



HISTORIC TOWN OF EATONVILLE, FLORIDA REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, July 1, 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.*

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), Mayor Angie Gardner, Vice Mayor Theo Washington, Councilman Tarus Mack, Councilwoman Wanda Randolph, Councilman Rodney Daniels

STAFF: (6) Demetris Pressley, **Chief Administrative Officer**; Veronica King, **Town Clerk**, Holli New, **Town Attorney**, Katrina Gibson, **Finance Director**, Valerie Mundy, **Public Work Director**, Stanley Murray, **EPD Police Chief**

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

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

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

Mayor Gardner Motions to **APPROVE** agenda with amendment moving item #3 (Approval of Amended Resolution 2025-10 Utility Rate Clarification) to Council Decisions; **Moved by** Councilman Mack; **Second by** Councilwoman Randolph; **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES.**

PRESENTATIONS AND RECOGNITION:

Proclamation - Mayor Gardner presented a reading of the Proclamation in recognition of Florida Water Professional Month.

Presentation (Dr. Jim Moyer – presenter) – Gave a presentation entitled “Understand Soil and Water Conservation Districts/Lake King.”

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION – (12)

The Juneteenth Committee (Group of four-Candace Finley, Tiffany Simmons, Ruthi Critton, Shana Mount) updated the council on the recent event and presented a video. Tiffany Simmons – There is something special and sacred about growing up in Eatonville—a place where legacy is not taught, it is lived. As girls, as women, we have witnessed what it means to build something meaningful for the community, where we shape the spirit of celebration, service, and pride. And now we stand here as women, reading, organizing, and hosting a festival of our own. It is a full circle blessing that we do not take for granted. The Juneteenth celebration was crafted from a place of deep love of community, history, and the town we call home.

After the committee presented their video, they donated \$1000 for the Town to be used for water bill relief. Pictures with the town council and the Juneteenth Committee was done.

Cathy Mills – (Resident) Son is now a homeowner and still on septic; there are citizens in Eatonville who are elderly, and the council needs to be more giving (considerate) of the citizens (regarding water bills). Elderly people who are on a fixed income have an issue with the raised water rates.

Bradley Mac – Owner of a plumbing company (Drain Daddy) on the West side at 997 West Kennedy Boulevard and is enrolled in the Mayor's Business Development Program for the infrastructure projects. I know a lot of funds will be allocated towards minority and women-owned businesses, but there are more things that could be done to guarantee that those resources will be allocated to small business owners within the town. Suggested to the council to do an ordinance that allow a percentage of those funds to be allocated to or directed to those small businesses. Although some of those funds are allocated towards minorities, and women owned businesses that does not exclusively mean that those businesses have to come from within Eatonville.

Angela Thomas – (Resident) I had to get an additional meter for the sprinkler system. I have to fill out a new application and pay a fee, but I have been here since 2007. Thomas is confused because she is not getting a new system, just an additional meter, have to Pay \$170 deposit in which a deposit was already paid, total meter cost is \$496, not giving reclaimed water, inquired about an additional bill, and taxes on the bill. Thomas would also like an update on the non-ad valorem study, start date of study and implementation, will change the price of the water bill.

Joyce Irby – I was in conversation with the Mayor for a while regarding the National Trust Grant and study for historical buildings. Irby wanted to confirm that it went through (yes).

Michael Mills – (Resident) Since I been in Eatonville, I have not had a water bill like I do today. We need to change the water rates; sewer bill alone was \$80 more. I would like to see the council help the citizens who are old, do not have money, or live on fixed income. Everyone might not be as fortunate to pay their water bills.

Eddie Cole – (Resident) Wanted clarification on the water ordinances, with the repeal of both of ordinances, which one is the town under now (request a copy), hoping that it is being looked into as to if there is money that has to go back to the residents, is too costly to refund the funds all at once.

Anthony Grant – (Resident) Acknowledge and appreciate the presentation on soil and water and public comments from (Bradley Mac) and acknowledged Ms. Critton (Juneteenth Committee); wanted to reiterate his concerns of the resolution passed on December 3, 2024 (water rates). If you adopted a resolution that established rates at a flat rate but are billing residents per thousand, and the document states it is a flat rate. How are you billing the residents per thousand? My understanding is that the attorney stated that was the interpretation, need to go back and do it the right way; it is disturbing when we come to you for answers, you as elected leaders elected do not have answers, the policy needs to be rethought, if you cannot talk to us, then who do we talk to?

