



HISTORIC TOWN OF EATONVILLE, FLORIDA

COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, September 17, 2026, at 6:30 PM

Town Hall – 307 E. Kennedy Blvd, 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 6:31p.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 (arrived late), Director Tarus Mack, Director Linder Greathouse.

STAFF: (4) Marissa Bellenger, **Deputy Town Clerk;** Greg Jackson, **Attorney;** Michael Johnson, **CRA Executive Director;** Seg. Fletcher Boone, **EPD**

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION:

Rasheed Aziz – (public comment submitted via email)

Shak Jones – First, I hope that all the Board members have received my resign. Above all, the ups and downs that come in politics, I am grateful for everyone who serves this Town. Tonight, I speak as a citizen of Eatonville and a former CRA employee. Ms. Jones shared her professional experience with the TOECRA and working under the leadership of Executive Director Michael Johnson. She stated that she was excited about TOECRA projects and what they would mean to the community. Redevelopment means honoring the past while creating the future. I saw Mr. Johnson's commitment to moving Eatonville forward. I am grateful for what I learned here, the people I worked besides, and the residents and businesses who contribute to the Town's future. I will continue to show up to Eatonville no matter what. Thank you. (Director Jordan arrived)

Ryan Novak – I want to discuss the Single-Family Homes Project. What is the benefit to the Town for this CRA to build six homes? A new build just hit the market in Town at \$443,000. Who are these homes being built for if the resident median income is \$40,000. Do they serve the community and the people who live here now? You guys did not inherent the land, it was purchased with public money. Now, the money is being spent without clear guidance as to what will happen after. What is the total cost of the program? What is the total of the proceeds? Which section of the Redevelopment Plan authorizes building homes and using the sales for debt on other parcels? Six homes at \$300k each—did you truly send out competitive bids?

Michelle Fort – I have a concern about the Single-Family Homes Project. Can someone look at the minutes for its approval? Ms. Fort referenced August 20, 2026, minutes. She commented on the Executive Director's actions in regard to the project. She asked why they had not seen what has been paid on the project. The CRA plan allows affordable housing. Building houses at \$300k is displacement. How does an entity created to help the people turn around and hurt them? Do we need to investigate the Executive Directors actions? Since 2021, the CRA has done nothing.

Joyce Irby – I try to talk to you one-on-one. If I cannot talk to you, I must come up here and speak. Director Mack, do you remember the person who came to you and called you "Big Money Mack," because I respected you. I respect you as a human being but not a councilman or director. You are the person who not only stood me up but also ignored my communications. We did not meet because you did not want to. The fact that you cannot apologize is so disappointing. I am hoping that you can be the man that I respect and be accountable. You violate your oath if you ignore the residents you swore to protect.

Cathy Mills – I have been a resident for 46 years, but I did not come here to talk about my residence but 41 Lincoln. This is no longer the town that freedom built. Our town has become reckless and disloyal. I have heard lies after lies. I was promised a meeting with someone, and my number is stuck in Town Hall, and I never got the call or meeting. There is an issue with my son's septic tank. This should be a town that is well respected. Freedom is not free. You must get out there and dig and push. The struggle is real. If this Council, CRA, does not come forward and do what was approved to be done two years ago, someone needs to speak up and talk. If it was not for the elderly people in this Town, it would not be the Town that freedom built.

Angela Johnson – When we as residents come, we are pulling the information from the Town's website. Can you please have copies of walk-on items available, or they be brought up on the screen. I would recommend that Consent Item #5 be moved to Board Decisions or Tabled. I am hopeful that during discussion or decisions that you have discourse on the annual budget. Ms. Johnson asked about the \$20,000 allocated toward programs. Can the Board insist that when programs and projects are available, they be advertised so that residents and businesses can apply? If you have walk-on items, it is a disservice to residents to not know what they are.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Chair Critton **MOTIONS** to **APPROVE** Consent Agenda Approving Resolution CRA-R-2026-40 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes March 19, 2026; CRA-R-2026-41 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes August 20, 2026; CRA-R-2026-42 Approving Amended Bylaws changes as submitted by Attorney Jackson and the Board of Directors; **moved** by Director Mack, **second** by Vice Chair Thomas. **Comments:** Director Randolph asked to move Resolution CRA-R-2026-42 to Board Discussion. **Chair Critton restates the motion with amendments. AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES 7/0.**

BOARD DISCUSSION:

