


**MEETING MINUTES FOR THE WORK SESSION
OF THE THATCHER TOWN COUNCIL
APRIL 1, 2024**

Councilmembers present: Mayor Bryce, Vice Mayor Howard, Councilwoman Smith, Councilman Welker, Councilman Vining, Councilman Carlton, Councilman McEuen

Staff present: Town Manager Heath Brown, Town Engineer Tom Palmer, Police Chief Glen Orr, Fire Chief Steve Curtis, Assistant Fire Chief Josh Curtis, Deputy Town Clerk Annie Reidhead

Visitors: None

Welcome and Call Meeting to Order at 6:00 p.m. by Mayor Bryce and he stated that this is a public meeting of the Thatcher Town Council. He stated that we do have a quorum.

Pledge of Allegiance led by Mayor Bryce.

1. **OPEN CALL TO THE PUBLIC:** None
2. **NEW BUSINESS:** Discussion, consideration, and possible action

A. Crack Sealer Bid Approval

Mr. Brown presented the bid from Crafcoc for a Crack Sealer machine in the amount of \$104,144.66. The Crack Sealer was originally budgeted for \$75,000 in fiscal year 2023/2024. The bid contains some additions that include a track auto loader. Mr. Brown explained that monies from contingency would have to be moved to cover the cost of the machine.

Councilmember Welker made a motion to move \$31,000 from contingency to the Machinery Line Item under the Streets Department where it was originally budgeted for \$75,000 to approve the purchase of \$104,144.66 from Crafcoc and seconded by Vice Mayor Howard. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Check Signing Approval – Glen Orr replacing Shaffen Woods

Mr. Brown explained in efforts to have Police Chief Glen Orr as a check signer on our local National Bank account the bank is now requiring meeting minutes to replace and/or change check signers. The Town will need to replace retired Police Chief Shaffen Woods with current Police Chief Glen Orr.

Councilmember Carlton made a motion to approve Glen Orr replacing Shaffen Woods as a check signer for the Town of Thatcher National Bank Account and seconded by Vice Mayor Howard. Motion carried unanimously.

3. **BUDGET WORK SESSION:** Discussion and consideration

A. **Purchases/Projects to Consider for Upcoming Fiscal Year**

Mr. Brown stated that he will be discussing the following list with the Council for consideration of purchases and projects. The list contains the total amount of purchases and projects with amounts of additional revenue for the year, the one-time purchases, and the total available funds.

Mr. Brown stated that Fire Chief Curtis along with Assistant Fire Chief Josh Curtis were present and would like to start the presentation with them. He referred to the equipment list provided in the packet.

E. Fire Department Equipment - \$295,000

Fire Chief Curtis explained each line item on the equipment list provided in the packet. Chief Curtis stated that he spoke to Central Fire Heights District about contributing monies towards the wildland truck. He stated that they are working on receiving quotes on the last two items on the list, remodel station and wildland building.

Equipment Needs for Thatcher Fire Department 2024/2025

Items Needed	Quantity	Cost	Total	Reason	Priority
Multigas Detector	1	\$5,800	\$5,800	Need 1 more gas detector for E9	High
Wildland Turnouts	35	\$1,000	\$35,000	Currently fight brushfires in structure gear	High
Turnouts	11	\$3,500	\$38,500	3 rd Set, as part of the Cancer Prevention Program	High
Wildland Truck	1	\$350,000	\$350,000	Humvee too small, needed to haul tools & water	High
Thermal Imaging Camera	1	\$4,500	\$4,500	Only have 1, each truck needs one	Low
Christmas Cheer	1	\$5,000	\$5,000	Gifts and meals deliver to needy families	Low
Remodel Station	1			New flooring, paint, and updating	Low
Wildland Building	1			Building to store wildland gear, vehicles, tools	Low

Total \$438,800

District Portion \$146,252

Town Portion \$292,548

The Council agreed to fund the Fire Department \$100,000 for the 2024/2025 fiscal year. They advised that Fire Department Staff research grants for some of the budget items. The Council agreed to raise contingency by \$100,000 for adjustment depending on what funds may be generated through grants.

Mr. Brown stated that he would like to present a list of the current projects before proceeding with the budget considerations which may assist with the budget process. He presented the project list to the Council that was included in the packet and discussed the projects with the timeframes.

