 631 for their leadership skills and collaboration.

Joyce Irby – Wanted to come and make a comment on self-inflicted wounds, I understand that the smartest person in the room has been voted out of legal representation by the council. This is a man who has passionately advocated for us and who is connected and respected, there has to be some personal reasons why this happened. It is a self-inflicted wound. When I tried to contact attorneys for personal representation, the first one I talked to said that Eatonville is a mess and it would be difficult to find an attorney to address any matters of the town. He [Clifford Shepard] has represented us honorably and passionately and this makes absolutely no sense.

Angela Johnson –Regarding the termination of legal services, there are less than 7% of Florida Board Members that earn a distinct designation to serve a municipality; have you completed any other research on firms that have this distinct designation. Is it wise to have the same attorney represent the Town and Community Redevelopment Agency, or would it bring potential conflicts? Also, when considering firms that can handle complex real estate transactions, Mr. Pressley, what is the status of the opinion from Orange County regarding the water rates? Council members, I would ask that you lead and self-govern, and not depend upon

that guidance from Orange County, and that you put forth a motion tonight to refund residents for the amount that they were overcharged, based upon what you approved, which is a water rate without the per thousand charges. Mr. Pressley, what is going on with our garbage collection? How do we bill residents that have two containers? What happens when the resident puts the bin on the truck themselves—who assumes the liability?

**Council yields two additional minutes for Johnson to continue her comments.** Johnson continues: We voted to fine HostDime, what was the completion date and have their fines been assessed? Based upon the recent shooting in Catalina Park, I requested a meeting with the Mayor, Mr. Pressley and Chief Murray; and that meeting was not taken [honored]. I was requesting it [meeting] because there were seniors who were not comfortable with speaking in front of you. I was really taken back that you would not take a meeting with myself and senior residents. Why do we have to continuously wait around for last minute communication from the council? I commend you, Mayor Gardner, for the Mayor's Business Academy, and I invite you to consider inviting the recent graduates to the Founder's Day luncheon. What is the status of the budget? Finally, I want to echo the comments made by Mrs. Mundy on the need for a local business preference ordinance. (Council Comment: provide feedback on allowing time among the 3 minute time to speak; unfair to others who want to speak, do not want to open ourselves by showing preferential treatment.)

Vance Guthrie – On the redistricting, the Maitland City Council are going to do a little more homework and draft a letter to send to the county, asking Eatonville, Maitland, and Winter Park altogether. Second, on a lighter note, I came here to share that the Edgewater High School class of 1985 is hosting its 40<sup>th</sup> high school reunion in September 12 and 13, please invite anyone you know out to it, there is a Facebook page called Edgewater High School c/o Class of 85 40th Reunion Group, at [ticketstrike.com/ehs85Eagles](https://www.ticketstrike.com/ehs85Eagles) to buy tickets; lastly, to speak on Mr. Cliff Shephard, he is the guy and you are not going to find anyone better.

Angela Thomas – First, can we get more information on Founder's Day and what to expect. Second, I was reading the line of credit, and if I could get someone to call me back on section 9. Lastly, to Mrs. King, the town website is the easiest website to maneuver, so I thank you for that.

**APPROVAL CONSENT AGENDA:** Mayor Gardner Motions to APPROVE the Consent Agenda Items 1 (Town Council Meeting Minutes 7-15-25) and 3 (Resolution 2025-18 Authorizing Issuance of Revolving Line of Credit Note); moved by Vice Mayor Washington; second by Councilman Mack; AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES 5/0.

## **COUNCIL DECISIONS:**

Approval Resolution 2025-15 – Directing the Finance Department to Provide Monthly Financial Statements, to the Town Council Each Month (Councilwoman Randolph) – Chair Gardner asks to table the item, but your request can still be made. If you want to look at checks, that needs to be done in-house. Randolph – We can table it now, but I request we have a financial report on the second meeting each month. **Mayor Gardner MOTIONS to TABLE Resolution 2025-15; moved by Vice Mayor Washington, second by Councilman Mack. MOTION PASSES 5/0. Discussion/comments:** Councilman Mack states that he respects Councilwoman Randolph's position in terms of the direction you want to go in. He does not believe that the council needs to make a resolution. Financial statements are available whenever the council asks.

