



HISTORIC TOWN OF EATONVILLE, FLORIDA

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, June 2, 2026, 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.*

CALL TO ORDER AND VERIFICATION OF QUORUM:

Mayor Gardner called the meeting to order at 7:38 p.m. and a quorum was established by Mrs. King

PRESENT: (5) Mayor Ruthi Critton, Vice Mayor Angela Thomas, Councilwoman Wanda Randolph, Councilman Tarus Mack, Councilwoman Ladwyana Jordan

STAFF: (7) Marlin Daniels, **Chief Administrative Officer**; Veronica King, **Town Clerk**, Trinetta Fisher, **Interim Town Attorney**, Valerie Mundy, **Public Works Director**; Katrina Gibson, **Finance Director** Tara Salmieri, **Town Planner**, Chief Murray, **EPD**

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Mayor Ruthi Critton led the Invocation in a Moment of Silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance

COUNCIL DISCUSSIONS: (Added to the agenda)

Continued discussions from the 6:30pm workshop with discussions about Hungerford Property with the Dr. Phillips Charities – discussions on how the town will benefit, the economic impact study objective is to understand what the possibilities are for the property, emphasized sustainability by increasing home ownership, a museum can be considered, Dr. Phillips will work with the town for the best solution for the land, inquired about the projected property tax, advisement board was asked to give respect to the council board, it is stated in the plan for the advisory board to spend time with the council and community members, will do a better job communicating, thanks for taking accountability and for a collaborative approach with the town, expressed the need for a liaison to inform the council and community of updates, need more individual time with the council members, what future updates to the council and community members looks like, will communicate at the council's invitation, will engage where community is, what to present by coming to different meetings, council requested for updates at every meeting, inquired about timeframe for the infrastructure expected to close in mid-August with two years to completed the development, inquired about the funding, Dr. Phillips's will have partners with emphasis on impact and not profit, inquired about the anticipated cost for the project, there will be a park and a pavilion, Dr. Phillips is looking forward to working with council and the staff, the development agreement prior to submitting the site plan is part of a process, have to work with codes and consider necessary variances as necessary, within 30 days Dr. Phillips will have an answer to identifying another board member for the advisory board who will represent the council, the community cleanup day scheduled Saturday (June 6) would be an event for Dr. Phillips to engage with the community, the town planner will planner another workshop to future address matters.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mayor Critton Motions to APPROVE Agenda; Moved by Councilwoman Randolph; Second by Councilman Mack; AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES, 5/0.

PRESENTATIONS AND RECOGNITION:

Florida Water Professionals Month and Emergency Responder Status – Proclamation was read into the record by Mayor Critton extending greetings and best wishes to all observing Florida Water Professionals Month.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION – (6)

Ryan Novak – (Resident) against adding the CRA attorney as the interim attorney for the town, concerns with it being a conflict of interest, referenced the lawsuit

Jasmyne Reese (with Shawn Welcome) – Shared a community event called Revive Zora an amazing celebration of the life, legacy, and community that shaped the literary of Zora Neale Hurston, Shawn Welcome is the coordinator for the spoken word festival that will take place at the Eatonville library, it is an open invitation.

Michelle Fort (Pam Stanley yielded her time) - against adding the CRA attorney as the interim attorney for the town, the attorney should protect public money, in which the current CRA attorney filed a lawsuit under the direction of the CRA Executive Director, the trust of the attorney is not there, request for the board to do an investigation of the CRA; need to focus on eliminating of property taxes, recognized Mr. Daniels for working to put things in place to build infrastructure, want transparency and accountability, the town deserves better, Councilman Mack asked that individuals speaking state their address.