CURRENT PROJECT LIST:

Allred Lane	2 Months
Red Lamp	4 Months
Street Power & Irrigation Relocations	3 Months
1 st Avenue Widening	5 Months
Shop Lean-to	½ Month
Incinerator Installation	½ Month
8 th Street Re-Alignment	3 Months
Porter Lane Drainage Improvements	3 Months
Ball Field / Cemetery Slope Project	4 Months
Recreation Complex	
Pickleball Courts	1 Month
Playground Area	1 ½ Months
Gazebo's	1 Month
Baseball Field Features	1 Mo
Amphitheater	4 Months
TOTAL:	33+ Months

A. Employee Raises – 3.5% Merit / 3.5% COLA - \$149,400

Mr. Brown referred to the spreadsheet included in the packet that compares tax revenues, employee merit increases, and employee salaries over the last 7 years. The Council discussed that the list provided should not be used to determine the COLA and merit raises. They advised Staff to review current market salaries, our job descriptions, and pay structure to develop an analysis that will assist in decision making for COLA and merit raises each year. Discussion of the continuation of employees receiving healthy raises each year cannot be justified without having better information.

The Council agreed on the amount of \$150,000, the majority to be used for merit and market increases and the remainder for COLA. They advised Staff to develop a strategic plan on the percentages of merit raises using employee longevity, potential, years of experience, risk of leaving, and market adjustments.

B. A/C Units at Gila Outdoor - \$50,000

Mr. Brown stated that he met with the owners of Gila Outdoor earlier this year to discuss the rental rate and the maintenance of the building. It was agreed that the monthly rental rate would increase from \$2,600 to \$3,800 and with that the Town would replace the interior lighting with LED lighting and replace the A/C units. The LED lighting has already been completed.

The Council directed Staff to move forward with the replacing of the A/C units at Gila Outdoor for an approximate amount of \$50,000.

- C. Scoreboards at Ballpark - \$20,000
Mr. Brown explained that the Thatcher Middle School softball teams are using two of our baseball fields for their games. The scoreboards would be purchased and installed for these fields. Staff mentioned they would search for sponsorships from local businesses.
The Council directed Staff to purchase and install the scoreboards for an approximate amount of \$20,000.
- D. Gator for Parks Department - \$10,000
Mr. Brown stated that the Parks Department currently has one Gator and is in high demand. It would benefit the Parks Department if a second one was purchased. The idea would be to leave one locked in the park storage and float the other one amongst projects.
The Council directed Staff to purchase a new Gator for the Parks Department in the approximate amount of \$10,000.
- F. Police Department Requests - \$35,000
Mr. Brown referred to Chief Orr. Chief Orr discussed the list provided in the packet for the 2024/2025 Police Department budget items.
- Lieutenant Position Promotion
\$15,000 Salary/ERE
 - Recruit (s) to Academy.
Academy Cost, Room & Board, Meals - \$20,000 per Recruit
Potentially hire two recruits until Sergeant Cauthen retires – Overlap cost \$125,000 (one time cost)
 - Additional Permanent Officer Position (Recruit)
Salary, Equipment, Training, and Supplies - \$150,000
- The Council directed Staff to move forward with the items on the Police Department Requests in the approximate amount of \$35,000 implementing a contract for the Police Recruit position.
- G. Golf Course Bottle Dispenser's - \$21,000
Mr. Brown stated that this item was discussed in October's Work Session meeting along with labor assistance on the cart paths and entrance hardscape. He explained that the installing of the bottle dispensers would be an inexpensive and efficient project.
The Council directed Staff to move forward with the purchase and installation of the Golf Course Bottle Dispenser's at approximately \$21,000.
- H. Employee Life Insurance - \$3,000
Mr. Brown stated that this item was also discussed in October's Work Session meeting. The policy would provide a \$25,000 Life Insurance policy to each full-time employee. The cost would be \$5.50 per month per employee, which would be 40 full-time employees x \$5.50 = \$220 month.
The Council agreed to move forward with adding the Employee Life Insurance benefit to full-time employees for an approximate amount of \$3,000.
- I. Dual EV Charging Station - \$85,000
It was unanimous amongst Council and Staff to table this item for a later date.
- J. Permanent Electrician Assistant - \$48,400 + \$30,000 = \$78,400
Mr. Brown asked the Council to consider adding a Permanent Electrician Assistant to the Electric Department due to the workload. Shawn Turley, Municipal Electrician, is continuing to borrow employees from other departments to get the work completed. This position would be a Maintenance Worker I type. We currently have a Part Time Electric Meter Reader that reads meters. Adding this position would eliminate the part-time position which would decrease the amount that is being asked for.
The Council agreed to add a Permanent Electrician Assistant position and eliminate the Part Time Meter Reader position which would decrease the budgeted amount by \$21,000. The budgeted amount for the addition of this position would be \$53,000.
- K. Creation of Lieutenant Position - \$15,000
This budget item was included in budget item F. Police Department Requests and should not have been its own budget line item.

