

**MINUTES OF THE BUDGET WORKSHOP
OF THE CAREFREE TOWN COUNCIL**

WHEN: TUESDAY, APRIL 12, 2022

WHERE: CAREFREE TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS
33 EASY STREET, CAREFREE, AZ 85377

TIME: 3:00 P.M.

Town Council Attending:

Mayor Les Peterson
Vice Mayor John Crane
Vince D'Aliesio
Tony Geiger
Stephen Hatcher

Town Council Absent:

Cheryl Kroyer
Mike Johnson

Staff Present:

Gary Neiss, Town Administrator; Mark Milstone, Town Engineer; Erica Shumaker, Communications Coordinator; Steve Prokopek, Director of Economic Development; Stacey Bridge – Denzak, Director of Planning and Zoning; Dennis Randolph, Code Enforcement Officer; Mike Tibbetts, Building Official; Honorable Tara Parascandola, Municipal Court Judge; Marilyn Dodge, Court Administrator; Kandace French, Town Clerk/Treasurer.

Mayor Peterson called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

A members of the Council may participate by technological means or methods pursuant to A.R.S. §38-431(4).

AGENDA:

ITEM #1 Workshop to discuss Fiscal Year 2022-2023 budget.

Town Administrator, Gary Neiss presented via PowerPoint details of the fiscal year 2022-2023 budget. Informing, this is the first of five public budget meetings. Mr. Neiss outlined the budget process and timeline of future budget workshops to be held in order to review with Town Council the respective needs of the organization.

Individual Staff presented accomplishments, goals and current needs for the organization. Mr. Neiss reminded of the importance of these discussions between Staff and Town Council as they provide clarity and understanding of workloads, while examining priorities, issues and concerns of the departments for the next fiscal year.

Mr. Neiss defined the four pillars, which make up the Town Council's Work Plan:

1. Quality Community Development
2. Infrastructure Management
3. Economic Development & Financial Stability
4. Communications, Marketing and Community Engagement

Town Administrator Neiss provided the year in review. Outlining the many accomplishments of the Town. Informing, all the work is accomplished with one of the smallest operational budgets and municipal staffs in the State of Arizona and as a community we should be very proud of the workload that the Town of Carefree staff accomplishes on an annual basis on their behalf.

Mr. Neiss explained, there are four divisions that make up the Town:

1. Administrative Services
2. Community Development
3. Public Works
4. Municipal Court

Each of those departments and respective Department Heads articulated their roles, accomplishments in the last year and goals for the next fiscal year.

Administrative Services

Town Management

Role:

- Oversee daily management of Town Departments and organizational workplans.
- Negotiate and/or administer Town contracts.
- Develop and administer Town's budget.
- Frequent meetings with Councilmembers, citizens, development interests, other regulatory and planning/development agencies.
- Write, review and/or manage policies and regulations of the Town.

Accomplishments:

- Managed cleanup of Town Gardens with significant pruning of overgrown vegetation, replenished decomposed granite, re-stucco and painted amphitheater and restroom building, began pedestrian light replacement program of rusted lights, upgraded and expanded WIFI system in Gardens and installed new security camera system that is helping to curtail vandalism.
- Assisted Public Safety Advisory Committee to conduct public meetings and generate report for the community and Council regarding evolving circumstances associated with public safety.
- Began program to detail costs associated with the possibility of Carefree joining the regional Automatic Aid partnership and evaluation of the Town's financial capacity to help define options to ensure financial solvent solutions associated with any changes to service levels.
- Closely work with and coordinate with each Town department to continue to implement Council's approved work plan and compliance to state statutes.

- Coordinated with legal representatives to address the community's best interests and mitigate risk.
- Managed Town service contracts to ensure efficient and effective levels of service.
- Hired Communications Manager to strengthen communications and engage residents, businesses and community interest in Town related issues, services, and programs.
- Worked with new Town Engineer to manage, maintain and/or replace the Town's aging infrastructure and assets as well as review projects and development to ensure regulatory compliance.