Approval of Resolution CRA-R-2026-42 Approving Amended Bylaws changes as submitted by Attorney Jackson and the Board of Directors – Mr. Johnson – We completed our discussion on the bylaws with all members, except Vice Chair Thomas. The changes have been noted and included in the amended by laws. Vice Chair Thomas – Is it possible that we can add to the bylaws to not have a meeting before 6/6:30pm Mr. Johnson – We can look at the section in the bylaws and amend it with the Board's desire. Chair Critton – I would caution against putting restrictions in the bylaws. Vice Chair Thomas – And if I cannot attend? Chair Critton – By accepting this position, you accepted the duties. Director Mack stated that the Board should be considerate of the residents. Chair Critton – I think we should all practice consideration. We can put it up for a vote if you all want. Chair Critton – I am assuming the amendment would be to article 4? Vice Chair Thomas – That we do not schedule special meetings before 6/6:30pm in consideration of Board members and the residents. Mr. Johnson – I do not see a problem in moving workshops to 6pm. Attorney Jackson presented a hypothetical to the Board. I recommend that this Board does they please. Is this also a restriction on workshops? Vice Chair Thomas – Yes. Director Greathouse asked why they cannot just poll for a time? If two times could be proposed. Attorney Jackson stated that the amendment would need to be made to article 4 and gave his recommendation for verbiage. Director Mack stated that 6-6:30pm workshops would be a good window of time. Vice Chair Thomas – What if we just change the regular meeting time to 7:30pm? Attorney Jackson suggested that section 4.1.1 indicate that any workshop meetings shall begin no earlier than 6p.m., or workshops shall not begin no earlier than 6p.m. Director Randolph – I would like to amend in the bylaws that CRA employees are Town employees. Director Jordan – Can we just table the bylaws? **Chair Critton rescinded motion to discuss, Director Mack rescinded move and Vice Chair second.**

Chair Critton MOTIONS to TABLE; moved by Director Mack, **second** by Vice Chair Thomas. AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES 7/0.

RFP 2026-0853 General Contracting Service for Single Family Homes Project – Mr. Johnson – The RFP cannot be discussed. A handout of the bidders and their amounts was provided to the Board.

BOARD DECISIONS:

Approval of Resolution CRA-R-2026-43 Adopting the 2026 TOE CRA Comprehensive Policies and Procedures Manual – Ms. Bellenger read the preamble. **Chair Critton MOTIONS to TABLE** Resolution CRA-R-2026-43; **moved** by Director Randolph, **second** by Director Jordan. AYE: ALL. MOTION PASSES, 7/0.

Approval of Resolution CRA-R-2026-44 Adopting the TOE CRA FY 26-27 Annual Budget – Ms. Bellenger read the preamble. **Chair Critton MOTIONS for APPROVAL; moved** by Director Mack, **second** by Director Williams. **Comments:** Director Randolph brought up concerns about a few line items, including the salary of the Economic Impact Manager. Vice Chair Thomas – If we did not want to pursue this would it be by vote or resolution? Attorney Jackson stated by resolution. Vice Chair stated that she would like this to be tabled and Attorney to review the resolution. Attorney Jackson stated that they could amend the budget. Director Randolph asked about the "due to" from the Town. Mr. Johnson – You are at your sunset period and that is an unpaid debt that needs to be resolved before the sunset. The attorney will come back with recommendations, but it must be in the budget. Director Mack – My recommendation is to get rid of it altogether. Attorney Jackson – You will need to vote by resolution. Also, you need to look at debts, as well as from the perspective of the Agency. Is it to the benefit of the Agency to remove that debt or work with the other party? The resolution from Vice Chair has been partially vetted. Attorney Jackson – I have some recommendations to give to the Board about the Town's debt. Chair Critton brought the discussion back to the budget. Director Williams – It does not have to be monetary value to dissolve this. I think we should wait for Attorney Jackson's recommendation. We do need to adopt this budget. Director Greathouse – This is money in the budget that we don't have. I think Orange County already resolved it. We should just remove it from the budget. Attorney Jackson clarified the confusion regarding the "due to" from the Town. Director Randolph – Can the CRA waive the penalty? Attorney Jackson confirmed. Director Randolph suggested letting Attorney Jackson draft a plan. Chair Critton – Is the acceptance of his line item an acknowledgement, legally, by the CRA of this debt. Attorney Jackson – Until such time it's amended. Chair Critton – Is it necessary to include it in the budget? Attorney Jackson – I look at as indicating that a debt that is due to the agency and so I would say that if I see that there and Mr. Johnson, or this board, were to direct me to take some type of action against that particular debt then I would do so because that is in item that has been recognized as something that is due now because an accounts receivables can be added at a later date by way of an amendment if it's not placed on the budget at this time it can be readdressed and then it can be placed in the accounts receivables bin at that time but it still does not make it go away, it is just not budgeted. Mr. Johnson – It will need to be taken out from revenues and operating expenses. Chair Critton – We would be amending the motion to remove three line items.

Director Mack amended motion to include amendments to the line items (removing the “due to” the CRA from the Town of Eatonville), **second** by Williams. **Chair Critton** states the Amended motion. 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-2026-45 Terminating Employment of the TOECRA Executive Director Without Cause for the Purpose of Pursuing A New Direction In Leadership – Ms. Bellenger read the preamble. **Chair Critton MOTIONS; moved** by Vice Chair Thomas, **second** by Director Randolph. **Comments:**

Director Williams asked for clarification and the plan, and reasoning. Director Randolph – He is an at will employee and could be dismissed at any time. Chair Critton – I don't see the need for section eight. Some of the sections are overstated. Director Randolph stated that she stands by the resolution. Chair Critton commented on the position of the CRA. Without leadership, it will raise questions about this agency's stability.