Angela Johnson – (Resident) What the council adopted was a rate that did not include a reference to give you the authority to bill at per thousand gallons. In regard to the motion set tonight, if the resolution gave you the authority to bill per thousand gallons, why do you have an item on your agenda to make a correction? So, if we are making a correction tonight, that would lead me to believe that what I have been charged since these rates were implemented was inaccurate, and therefore I am making a formal request for a refund of the amount that was charged. I respectfully request that a motion be put on the floor tonight to refund the overcharge to all residents as a credit over 6 months. I would also like information that could be provided to residents about water bill relief, and would like a detailed list of residents that have received a water bill relief, what is the policy to ensure that those credits are not given to the same individuals over again?

Additional comments: Mayor Gardner clarified her statement of not addressing public comments with a back and forth dialogue but follow up will be provided if needed; Vice Mayor Washington stated it is a public period. Where every question cannot be answered, having dialogues will not allow us to get through the meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Mayor Gardner Motions to **APPROVE** Consent Agenda Item #1 (Approval of Town Council Meeting Minutes 6-17-25) and Item #2 (Approval of Resolution 2025-11 Reappointment to the Planning and Zoning Board); **Moved by** Vice Mayor Washington; **Second by** Councilwoman Randolph, **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES.**

COUNCIL DECISIONS:

(Moved from Consent Agenda) Approval of the Amended Resolution 2025-10 Utility Rate Clarification– (Preamble Read). **Mayor Gardner Motions to APPROVE** the Amended Resolution 2025-10. Utility Rate Clarification; **Moved** by Vice Mayor Washington; **Second** by Councilman Mack with questions. **Discussions:** Councilman Mack wanted to motion for reimbursements to residents (for water utility bill) before approval of Resolution 2010-10 (*rescinded his second for approval of Resolution 2025-10*); [**Councilman Mack Motions** to reimburse residents on their water utility bill, there is already an open motion on the floor. **Further Discussions of Resolution 2025-10:** Councilman Daniels – The former mayor Cole had good questions on the ordinance, as well as Mrs. [Angela] Johnson (To Mr. Pressley) What do you recommend? Recommends doing the study first then addressing water rates? Is there a deadline tonight? Demetrius Pressley – The request that is being talked about is separate from what is happening here with resolution 2025-10, working with the County Commissioners accounting and speaking with their attorneys and to get their legal opinion on whether our route was correct or should there be some modifications, do not recommend that the council make a decision regarding a refund until information comes back from the county. Vice Mayor Washington asked Finance Director Mrs. Gibson to answer what the audit stated for the years that we had to do a water study. Mrs. Gibson – For twenty years the town has been getting a finding in the audit report because of our water rates, an increase in water rates is needed to get grants, bring in revenue, fix roads, and to pay staff. The auditor took all of the revenue of where the town should be in order to pay for expenditures, the longer we wait to pass the ordinance or resolution, the higher the refund. Vice Mayor Washington - agree with giving a credit back on residents' accounts monthly, was the per thousand being charged before the resolution was passed? Yes confirmed by Mrs. Gibson; Councilwoman Randolph – This issue is complicated and need to do the right thing done. We need to establish the refund period from the beginning [start date] up until now. Then we should focus on the water rate, would like clarity on the utility tax on the rates. Mrs. Gibson – We have an ordinance to charge a utility tax; Mrs. Gibson will send the ordinance in the morning. **Mayor Angie Gardner seconds the approval** of the Amended Resolution 2025-10 Utility Rate Clarification, **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES. Further Discussions:** Mayor Gardner asks Mrs. Gibson to clarify the previous rebate. Mrs. Gibson stated that it was for garbage, not water. Demetrius Pressley clarifies that Attorney New is trying to make sure the wording is proper in regard to Councilman Mack's motion to reimburse residents, it is not a matter of not knowing what to say, it is making sure that when we come back and workshop it, we are saying a motion to credit contingency based off the findings. We are questioning if the ordinance that we have established is sufficient. We also need to conduct a study to identify the time period for the reimbursement. What Councilman Mack is suggesting is without checks and balances. Councilman Mack – Attorney New, did you have an opportunity to review the documents that was provided on the ordinance that was approved in terms of the water rates. Attorney New – I have not reviewed them since December but have the documents for reference. Are you asking about the resolution with the utility schedule? The ordinance was repealing the previous ordinances allowing utility rates to set by resolution. The resolution then set the utility rates. Councilman Mack wants the Attorney's opinion on the asterisk which has been clarified by administration. Councilwoman Randolph – Do we have a motion on the floor? (No) We will be here all night on this issue, and I would like to put a motion on the floor to table this. Mayor Gardner clarified that the council is just discussing. Attorney New – Did the council ever formally adopt the Florida Rural Water Association findings and suggestions. Mayor Gardner is unsure and will follow up. The proposed motion [by Councilman Mack-for reimbursement to residents] has been rescinded, and no action has been taken.

