

Town Halls Disorganization

(1-15-08)

Town Hall's disorganization, missing information, documents, miscoding of spending and lack of backup materials resulted in the Town Council's first meeting of 2008 maybe being the longest ever in Eatonville history! It ended after 11:50 pm.

To hear the meeting click here.

1-15-08

The meeting had barely gotten started when during the approval of the agenda it became clear that the packet did not contain all the materials that were required. One Council member asked that the Sewer item, Resolution 2008-E, be removed because of lack of backup materials, and improper materials that were included. It ended up staying on the agenda. Later it became even clearer that much had not been included. It also became clear after the Mayor informed the Council that he had the power to choose to not enforce laws that they had passed and that is what he had done in this case. The Council after much debate decided to extend the performance date to the last day of 2008.

The next speed bump, which quickly became a full equipment check, came with the consent agenda which included payment of all of the bills for the Town. The total was for \$389,286.10 with the salaries etc. being \$202,486.70. Four of the five Council members questioned a number of items. The standard answer from the Clerk as to why there were many improper entries was "[Key stroke error](#)" again and [again...](#)

The packet did not include any additional information other than three totals for the labor cost for the consent agenda. It is this writers understanding from a meeting with the Auditor that in Roy almost a million dollars of extra warrants were included improperly to individuals and thus this is an area that needs tight controls. In Roy if anyone had checked the actual warrants the problem would have been flagged and thus why weren't the actual warrant brought for Council inspection. Apparently the Council was given a listing of some type to sign in regards to payroll which was not included in the packet for subscribers. I wonder why? It is my understanding that this information was such that one could not tell if extra unearned checks were included, which employees were being paid, which accounts were being charged or which departments.

There was not a public works report.

And as usual no Town Administrator's report.

The Town Code says the following:

["Report regularly to all council and planning commission meetings on the status of town operations and projects"](#).

The mayor handed out at the meeting his report which was nothing more than an outline. Again as with much of the material in the past getting this information at the last minute the Council and Public has no good way to participate. Maybe that is the idea, many including the paper has in the past described Council action appearing to be like rubber stamping.

During the proceeding on the first item of "[NEW BUSINESS](#)", Resolution 2008-A, Baublits' Annexation the next road block came up. [The Town Attorney got up and told the Council that this matter should have at the last meeting been sent to the Planning Commission.](#) At the time I was the Chair of the Planning Commission and spoke representing the body and told the Council that this needed to go to the Planning Commission. The Town Planner said this had gone thru "[the proper channels](#)". The Town Attorney sits to the left of the Planner and at no time did he add to or correct the record. Now it seems the Attorney has made a ruling that seems to agree with me. The Attorney said now that it was improperly handled it could not be sent to the Planning Commission without giving the moving party a "[bullet proof appeal in Superior Court](#)".

This item was passed.

Go figure!

During discussion of Resolution 2008-D the Mayor said that he would not reappoint an individual due to term limits. Due to this Mayors' performance to date I hope that he applies this to himself and does not run for a second term. The Union agreement was on the agenda as Resolution 2008-E, which was finally passed as presented. It appears like the agreement will give raises totaling 24% to 26% over three years. After many question and much discussion it finally came out that the Council and subscribers were not even given a copy of the contract the Council had to approve. There was no information given on what was included in the existing contract. There were items that remained to be settled but the Council was asked to let the Mayor handle them. It seemed that there was at least one member at one point who was inclined to put this matter over until all items were completed. At one point the Union Representative indicated that the Town would be open for "Unfair Labor Practices" if the Council was to change any of the elements of the agreement. So did the Council become a rubber stamp when they approved the Contract? The Union Representative and the Mayor were full of praise for the professionalism of each side leading some in attendance to wonder if the Mayor's bargaining was fully engaged? The Council passed this 4 to 1.

School impact fees increases

was turned down and thus Ordinance 2008-2 was not approved. Bobbi Allison made the motion "[to deny the Ordinance 2008-2](#)".

Bobbi Allison

was elect Mayor Pro Tem and Brenden Pierce the alternate for six months.

During

Council members comments Rich Adams made a motion to set a special study session in regards to Council Committee's. He pointed out that the current system produced Ad Hoc Mayor's committees that did not have to be advertised, allow the public to attend and that the Mayor could remove Council members (legislative branch) from at will. The Mayor (who is in the executive branch and the head of) had setup several matrix of assignments of Council Member (legislative branch) that he wanted. Mr. Adams was paying attention to the importance of "separation of powers" and "balance of powers" and wanting to make a system where the public is included. Adams well understood that the executive branch should not be appointing Council members to legislative functions. As a result a special meeting billed as a study session was scheduled for Friday January 25, 2008 at 6 pm in regards to Council Committees.

Adam's

expounded on the theme that he and others had in the past about not being given complete information and then getting it late. Thus the Council does not have time to study and be informed and ready to take action during the Council meeting. Town Hall maintains that they can get the packet out on Thursday at 4 pm before the meeting and some on the Council and the Public believes it should be Wednesday. In any case I don't ever remember it being out on Wednesday and it seems to not often be out on Thursday and then never complete. Some believe it is way past time to not act and to hold things over in order that the Council can discharge its responsibilities, maybe the public will in this way be better served.

Finally the meeting end!