



HISTORIC TOWN OF EATONVILLE, FLORIDA SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, March 31, 2026, at 5:30 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 5:30 p.m. and a quorum was established by Mrs. King.

PRESENT: (4) Mayor Ruthi Critton, Councilman Tarus Mack, Councilwoman LaDwyana Jordan (Arrived after roll call), Councilwoman Angela Thomas

STAFF: (5) Marlin Daniels, **Chief Administrator Officer;** Veronica King, **Town Clerk;** Marissa Bellenger, **Records Coordinator;** Clifford Shepard, **Town Attorney;** Detective Frazier, **EPD**

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION – (3)

Zari St. Jean – Spoke on the internal structure of how this town actually functions day-to-day. This council sits in elected seats, and you were chosen by the people of Eatonville, and you answer to them. With this new era of leadership, it cannot be assumed the people filling these roles are aligned with the direction this community has chosen. The greatest threat to any new administration is not opposition from the outside. It's hired staff and appointed bodies who outlast the elected officials they were supposed to serve, carrying forward old habits and old allegiances into a new season of the people did not vote for. formally request that every non-elected employee, every appointed position on every board serving this town be required to reapply and reorganize. Our boards must be reconstituted with fresh eyes, clear mandates, and direct accountability to the vision Madam Mayor Critten was elected to carry out. Stagnation at the staff and board level is how a new mayor's vision dies quietly in the hallways before it ever reaches the people; the exit on I-4 reads Historic Eatonville District, we are not a district, but a 139-year-old incorporated and self-governing town founded by Black people that were freed from slavery. Our staff, our boards, and our important bodies must be committed to keeping it exactly that. A new mayor with an old structure is just a new face with the same result. Reapplication, reorganization, realignment. Eatonville deserves nothing less.

Ryan Novak – Raised concern with the name of persons being considered for seat five were not in that packet, what the urgency, why residents were not given information about who would represent them for two years on this council, tonight packet still has a blank line, this is not a procedural technicality, a council member at the last meeting acknowledged that withholding a nominee's name until the night of a vote is whatever someone's strategy may be, this appointment is not about leadership, it sounds like politics over people, there was a question raised about whether a state statute could allow a two-one minimum quorum to override the charter's requirements, the charter does control and indicates an affirmative three votes requirement. This community deserves better than the bare minimum. It deserves a process where residents know who is being considered before a vote is called, it deserves council members who ask how to lead, not how to work around rules. The charter gives you until April 17th, there is no emergency, no special needs. Let the record reflect-

that residents were given no advance information about the appointee, that at least one council member publicly explored whether the charter's voting requirements could be circumvented before this vote was taken.

Joyce Irby – An emergency meeting was called to circumvent, undermine, to disavow the voters who voted new people in, the special meeting was with former council members to secure something that you wanted, this is a violation of your oath, there is no reason to call a vote with the old council, (members) except that you think whatever you are voting for cannot pass before they are sworn in, then argue about when your resignation takes place, I suggested to Mayor Critten that she consider appointing Ms. Randolph until you came in to undermine her with that vote.

BOARD DECISION: **NOTE: Agenda item were rearranged from the original agenda

COMMENTS: Mayor Critton gave background information to the walk on item, there were adjustments made on the town side to the bank accounts for signatures, need to ensure the same on the CRA side so that agency can handle invoices and operations,