Workload:

- Work with Communications Manager to further engage residents and stakeholders using multiple communication channels.
- Work with consultants to develop and implement community and Council preferred public safety options.
- Coordinate with staff and contracted consultant teams working on future initiatives such as General Plan update, special projects, and infrastructure.
- Continue to work with external agencies to represent the best interests of the Town.
- Continue to coordinate the execution and updates of work plans of each Town Department and new Council on future work plan.
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Town Clerk/Treasurer/Accountant (2 FTEs):

Role:

- Care, custody, and state mandated retention of all the records, books and papers for the town, water company and cemetery.
- Election official responsible for all duties required by state statute.
- Receiving and safeguarding all monies received and keep separate records and accounts for different funds.
- Responsible for computer hardware, network security, maintenance and server administration.
- Responsible for oversight and compliance of the yearly town audits for Town and UCFD.

Accomplishments:

- Managed, prepared, and notices 58 Public Meetings/Public Hearings including Town Council, Carefree Water Company/Utilities Community Facilities District, Public Safety Advisory Committee and Sky Ranch Community Relations Committee.
- Responded to a 70% increase in the number of Public Records Request.
- Maintained and trained staff on the new records management archival system and began the transfer of vital documents to a secure storage location.
- Attended and graduated from the inaugural Desert Foothills Leadership Academy, a nine-month program.
- Attending the 2021 State of Arizona Election Recertification program to maintain certification as an Election Official.
- Attending training to maintain Arizona Municipal Clerk certification.
- Maintained paralegal/legal assisting certification with the National Association of Legal Assistants.

- Assisted the Town Attorney in collecting facts and materials and responding to a Complaint filed with the Arizona Ombudsman (falsely) a violation of Open Meeting Law requirements.
- Coordinated with chosen vendors to install an eight-camera security system in the Carefree Desert Gardens.
- Document, generate reports and provides detailed information required for annual financial audits and budgeting for the Town and staff.
- Provided accounting and IT support to staff and management on a daily and weekly basis.

Goals:

- Manage and oversee the 2022 Primary and General Election, including both the Town election and the Maricopa County polling location being held in Carefree.
- Secure and implement the Agenda Quick software program to streamline the agenda and minutes process in addition to giving the Communications/Social Media department supportive meeting streaming capabilities.
- Coordinate with the Town Accountant to obtain and institute a new, dynamic accounting program and transfer of all data.
- Complete the application process to obtain the Master Municipal Clerk (MMC) designation from the International Association of Municipal Clerks.

Communications (1 FTE):

Role:

- Centralize Town’s communications.
- Manage all communications channels –digital, written, and verbal platforms.
- Improve communications with all community stakeholders.

Accomplishments:

- Updated Town’s website.
- Assisted in the planning and execution of community events/activities.
- Assisted in the development of communications regarding town issues.
- Provided content and formatted Town newsletter and issue base factsheets.

Goals:

- Work with various merchants’ associations to build visibility.
- Coordinate the use of event space within the Town Center to facilitate community-based events that are produced by third parties.
- Implement improvements to the Town’s digital and social media to enhance content, visual quality and frequency of reach.
- Coordinate and help to manage the Town Center visitor center as well as content of information shared within the center and coordinate Ambassador Program.
- Produce informational videos and manage the Town’s YouTube channel to enhance engagement of visitors, residents, and business interests.
- Form partnerships with internal and external businesses to create a package of experiences to market to various audiences.

Community Development

Planning Director and Zoning Administrator (2 FTE's)

Role:

- Responsible for updating and implementing the General Plan and other development-related documents.
- Recommends updates/revisions to the Zoning Ordinance, Town Code, and Subdivision Regulations often based on State mandates.
- Meets with Planning and Zoning Commissioners, Councilmembers, citizens, applicants, businesses, and property owners and other interests to discuss development plans, cases and permits, and general development opportunities in Carefree.
- Works in concert with Economic Development Division to support revenue-related initiatives involving the physical development of Carefree.
- Reviews zoning cases (administrative and public meeting/hearing) and building permits (for Zoning), which includes inspections, field observations, and general site meetings.
- Fields zoning and development questions as well as reviews/resolves code enforcement issues with Chief Building Official and Code Enforcement Officer.
- Along with Planning Clerk, manages Planning and Zoning Division archives.

