



HISTORIC TOWN OF EATONVILLE, FLORIDA

COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, September 18, 2025, at 6:30 PM

Town Hall (Council Chambers) – 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 Board Agenda Page.*

CALL TO ORDER – Chair Angie Gardner called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL – Quorum was established through roll call by Ms. King.

PRESENT: (7) Director Donovan Williams, Director Ruthi Critton, Director Tarus Mack, Director Wanda Randolph, Director Rodney Daniels, Vice Chair Theo Washington, Chair Angie Gardner

STAFF: (4) Greg Jackson, **Attorney**; Michael Johnson, **CRA Executive Director**; Veronica King, **Town Clerk**; Officer Pooler, **EPD**

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION:

Angela Johnson (Resident) – On the budget for the upcoming fiscal year, there is a “due to” from the CRA in the town’s general fund of \$322,000. On page 10 of the audited financials for the fiscal year ending 2024, the auditors did not report a due from the general fund. The only thing that they have is the CRA owing \$7,690 to the general fund government. On page 12 of your current year’s budget, it does not include the \$322,000. During the workshop, you all stated that if it was something that the attorney advised the executive director on, they need to account for all monies that are due. If those funds were due now as well as last year, why were they not included in the budget? Before you pass your budget tonight, I would ask the executive director, what are the current salaries? And what are the projected increases in salaries? They should be reviewed to see if they are in line with the same salary increases that the town is implementing. It is my understanding that the CRA runs special events. Has the board been provided the finances behind the CRA’s events to show if there was money gained or lost? If there was a profit, where do those funds go? Are they going back into the CRA for programming or to the community?

CONSENT AGENDA:

Chair Gardner **MOTIONS** to **APPROVE** the Consent Agenda; **moved** by Director Critton, **second** by Director Mack. **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES.**

BOARD DECISIONS:

Approval of Resolution CRA-2025-36 Approval of Florida Community Loan Fund Loan Agreement & Terms for Purchase of 140 S. West St. Property – (Preamble read) Chair Gardner **MOTIONS** to **APPROVE** the Resolution CRA-2025-36; **moved** by Director Critton, **second** by Director Mack. **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES.**

Approval of Resolution CRA-2025-39 FY 2025-2026 Budget – (Preamble read)

Chair Gardner **MOTIONS** to **APPROVE** the Resolution CRA-2025-36; **moved** by Director Critton, **second** by Director Mack. **Comments/Questions:** Executive Director Michael Johnson states that they are required to advertise the proposed budget 7 days prior to approval, which has been completed. Attorney Jackson addresses the discussion during the workshop. Attorney Jackson – In regard to the CRA, since it is an independent legal entity, when you look at matters relating to the budgeted item of the “due to,” make sure to look at it from the standpoint of the agency and your role as board members for the agency, as opposed from a standpoint of what the town should do. Director Randolph asks if the salaries for the CRA are the same as last year? Executive Director Johnson – All the department directors were given a 10% increase in salaries. Instead of having two part-time positions, we combined them into one full-time position. Director Randolph – I thought the budget for the salaries was just for the town side and not the CRA? Johnson confirms that it was for the CRA too. Director Randolph states that she would like an explanation for the \$322,000 due to the CRA from the town. Executive Director Johnson – I would ask that the board allow me and the CAO to work through the logistics of that and come back with a final explanation. As far as the budget is concerned, it is an outstanding refund and we are required to report it in our budget. Director Randolph asks when does it have to be reported? Executive Director Johnson states that the time is now. Director Randolph inquiries about the concern of special events funds raised by Angela Johnson during Citizen Participation. Executive Director Johnson – I will provide event information and financials to the board.

Chair Gardner **resumes the MOTION to APPROVE; NAY:** Director Daniels, Director Randolph. **MOTION PASSES, 5/2.**

STAFF REPORTS:

Executive Director Michael Johnson – We are quickly moving through the loan process. Yesterday, the architects, engineers, environmental staff, myself, and Mr. Washington, did a walkthrough to make sure it is designed for them (Parks and Recreation). We had an excellent meeting with the CAO and one of our health foundations, and we believe that we are doing great service to our seniors.

