



TOWN COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

Minutes

Wednesday, May 15, 2024 at 6:00 pm

**Springerville Town Council Chambers - 418 E. Main St. Springerville, AZ
85938**

Pursuant to A.R.S. Section 38-431.02, notice is hereby given to the members of the Springerville Town Council and to the general public that the Council will hold a meeting open to the public at the Springerville Town Hall, 418 East Main Street, Springerville, Arizona. The Town Council reserves the right to adjourn into Executive Session in accordance with Arizona Revised Statutes Section 38-431.03 (A)(1)(3)(4) and (7) for legal consultation on any of the following agenda items.

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING: 6:00 P.M.

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Minutes:

Mayor Reidhead called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Amy Sloane led the pledge of allegiance.

2. INVOCATION:

Minutes:

Robert Pena offered the invocation.

3. ROLL CALL:

Minutes:

The Town Clerk completed the Roll Call.

Present: Shelly Reidhead, Mayor; Richard Davis, Vice-Mayor; Douglas Henderson, Councilor;

Donald Scott, Councilor; Florencio Lozoya, Councilor

A quorum is present.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Minutes:

Monica Boehning a Round Valley resident of 42 years encouraged the council and community to take a strong stance against the proposed wind and solar farm. This farm could come as close as mile marker 370, only 4 miles from Springerville Town boundaries. She knows many Round Valley citizens who are just as concerned as she is. She explained the negative impacts that the project could have on our local ranchers and the big horn sheep herds and the danger for our

migrant birds. She explained the ranchers directly affected include the Knights, Browns, and Dobsons as they have grazing leases on this state trust land. She continued to explain her concerns about ruined tourism by the visual quality and how many visitors we draw here to see the community and hunt here. She further expressed this is another green energy project that is destined to fail. It was explained the lack of effectiveness of wind turbine power and the need to power them in the winter. The ground vibrations they produce may have an affect on our ground, soils, and volcanic bedrock along with the potential for oil leaks. She asked them on behalf of so many who could not be here tonight, to not only send a letter of none support for this project but to take it a step further and adopt a resolution against this project, and send it to the Arizona Land Commission as she believes they will have the final say. She thanked the Council for their willingness to listen to the concerns.

Terry Shove addressed the Mayor and Council. She started by saying Robert Pena has done a great job with the fire department. She reminded everyone of the High School graduation next week. She reported that she attended the High School scholarship dinner and it was amazing amazing. There was about \$2.3 million of scholarships awarded to the students from fine arts, sports, and academics. She also attended the award assembly at the high school and there was a lot of awards given out there too.

Brian Carpenter reported on the RV Senior Center. There is a University of AZ employee coming to the center and giving gardening classes, yoga on Tuesday, and Bingo. He reported the Silver City trip was canceled due to illness, it will be rescheduled. They plan to attend the Lavender Festival, the Humming Bird Festival, and possibly Laughlin. Next, he expressed he would be sharing his personal opinions that are not a representation of the Senior Center regarding the wind farm. He has not spoken to a single person in favor of this. He expressed his concerns on how it will negatively visually impact our area and explained people come from all over to see this.

Tony Contreras with the Springerville Eagar Chamber of Commerce addressed the Mayor and Council. He reported on the success of their digital fingerprint services. Since they have been offering them, they have been able to fingerprint 277 people. He reported they are also providing notary services. Next he reported on the businesses that have recently joined the chamber.

Council and the public were invited to the chamber mixer tomorrow at the chamber building from 5:30 - 7:00 pm. Lastly, he reminded everyone of the White Mountain Giveaway Raffle. This supports the Boys and Girls Club and the Chamber.

Amy Butcher addressed the Mayor and Council. She moved to this community for the beauty of it a few years ago. She is speaking in opposition of the wind farm. She explained she organized a group that has met and will continue to meet to see what can be done to stop the wind farms from coming. She spoke to Game and Fish and was told the Lava Run Wind farm is not the only one trying to build a farm here, two other companies are trying to come as well. She would like Council to consider a letter saying they won't support wind farms ever, to avoid having to keep doing this. She feels the companies have been sneaky about talking to businesses and landowners, they have not cared to hold a public forum. She would also like to see water, economic, and environmental studies. She expressed the high desert is a fragile area. They have started collecting signatures on petitions and have well over 200 signatures opposing this. She is not sure who they should send them to.

