



HISTORIC TOWN OF EATONVILLE, FLORIDA SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING

MEETING MINUTES

Friday, April 10, 2026, at 6:30 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 6:30 p.m. and a quorum was established by Mrs. King.

PRESENT: (5), Mayor Ruthi Critton; Councilman Tarus Mack (By Zoom), Councilwoman LaDwyana Jordan, Councilwoman Wanda Randolph (Arrived after Roll Call); Vice Mayor Angela Thomas

STAFF: (3) Marlin Daniels, **Chief Administrator Officer;** Veronica King, **Town Clerk;** Clifford Shephard, **Town Attorney;** Lt. Boone, **EPD;**

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

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

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION – (3)

Joyce Irby – Thanked the council for appointing Angela Johnson to the CRA Board; Karen Castor General, Supervisor of Elections, who was our school board member, read a list of all the property they sold, how much money they made, it was very disturbing, more recently feels like the school board has given us a gift, an opportunity, the school board started reading off a list of things over many, many years, opportunities we had to get the property, to collaborate on the property, were responsible generally for messing that up. It is not like we did not have chances, we have never owned the property and belonged to us, feel like Dr. Phillips does not have to do anything with us if they choose not to, they are a charity, they are choosing to do their work, their record is impeccable, and I would appreciate it if we would give them the opportunity, start the dialogue and see what progress can be made.

Michelle Fort – think that we have an opportunity that can cause everyone's lives can change, with working with Dr. Phillips, holding ourselves accountable, but also holding them accountable; this (Dr. Phillips) is an organization that cared enough about Black people when there was no hospital in Orlando, he saw a need, the residents deserve this, looking at all they are wanting to bring, it is exactly what we need, early education, everyone should know how to read and write, medical should not be an option, when we talk about what they are doing, let us talk about the facts, before it was a Dr. Phillips, it was an UP Development, a car dealership, now that it's Dr. Phillips, there is a problem, let us not look at the problem, look at it as an opportunity, the opportunity that Joseph Clark was afforded.

Ryan Novak – Did the CRA board approve a lawsuit against the town; in the lawsuit was the remedy to reinstate, an individual back to the CRA, that is more of a wrongful termination lawsuit, if an individual feels that they have been wrongfully terminated, they should seek their own counsel and file their own suit, not from the board on behalf of the entity for which a person is seeking revenue, it is odd that you are suing yourselves, I do not think you approved a lawsuit, with a legal defense against this (lawsuit), it will get tossed out quickly.

COUNCIL DISCUSSIONS/DECISIONS:

Establish Legal Services For Imminent Lawsuit Filed With Orange County - The purpose of this meeting tonight is case numbers 2026-CA-003759-0, notified on the 7th of April of a potential lawsuit and served April 9th. (Town Attorney) seeking, authorization to file something on behalf of the town to defend it, to the extent it needs to be defended from the CRA, as a town attorney, I cannot defend lawsuits without authorization, the client directs the action, nothing has been filed but prepared to file something, if authorized, asked Mr. Daniels to notify the insurance carrier, have not heard back from them, in the meantime, we have 20 days to respond, from the date we were served. (Councilman Mack) very unapologetic about showing the best interest in the town of Eatonville, want to protect the best interests and the integrity of both agencies, which is the town and the CRA, having two different entities within itself, especially with the lawsuit and litigations, potentially file against each other, do not think it gives us a good image and does stains the community, both lawyers need to sit down to have an in-depth conversation about how we can solve these matters. (Councilwoman Jordan) it is up to us (the council) to seek legal counsel -, can both attorneys for both sides have a conversation, is there someone else that can come in and oversee the both of you (attorneys) and then come back to us so we can make a decision as to where we stand? (Attorney Shepard) The Town of Eatonville CRA as a legal matter of suing the Town of Eatonville, you all sit on both boards, in effect, you are suing yourselves, if you did not authorize this (suit), question that probably merits some consideration is about how we got here is, who said this was a good idea, can the lawyers work it out, well the lawyers work for clients, my client is the Town of Eatonville, represented by the elected officials, Mr. Jackson's client is the Town of Eatonville, represented by the elected officials plus two citizens, unless you make one decision as the CRA board, and a different decision as the council, there is not much to work out, if you agree with Mr. Jackson and his lawsuit, there is nothing to defend, I will not take a position that is contrary to what you tell me to do, if you were to instruct Mr. Jackson, this is not what you wanted and you were not authorized, it should be dismissed immediately, lawyers are just a tool in this of what results you want, representing your interests; an anticipated amount for legal fees cannot be determined and is based upon how the lawsuit goes, the fees can be pulled out of contingency or professional services (Councilwoman Randolph) not willing to move towards anything unless the attorneys get together and a cost is determined, recommend to table this item (Mr. Daniels) we are under a timeframe of 20 days to respond, (Attorney Shepard) Attorney Jackson's assistant is trying to get an emergency hearing scheduled and a hearing could potentially be set as early as Monday. (Mayor Critton) if somebody drops off a summons at your personal residence today, the first thing you are going to do is to seek legal counsel, the suit has been filed, to do nothing will run risk of declaratory judgments being made on our behalf without having any say. (Councilman Mack) recommend er bringing Mr. Johnson back and let the CRA. (Vice Mayor Thomas) – tonight is to seek legal counsel to help in the event that a hearing is called on Monday.

Councilwoman Randolph **MOTIONS** to hire Attorney Shepard to represent the town responding the lawsuit of the CRA versus the Town; **moved** by Vice Mayor Thomas, **second** by Councilwoman Jordan. **ALL, MOTION PASSES. (4/0)** – **Note:** Councilman Mack was unable to vote by zoom; Summons was served on April 9, 2026.

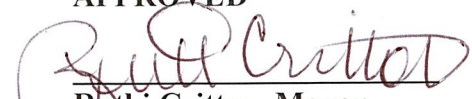
ADJOURNMENT Mayor Critton **Motions** for Adjournment of Meeting; **moved** by Vice Mayor Thomas; **second** by Councilwoman Randolph; **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES. Meeting Adjourned at 7:21pm.**

Respectfully Submitted by:

ATTEST


Veronica L. King, Town Clerk

APPROVED


Ruthi Critton, Mayor