Approval of the Paige Corner Preliminary Plat (Planning) – Town planner Tara Salmieri presented a PowerPoint presentation on the Paige Corner Preliminary Plat. Salmieri stated that tonight, the council is being asked to vote on a preliminary plat which takes the 2.74 acres of land and then divides that into 8 lots. The preliminary plat stages are to look at that piece of land, and how it meets all the zoning criteria. The owner of this piece of land as well as the representatives are here tonight for any questions. Councilwoman Randolph – Does this mean it meets the requirements for land and developing code, and there are no other issues? Salmieri confirms. Councilwoman Randolph – So, this will be on individual lots? Planner Salmieri – Yes, it takes one piece of land and divides it into multiple pieces to allow single-family homes. The land use itself would permit 8 units and acres. Councilwoman Randolph – Mr. Pressley, where are we with impact

fees? Mr. Pressley stated that impact fees have been established. Councilman Mack requests to yield time to the representatives to speak on the plan. Tom Faber is with Faber Engineering and states that the project was originally started in 2023. Faber – We are not proposing to do anything crazy, this is restating zoning and designation. The site actually has 41% open space. There will be a good amount of green space the residents can enjoy. We are happy to answer any questions. Councilman Mack states he appreciates their involvement and for coming out tonight and appreciates Town Planner Salmieri's enthusiasm. **Mayor Gardner MOTIONS to APPROVE the Paige Corner Preliminary Plat; moved by Vice Mayor Washington, second by Councilman Mack. MOTION PASSES 5/0.**

Approval Resolution 2025-14 – Establishing a 30-day Work From Home Limit (Councilwoman Randolph) – Mayor Gardner asks that this item be tabled because this request falls under administration. **Mayor Gardner MOTIONS to TABLE Resolution 2025-14; moved by Vice Mayor Washington, second by Councilman Mack. Discussion/comments:** Councilwoman Randolph asks for the reasoning behind tabling this item. The resolution is for the Town Council to adopt a work from home policy. It is up to the administration to enforce the policy. Councilman Mack – This is an administrative item, should let the administration handle the enforcement. I do agree that we need some stipulations for people working from home, but your requirements need to be tweaked a little bit. I ask that we table it and that the Mayor and administration look at this item and see what they can come up with. Councilwoman Randolph asks Mayor Gardner if she believes the town needs a work from home policy, and if so can you get with administration and come up with a policy? Mayor Gardner – it depends on every situation. Right now, in 2025, work from home makes sense. If we were to ask everyone to come in-house, where would we put everyone? That is one thing to think about. There are other circumstances that are going into consideration with the work from home policy. In this instance, it works well and to change it would mean changing the person [in the position]. Councilwoman Randolph – you need to have some guidelines or policy for working from home. We need more protection for our employees working from home. Mayor Gardner – That is something Mr. Pressley can get with Human Resources on and see what is out there already. Pressley – They [Human Resources] have already started on the rewrite of the policy and procedures of the town. They are going through the ADP consultant, on finalizing and updating the policies. I am waiting on the time frame for when they will be completed. Councilman Daniels – Policy is necessary and should have been in place. I am in favor of the policy, and it is definitely needed. Councilman Mack – we need a procedure for the employee coming in three times a week. Pressley – One of the things we are doing with the revamping of the policy was to make sure we had a workflow. That is one of the things HR has been working on. Another thing, the purpose was to review the whole system. Versus working on one resolution, it would be good to bring the entire policy to council in a workshop. Councilman Mack – Councilman Randolph, did you have an opportunity to speak with Mr. Pressley before presenting this item? Councilwoman Randolph – I had a conversation with Mr. Pressley some time ago, but not recently. Councilman Mack – It is important that we do have these conversations with Mr. Pressley. At this point, everyone has a different opinion. We are not going to agree on everything, but we have to have the notion that we have already discussed it. If you are working on something policy-wise, I think it should have been addressed to Councilwoman Randolph. Councilman Daniels – The Vice Mayor brought up a good point about sick time. If you are sick, you should not be working. In those types of situations, I am relying on the administration to work it out. Councilwoman Randolph – If I would have known that we were working on this—it did not come up. Mayor Gardner – But Mr. Pressley, in all fairness, has mentioned this in a meeting. Councilwoman Randolph – Stating something and saying that something is going to be done is two different things. **Mayor Gardner calls for the question; AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES 5/0.**

