

MINUTES
REGULAR MONTHLY COUNCIL MEETING
Town of Penney Farms, Florida
Tuesday – February 18, 2020

Anyone wishing to address the Council regarding topics on the Agenda are asked to fill out a request form. Present it to the Town Clerk prior to the meeting. The Town Clerk will allow a three minute time limit to speak, unless other arrangements have been made. Request forms are available at the sign in podium or at the Town Clerks' desk.

Abbreviations:

***CM- Council Member *TA- Town Attorney *TC- Town Clerk *TM- Town Manager *VM- Vice-Mayor**

OPEN REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING: 7:00PM

Mayor Sabin invited Mackenna Mack, honorary Mayor's Assistant, to open the meeting by banging the gavel.

FLAG SALUTE: *Mayor Sabin*

MOMENT OF SILENCE: *Mayor Sabin*

APPROVE THE AGENDA:

Motion to approve the Agenda with the addition of a Recognition by CM Ryder; second by CM DeVille.

Motion approved without dissent.

ROLL CALL: Mayor Sabin; Vice-Mayor Ryder; Council Member Andrews; Council Member Taylor; Council Member DeVille; Town Manager Cooper

ABSENT: Town Attorney Quinonez

RECOGNITION(S):

Special Guest, Michelle Cook- introduced herself as a candidate for Sheriff of Clay County. She stated she grew up in Clay County, and her father was in the Navy. She commented to those that grew up out here, her high school boyfriend still lives across the street. She went into law enforcement with Jacksonville Sheriff's Office (JSO) in 1992 and worked her way up through the ranks under 4 different Sherriff's, and retired as the number 3, Director of Operations, where she had over 1,000 officers, a million dollar budget, several thousand civilians, a thousand special events a year under her command. She stated she tried to come back to Clay County in Green Cove Springs, but they had already given the job to someone else before she inquired. She was offered and accepted the Chief of Police position for the City of Atlantic Beach for the last two years. She stated under her command, the City of Atlantic Beach saw reduction of crime, improved response time, better morale, and better benefits for the officers. She commented that she is fiscally conservative and knows how to run an agency. She is ready to come back home to Clay County and is running for Sheriff. She directed the audience to the petitions to get her on the ballot.

Audience Member, Tony Saunders- stated the reason he came to address the Council is last year the Town talked about the Taxes for the Town of Penney Farms. As far as he knew the taxes were going to be tabled. He stated that they had no idea that the taxes were going to be initiated until his father got his tax bill. He asked the Council why there was such a drastic tax and how they came up with the 5% tax? He stated the Town of Penney Farms is number 2 in the county, just under Orange Park. Green Cove Springs and Keystone Heights are lower than Penney Farms. He asked how the Council came to that and why the people were not notified?

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Mayor Sabin- asked the Town Clerk to speak to the issue of notification and was directed to the Town Manager.

TM Cooper- stated there was notification in the public newspaper. He commented that there is a legal process when implementing the Ad Valorem tax that the Town has to abide by.

Audience Member, Tony Saunders- stated that was not a good idea because no one gets the paper anymore, everyone has phones and computers. He stated last time he came to a Council meeting he listed his email address in hopes of acquiring information that way but he never got an email. He stated his father and mother were on a fixed income at 90 and 91 years old and now they will have about \$250.00 added to their taxes. He commented he thinks it is inconsiderate of the Council to do this without notifying the people. He stated he can see going up a little bit at a time but 5% is pretty fast.

Mayor Sabin- thanked Mr. Saunders for addressing his concerns and stated that the Council will be reviewing the budget process soon and will take his comments under advisement.

Mayor Sabin- invited Mr. Chick DeMedici to address the Council.