1. (Was previously item #2) Appointments of the TOECRA Chair By Resolution 2026-19 (Preamble Read as amended) Mayor Critton nominates the mayor (self) as the chair of the TOCRA board. Mayor Critton **motion** to **APPOINT** the mayor (self, Ruthi Critton) as the chair of the TOCRA board; **Moved by** Councilman Mack; **Second by** Councilwoman Thomas; **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES. (4/0)**
2. **(WALK- ON)** Approval of Resolution 2026-21 changing the signature requirements for check signatures on the TOCRA bank account with TD Bank as a result of the March 7th, 2026, general election for seats one, two, and three. (Preamble Read) Mayor Critton **motion** to **APPROVAL** of Resolution 2026-21 changing the signature requirements for check signatures on the TOCRA bank account with TD Bank as a result of the March 7th, 2026, general election for seats one, two, and three; **Moved by** Councilman Mack; **Second by** Councilwoman Thomas; **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES. (4/0)**
3. (Was previously item #1) Appointment for Town Council Seat #5 By Resolution 2026-16 (Preamble Read)
Councilwoman Jordan - requested for explanation on a special election before nominations are made (Response from attorney: the charter requires an appointment of a successor within 30 days, if and appointment cannot be reached then a special election happens automatically, the timing is between the administration and the supervisor of elections, the approximate cost is \$11,000, if early voting is decided to happen the cost would go up, a special election must be held within 90 days after such vacancy occurs. which would be 60 days after the 30 days required for appointment. After the 30 days and there is no appointment, there is another 60 days to hold the special election, will be a two year term (remaining of vacated term). Councilman Mack – believes every candidate is duly qualified to serve in any capacity required, there is nothing in the charter or Florida statute that requires letting the public know candidate selections, if there are concerns, I feel to call or send email. Attorney Shepard - there is no requirement under Florida statute that has a specific path to follow on how to fill a vacant seat under your charter, everything from that standpoint is a matter of the choice of the body (town council). Town Clerk: Copies of two emails for recommendation has been provided to town council; the charter language from 2016 is the same as the existing charter.

NOMINEES:

- Mayor Critton **motion** to **APPOINT** Dwayne Rackard; **MOTION DIES FOR LACK OF SECOND**
- Councilman Mack **motion** to **APPOINT** Theo Washington; **MOTION DIES FOR LACK OF SECOND**
- Councilwoman Jordan **motion** to **APPOINT** Wanda Randolph; moved by Councilman Mack, second by Councilwoman Thomas; **YAY: Councilman Tarus Mack, Councilwoman LaDwyana Jordan,**

Councilwoman Angela Thomas **NAY**: Mayor Ruthi Critton, **MOTION PASSES, 3/1.**

OATH OF OFFICE – Wanda Randolph was sworn into her appointment to council seat five by the town clerk, with applaud from the council and attendees. Councilwoman Randolph took her seat on the Dias, pictures were taken with the town council.

STAFF COMMENTS: No Reports

MAYOR/COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Councilwoman Randolph – Expressed her happiness about the appointment of seat #5, will continue to work for the residents and seniors, will do a great job and will do a good job, thanks to the council for their confidence and for all that is done in helping to stay above what is needed in Eatonville; have worked the last four years side by side with Councilman Theodore Washington, he deserves to have an applause, he served as vice mayor; inquired about the opening for vice mayor, it will be on the next meeting, wanted to fill seat five first so all council members can weigh in that decision.

Councilman Mack – Thanked Ms. Randolph for her leadership and how she serves the community, it is not always easy, all was qualified but only choice could be made, made a decision to also save the town \$11,000, congratulations to Ms. Wanda (Randolph).

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS:

All actions for the approval of Resolution 2026-21 changing the signature requirements for check signatures on the TOCRA bank account with TD Bank as a result of the March 7th, 2026, general election for seats one, two, and three was **RESCINDED**. amend resolution 2026-21 to add the newly appointed Councilwoman Randolph to the check signers list. On the TOCRA. Mayor Critton **motion** to **APPROVAL** of Resolution 2026-21 with amendments (adding Councilwoman Wanda Randolph to the signers list) changing the signature requirements for check signatures on the TOCRA bank account with TD Bank as a result of the March 7th, 2026, general election for seats one, two, and three; **Moved by** Councilwoman Thomas; **Second by** Councilman Mack; **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES. (5/0) Comments:** Will do the same thing on the town side at the next meeting. Councilwoman Randolph participated in the vote for this item.

ADJOURNMENT Mayor Critton Motions for Adjournment of Meeting; **Moved by** Councilwoman Thomas; **Second by** Councilman Mack; **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES. (5/0) Meeting Adjourned at 6:08pm.**

Respectfully Submitted

ATTEST



Signed by:

Veronica King

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Veronica L King, Town Clerk

APPROVED

Signed by:

Ruthi Critton

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Ruthi Critton, Mayor