



HISTORIC TOWN OF EATONVILLE, FLORIDA REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, April 7, 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 Critton called the meeting to order at 7:39 p.m. and a quorum was established by Mrs. King.

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

STAFF: (8) Marlin Daniels, **Chief Administrator Officer;** Veronica King, **Town Clerk;** Clifford Shephard, **Town Attorney;** Valerie Mundy, **Public Works Director;** Katrina Gibson, **Finance Director;** Chief Stanley Murray, **EPD;** Darius Washington, **Recreation Director;** Faith Woods, **Executive Assistant;**

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Mayor Critton led with a moment of silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

Mayor Critton MOTIONS to **APPROVE** the meeting agenda with amendments; **moved by** Councilman Mack; **second by** Councilwoman Randolph; **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES.** **Amendments:** Adding before consent agenda the second presentation from the workshop (department head presentations); adding the workshop discussion item (Bruce & Winnie Mount Scholarship Program) before council decisions (before item #5); moving item #7 (resolution 2026-18) up to item #5

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION – (3) – *Because the workshop time ran out, two minutes of additional time was given to those who did not get a chance to give comments during the workshop period.*

NY Nythiri – brought a formal notice for the record that on April 1st, the Southern Poverty Law Center filed a lawsuit against the Orange County public school board to protect historic black municipality in Florida, a press release was provided, asking Eatonville citizens to join the lunch scheduled for Saturday, April 18th to hear the allegations in the complaint (opportunity to hear from attorneys, make comments and ask questions), flyers will be sent out.

Joyce Irby – Inquired about what NY Nythiri wanted for the lawsuit, felt that what she wanted originally the 25 acres for a project was too much; was called a liar because things said that is documented since 1994, if you keep lying over and over some people will believe it and that is the problem, the facts are the facts since day one; Mike states that he answers to no one when asked if he is a town employee, he questioned the mayor about why she went to the bank stating she had no right to look at the CRA accounts, there is person who is completely wrong and he states he works for no one, it is illegal to not provide a statement and answers to questions asked about the accounting of the CRA (when requested of others), there is more time spent on this person who is creating issues, need to deal with the facts.

Michelle Fort – Disappointed with the CRA board; Mr. Johnson is allowed to be the CRA mayor and for him to use the CRA attorney as his personal attorney, questioned why Mr. Johnson did not go see the mayor (former Mayor Gardner), need to get Attorney Jackson off the CRA, he advised hiring (Mr. Johnson) when it was illegal, he (Mr. Johnson) is a town employee and the records show that, respect what the charter and policy says and do it, do not give citizens public records, requested for what was charged on public funds, nobody responded, do not know how being disrespectful to your supervisor, the council, and to the citizens are condoned, what if we find out that those charges are fraud (used for personal use), do what is right and read your package, this is what happens when there is unchecked power, when he (Mr. Johnson) asked Greg (CRA Attorney) about his employment issues (not a CRA issue), the \$10,000 bill need to come out of his (Mr. Johnson) paycheck, that had something to do with his personal matters, he needs to get his own attorney and fight it out, asked to get this in check, read the bylaws, and act out on them, do not let him (Mr. Johnson) do what he wants.

PRESENTATION: (Added to the agenda) Department heads of the administrative staff gave a 90-day overview of departmental updates, projects, and tasks; public works, finance, police, recreation, and the town clerk's office gave presentations with comments and feedback from the town council and the chief administrative officer.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA:

Mayor Critton MOTIONS to APPROVE the Consent Agenda; moved by Councilman Mack, second by Councilwoman Thomas. AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES. Comments: Mayor Critton read the date of the meeting minutes for approval (March 17). Consent Agenda Items: Approval of Town Council Meeting Minutes (March 17, 2026), Approval of Resolution 2026-11 Establishing Term Limits For Two (2) Newly Appointed Regular Board Members and Two (2) Appointed Alternate Members to the Planning and Zoning Board, Approval of Resolution 2026-22 Amending Resolution 2026-15 The Signature Requirements For Checks Issued, and Approval of Resolution 2026-23 Dissolving The Election Canvassing Board.

COUNCIL DISCUSSIONS: (Added to the agenda)

Discussion of the Bruce and Winnie Mount Scholarship Program – The program is done every year, there is \$5,000 in the budget for scholarships, want to go public Monday (April 13th), bringing before the council the details of the program to see if there are any changes desired, what is in your packet is what will be available to the public, the goal is to put it on the website, make it available at the front desk and available by email at the request of those who are interested in the program, there are no changes from last year program unless there are changes you (the town council) would like to see, if there is only one applicant, the town council will decide if the full scholarship will go to the one applicant, have to be a resident of the Town of Eatonville, Scholarship Application will be available to the publication stating April 13, 2026.