Resident, Chick DeMedici- stated he just built a new house on Etheleen Court. He stated he has been in Penney Farms for three years and in Green Cove Springs for twenty. He elaborated on Mr. Saunders comments about the Ad Valorem tax. He commented that he has spoken with Mrs. Anita several times regarding the tax and has done a bit of research. He stated, for the residents, the tax seemed "all of a sudden". He presented the information he had gathered as follows; there are 8 tax districts in Clay County. The millage rates range from 15.38 to 20.27 and so on. The Town of Penney Farms tax district is number 5, and the highest, which is 20.2784. 5 points of that are from the Ad Valorem tax. The Ad Valorem can go from 0-10 mills and the Town decided to go right down the middle. He stated he is paying more taxes on his house on Etheleen Court than he would be if he was on the river in Orange Park or Green Cove Springs. Orange Park has a 5.8 and some change for their assessment, but they get fire and police. Fire and Police is 2.75. He stated he loves Penney Farms, he loves the small town feel of it. He commented he just built a house, and when you do permitting in the Town you pay a little more because the Town has to make some money. He stated some things you have to pay a little more for, which he didn't agree with, but you just have to do it. This 5 mill, in his opinion, is excessive. He knows the roads take a lot of money to fix and maintain, but for him as a member of the Town paying the tax, the residents of Etheleen Court just paid out of their pockets for millings for their road. He stated he doesn't mind paying a little bit but for the services offered, he believes Penney Farms should not be the highest.

Mayor Sabin- thanked Mr. DeMedici for his comments.

CM Andrews- asked to address the candidate for Sherriff, Michelle Cook. He asked her if she is the successful candidate for Sherriff, what would she do different to interact with a small town as far as crime?

Special Guest, Michelle Cook- stated that was a great question. She answered saying she grew up out here, and she understands small towns. She was Chief of Police in Atlantic Beach, which is again a small town. She stated she understands policing in a small town versus a big city. Small towns are relationships, time, investments and coming to meetings like this, or coming to have lunch. She stated that is her style and what she is comfortable with. It would be the leadership change that would be seen right off the bat, the understanding and appreciation for what small towns are. She commented that she gets it, and that is a short answer to a very long question.

CM Andrews- stated the reason he asked is the last candidate for Sherriff came out to the Town for the vote and then wasn't seen again.

Special Guest, Michelle Cook- stated that is the reason she is running. She does not agree with the current leadership style, or the conflicts with ethics. She left her post at Atlantic Beach two weeks ago. Walking away from a great job to come home and serve her county means the most to her. She stated all of her family is in Clay County. She

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stated she lives across the bridge in St. Johns County currently and the only reason she has not already moved to Clay County is that she has 4 foster kids she just adopted and she doesn't want to just pull them out of school and move them in the middle of the school year.

Resident, Chick DeMedici- commented that he had worked at the Sherriff's Office at the same time as Mrs. Cook did back in 1999, and he currently works for the Fire Department. He stated she has been coming up the ranks and they have friends in common. In all of the years he has been with the Sherriff's Office or the Fire Department with the city, he has heard nothing but great things about Mrs. Cook.

PROCLAMATION(S): NONE

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- Regular Town Council Meeting Minutes – January 21, 2020

A motion to approve the regular Town Council Meeting Minutes dated January 20, 2020 by VM Ryder; second by CM Andrews. Motion approved without dissent.

RESOLUTION(S): NONE

ORDINANCE(S): NONE

TOWN MANAGER REPORT: Town Manager

- A Review of the January 2020 Town Manager Report

During the first week of this month, a notice was hand delivered to the residents asking for their input on the capital projects to be approved for the Town.

Dyana Stewart with the Florida Rural Water Association (FRWA) came to the Town for a few days to discuss and input information for the Water Utility Revenue Plan, which takes place of the rate study that the Town does every two years. This is done to ensure the Town's Water Utility is operating financially sound and is prepared to maintain its future infrastructure efficiently.

I am still in the process of hiring a public works technician and have had little response for the position.

In the middle of the month, the Town had switched onto the Penney Retirement Community's (PRC's) water to clean out our water tower and fix the floats inside of the tank.