- L. Shoe Allowance - 16 @ \$200 = \$3,200
Mr. Brown stated that he is part of an email group for Arizona City and Town Managers. One of the emails that was sent out recently was regarding what amount Cities and Towns give their Public Works employees for shoe/boot allowances. He stated that most of the Cities and Towns do give the employees this allowance and would like it to be considered for our Public Work employees. The Council agreed to move forward with adding the Shoe Allowance benefit for full-time Public Work employees to the approximate amount of \$3,200 and to develop a Show/Boot Allowance policy to be put in place, which may include a requirement of steel toe boots, before implementing.
- M. ROW (Right of Way) Purchases - \$250,000
Mr. Brown explained that we have Right of Way purchases that need to be made for the east side of the highway for Thatcher Plaza. Currently we have the Right of Way for the west side of the highway. He stated that there is a grant in place for the design from Quail Ridge to Eagle Drive that we do not have the Right of Way for. He also mentioned the Right of Ways that are still needed for 1st Avenue. The Council directed Staff to move forward with the \$250,000 Right of Way Purchases.
- N. Pavement Preservation (Over HURF) \$660,000
Mr. Brown discussed the projects of pavement preservation and fog and chip sealing which had been previously discussed in other Council meetings with the Streets Department 5-year plan. This upcoming fiscal year Staff would like to focus on the Pavement Preservation Project which funds would need to be added over what we are receiving through HURF. The Council agreed on the amount of \$660,00, over the HURF amount, for the Pavement Preservation Project.
- O. Town Hall Improvements - \$50,000
Mr. Brown included a list in the packet with the improvements for consideration.
- Screens for Rooftop A/C Units
 - Interior LED Lighting
 - New Drive-Thru / Drop Box Mechanism
 - East Side Yard Upgrade
 - New Signage / Lettering
- The Council agreed to fund \$20,000 for Town Hall Improvements this year, and funding over multiple years until complete.
- P. Curbing Machine - \$225,000
Mr. Brown stated that he discussed the Curbing Machine with Tommy Nicholas, Streets Project Director, right before this meeting. Mr. Nicholas presented some information regarding the machine, there are not a lot of projects that require long, straight stretches of curbing. When there are projects that require curbing, they usually have driveways, and the curbing machine cannot be used. Mr. Nicholas feels the curbing machine may sit a lot of the time rather than being used. The request for a Curbing Machine would like to be made for a used Water Truck. The current water truck in use is very old, leaks, and in high demand. The Council agreed to the switch of purchasing a Used Water Truck in the approximate amount of \$100,000 instead of the purchase of a Curbing Machine in the approximate amount of \$225,000.
- Q. Shop Compressor - \$7,000
Mr. Brown stated that this is a necessary item for the Town Shop. The current one is 50 years old and has been having a lot of maintenance work done on it. The Council agreed to the amount of \$7,000 for a new Shop Compressor.
- R. Red Lamp Improvements - \$205,000
Mr. Brown stated the improvements will be for American Southwest Credit Union. The Town will receive \$100,00 for the lot and \$29,000 for the infrastructure. The Council agreed to the amount of \$250,000 for the Thatcher Plaza Improvements.
- S. 1st Avenue Widening, US 70 to Church Street - \$340,000
Mr. Brown discussed this budget line item would help in accommodating potential new businesses. If the funds are not utilized for new businesses, it may be an option to utilize the funds towards the Recreation Complex. Staff would get authorization from the Council to move forward with this change

if needed.

The Council agreed to the amount of \$340,000 for 1st Avenue Widening, US 79 to Church Street.

T. 8th Street Realignment - \$250,000

After discussing the project list, it was unanimous to budget the 8th Street Realignment project in fiscal year 2025/2026 and not this upcoming fiscal year.

U. Recreation Complex Playground - \$300,000

After discussing the project list, it was unanimous to budget the Recreation Complex Playground project in fiscal year 2025/2026 and not this upcoming fiscal year.

V. Pickleball Courts \$50,000

After discussing the project list, it was unanimous to budget the Pickleball Courts project for the fiscal year 2025/2026 and not this upcoming fiscal year.

TOTAL	\$3,102,000
Additional Revenue	\$450,000
23/24 One Time Purchases	\$1,475,000
TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDS	\$1,925,000

Council requested that Staff develop a 5-year plan for maintenance on all facilities, equipment, Police Department, Fire Department, and all other departments. A 5-year plan that may be like the information that is currently provided to them regarding the Street Department or some type of spreadsheet. The Council stated that these plans would assist with the budget process from year to year.

Mr. Brown stated that he will research the Expenditure Limitation as to what budget line items may or may not be affected. He will utilize the considerations given by Council to prepare a Preliminary Budget in May and a Final Budget in June.

B. Other Discussion Items as Needed

Add Electric Rates to the next meeting agenda.

4. ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor Bryce adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

APPROVED:

Heath Brown, Town Manager

Randy Bryce, Mayor

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the work session meeting of the Town Council of the Town of Thatcher held on this 1st day of April. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Annie Reidhead, Deputy Clerk