Accomplishments:

- Processed 21 Zoning Applications/Preapplications, held 10 Public Meetings/Public Hearings including Town Council meetings.
- Reviewed 170 Building Permits for compliance with the Town's Zoning Ordinance, including 17 new single family residential lots.
- Maintained new archival system for the Planning and Zoning Division and began the transfer of vital documents to a secure storage location.
- Supported Town Clerk and Town Administrator with Meeting Minutes for Town Council and Public Safety Advisory Committee Meetings.
- Transitioned new Town Engineer to assume rights-of-way oversight and general procedures as it relates to the Planning and Zoning Division.
- Addressed Numerous Walk-ins/Phone calls/Development Questions/Public Records Requests

Goals:

- Oversee the hiring of a Planning consultant for the General Plan update process and manage the project.
- Continue to support efforts related to Redevelopment Plan for Town Center under the Economic Development Division.
- Continue to manage the Master Signage and Access Plan for Town Center.
- Create new fee structure for Planning and Zoning applications.
- Planning technician training for planning clerk to support Building Division permit reviews.
- Continue to manage zoning cases and entitlement processes.
- Continue to provide a high level of customer service.

Building Safety Division (1 FTE):

Role:

- Perform inspections and plan reviews.
- Issue building permits.
- Meet with developers, homeowners, contractors, and architects to resolve complex building code issues.
- Provide safeguards for the public and property related to construction.

Accomplishments:

- The Building Division conducted 3,904 inspections over the course of the fiscal year.
- The permitted construction projects added over 84,116 square feet, remodeled 15,670 square feet and was valued at a total of over \$11.2MM.
- The Building Division also performed 1,298 site visits, 230 plan reviews, approved 17 new single-family residences, approved 55 home remodels, and continues to inspect Town Center Developments –the Hampton Inn and the View Townhomes.

Goals:

- Review and update permit fee structure to ensure cost recovery for services rendered.
- Investigate options for on-line permitting for applying for permits, payments, and paperless reviews.
- Adopt updated versions of International Building Codes.
- Update Professional Certificates.
- Complete up to 60 hours of continuing education.
- Maintain timely plan reviews and inspections.

Economic Development (1 FTE):

Role:

- Diversify the Town's tax base to pay for existing core municipal services.
- Focus on business retention and attraction efforts.

Accomplishments:

- Completed the General Plan Amendment for the northwest corner of Tom Darlington and Carefree Highway to facilitate a resort.
- Gained approval for the Town Center Redevelopment Area boundary and initiated the Redevelopment Area Plan process.
- Started the Signage, Circulation and Parking Plan process
- Managed the Thunderbird Fine Arts and Wine Festival as well as other key events through COVID.
- Continued the growth of Third Thursday Art Walks.
- Continued to assist in growth of the Farmers Market.
- Continued the development of events in the Gardens including holiday events and music concerts.

Goals:

- Revitalization/redevelopment plan
- Development of master signage, circulation, and parking analysis

- Maximize current opportunities for new commercial development through outreach and advocacy
- Ramp up event and activity schedule and Town promotion

Code Enforcement (1 FTE):

Role:

Investigate Complaints
 Court Duties/Bailiff
 Process business licenses & vendors certificates
 Assist front of office

Accomplishments:

Processed over 480 business licenses
 Processed over 450 vendor certificates (March-November)
 Conducted 298 Investigations
 Updated Emergency Operations Manual

Goals:

- Assist in the data and refinements of:
 - Emergency Operations Plan
 - Town and Fire Department COOP (Continuity of Operations Plan)
 - Maricopa County Hazard Mitigation Plan
 - Town of Carefree Emergency Operations Plan
- Work with Planning and Zoning to update Codes to refine as need
- Continue to process all business licenses, vendors certificates, and investigate code violations

Public Works

Town Engineer (1 FTE):

Role:

- Oversee agency governmental compliance requirements
- Manage public infrastructure and assets
- Coordinates workload for Facilities/ROW Division
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Accomplishments:

- Review and approved 45 Building Permits, 44 ROW Permits, & 24 Grading and Drainage inspections
- Review and approved ADEQ MS4 Compliance
- Applied for MAG Safety Improvement Program Funding
- Awarded grant from Maricopa County Flood Control Small Projects Assistance Program (SPAP)
- Complied with Dust Control Block Permit
- Created a Bid Package for Cave Creek Road Improvements and Pedestrian Safety Improvements
- Design Review and billing approval for two engineering consultants
- Worked with 40 different residents on grading and drainage issues
- Supervision of PW Staff including hiring for vacated staff position

- Working on 10 Year PM Report & Implementation
- Conducted 34 Construction Inspections at the View and the Hampton Inn
- Created a new 5-year Capital Improvement Plan
- Conducted 10 reviews of water infrastructure project
- On-going coordination with the Water Manager, P&Z Director, and Economic Development Director
- On-going Coordination with Mayor, Town Council, and P&Z Staff
- 90 Pre-Con and Post Construction review of ROW Permits
- 8 Culvert and Wash Inspections
- Initiated an asphalt emergency repair for Father Kino Road
- 125' Guard rail Installation
- 5 Review of Pedestrian Circulation Plans
- Developed plans for Ridgeview Dr/Ho Road Crosswalk

Goals:

- Ensure continued regulatory compliance and training.
- Update program to maintain culverts.
- Complete update to Town's Pavement Maintenance Plan.
- Create replacement and maintenance schedules for Town's heavy equipment and vehicles.
- Continue to assist/oversee improvements to public rights-of-way and Town facilities.
- Seek grant/alternative funding for public works projects.
- Continue to conduct grading and drainage inspections and review plans for compliance issues

Facilities/ROW(4FTE):

Role:

- Maintain/repair public facilities/ROW
- Install traffic signs
- Assist in special events
- Manage and maintain equipment

Accomplishments:

- Implemented a program to efficiently use new brush chipper to better manage overgrowth of plant material along Towns rights-of-way.
- Thinned all tree canopies within the Town Center Gardens.
- Painted all walls and buildings within the Town Center Gardens.
- Built storage facility for golf cart and amphitheater chairs and tables to create space in the greenroom.
- Converted greenroom into a flexible space for visitor center, meeting space, office space and event space.
- Installed new drainage culvert in cemetery to stop erosion along driveway.
- Treated surface of amphitheater and painted floor of Splash Pad.
- Repaired all lights and electrical outlets covers within Town Center Gardens.
- Oversaw conversion of Firehouse bay lighting to energy efficient LED lights.
- Ensured all Town Center Irrigation leaks were address immediately upon automated notification to mitigate water loss.

- Regularly remove trash along collector and arterial streets.
- Participated in MS4 training and conducted inspections.
- Conducted culvert inspections.

Goals:

- Ensure continued regulatory compliance and training.
- Continue and refine program to maintain culverts.
- Continue to manage and maintain rights-of-way and Town facilities/amenities.
- Continue to coordinate infrastructure projects with street maintenance projects.
- Develop schedule for trimming along Town's rights-of-way.
Work with Town Engineer to create replacement schedule for equipment with limited useful life.
- Coordinate with Town Engineer Capital Improvement Plans and Projects.

Consolidated Court

Court (2 FTEs):

Role:

- Process all civil and criminal citations issued in Carefree and Cave Creek
- Respond to public inquiries
- Maintain accurate court records
- Distribute monies received according to statute

Accomplishments:

- Updated and created when needed all criminal and civil traffic forms to comply with law and rule change.
- Implemented significant revisions to civil traffic bond card to reflect changes in the law, reflect consistency with other jurisdictions, and secured prosecutorial agreements to focus on corrective action.
- Streamlined court process to improve customer service, safety of customers and staff and efficiently address cases on docket.
- Proposed changes to Carefree Town Code to reflect changes in law (Ordinance No. 2021-03 Adopted 9/7/21).
- Renewed agreement to allow continued participation in East Valley Regional Veteran's Court.
- Attendance at Presiding Judges meetings (monthly), Legislative Update meetings (weekly), West Valley Coalition meetings (monthly), East Valley Regional Veteran's Court meetings (quarterly); Court Administrator attendance at Limited Jurisdiction Court Administrators' Association meetings (monthly) in order to stay apprised of upcoming changes and best practices.
- Attendance at Annual Statewide Judicial Conference, Governor's Office on Highway Safety Conference, and New Judge Orientation.
- Ensured court staff provided all resources and opportunities to attend state mandated training requirements.
- Implementation and continued migration of court forms, processes, and information to Microsoft Teams to facilitate centralized access for all court staff.