At the end of the month, PRC was on Town water when they replaced a valve on their water tank.

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has completed cleaning out all of the ditches and storm water drains along State Road 16, throughout the Town limits.

A representative from Lowe's came to the Town and they are looking forward to helping the Town in renovating the Town Museum. I should have a better idea of their commitment and what that entails by the end of February.

I attended the Gold Seal Award presentation at PRC, the monthly City Manager's meeting, as well as all of the required Town meetings scheduled for the month of January.

A motion to approve the Town Manager Report for January 2020 by CM DeVille; second by CM Taylor. Motion approved without dissent.

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TREASURERS REPORT: Town Manager

Review the January 2020 Treasurer’s Report:

- General Fund – 01/01/20 - 01/31/20
- Utility Enterprise Fund – 01/01/20 - 01/31/20
- Wastewater/Sewer Fund – 01/01/20 - 01/31/20
- Balances of other accounts reviewed – 01/01/20 - 01/31/20

*A motion to approve the Treasurer’s Report for January 2020 by VM Ryder ; second by CM Andrews.
Motion approved without dissent.*

CONSENT AGENDA:

All matters under the Consent Agenda are routine and will be enacted by one motion and vote. Backup documents and staff recommendations have previously been submitted to the Town Council and will not be discussed unless an item is removed from the Consent Agenda and considered separately under “New Business”.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES/DEPARTMENTS: (All Pulled Reports will be considered under New Business)

- | | | | | | |
|------------|----------------------|-------------|-------------------|--------------|-------------|
| 1. Finance | 2. Public Works | 3. CDR | 4. Human Resource | 5. Utilities | 6. Building |
| 7. Grants | 8. Planning & Zoning | 9. Security | 10. Legal | | |

*A motion to accept the Consent Agenda withholding report #3- CDR, by VM Ryder; second by CM DeVille.
Motion approved without dissent.*

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: NONE

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Pulled Reports

#3- CDR

CM Taylor- stated she wanted everyone to know that the CDR Committee is already hard at work on "Old Fashioned Farm Day" which will be on April 18, 2020. She commented it will be a beautiful sunny day. She encouraged everyone to help out by finding vendors and ideas for activities for the event.

2. Items not on the Agenda: NONE

3. Public Participation:

Resident, Cathie Parrott- stated the Historic Society is having John Bowles, portraying J.C. Penney, on Thursday, February 20, 2020. She invited all to attend and stated it was going to be a great time. She also commented that she works with Scenic Highway, trying to keep the trees along the road upstanding. She informed the room that they are going to be having a Pancake Breakfast on Saturday, February 22, 2020, down in Kohler Park. Tickets are \$10.00 each for all you can eat, from 9AM to 11AM.

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Resident, Gerilynn Barton- stated in reference to the Barton sewer problem, when the Town put in Hoffman Street and did the curbing, they crushed her sewer pipe. She commented that all of these years, that was what caused her sewer problem. She stated she has a high bill and wanted to ask the Council if she could have some assistance with it. She stated the plumber worked diligently and found out it was not grease in the pipes, that it was actually a crushed pipe. The plumber had to go under Hoffman and replace the pipe with all new PVC. Her bill is \$1,100.00, and she would like the Town to help with it.

Mayor Sabin- thanked Ms. Barton for addressing the Council and stated the Council would take her request under advisement.

Resident, Rick Hawn- stated he has lived here a couple years now, he runs the horse stable on Kentucky Avenue. He stated he is also retired from law enforcement and would be happy to talk to Candidate Cook. He commented that he agrees with the other audience members about the Ad Valorem tax. He stated it is a big jump. He doesn't know all of the processes, with the newspapers and advertising, but he noticed in the Town Managers Report that notices were hand delivered about something. He asked, if the taxes were going to jump that much all at once, wouldn't it have been something that should have also been hand delivered with notices?