Approval of Resolution 2025-16 – Interim Legal Counsel Services (Councilwoman Randolph) – Mayor Gardner – I feel the same way about this because we are not just talking about legal counsel now. We have boards. We have big issues going on in the town. Even with the grants, the town has been doing so well. It does not make sense to change the legal oversight right now. I am asking that this item also be tabled. **Mayor Gardner MOTIONS to TABLE Resolution 2025-16; moved by Vice Mayor Washington; second by**

Councilman Daniels. **Discussion/comments:** Councilwoman Randolph asked Mayor Gardner what the reason is for tabling. Mayor Gardner stated that she has various reasons: (1) the quality of legal counsel, (2) the timing right now is not good, (3) and if he is removed, we still have ongoing legal issues. Vice Mayor Washington – I was in a class last week and one of the things that the FRA spoke of is that you should have different counsel for different agencies. Councilman Mack – The issue that I had, it is nothing personal, I just feel like we are not moving in the right direction for multiple reasons. One is the lack of respect from Attorney Shepard. I want the best interest of the town and when I asked the question: do we have any lawsuits against the town; and when I get a “no” and it is a “yes,” I have a problem with that. In my opinion, even if you did not know, you should have known. Vice Mayor Washington – Attorney Shepard deals with multiple lawsuits, the CRA has lawsuits, so if he did not know, but the Florida League of Cities had a lawsuit. Pressley – We have heard from the residents and as you all are figuring out, previously HR, which handles several risk management litigations, they do not go directly to general counsel. Councilman Mack asks why general counsel is not made aware. Pressley – It is normally handled with HR. After the meeting and because of the nature of it, I instructed our HR, which the town did not have for many years, that is if we have any litigation to make sure that our general counsel is aware even if it is not something that he is handling. Councilman Mack – The general counsel oversees all agencies, if anything is happening legally in this community, he should know about it. Mr. Pressley asked if the attorney could speak on the points being brought up in council. Attorney Shepard – First I want to say that I never want to give anybody on this council the impression that I do not respect them. I am passionate about this town and whether I sit here or not is not going to change that. In regard to the recent issue about the lawsuit, the next day after the meeting Mrs. Randolph told me about a pending lawsuit. That is when I immediately notified everybody in the town. And to the extent, someone thinks that I should be reviewing the docket, if that is something the town wishes me to do, I am happy to do it. But I will say, it is more than normal that when the town gets sued, for me to be notified through official channels. I think the lawsuit in question was one involving a police officer and that is why it would not have involved me, but it would have been nice to know. Councilman Mack requests that Attorney Jackson approach [podium] so that he can ask some questions. Councilman Mack asks Jackson if he is able to handle the capacity of Attorney Shepard’s position. Attorney Jackson states that he can. Councilman Mack – If he is capable, I would like him to fill the position temporarily. Attorney Jackson – I have had conversations with Mr. Pressley and Attorney Shepard. My understanding is that there is a school board issue. Attorney Shepard has done an outstanding job regarding the school board issue. Attorney Shepard and I talked about him continuing working on the school board issue, which I support. Councilman Mack – I do appreciate your [Attorney Jackson] opinion and everything you just stated. With that being said, for the sake of the town, I would strongly consider keeping Attorney Shepard on a temporary basis or even a permanent basis, if things are changed for the benefit of the town. Attorney Jackson – A lot of times that I stand up here, folks may question my capabilities and what I would ask is to get to know me and my extensive experience, do not want people thinking because my title does not include board certified, that it means my abilities are not on par. Councilwoman Randolph – Thank you Attorney Jackson for your comments and Attorney Shepard. I put this item on the council agenda, after analyzing a lot of things and coming back from the FRA meeting and learning how respected Attorney Shepard is. Mr. Shepard has put in a lot of time with this agency. And I do not want to make a long speech, but I am in favor of tabling this until we can make a decision later on. Councilman Daniels – I was in favor of tabling from now after listening to citizens and council members comments, but we need to do better. **Mayor Gardner calls for the question; AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES 5/0.**