- Low-cost technology implemented to facilitate attendance at COJET and virtual meetings for all court staff.
- Initiated Security and Emergency Preparedness Committee meetings, completed comprehensive Court Security Assessment, updated Court Security Plan, reviewed and changed security protocols and equipment to conform with Arizona Supreme Court requirements and ensure safety of customers and court staff.
- Implemented use of telephonic appearances for criminal cases on a limited basis to reduce foot traffic, prevent unnecessary travel, improve customer service and ensure access to justice.
- Recruitment, selection and onboarding of Court Administrator and Deputy Court Clerk positions.
- Annual fiscal audit performed with zero findings.

Goals:

- Continue to identify ways to streamline court processes and employ technology where appropriate to promote efficiency, improve customer service and access to justice.
- Continue to update and create court forms to comply with changes in the law and rules as needed.
- Continue to identify any security concerns and identify possible needs qualifying for grant funding to improve court and customer security.
- Continue to attend at all materially relevant meetings and conferences to ensure best practices being employed at the court.
- Identify materially relevant educational opportunities to enhance and improve court staff knowledge and performance of duties.
- Evaluate internal court administrative orders for update and revision as needed.
- Identify and evaluate for possible implementation changes to the court's website to improve ease of use, functionality, and promote access to justice.

Following an overview of Capital Projects, Mr. Neiss provided the dates of the next budget work sessions.

- April 19th Forecasted revenues & planned expenses
- April 26th Review of Draft Program Based Budget
- May 4th Tentative budget -bottom line adopted
- June 1st Budget adoption

Public Comment offered by Sharon P. Smith regarding form of minutes of meetings.
Janet L. Veves offered comment regarding Dark Skies.

ITEM #2 Adjournment.

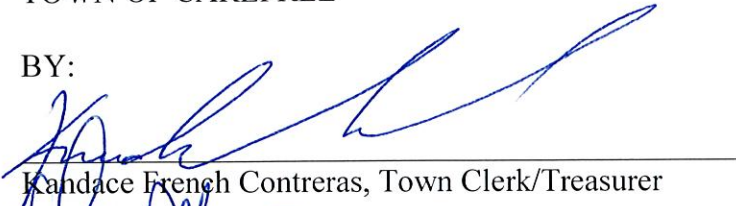
Council Member D'Aliesio **MOVED TO ADJOURN**. **SECONDED** by Council Member Hatcher. **CARRIED**, unanimously.

The meeting ended at 5:08 p.m.

DATED this 13th day of April 2022.

TOWN OF CAREFREE

BY:

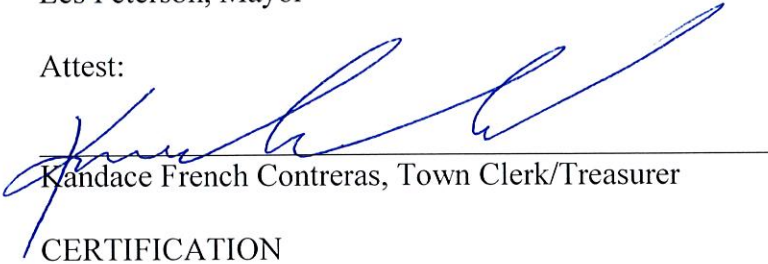


Kandace French Contreras, Town Clerk/Treasurer



Les Peterson, Mayor

Attest:



Kandace French Contreras, Town Clerk/Treasurer

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the Budget Workshop of the Town of Carefree held April 12, 2022. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.



Samantha J. Gesell, Planning Clerk