Shana Mount Powell – (Resident) sat in these chambers and listened closely about the concerns surrounding Dr. Phillips and the proposed development of the Hungerford Property, watched council for the past nine months go back and forth about what has already transpired, asked is the council doing to clearly communicate to Dr. Phillips about what the people want, presented a call to action to host a true, open, and transparent chat with the residents of Eatonville, not another filtered conversation, a real opportunity to listen, a space where the people can openly share what they want to see on that property so that council can take back to Dr. Phillips what we truly would like to see as a collective, come to together face-to-face to ensure that the voices of Eatonville are not just heard but reflected in every decision moving forward.

John Beachum – Eatonville is a culture heritage tourism and the arts and education, Eatonville is a designation, expressed how Dr. Phillips did not listen to council as they spoke their heart, there is what you call Block from Participation, blocking this council from participating in a process, a museum is a must for historic Eatonville, the ground that you are trying to build on is holy, the collaboration is culture and heritage tourism, they should pick someone to be on that board, the town people donated 50 acres to build their school with no education increasing the 100 acres to 300 acres and OCPS took the land, sold the money and did not give anything back in investment.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Approval of 2nd Reading of Ordinance 2026-3 Dissolving the Board of Adjustment Board and Transferring Powers to the Planning Board (Preamble Read) (No Public Comments; No Council Comments) **Mayor Critton Motions to APPROVE** the 2nd Reading of Ordinance 2026-3 Dissolving the Board of Adjustment Board and Transferring Powers to the Planning Board; **Moved by** Councilman Mack; **Second by** Councilwoman Randolph; **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES, 5/0.**

Approval of 2nd Reading of Ordinance 2026-2 Certified Recovery Residences Ordinance (Preamble Read) (No Public Comments; No Council Comments) **Mayor Critton Motions to APPROVE** the 2nd Reading of Ordinance 2026-2 Certified Recovery Residences Ordinance; **Moved by** Vice Mayor Thomas; **Second by** Councilman Mack; **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES, 5/0.**

Approval of the 1st Reading of Ordinance 2026-4 Establishing Water and Sewer Impact Fee (Preamble Read) (Mr. Daniels) introduced this item referencing the blanks in the agreement as designated amounts needed for determination for either option A or B. (Ms. Mundy) stated that water and sewer impact fees encourages any growth to be paid for with the water and sewer system, anything that the developers or builders are not doing are on the backs of the existing customers to pay for the growth, Option A is an impact fee for water at \$1,530 and fee for wastewater \$540, Option B is an impact fee for water at \$4,620 and fee for wastewater at \$2,440, Option B is recommended in order to keep up with the growth of the town, need to build capacity for future growth, the fees has not impact on the residents. (Public Comments: Ryan Novak - impact fees must be used exclusively for future water and sewer infrastructure purposes, it is not a fund that can be used for any other purposes, agree with option B because we are behind and have missed out on the collection of those fees on others who have already impacted the infrastructure.) (Council Comments: there is a section of the ordinance that speak to the comment that establishes the water capacity fee trusted account which shall be maintained separate and apart from all other town accounts; fees will not concern/impact any citizen; the expected timeline is 90 days after the passing of the second reading) **Mayor Critton Motions to APPROVE** the 1st Reading of Ordinance 2026-4 Establishing Water and Sewer Impact Fee with option B; **Moved Councilman Mack; Second by Vice Mayor Thomas; AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES, 5/0. Note:** Option B has been the selected option.

CONSENT AGENDA: Mayor Critton Motions to APPROVE Consent Agenda approving the FY 2026 budget amendment for the reallocation of a designated portion of the Deputy Chief's salary within the FY 2026 budget; Councilwoman Randolph requested for this item to be moved to Council Decision; **Mayor Critton Motions to MOVE Consent Agenda to Council Decision Moved by Councilman Mack; Second by Vice Mayor Thomas; AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES, 5/0. Comments/Notes:** Requested for the consent item to be moved to Council Decision. There were no other consent items to approve.

COUNCIL DECISIONS:

Approval of the FY 2026 budget amendment for the reallocation of a designated portion of the Deputy Chief's salary within the FY 2026 budget (Moved from Consent Agenda) - **Mayor Critton Motions to APPROVE** the FY 2026 budget amendment for the reallocation of a designated portion of the Deputy Chief's salary within the FY 2026 budget; **DIES** for lack of Motion/Second. **Notes:** Item was brought with no resolution.