Louisa Quintana addressed the Mayor and Council. She explained she worked with the Counties

in New Mexico weighing the pros and cons of the SunZia wind farm. She explained it is corporate greed coming in to bring the wind farms. She explained they promise local jobs, and only employ them for 6 months. The tax studies are a lie. They have incentives that they think we want. Property owners are negatively affected by this. There are minimal government regulations on wind farms. She explained from her experience they say they will only come within 20 miles of town, then slowly closer and closer until they are 1 mile away. She formerly dealt with a Chicago-based company. They formed a task force against them and she suggests we do too. She said we don't even know that the power generated here will stay here. It will likely go to California. Next, she explained the stem of the windmill is put into the ground with blasting and fracking. This is done with chemicals that are going into our aquifer. This will affect our wells. She explained how blasting causes cracking to foundations and leads to vibroacoustic disease. She explained this comes from the constant vibrations, and there are health issues vibroacoustic disease causes. She explained the community can beat this, there are no government regulations.

5. COUNCIL, MANAGER AND STAFF REPORTS:

a. Mayor & Council Reports: Summary Updates on committee meetings.

Minutes:

Councilor Henderson reported on preparations for the aviation expo.

Mayor Reidhead reported she attended a conference last week regarding the wind farms. She thanked Public Works for the planting of trees for Arbor Day, and reported on the 4th of July Parade having to be rerouted, and reminded the community to continue to prepare with food storage. She explained Montana and Idaho have declared a State of Emergency and normal amounts of crop planting will not occur this year. She asked the community to get themselves ready.

b. Staff Reports: Summary Updates

Minutes:

Public Works Director, Robert Pena reported on the Arbor Day trees they planted and that they have completed the impound yard. They have been very busy. He updated on the new hires of the department, Mr. Tapia and Mr. Cluff. We will be filling the admin assistant position soon. We had 4 good interviews and will select from them. The AMR meter project is advancing, we have had some packets picked up. We will present the bids at the June meeting.

Chief of Police Dayson Merrill introduced Mike Fortado the new Animal Control Officer. Dayson thanked Robert for supporting the Police Department. He went over the statistics included in the staff report of the agenda packet. This included the total number of incidents, officer cases, criminal cases, and accidents. He thanked Public Works for getting the impound yard ready to utilize. The police department sent an employee to the property and evidence training that allows us to apply for state and federal grants. The US Forest Service utilized the public safety building for training. He updated that Officer Gleeson has been promoted to Sergeant. They assisted the schools at an assembly and participated in a re-unification drill with the middle school. Staffing currently includes 6 sworn officers, 1 office admin, and 1 animal control officer. He thanked the Mayor and Council for their continuous support.

Fire Chief Levi Penrod updated that they went out to bid for a contractor to build the new fire station, and they should be starting any day. They anticipate the project to take about 6 months. He next updated on getting another grant for a Zoll monitor. They just had 3 more employees complete the E.M.T schooling. They are combining ISO ratings for Springerville and Eagar.

Town Clerk Kelsi Miller reported that she has supplied in paper and in an email two letters received with concerns of the easements in the El Cajon Estates. Manager Rasmussen will be responding to those emails and looping the Council in on his response. Manager Rasmussen added that he has already met with one of the gentlemen who wrote a letter and his shed is not in the easement.

c. Manager Tim Rasmussen: Summary Updates & presentation(s)

Minutes:

Tim Rasmussen asked Robert Pena to update on the incident on North Pima. Mr. Pena reported someone was welding on their fence down below Public Works and sparked a fire. With the quick thinking of the public works crew, inmate crew, and some equipment they were able to assist Round Valley Fire Department in containing the fire and stopping it from burning the structure it was moving towards. Manager Rasmussen added that public works quickly moved to build a line and great job to them. Manager Rasmussen reported that he met with airport manager Manny Lucero yesterday. He wrote a letter to the Staff and community explaining his illness and the importance of the community to him. We did get his short-term disability application filled out and sent in, this secures his position and insurance. He reported on lunch with the Round Valley Community Services Center. He explained next month he will be bringing the fee schedule to them. He presented the Apache County UTV brochure prepared by Barry Williams. He is still working on the Town of Springerville Emergency Manual and an upcoming auction. Community Broadband Advocates are still working on the EDA grant for the industrial park. Mr. Muth is helping us with some easements. We are working with Mr. Wilfong on the possibility of balloons over Round Valley again. He reported that we sent out the letters last week for Hacienda and El Cajon, and we have received 5 or 6 emails/phone calls. People are upset. He updated on the community day or service, it was a big success. The bid closing for 578 N Main Street was today. We will be bringing that item back to Council next month. He recognized our local White Mountain Publishing writer present, he thanked her for the article regarding the wind farm. He reminded them that we do have to reroute our 4th of July parade due to ADOT not allowing us to close a highway. We will continue to get the word out.

6. CONSENT ITEMS:

Minutes:

ACTION: Motioned by Councilor Donald Scott, seconded by Vice-Mayor Richard Davis to approve consent item 6a the Regular Meeting Minutes from April 17, 2024.

DISCUSSION: None

Vote results:

Ayes: 5 / Nays: 0

a. Consider approval of the April 17, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes.