Resident, Rosemary Gilson- informed the Council and Audience, that on Saturday, March 7, 2020, the annual CROP Walk will be held in the Town of Penney Farms, starting at Barrows Hall at 8AM. It is a two mile walk that goes throughout Penney Farms. It is a fundraiser for an interdenominational Christian organization called Church World Service. CROP stands for Christian Rural Overseas Program and began after the second World War in order to help some of the devastated countries in Europe. It is designated now to provide food in areas of the world that struggle with famine. The reason Penney Memorial Church partners with the Town and other local churches such as New Hope Baptist and Pier Station, is because 25%, or 1/4, of the funds raised comes back to this Community. In years past lunches were provided to the summer program that was run by the New Hope Church. More recently the funds were given to the Green Cove Springs food pantry which serves a much wider need for food in our community. She stated last year over \$11,000.00 was raised and 1/4 of that came back to these needs in our area, and this was much appreciated by the Green Cove Springs food pantry. She encouraged any and all people to walk, or pledge money to others that walk, to contribute somehow to this annual event. March 7th is coming up and it would be great to see everyone there. Coffee and donuts will be provided before you start walking.

4. Other:

TOWN CLERK:

TC Cooper- stated there is a Town Council Workshop on Friday, February 21, 2020 at 9AM. She commented that there are also some notices up on the bulletin boards around Town, there is a new Republican Candidate, David Theus, running for Congress and he is doing a meet and greet on Tuesday, February 25, 2020 from 9AM- 11AM. Marco Rubio is holding mobile office hours at Town Hall on Thursday, February 27, 2020. The Clay County Fair is around the corner and the Town is a ticket outlet. They are discounted if you get them early, adults are \$7.00, seniors are \$5.00, and armbands are \$17.00. Children 5 and under are free.

Resident, Howard Davidson- asked what the subject matter of the Town Council Workshop would be?

TC Cooper- stated there are several items on the agenda, including an Ordinance for the Town of Penney Farms to become a Tree City USA Community, Resolutions restating and updating the Water/ Wastewater Utility Asset Management Plan with the words "billed in arrears", a Resolution for an updated "Bad/Dishonored Check Policy" for the Town, a Resolution for new "Special Pick-Up" fees, and also a Resolution identifying support of the Clay County Agricultural Fair. These items will all be voted on in the March Town Council meeting, so they will be discussing them in the Workshop. The Council will also be discussing budgeting, revising and reviewing

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the Capital Projects list. There were several responses and suggestions for the Capital Projects list from residents.

Mayor Sabin- stated if anyone can possibly attend the workshop, this is the Council's opportunity to talk amongst themselves and discuss Town business. The Sunshine Law prohibits the Council from discussing Town business outside of the meetings and workshops. He stated one of the things that will be reviewed is the input from Public Works and Water Utility Committee and what to spend during the current fiscal year with the Town's revenues. This is an opportunity to see the Council in action. His goal is to see that these decisions get made this year, and get the money out and contracts started and do some things with the income the Town has received this year. Notwithstanding the feedback received tonight which will be taken under advisement. The Council will not be voting Friday, only discussing it with each other. These things will be brought to the March meeting at 7:00PM and he encouraged everyone to follow what was being done and provide feedback. He asked everyone to attend the March meeting where they will hopefully be approving the expenditures.

VM Ryder- reminded the audience that there are bulletin boards around the Town and everything is posted.

TC Cooper- stated as long as people sign in and list their email addresses on the sign in sheet, it will be added to the resident email list and monthly emails are sent out. She also commented that with an Ordinance there will be two public hearings prior to passing the Ordinance.

CM Andrews- asked about giving John Bowles a Key to the City for the Town?

TC Cooper- stated that the Key to the City is on the agenda for the workshop.

CM Taylor- asked for clarification, the March meeting is the one that is on a Wednesday rather than the normal Tuesday?