Approval of Resolution 2026-27 Hiring Greg Jackson As The Interim General Town Attorney for the Town of Eatonville (Preamble Read) – Mayor Critton requests that this item be tabled since there is no vacancy, Councilman Mack would like to move forward with a motion. Attorney Fisher serving as the interim general counsel stated that the item has to be tabled because there is no vacancy to fill, Attorney Jackson can bid for the position (during the RFP bid process), the RFP did not go out on May 1st. **Mayor Critton Motions to TABLE** Resolution 2026-27 Hiring Greg Jackson As The Interim General Town Attorney for the Town of Eatonville; **Moved by Councilman Mack with questions; Second by:** Vice Mayor Thomas; **AYE:** Mayor Ruthi Critton, Vice Mayor Angela Thomas, **NAY:** Councilwoman Wanda Randolph, Councilman Tarus Mack, Councilwoman Ladwyana Jordan, **MOTION FAILS, 2/3. Comments:** Mr. Daniels provided clarity about the hiring of an interim, Attorney Shepard was previously hired as an interim because there was a vacancy, in this case, because Attorney Fisher is currently the interim Attorney, there is no vacancy to hire Attorney Jackson as interim; the emergency hire is up to six months; the RFP went out (May 22 and May 26 for the magistrate and for legal counsel) with a deadline of June 26 at 2pm, the RFP went out late due administrative challenges on the town side and on the other agency side before it could go out, Mr. Daniels had to step in to ensure it was done, Vice Mayor stated that the mayor has every right to conduct this meeting professionally, regardless of liking someone, it does not constitute the right to get rid of anyone, we should go by what the policy says, the RFP is out if we want to start inviting candidates in to have those interviews. We can start as soon as somebody