COUNCIL DECISIONS:

Approval of Resolution 2026-18 Appointing/Confirming Individuals to the Community Redevelopment Agency (Preamble Read) – Mayor Critton **MOVES** to Appoint Angela Johnson to the Community Redevelopment Agency; **moved** by Councilman Mack, **second** by Councilwoman Randolph. **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES.**

Approval of Resolution 2026-17 Authorizing The Appointment of A Vice Mayor, Per Section 2.04 Of The Town of Eatonville's Charter – (Preamble Read) – Mayor Critton **MOTIONS** to Appoint Councilwoman Angela Thomas as Vice Mayor; **moved** by Councilman Mack, **second** by Councilwoman Randolph. **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES.**

Approval of Resolution 2026-20 Designating Vice Chairman of The Town of Eatonville Community Redevelopment AGENCY (TOECRA) – (Preamble Read) - Mayor Critton **MOTIONS** to Appoint Councilwoman Angela Thomas as Vice Chairman Of The Town Of Eatonville Community Redevelopment

AGENCY (TOECRA); **moved** by Councilwoman Randolph, **second** by Councilman Mack. **ALL, MOTION PASSES.**

(Added to the agenda) Appointing An Alternate Board Member of the Planning and Zoning Board As A Regular Board Member Due To A Vacancy – Mayor Critton **MOTIONS** to Appoint Trevor Cobb As A Regular Board Member Due To A Vacancy; **moved** by Councilwoman Randolph, **second** by Councilman Mack. **ALL, MOTION PASSES. Comments:** Trevor Cobb appointment term as a regular board member will be consistent with the terms stated in Resolution 2026-11; the vacancy was the results of Angela Johnson being appointed to the CRA Board.

REPORTS:

Chief Administrative Officer - Marlin Daniels – If the town council have any needs of the departments heads, requested that they send information to him (CAO's office) and will ensure those things are facilitated through the Executive Assistant; department heads have been notified that they need to be more clean, precise, and organized starting with offices and policy and procedures (Deadline is April 20th); no public works vehicles are parked in the parking lot (at town hall), they will be parked at the barn, they will clock in at the barn; town council will be receiving a six month budget to actuals from finance, will assist departments with budget justifications, budgets will no longer be padded; conversation about property taxes has come up, cannot wait until something happens, have to proactively look at the budget; personnel shifts are taking place to help facilitate accountability, will need town council approval to shift personnel to ensure the right personnel, may need more part-time positions; a presentation for the impact fees for water and sewage should come the first council meeting in May, with the Hungerford deal, if it still moves forward in August/September and if the impact fees are done within the 90-days, the fees will be in place; currently pushing for a collaborative approach by working with non-profits and others to make sure the work is done and that the town moves a lot faster, request the support of the town council; will be revamping the special events policies and procedures, if people are coming to utilize the town, the fees should be passed over to them to have town staff; currently looking at the fee schedules, look at what other municipalities are doing contractually and could possibly save \$60,000 easy when considering permits, building officials, current contract since 2018 is \$400 per day whether someone does the work or not (Approx \$104,000 yearly), our fees does not line up, have to make things right and save money; on May 8th (9am) request is for the town council to join Homes for Heros as a new home will be given to one of Eatonville's resident, Chief will lead the procession and other politicians will be present; getting more phone calls from others wanting to help the community, we have to do the right things and set the standard.

Town Clerk – Veronica King – The Bruce and Winnie Mount scholarship application will be available starting Monday, April 13th; as of March 2026, the historical preservation board is in compliance with the certified local government; will be on vacation April the 20 - 24th, the Clerk's office will still run as a well-oiled machine.

Town Attorney - Clifford Shepard – Not aware of any lawsuits; there may be an imminent lawsuit coming from the CRA side, have no more information on the imminent lawsuit.

TOWN COUNCIL REPORT/DISCUSSION ITEMS -

Councilwoman Wanda Randolph – have not received the budget report after several requests (request to pick up tomorrow); would like to know what funds the town owes the CRA and funds the CRA owes the town, there is a need for checks and balances, the back and forth needs to cease for accountability and needs to be corrected, funds received from the county should be appropriated and not channeled through another agency (Mr. Daniels states that this is not a new issue and is being addressed, must be ratified from both sides the town and the CRA), inquired as to if funds extracted from an agency puts that agency in a very poor financial condition (Mr. Daniels spoke to protocols put in place, everything will come by his desk, cost over \$1000 will has his signature, will check ledgers, looking at budgets form the last six months, need to know

overages and not wait to the next budget cycle, looking at credit cards, will get the information to councilwoman, all council members will get the budget); have not been able to receive the things asked for, do not have access to anything, no computer access to the website, do not know what is going on, this should have been handled in an urgent manner as an elected official (Mr. Daniels stated that the I.T. representative for the town has been on vacation for three weeks, need the support of council to bring in a company to ensure these things are handled outside of one person, financial reports should be available to council by the second meeting of the month, will bring a resolution for bank access and review of bank accounts-not check signing).

Vice Mayor Angela Thomas – Thanked the town council for the appointment as Vice Mayor; inquired about what is being done for Founder’s Day and Juneteenth; recommend starting next week working with the Zora Festival and not wait until the last minute, need to communicate expectations, recommend doing a retreat to talk about what we want, what we do not like, the retreat (one day on a Saturday) would have to be at town hall or at the Denton Johnson for public accessibility within the jurisdiction, if there is not decisions a public period is not required (Mr. Daniels will schedule a time for the retreat that will be good for the town council).