REPORTS:

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER, Demetris Pressley: We are working with the CRA regarding their event. We are pursuing additional funding for water and sewer infrastructure; will have a community meeting for the policing facility on July 8th; working with recreation on summer programs and the pool; followed up with the county on the sidewalk issue from the last meeting also working with public works to address sidewalk issues;

will reach out to the appropriate person regarding the septic tank, will research and follow back up; regarding irrigation, there is no reclaim water.

TOWN CLERK, Veronica King: Reminded council that today (July 1, 2025) was the deadline to submit the 2024 Form of Financial Interests, still have time to submit before there is a fee assessed after September 2nd. In addition, there have been some questions on the upcoming 2026 election, based on the new charter. The first day of qualifying should be any time after noon of the 50th day prior to the general town election, but no later than noon of the 46th day prior to the day of election, will translate this to calendar form.

TOWN ATTORNEY: No Report

TOWN COUNCIL REPORT/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Vice Mayor Theo Washington – We are not perfect; we can have errors.

Councilwoman Wanda Randolph – I do not think most residents are aware of the separate meters. We should send awareness to everyone; requested an explanation for the work from home policy for employees, there is no procedure/policy per Mr. Pressley; requesting that a work from home policy is implemented; would like to say the Juneteenth celebration and committee did a great job; the Eatonville Senior Citizens are having a 4th of July event on Saturday [July 5] you do not want to miss it; there will be a breast cancer screening event on September 6th by local health workers; inquired about the incident on the water, Ms. Mundy clarified the internet outage impacted service and that public works are working on the situation.

Councilman Rodney Daniels – Agrees with Councilwoman Randolph in regard to sending alerts and robo calls about water; enjoyed the Juneteenth event and thanked the committee for a great job done, want the town to benefit from these events from a publicity and monetary standpoint. I agree that we need to find a way to take care of citizens when we make a mistake. I appreciate everyone who comes to the meetings to voice their concerns.

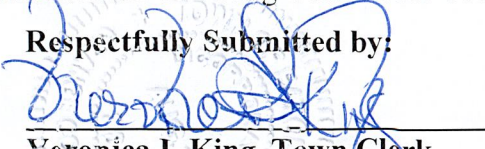
Councilman Tarus Mack – Thanks to those who attended tonight's meeting. Condolences to the Bradshaw family; the community cleanup event is on July 19th from 8-12pm. Any volunteers who want to get involved call town hall; be sure to come out to the 1887 Farmers Market set up by Julian Johnson; there is a life cycle bike ride with free bike rentals. Vice Mayor Washington did a great job on his recent event. Thank you to the Juneteenth committee for their great event and giving back. Thank you for the presentations tonight. In regard to the Catalina Park police facility, we need to have community engagement, and I have reiterated that multiple times, before approving anything.

MAYOR'S REPORT, Mayor Angie Gardner: We will miss out on millions if we do not increase the water rates. I know people are concerned about different bills. If you are going to want a refund from an account that is in the negative by over a million dollars—that is negligent. It has to be done now so that future leaders do not have to worry about it. All of the narratives, you know it is political, are not complaining about asterisks, they are complaining about the rates. I am looking forward to unity. I am proposing that we discuss creating brochures that will introduce you as a council person, highlight things you have done, a headshot, and some facts. This matters because it is an outreach tool for public awareness of your role, long term community engagement aspect, and also having a historical piece for the town.

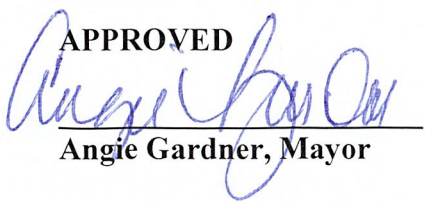
ADJOURNMENT Mayor Gardner **Motions** for Adjournment of Meeting; **Moved by** Councilman Mack; **Second by** Councilwoman Randolph; **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES. Meeting Adjourned at 9:47 p.m.**

Meeting Handouts: Community Clean-up Day (July 19, 2025); Councilman Rodney Daniel's Form 8B Memorandum of Voting Conflict for County, Municipal, and Other Local Public Officers

Respectfully Submitted by:


Veronica L King, Town Clerk

APPROVED


Angie Gardner, Mayor