applies. Attorney Jackson was invited to speak stating that the current attorney was hired on an emergency basis to address a lawsuit, at such time that the lawsuit was dissolved, the emergency issue that arose for that attorney to be hired had been dissipated, Mayor Critton clarified that the lawsuit was not the only emergency it was also because of the voluntary resignation of Attorney Shepard leaving the council without legal counsel, there are other things in the town that require legal attention that Attorney Shepard's firm was tending to such as, planning, historic preservation, grants, and multiple administrative operations, Attorney Jackson stated his opinion about the charter language about appointments, it is very specific about who the mayor can appoint such as a CEO and different heads of different departments, but it (the charter) states very specifically who appoints the attorney for the council. (Attorney Jackson) have not prepared RFP for the permanent position, was asked on the interim basis and did not ask to have my name placed on this agenda or any other agenda, it is very offensive to me as an attorney here in this community for over 25 years to have individuals come to this podium and accuse me of doing anything that's untoward. held self honorably, served this country, been naval intel, been infantry, and actually the superintendent for church school, in filing the lawsuit, it was followed to every letter of the law, there is a reason why I am still sitting as a CRA attorney and someone else resigned, every document provided to the CRA board was backed up by statute, by bylaws, and by law to include every single thing provided to the defense, no other attorney provides statute provisions, AOG opinions, bylaws, or anything, everything done was appropriate and by the law, if anyone wants to challenge me on that, please write me a memo, it will be reviewed and challenged if needed. (Councilman Mack) recommended Attorney Jackson as the intern attorney because he knows the legalities of new and old business in the town and felt he was the best fit, until council permanently put someone in that position, will not tolerate disrespect, if Attorney Fisher puts in for the RFP, it is a hard no. (Attorney Fisher) when becoming a lawyer, you have to take what is called the MPRE (Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination), which is the ethical rules of becoming an attorney, one of the basics rules is the conflict of interest, when the lawsuit was filed, it was a huge conflict of interest for the Town of Eatonville, Florida Bar Rule 4.17 states that you cannot represent a client on a matter that is adverse to the client, the lawsuit filed was completely an adverse to the town, as an attorney, it should have been stated that you cannot file the lawsuit, that put Attorney Jackson in conflict for representing the town any further (Attorney Jackson) I was not representing the town, but was representing the CRA, the statutory is a separate, distinct legal entity, am currently in the process to becoming board eligible as a trial attorney, sitting for the exam in March/April, for over 25 years, I have worked myself up to this position, have been an assistant attorney, general for the state of Florida, have counseled municipalities extensively, and have written white papers on CRA's for legislators. (Mayor Critton) for clarity and to Attorney Jackson, are you interested in representing the town in all capacities, there was a comment made that you know all the interactions and dealings from my administrative purview, I have only interacted with you on the CRA side, whereas we have interacted with Attorney Shepard's firm on all the other administrative departments of the town, the CRA is in fact supposed to be independent, separate, and distinct, while the Shepard's firm was representing the town in all other capacities, and all other meetings. Is it your statement that you are interested in representing the town on an interim in all the other capacities in which the town attorney has and is currently representing us (Attorney Jackson) have stated that I will assist this council in any way if asked me to serve, if I were both the CRA and Town attorney, I would not have filed a lawsuit against the town, if I am asked to serve the town in an interim capacity, I stand ready to serve in any way possible. (Councilwoman Jordan) I previously states that would not have an issue with Attorney Jackson stepping in as interim if we were not in conflict with the lawsuit, it was put on the agenda because the lawsuit has now passed and feel that Attorney Jackson has done a good job with the CRA since being a part of the town since 2019, Attorney Shepard has stated that his time and availability is getting less, do appreciate everything that Attorney Fischer has done for this town by stepping in this emergency situation, but the emergency is over. (Mayor Critton) want to ensure that we understood that there was not an actual vacancy available, when Attorney Fisher was brought in as emergency it also covered the interim, we have the authority to go ahead and start interviewing those individuals, we still have the authority as the council to make the permanent appointment. Councilwoman Randolph) felt that the voting rights and the authority of hiring the attorney

regardless of an emergency or non-emergency, whether it is by replacement by retirement or death, it still lies in the authority of the town council and that was and still is my position, the emergency is over. (Mayor Critton) asked Councilwoman about the difference of her position with the former Mayor's authority to execute the emergency hire of Attorney Shepard from the current authority of the Mayor to hire Attorney Fisher due to an emergency, emphasized that the lack of an attorney is an emergency the appointment is good up to 180 days. (Councilwoman Jordan) asked with there not being a vacancy, does the council have to terminate attorney Fisher and bring in attorney Jackson. (Vice Mayor Thomas) the ordinance, the policies is law, what it says about hiring an interim, you (the mayor) have that, to hire a permanent attorney, the charter says we (the council) have that authority, if the ordinance says we have the right to hire an attorney yet no one has applied for that position and we do not have a vacancy (due to the current interim), do feelings really matter or what is best for the town of the of Eatonville? (Attorney Shepard) policies are not law, policies are directives to good practices. in August/September of 2025 when attorney Shepard was terminated and hired back immediately for emergency hire, I was put on the agenda for consideration as interim attorney, Attorney Shepard remained because I spoke up for him, at that time, Attorney Shepard stated that he was working on the school board property and weeks away from a deal on the property, after speaking to Attorney Shepard extensively and former CAO Pressley, it was stated that it was close to getting the school board property done, in return I stated that it wouldn't be fair to come in and halt the town if the school board property is about to be close (on the deal).