Councilman Tarus Mack – Gave condolences to those suffering lose; ask for status on HostDime, on the water rate for the citizens (credit), water and sewer impact fees; looking forward to kids coming out for the April Fool’s Day, educate them on swimming, expressed the need to be proactive in the safety of the kids and anyone who gets in the pool; it was a great event Saturday with Julian Johnson (1887 First), acknowledged Chief for the work that they do to make sure the town is safe, acknowledged appreciation for every director and employee for the work done on a daily basis, recognized the Stanleys for the Cycling Club (over 60 people), congratulations to all the positions appointed (Planning and Zoning terms, CRA Vice Chair, Vice Mayor), trust everyone sitting on the Dias (as the only male).

Councilwoman LaDwyana Jordan – Thanked Attorney Shepard for the clarification of the ordeal with the CRA; inquired about the direction will be taken with the Executive Director, even if the attorneys need to get together or decide which one to go with, hoping for guidance and direction from the Mayor; inquired about the lawsuit of litigation with the Hungerford property and PEC requesting for an update on Dr. Phillips, received an email about the advisory committee, have not heard anything since their last visit, expressed a desire to be more informed with ongoing updates on what is happening with the property, it was told to us that they (Dr. Phillips) wanted a partnership and that they would be respectful to this board (Mr. Daniels stated that Dr. Phillips is not named in the suit and willing to come back before council, they were waiting to come back after the election and appointment of council seat five), inquired about forming an advisory board on the town side, if they are not true to their word, maybe the town should join the lawsuit with PEC. **Additional Comments:** Members of the Town Council expressed concerns about Dr. Phillips not working with the town, inquired about the next steps. Mayor Critton suggested getting all thoughts together, looking at the facts, and bringing concerns to the CAO, and must understand the facts before making any movements. The Mayor and CAO was approached by media (declined speaking with the media until there is a united front), recommend consulting with having a PA forum to ensure that rights things a being said. Councilman Mack is not in agreement with everything that is being proposed for the Hungerford property. Vice Mayor Thomas states that we have to get the best of the situation and find a way to make it work.

MAYOR’S REPORT - Mayor Ruthi Critton – Send condolences to those families who are suffering a loss; announced the April Fool’s Day event extending an invitation for individuals to dive in (Saturday, 12-4pm – accepting volunteers), 18th Annual Health Fair hosted by Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church (Saturday, 10am -1pm); acknowledged the Eatonville library and their staff for their information and resources to the community; request for an update on HostDime (would like updates to be provided to the whole council);


enjoyed the Catalina Easter Egg event over the weekend, the community really bands together; there are concerns with speed bumps in Catalina Park (request an update); recognized the cycling club for taking on the task and for being consistent recognizing the Stanleys, Ms. Rentz (the escort), and others apart of the organization; inquired as to if there are staff for Special Events (no), have been approached by members of the community asking how they can participate with special events, request for information on the point of contact for special events, job descriptions or whatever it looks like when involving others with special events; gave a happy birthday shout out to First Lady Mount (Winnie), she was full of personality and love for this community, miss her dearly; this is the first regular council meeting (as Mayor), there have been 40 meetings between March 17th and tonight as a full board, excited about the work that will be done, there have been many calls from people excited about this administration, we are at a crossroad in this community and what we do now will affect this community for the next 139 years, we need to be intentional and strategic about decisions, on the local, state and county level; to the matter concerning the Executive Director, can consider a special meeting or address the matter at the appropriate venue, or address at next Thursday's CRA meeting, we can schedule for that and communicate that information to the board; Mayor's Final Words – I take pride in my name, in the integrity attached to my name, have been accosted, harassed, bullied, lied on, and ignored, everything that happens in this town falls on me, you cannot smile a bunch of stuff away, you have to take on the chin and I am willing to do that, 180 people supported me in this and I owe it to them to make sure that my face and the face of this entire council stays clean, if there is a question about an action that have been taken, it can be directed at me, to say in any form of public record that I stepped outside of my authority as chairwoman or as mayor is incorrect, to make allegations that are false, untrue, is not only unprofessional but it will not be tolerated, I am here to collaborate, I am not making any moves outside of my authority without convening with you first, which is why I am appreciative of Attorney Shepard presenting tonight, all of us need to be made aware of the same information, we will stand and operate under facts, now having a full board we can invite Dr. Phillips back for an update

ADJOURNMENT Mayor Critton Motions for Adjournment of Meeting; **moved** by Vice Mayor Thomas; **second** by Councilwoman Randolph; **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES. Meeting Adjourned at 9:56pm.**

HANDOUTS: Meeting Minutes, SPLC Lawsuit Press Release, Statement of Revenue and Expenditures, April Pools Day flyer and updates on events within the Recreation Department.

Respectfully Submitted by:

ATTEST



Veronica L King, Town Clerk

APPROVED



Ruthi Critton, Mayor