**(Added to the Agenda) Mayor Gardner MOTIONS to REINSTATE Legal Services with the Shepard Law Firm; moved by Councilman Daniels, second by Vice Mayor Washington; AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES 5/0.**

Approval of Resolution 2025-17 – Non-Rehire of Individuals Dismissed Due to Unsatisfactory Performance or Conduct (Councilwoman Randolph) – Mayor Gardner – I feel the same way about this but with what Mr. Pressley said, if we are updating the manual this will be a part of it. **Mayor Gardner MOTIONS to TABLE**

Resolution 2025-17; **moved** by Vice Mayor Washington, **second** by Councilman Mack. **Discussion/comments:** Councilman Mack – I do not agree with this resolution because it is almost like if I am elected, the people decide that. So, how are you going to tell me that I cannot run? Councilwoman Randolph clarifies that this resolution is in regard to employees. Councilman Mack – I know a lot of different companies and corporations who have fired people and hired them back. I do not think this is something that we should be dealing with. Councilwoman Randolph – You are correct, there are a lot of times companies will rehire, but only because they are desperate for workers. We need to demonstrate that we want quality employees and are accountable. This is a way to say if you have unsatisfactory performance or conduct, you will not be considered for employment in the Town of Eatonville. Councilman Mack – That is why we do background checks and other checks, so that those people are not hired. Mack reiterates that a resolution is not needed. Mr. Pressley clarifies that a portion of this will be part of the policy being made by HR. Councilman Daniels – I thought Councilwoman Randolph was saying the rehire of town employees with unsatisfactory performance should not be allowed? Councilwoman Randolph confirms. Councilman Daniels continues by saying he agrees. Councilwoman Randolph requests for Attorney Shepard's opinion. Attorney Shepard – I am not sure that any of the cities I am counsel for has a rehire policy. That does not mean you cannot have such a policy. I do suggest that language be added for disqualifications. **Mayor Gardner calls for the question;** **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES 5/0.**

## **REPORTS:**

**CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER: Demetrius Pressley** – In regard to Orange County's opinion on the water issue, they are not giving an official opinion due to the nature of the item, so they asked us to review the process, and we did. But if this council wants another opinion before we make a decision, that is what I want to make sure. I do not have a yes or no answer I can give you all on whether or not they were in agreement. Regarding the public comments, I will be reaching out to public works to talk to Waste Pro and confirm that process. In regard to Founder's Day, that information has been sent out (3-day event, 14-16). Thank you for helping us to get the line of credit in place to continue to proceed with the improvement to the town's infrastructure. Mrs. Tara Salmieri has been working with CPH in getting a survey to help us proceed with getting it back for council approval. The Town planner and planning coordinator will be working on rezoning; Mrs. Gibson created folders and binders for the budget (there is a workshop scheduled for the next meeting). Also, we are moving at a rapid pace with the engineering and architecture for the clubhouse. We are hoping to have that out for bid at the end of September. Mrs. Johnson I will reaching out to you regarding the recent shooting. Lastly, we just had out MPDS inspection with the state which included audit checks. We also got some quotes on the van, so we will be presenting that for council's approval. As for sidewalks, we have been doing checks with public works and getting some quotes for those areas. Lastly, the Host Dime project, I did get an email from the owner and included you all, they have not completed. As of July 31st, they are now being charged \$250 per day. The owner is aware and expressed some of the challenges, one being working with the building official and updating codes. In closing, the local Principal of Hungerford Elementary has been nominated for Principal of the Year. Moving forward, I think it would be good to recognize her at some point.