Councilwoman Jordan Motions/Moves to APPROVE Resolution 2026-27 Hiring Greg Jackson As The Interim General Town Attorney for the Town of Eatonville; **Moved by** Councilman Mack with questions; **Second by:** Councilman Mack; **MOTION HALTED/NO ACTION WAS TAKEN. Comments/Notes:** Conversation took place about the appropriateness of the motion. Attorney Trinetta Fisher had to leave due to an emergency with her child. Mr. Daniels recommended that the meeting be adjourned due to no legal representation. A special meeting will be scheduled for Monday, June 8, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.to address the remaining agenda items with no action due to no legal representation. Council Members: Mack, Jordan, Critton, and Randolph are available for the special member. Attorney Jackson asked that his name be redrawn from Resolution 2026-27. Council member can submit names for consideration.

Approval of Resolution 2026-30 Appointing/Confirming Individuals to the Community Redevelopment Agency (TOECRA) (Preamble Read) – No Action

Approval of Resolution 2026-31 – Authorizing Funding A Request For Proposal (RFP) For Development Consulting and Advisory Services for the Town of Eatonville (Preamble Read) – No Action

Approval of Resolution 2026-32 Establishing Community Engagement for the AI/Data Centers (Preamble Read) – No Action

REPORTS:

TOWN CLERK – Reminder of the Bruce and Winnie Mount Scholarship, one application has been received; reminder that the election closeout reports are due from the running candidates for the 2026 March election (whether elected or not elected) is Friday, June 5th

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER – The military has taught me; you treat everybody with dignity and respect, and it is a two-way street, something I have been evaluating is our logo where everybody is going in the same direction, when we talk about tilling the land, but it has to be systematic, we h focus on I think save to stay focus, many times we get distracted by other things instead of just staying the course; received an email that council is aware, about furnishing the lobby, police cars, allowing the donation or purchase of old used police vehicles from other law enforcement agencies, second hand hand-me-down equipment says that Eatonville is poor and shameful, if anyone who understands government and business, the use of surplus or

refurbished furniture is widely accepted and a fiscally responsible practice within municipalities of all sizes and does not indicate financial distress, it is funds saved through such acquisitions and are redirected toward essential services that directly benefit our residents, including public safety, infrastructure, and community programs, there was an individual who was in administration turn back fifteen brand new police cars saying that we did not need them, the acquisition of surplus law enforcement vehicles is a standard and widespread practice among Florida municipalities. In fact, Orange County and other Florida cities and counties regularly participate in surplus programs for equipment allowing agencies to obtain needed vehicles at little to no cost to taxpayers, there are nearly 5,000 active surplus auctions across Florida at any given time reflecting how normal this practice is statewide. New police patrol vehicles can cost anywhere between \$35,000-\$55,000 each. For a small municipality like Eatonville, acquiring even two or three surplus vehicles in serviceable condition can save taxpayers anywhere from \$70,000-\$165,000 in funds that can be applied to staff, service or capital improvements that are visible to our residents every day, had to address this issue because people trying to deflect and cause confusion in this town, it is time for us to stand up and start pushing forward, people have had their time and their opportunity to do things, times have changed and cannot keep saying what we did 20 years ago; went to a conference with other city and county administrators talking about agitators being people that is trying to keep things going instead of giving suitable solutions and not taking up our time; the audit is in full effect and should be finalizing that soon, we are in budget now which started June 1st, department heads have to provide supporting documents for their budgets or it (requests) will not be put it on the budget; there is a bill about property taxes, if it go through six municipalities will lose complete funding, there is about 20 to 25 (municipalities) that will lose 90% of their budget; the personnel policy is being updated now, there are over twenty years of old policies that should have been updated; recommend to individuals on the board and staff to get continue education, if you are not getting continue education you are failing us, staff will get training and education; waiting for legislative objectives in order to properly do the budget; there has been no hits to the RFP for legal and for the magistrate, it has been out on Demand Star; inquired about a desired time the council would like to do the retreat which is essential for us to move forward; the information that was provided for the police department was to bring salaries up, if this is not desired, I'll take any recommendations from you (council) and we will bring it back.