BOARD REPORTS:

Director Randolph – I sent some photos of 550 East Kennedy Boulevard, which is the Thomas House. Last night, we talked about this particular property as far as historic preservation. The north side of the building has collapsed. I spoke to Mrs. Tiffany Simmons, who is the designated spokesperson and is authorized to take care of matters for the house. I spoke to Mr. Johnson to see whether or not we could do something to help the property from further damage. This upcoming Saturday, they will have a crew out there to do some repairs and stabilize the house. This could potentially be something that we may want to take on a temporary basis, just to try to sustain it from any further deterioration. Executive Director Johnson states that he sent Mrs. Simmons the co-compliance application, the process cannot be completed until there is a code enforcement complaint and documentation done, including a referral from the Code Enforcement Officer to the CRA. Once that happens, I am open to bringing it back to the board. Director Randolph – I believe our conversation today was that we were not aware of any known code violations. Executive Director Johnson – There have been several code violations, but I am unsure if they have been documented or not. Director Randolph states that in order for the house to comply with the CRA’s grant program, it has to be cited for code violation. Executive Director Johnson responds that as of today, ten properties were filed with code enforcement complaints and the Thomas House was one of them. Director Randolph – Mrs. Tiffany Simmons will be in attendance at the next meeting with family members who will voice their concerns as to how the CRA Board can assist.

Director Critton – Esteemed Learning is involved with the project on the Thomas House. The property is not only sentimental to Eatonville, but also the Thomas family, to whom I am related. The journey that the family

has taken to get to the point that they are now has been a long one. We know how difficult probate can be. There has been some work done in the last two years to mitigate some of the conditions that you see currently. Just so the board is aware, I do sit on the board of directors for Esteemed Learning. I did bring the information about the programs that the CRA has to offer to the board, to Mrs. Simmons and the family, so that they were aware of the resources available to them. I also advised them that those programs do have requirements that need to be met in advance. In addition, I suggested that they read those compliances and requirements to ensure that there was not a waste of time on all sides. There is active work being done to help with the condition of the house and I would like to ask for some level of grace to the family. If there are resources available, they know that I will have to recuse myself from any votes on the CRA side. There are also other partners and organizations that have been aware of the situation, and they are active initiatives happening.

Vice Chair Washington – We definitely need volunteers to assist on the Thomas House project. There needs to be funds for the family, and I think before we tried to assist the Thomas House years ago, but they need to take care of some things before they bring them to the board. Hopefully, we can get it fixed up because it is difficult to look at.

Chair Gardner – I also spoke with Tiffany Simmons and Ms. Irby and at the time, it was a small business in the town and they were looking for a project. **Director Critton** – There were some projects that were being talked about for town rehabilitation, and we expressed interest in the Thomas House. We wanted to clean some things up internally and make sure that the property was not an owner-occupied dwelling. Many residents in Eatonville would like to see the Thomas House renovated and used. **Chair Gardner** – I believe that the house needs to be restored. I would also like to see St. Lawrence Church receive a grant to restore their property. Also, if there are code violations then it should first go to those persons that are living in the home that need those resources. **Director Critton** – Mr. Johnson invited me to the Main Street Conference in Jacksonville, so the Department of Historical Resources has been a resource that we have been looking at, as well as the Historic African American Churches grant. If you are aware of any resources, I am sure that the family and Esteemed Learning would be more than happy to take advantage of them.

ADJOURNMENT Chair Gardner **MOTIONS** for Adjournment of Meeting (**MOVED** by Director Critton; **SECOND** by Vice Chair Washington; **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES.**) **Meeting Adjourned at 6:54 P.M.**

Respectfully Submitted by:

Veronica King

Veronica L King, Town Clerk



APPROVED

Signed by:

Angie Gardner

Angie Gardner, Chair