**TOWN CLERK: Veronica King** – The town has a new public records request portal that has launched: NextRequest. On August 19th, the council will present the Bruce and Winnie Mount Scholarship awards. The Special Election for District 15 is approaching, and we have early voting August 23-31 with election day on September 2, 2025. The council meeting for September 2nd will be moved to the Denton Johnson Community Center. For the 2026 election, being that our election is on a Saturday, do we want to participate in early voting with Orange County? The administration will review the potential and cost for using Town Hall for early voting.

**ATTORNEY: Clifford Shepard** – I am happy to meet with anyone of you at any time. Additionally, I really do take to heart the comments about respect. I am a little thickheaded sometimes and other times I do not hear

the tone I am using, but it is not my intention to disrespect you. I wanted to make sure that I checked the docket today; as of today, there are no new cases.

**MAYOR'S REPORT - Mayor Angie Gardner** – I am going to start by saying a huge shout out to GCI, Mrs. Mundy, Town of Eatonville, and the Chamber for the Mayor's Business Development Academy. I am so appreciative of the time and effort that went into the event. I want to congratulate the scholars who received the Bruce and Winnie Mount Scholarship. Also, condolences to all of the families that have lost loved ones. I have to address the email that was mentioned earlier. I only found out about the shooting at 8 o'clock and the email was sent at 8:25. The Town has to get itself together before getting with the residents and seniors. And the concerns are not just for that area. We were in the process of getting the information when the email was sent. Therefore, it made sense to reschedule the stakeholders meeting to include safety and so that it is for everyone in the community. The meeting was not denied; it was scheduled at a time for everyone. The other concern that was stated was that I did not want to have a meeting, so you call each of the council members, and to me that is a threat. We need to rethink that process.

#### **TOWN COUNCIL REPORT/DISCUSSION ITEMS -**

**Vice Mayor Theo Washington** – The Mayor's Business Academy graduation was nice. Condolences to the families of Eatonville who have lost loved ones.

**Councilman Rodney Daniels** – Can we get Mrs. Mundy to give an update on the alligator issue. As far as HostDime, can we make sure the town is not hindering them? Also, I passed by the night market and it was packed with food and vendors, but Angels [restaurant] was empty. The solution for everybody is to include them in the night market. Thank you to everyone for coming out tonight.

**Councilwoman Wanda Randolph** – Congratulations to the recent graduates of the Mayor's Business Academy. Councilwoman Randolph presented a picture of markings on the street [tire marks] on the west end. The photo is about a month old, and if you drive by you can still see the markings. Also, the breast cancer event will be held September 6th. Moving forward, we should just do right by our community and town.

**Councilman Tarus Mack** – Thank you to everyone who showed up to tonight's council meeting. Condolences to anyone who has lost loved ones. A big congratulations to the recipients of the Bruce and Winnie Mount Scholarship. I strongly recommend that we have engagement with Catalina Park residents in regard to the police facility being built there. Perhaps we could have more engagement so that they have an idea of the plan. Also, I am somewhat disappointed because we have been doing a great job with Waste Pro and now it is becoming problematic. I am looking forward to my back to school giveaway. There will be free haircuts, food, book bags, and school supplies. My philosophy has always been helping people and changing lives. Thank you to Mrs. Gibson for her assistance. Also, looking forward to Founder's Day and our 138 year celebration.

**ADJOURNMENT** Mayor Gardner Motions for Adjournment of Meeting; **Moved** by Vice Mayor Washington; **Second** by Councilman Mack; **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES. Meeting Adjourned at 9:47pm.**

**Handouts:** Agenda, Certificate pertaining to public meetings and no conflict of interest (revolving loan); updated Resolution 2025-15 and Resolution 2025-16; Founder's Day flyer

**Respectfully Submitted by:**

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**Veronica L King, Town Clerk**

**APPROVED**

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**Angie Gardner, Mayor**