Chair Critton resumes the question. AYE: Director Greathouse, Director Randolph, Vice Chair Thomas. **NAY:** Director Williams, Director Mack, Director Jordan, Chair Critton. **MOTION FAILS, 4/3.**

Approval of Resolution CRA-R-2026-46 Authorizing the CRA board chair Ruthi Critton to act as the Executive Director assuming administrative functions of the Community Redevelopment Agency Board of the Town of Eatonville – Chair Critton removed this resolution from decisions.

STAFF REPORTS:

Marissa Bellenger – Deputy Town Clerk (Clerk Office) – No report.

Attorney Greg Jackson – I have sat in on meetings with the Vice Chair with Executive Director Johnson and the CAO with Orange County. The County is looking very closely at the Town of Eatonville Community Redevelopment Agency. Any shake-up with leadership could jeopardize the future of this board, and the question of whether this Board sunsets would be the decision of Orange County. There is a good chance that the CRA will be extended for at least another five years. I think the reason that this consideration is being taken seriously is because of the leadership of this CRA. In addition, the decision of the TDT award is based on the leadership of the Board and Executive Director Johnson. If you continue to have this strong Board under the Chair, Vice Chair, and Executive Director, you will continue to see great things happen. So, great meeting tonight. You all did exactly what you all were supposed to do. You are very cognizant of your residents and of your roles and duties.

Executive Director – Michael Johnson – This Saturday is the Eatonville Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting. On October 19th, Orange County will be addressing TDT funding. On November 10th, we secured a date to go before the Board of County Commission. We have closed out the AAHC grant.

BOARD REPORTS:

Director Donovan Williams – Overall, great meeting. To residents, I always hear what you are saying but give us solutions.

Director Linder Greathouse – I do not have anything against you, Mr. Johnson, but the residents are telling me that they want new leadership. I am beholden to the people of this Town. It is nothing personal.

Director Tarus Mack – Thank you for being involved in CRA business. I am happy that we were able to pass a budget tonight. I am glad we worked together collectively. We, as board members, have a tough job. I am happy that we were able to pass a budget. It is a privilege to sit up here and make the decisions that we make. I am always going to vote with my conviction. I know the significance of what we must do in this Town to move it forward and to make sure that we are successful. We must be mindful of the direction that we are going in. I have been here almost all my life, and I care about what happens. I have great respect for Ms. Mills, and we need to fix her issue. I will make time to be available for residents who want to meet. If I rubbed you the wrong way, I apologize.

Director LaDwyana Jordan – I appreciate you all coming out. I hear everything you all are saying and collectively, as a board, we are trying to get things right. It is a grind up here. I would like someone to explain to me what is going on with Ms. Mills and her son so the Board can figure out what we can do.

Director Wanda Randolph – We had a great meeting tonight. I know sometimes that we are leaders, but what is real leadership? The reason I put this resolution out is because I feel like you (Mr. Johnson) do not give us information or adequate reports. I am on his board for a reason. I am about no nonsense. We need more strength in leadership. I know that God placed me in this position to do what needed to be done here, and that is what I stand for. Above all else, I am a team player. As for Ms. Mills, I tried back in February to resolve the issue, and nothing was done. The other day I asked for information on the heritage tourism culture program, and you only sent me partial information. We have properties sitting around that we have done nothing with for years. To the residents, you can call me any time, and I would be more than happy to sit down and speak with you.

Vice Chair Angela Thomas – Our previous director passed on September 11th, and his memorial is coming up.

Chair Ruthi Critton – I had several conversations with Executive Director Johnson regarding the budget and what I am hearing from the Board is that you would like the information sooner. Regarding potential sunsetting, the CRA is a tool in a toolbox. And for an underserved community, like the historic Town of Eatonville, all of our tools matter. I will always advocate for more tools in the box, whether that is the CRA, public-private partnerships, or grants—whatever it takes to continue to redevelop. I would also request that you send a list of your priorities to the Executive Director, as was asked by you all previously. A lot of my support for this Board from day one has been redevelopment and housing. It is a priority that I have listed on several occasions. Back in March we spoke about evaluations for the Executive Director and there was no follow-up from the Board as to what that would look like. If we expect the Executive Director to do his job, then we have a responsibility to do ours as well. Chair Critton touched on the various ongoing projects by the TOECRA. She stated that she will continue to advocate for the work the agency is conducting. She encouraged Board members to play their role and to understand the authorities so they can all coexist together.

ADJOURNMENT Chair Critton **MOTIONS** for Adjournment of Meeting (**MOVED** by Director Randolph, **SECOND** by Vice Chair Thomas; **AYE: ALL. MOTION PASSES.**) **Meeting Adjourned at 8:50 P.M.**

HANDOUTS: Rasheed Aziz Public Comment; CRA Proposed Budget; List of Bids for RFP 2026-06302

Respectfully Submitted by: Marissa Bellenger

ATTEST

APPROVED

Veronica L King, Town Clerk

Ruthi Critton, Director