TC Cooper- stated yes, the March meeting was originally scheduled for Tuesday, March 17, 2020, but has been moved to Wednesday, March 18, 2020 due to the Primary Election being held at Town Hall. There is a bright orange notice stating the change on the bulletin boards and it will also be emailed out in the monthly emails.

CM DeVille- congratulated the Board of County Commissioners for their announcement that they brought a National Bike Race to Clay County, and the Town of Penney Farms will be the center hub for these races. These races are a big deal. The Board of County Commissioners stepped up with the Tourism Department to bring a National Race here.

Resident, Cathie Parrott- stated that Penney Farms was on the news.

Mayor Sabin- stated the Town of Penney Farms will not be the best kept secret for much longer with the National attention from the National media that will be present. He commented that there will be plenty of notice for the residents to get out of Town for the time or to be present for the race.

Mayor Sabin- recognized Kurt Legait's birthday this week and the audience sang happy birthday to him.

TC Cooper- announced if anyone is looking for Girl Scout Cookies to see Mrs. Indie Brooks.

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CORRESPONDENCE: (Location of items – Listed)

January 2020:

1. Copy of Finance Committee meeting minutes dated 01/21/20 – Finance Section
2. Copy of Past Due Water Accounts (January 2020) – Utilities Section
3. Copy of Community Development & Recreation Committee (CDR) minutes dated 12/03/19 and 01/14/20 – CDR Section
4. Copy of letter from Town's Workers Compensation Attorney dated 01/8/20 – Human Resources Section
5. Copy of the Water Utility Committee meeting minutes dated 01/16/20 – Utility Section
6. Copy of Past Due Accounts for January 2020 – Utility Section
7. Copy of Planning & Zoning Commission meeting notice dated for 01/22/20 – P & Z Section
8. Copy of mowing invoice to Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) dated 010720 – Correspondence Section
9. Copy of FDOT Road Report for Clay County – Correspondence Section
10. Copy of letter to Association of Penney Retirement Community Residents dated 01/13/20 – Correspondence Section
11. Copy of letter to Penney Retirement Community (PRC) dated 01/13/20 – Correspondence Section
12. Copy of the dinner meeting notice for the Northeast League of Cities dated 01/16/20 – Correspondence Section
13. Copy of the Oath of Office for the current Mayor dated 01/21/20 – Correspondence Section
14. Copy of the Oath of Office for the current Vice-Mayor dated 01/21/20 – Correspondence Section
15. Copy of letter from PRC dated 01/20/20 – Correspondence Section
16. Copy of letter to resident, Richard Hawn dated 01/27/20 – Correspondence Section
17. Copy of Notice the Town Hall Office closed 01/01/2020 for New Year's Day – Miscellaneous Section
18. Copy of Notice to all Town residents for Capital Project input date 01/07/20 – Miscellaneous Section
19. Copy of Notice for the Historical Society meeting dated 01/16/20 – Miscellaneous Section
20. Copy of Notice the Town Hall Office closed 01/20/20 for Martin Luther King Jr. Day – Miscellaneous Section
21. Copy of Notice the March Town Council meeting date change posted 01/29/20 – Miscellaneous Section

A Motion to adjourn the meeting by VM Ryder; second by CM Taylor. Motion approved without dissent.

Mayor Sabin invited Mackenna Mack to close the meeting by banging the gavel.

Next Council Meeting, January 21, 2020 at 7:00 PM.

SEAL

Mayor, Paul E. Sabin, Presiding

ATTEST:

Anita E. Cooper, Town Clerk

ALL INDICATIONS OF ATTACHMENTS TO THE MINUTES ARE ON RECORD IN THE OFFICIAL MINUTES BOOK, OR ON FILE AT THE TOWN HALL. TOWN COUNCIL MEMBERS RECEIVED COPIES OF THE ATTACHMENTS PRIOR TO OR AT THE TIME OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING. A RECORDING WAS MADE OF THESE PROCEEDINGS AND IS ON FILE AT THE TOWN HALL.