7. FORMAL RETIREMENT OF FIRE CHIEF ROBERT J. PENA JR:

Minutes:

Round Valley Fire Department Battalion Chief Robert Pena III and Town Manager Tim Rasmussen led the presentation and official retirement of Robert Pena Jr. from the Springerville Fire Department with 32 years of service. Family, Chiefs, and fellow firefighters shared memories of their time working with Robert over the years. Robert was presented with plaques and recognition from his time as a wildland firefighter from Captain McDowell, recognition from Chief Chevalier and Chief Woods of Timber Mesa Fire and Medical, recognition from Round Valley Fire Chief Levi Penrod, and a plaque from the Town of Springerville presented by Robert Pena III. Robert Pena Jr. thanked the Town of Springerville for his time with the department and all of the opportunities throughout his tenure.

OLD BUSINESS

8. ORDINANCE 2024-001: SECOND READING AND POSSIBLE ADOPTION

a. Second Reading of Ordinance 2024-001:

Minutes:

SECOND READING: Vice Mayor Richard Davis completed the second reading of Ordinance 2024-001, An ordinance of the Mayor and Town Council of the Town of Springerville, AZ Amending Title 6, "Animals" of the Town of Springerville Town Code; providing for severability, providing penalties for violations, and establishing an effective date.

b. ACTION ORDINANCE 2024-001:

Minutes:

ACTION: Motioned by Councilor Doug Henderson, seconded by Councilor Donald Scott to adopt Ordinance 2024-001 Amending Title 6 - Animals, of the Town Code.

DISCUSSION: None

Vote results:

Ayes: 5 / Nays: 0

9. ADOT AIRPORT WILDLIFE FENCE DESIGN & INSTALL GRANT:

Minutes:

DISCUSSION: Town Manager Rasmussen presented this item. He explained when he came back to work for the town, the town had already committed to some grants and projects, this being one of them. After reviewing the grant for the wildlife fence it was determined it was only for 40% around the airport. Neither the Town nor ADOT has applied for the funds for the rest of the project. Councilor Henderson pointed out that in 42 years we have only had 2 instances of animals on the roadway. One of the animals was a dog, and the other was an antelope. When staff asked ADOT why they wanted the town to get this fence and questioned the importance of this project the grant administered explained when she flew up she saw gophers within the airport. They discussed if this project is really needed and if they chose to back out of it the town would have to pay ADOT back for the amount they paid to the engineers and would have to pay the second engineering

invoice. Tim explained we would be responsible for roughly \$39,000. It was explained this project is so far behind schedule that it's being administrated with our former engineers. It was supposed to be completed April of 2024 and the environmental clearance hasn't even happened. Councilor Scott expressed his concerns about canceling this grant and how it will affect future funding opportunities. Manager Rasmussen explained it would not.

ACTION: Motioned by Councilor Doug Henderson, seconded by Vice Mayor Richard Davis to direct staff to halt this project and have finance pay back the amount owed.

Vote results:

Ayes: 5 / Nays: 0

NEW BUSINESS

10. ROUND VALLEY QUILT & FIBER ARTS SHOW:

Minutes:

DISCUSSION:None

ACTION: Motioned by Councilor Doug Henderson, seconded by Vice Mayor Richard Davis to approve the Tourism Tax Fund donation request in the amount of \$750 to the Round Valley Quilt and Fiber Arts Show.

Vote results:

Ayes: 5 / Nays: 0

11. CONNECTGEN LAVA RUN WIND AND SOLAR PROJECT:

Minutes:

DISCUSSION: Manager Rasmussen led the discussion. He explained the Chairperson of the Apache County Planning and Zoning Commission asked if the town is in support or not in support of this project. We felt this was a Council decision. Councilor Henderson shared that following the meeting they came and presented at, he met with them with follow-up questions. He feels they danced around the questions and were unable to produce the reports they referenced. Councilor Lozoya shared that he has had many citizens reach out to him also concerned about this project and he has not heard a single person in support. He has weighed the pros and cons and does not want this for our community. Mayor Reidhead explained the 15 long-term jobs does not justify the negative impacts. Councilor Scott expressed he lives on a mountain and when he looks towards the east all he sees is red blinking lights. These renewable energy projects are devastating to communities. Allan Harding added that if we send a letter to Apache County, we should also send a letter to the AZ Corporate Commission with examples of the 1-40 wind farm corridor. They discussed when the projects are done in 30 years they are just a boneyard of windmills. The majority of the material is not recyclable. The police department added that these types of projects bring transient workers into town that increase call volumes. It was discussed the wind farm would be far worse than the solar farm and they should contact Eli Crane. It was also discussed that these are corporations taking advantage of the Green New Deal and bringing free money to Round Valley to make millions on.