INTERIM TOWN ATTORNEY'S REPORT – Trinetta Fisher - No Report

TOWN COUNCIL REPORTS:

COUNCILWOMAN RANDOLPH – No Report

COUNCILMAN MACK - we got business to take care of and will have a difference of opinion; condolences to those who have suffered any loss; thanks to all the presenters tonight especially Dr. Phillips Foundation, not completely happy with the source of everything that is taking place and I do not fault them, hoping we can move down a different path changing the trajectory on how we do business in our town, what bare going to do if the tax (bill) happen; as the CAO, I expect much from you, it is a great responsibility, hoping that we can create something that is going to benefit of our town, especially from a tax based perspective, we should have gotten ahead of this; appreciate Jasmyne Reese for her presentation encouraging everyone to participate in the June 9th event; the cleanup day is going to be Saturday (June 6, starting at 9am at town hall), will include food, music entertainment, hurricane preparedness, appreciate Chief Murray's partnership, hurricane season started yesterday and its important that we get educated on how we need to prepare ourselves during the hurricane season which ends in November, looking for volunteers; the bike ride is also on Saturday (June 6), recognized the Stanley for their leadership and acknowledged the impact bike event; the 1887 First Night Market (June 6, 4pm) presented by Mr. Julian Johnson (last time to be held at town hall), encourage anyone to come out and bring your family; if you are a staff member or potential staff member, I have serious problem and not comfortable with somebody disrespecting me or anyone on this council, do not tolerate disrespect not caring who you are; are their any lawsuits (there is something going through the process, a letter was received, have

15 days to respond, this matter has been given to Attorney Shepard, the situation has been going on since May 14, 2025).

COUNCILWOMAN JORDAN – hoping that (Dr Phillips) will reach out concerning our requests; classes, training, and education are near and dear to my heart; thanks to the Stanley for the impact ride, great turnout; gave an invitation for the Eatonville Chamber Coffee Break, June 10th, inquired about the Town of Eatonville renewing its membership with the Chamber, the Eatonville Chamber plays an integral part to the town of things that we do here and would like to see us have more participation in that organization.

VICE MAYOR THOMAS – this is not a debate group nor a group of jurors that we need to keep hearing the back and forth, have respect for the residents and for this board, to go back and forth saying the same thing in the middle of a motion is disrespectful; thank you for the biking event, really enjoyed it; please have the attorney speak with Councilwoman Jordan, she is new, the Florida League of Cities is a good place for her to learn, do not put these council members in a position that we may say something that we should not be saying.

MAYOR'S REPORT:

MAYOR CRITTON – thanks the clerk for the reminder about the election reports, it is extremely important fines are not small, let us get that information to the clerk; request for the printed copy of the Dr. Phillips presentation for the entire council; in favor of the retreat sooner than later; the impact ride was huge, like the bike ride on steroids, it was super fun, with mental health conversation and a panel, acknowledged Mr. Thompson who collaborated with the life cycle club, thanks to the Life Cycle Club for your contribution to the health and wellness of this community, it seems to get bigger and bigger and we appreciate that; need to get back to the door-to-door, in the water bill disbursement (of information) so that residents are prepared for events that are coming up and make accommodations for nice large events that we want to continue to see in the Town of Eatonville; thanks to the CRA for the CRA giveaway, acknowledged Mr. Nick and Mr. and Mrs. Nichols who back, there were a numbers of vendors, free resources; let us push to make sure our residents are aware and able to take advantage of the opportunities, a request to make phone calls; The town is hosting Juneteenth, there are a number of Juneteenth events that will be happening in the town, check out our socials for promotions of those event.

ADJOURNMENT Mayor Critton Motions for Adjournment of Meeting; **Moved by** Councilman Mack; **Second by** Councilwoman Randolph; **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES. Meeting Adjourned at 10:21pm.**

Handouts: EPD Budget information, Recommendations for Technical Committee, Revive Zora Flyer.

Respectfully Submitted by:

DS

 Signed by:

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Veronica L King, Town Clerk

APPROVED

Signed by:

 B7C21BB6095E4AA...
Ruthi Critton, Mayor