ACTION: Motioned by Councilor Doug Henderson, seconded by Councilor Florencio Lozoya to send a letter of no support for this project to Apache County and State representatives.

Vote results:

Ayes: 5 / Nays: 0

12. 225 EAST MAIN STREET:

Minutes:

DISCUSSION: Manager Rasmussen explained that staff was given the direction formerly to use \$100,000 to design and engineer a police department in the building at 225 E Main Street. The goal was to budget a million dollars to build the police department. As we build the budget for this upcoming year we suggest we do not do that at this time. He and Chief Merrill discussed the current department and believe we can get 14 desk in there and have room for a fully staffed police station in the current building. The following day the Hardings contacted Tim and pitched the idea of leasing. We are looking for direction for this building. Mayor Reidhead agrees that we should hold off on spending a million dollars on that building this year. The building is paid off and we paid \$350,000 for it, it is a good asset to have. It has been empty for over a year. They discussed if they do rent the building out there is room in the locked bays to store the stuff in the building. The Hardings are not interested in the back bays, they would like to put in an art gallery in the front section and offer custom engraving. Chief Merrill added that a conex storage container or two would also suffice. The only concern Vice Mayor Davis has is he does not want the building torn down. The Hardings expressed they would potentially be looking at a two-year lease.

ACTION: Motioned by Councilor Doug Henderson, seconded by Vice Mayor Richard Davis to direct staff to not budget the 1.1 million dollars to renovate the building into a police station and to explore other options including leasing it.

Vote results:

Ayes: 5 / Nays: 0

13. GILA RIVER INDIAN COMMUNITY GRANT:

Minutes:

DISCUSSION: This item was presented by Chief Merrill and Lieutenant Bevington. They are wanting to submit a grant application for over \$500,000 to get 7 fully equipped and outfitted police vehicles.

ACTION: Motioned by Vice Mayor Richard Davis, seconded by Councilor Donald Scott to approve to submit the Gila River Indian Community Grant application for the purchase of new patrol vehicles.

Vote results:

Ayes: 5 / Nays: 0

14. EMPLOYEE MANUAL UPDATE:

Minutes:

DISCUSSION: It was pointed out that the Affordable Care Act mandates we provide insurance to employees regularly scheduled for 30 hours, not 40 as the manual indicates.

ACTION: Motioned by Councilor Doug Henderson, seconded by Vice Mayor Richard Davis to adopt the Town of Springerville Employee Manual dated May 15, 2024.

Vote results:

Ayes: 5 / Nays: 0

15. UPAHEAD SOFTWARE AGREEMENT:

Minutes:

DISCUSSION: Manager Rasmussen presented this item. He explained every time we have a water break or issue we need to be able to get the information out to the public. Currently, we use the website and Facebook but often are asked if we have any alternative method of communication for those not on Facebook. UpAhead is a messaging service that the public can sign up for and when their is an issue we can send out a text message to inform the public. This will cost the town only \$199 per month.

ACTION: Motioned by Councilor Doug Henderson, seconded by Vice Mayor Richard Davis to approve the proposal and contract with UpAhead.

Vote results:

Ayes: 5 / Nays: 0

16. TOWN MANAGER:

Minutes:

FIRST ACTION: Motioned by Vice Mayor Richard Davis, seconded by Councilor Florencio Lozoya to enter into executive session at 7:54 pm for the Town Manager review.

Vote results: Ayes: 5 / Nays: 0

Council entered back into regular session at 8:14 p.m.

SECOND ACTION: Motioned by Councilor Doug Henderson, seconded by Councilor Florencio Lozoya to approve the 10% performance pay to the Town Manager.

Vote results: Ayes: 5 / Nays: 0

17. ADJOURNMENT:

Minutes:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

_____.

Shelly Reidhead, Mayor

ATTEST:

_____.

Kelsi Miller, Town Clerk

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and copy of the minutes of the Springerville Town Council in a Regular Council Meeting on _____. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and a quorum was present.

Dated this _____ day of _____, 2024

_____ Kelsi Miller, Town Clerk

Members of the public who only want to provide written comments can express their comments by emailing the Town Clerk at **kmiller@springervilleaz.gov** to be read or summarized during the call to the public. All comments must be submitted by 12:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting.

Americans with Disabilities Act (A.D.A.): The Town of Springerville intends to comply with A.D.A. If you are physically challenged or disabled and need special accommodations to participate in this town meeting, please contact the Town Clerk at (928) 333-2656 ext. 224 forty-eight (48) hours prior to the meeting to arrange necessary accommodations.

Contact: Kelsi Miller, Town Clerk (kmiller@springervilleaz.gov (928) 333-2656 x 224) | Minutes published on 06/03/2024, adopted on 06/19/2024