



**VILLAGE COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TO BE HELD VIA ZOOM TELECONFERENCE
TAOS SKI VALLEY, NEW MEXICO
FRIDAY, JANUARY 17, 2025 1:00 PM**

1. CALL TO ORDER AND NOTICE OF MEETING

The regular meeting of the Village of Taos Ski Valley Council was called to order by Mayor Chris Stanek at 1:00 p.m. Notice of the meeting was properly posted.

2. ROLL CALL

Marlene Salazar, Acting Village Clerk, called the role and quorum was present.

Governing Body Present:

Mayor Stanek

Councilor Caldwell

Councilor Turner

Councilor Stagg

Councilor Wittman

3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

MOTION: To approve the agenda

MOTION: Councilor Wittman **SECOND:** Councilor Turner **PASSED:** 4-0

4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 20, 2024 REGULAR VILLAGE COUNCIL MEETING

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the December 20, 2024 regular Village Council Meeting

MOTION: Councilor Wittman **SECOND:** Councilor Turner **PASSED:** 4-0

5. A. CITIZEN'S FORUM –for non-agenda items only. Limit to 5 minutes per person (please email msalazar@vtsv.org to sign up)

Resident Matthew Hayner welcomed the new Village Staff. Mr. Hayner reported he would like to ask the VTSV to be diligent with informing the public regarding prescriptive burns and with information regarding the NFL clearing and mitigation efforts, as well as the USFS fire mitigation work recently conducted. Fire crews were recently working near Mr. Hayner's property, and Mr. Hayner would have liked to have been informed of the work in advance. There are many scattered piles near Mr. Hayner's home along with huge dry tree trunks. Mr. Hayner recommends that these slash piles be burned from the top of the mountain, moving downward. He believes this logic would help and control potential fire damage, if a fire occurred. Mr. Hayner would like to propose to VTSV that large slash piles be accepted by the VTSV, and not just small loads. With the recent fires in California, it seems like clearing big items would be more beneficial. Mr. Hayner has also applied for the NFL grant and has not heard back to see if he is a qualified candidate, he would appreciate feedback.

Resident Thomas McCullough: Mr. McCullough thanked Mr. Bellis for attending the Neighborhood Association Meeting in December 2024. Mr. McCullough stated Mr. Bellis talked about addressing certain issues that were brought up during the meeting. Mr. McCullough once again thanked Mr. Bellis, and the Mayor and Council for acting on and bringing these issues to some conclusion immediately or within a two-week time frame. Mr. McCullough stated he appreciates the change in the tenor and communication within the Village and that all residents who want to speak up can expect to have a resolution or an answer.

B. PUBLIC COMMENT - Public comment on agenda items. Limit of 5 minutes per person. This is an opportunity for the public to comment on items appearing on the meeting agenda, except for Public Hearing items. Subsequent public comments by speakers not directly affected will generally be permitted only at the discretion of the presiding officer during discussion of agenda items by and among the Council members and persons and entities who are directly affected.

Resident Mike Fitzpatrick: Mr. Fitzpatrick requested to address the Council regarding an item discussed at the December 20, 2024 Village Council Meeting regarding the gifting by TSVI of a space for a Village post office (unit 103) and his concern regarding statements by the Village legal counsel and the lack of documentation available for the item.

Mr. Fitzpatrick expressed the view that the item should have been tabled, that it was misstated as to whether there were condominium fees associated with the transfer, that there were parking spaces allocated to the transfer, as to why there was a Special Warranty Deed, because there were reversionary provisions in the agreement, that the title insurance was not going to be provided until after the closing, that it was failed to be disclosed that TSVI would be seeking reimbursement for the facility through the TIDD, and that he believed that the Village needed to secure experienced and unbiased real estate attorney representation, including an appraisal, survey and title insurance, prior to the transaction being completed.

7. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Planning & Zoning Commission: Councilor Wittman reported a meeting was not held in January 2025. The next meeting scheduled will be held February 3, 2025, at 1:00 pm. Councilor Wittman announced the Village of Taos Ski Valley is accepting new applicants for the Planning and Zoning Commission. Please send your application to Administrator Rick Bellis at rbellis@vtsv.org

B. Public Safety Committee: Councilor Caldwell reported the Public Safety Committee and Firewise met on January 3, 2025 at 10:00 am. Committee discussion included the water meter pilot project for which the software is currently being created so as to be compatible with current utility billing software. Recycling is moving forward in two phases: First phase to start in the spring of 2025. This includes cardboard, aluminums and glass that will be transported to the landfill. The second phase is more complicated and will be announced at the next meeting. ATV's and Camping issues were also discussed. No Passing signs are being ordered for Amizette. Concerns about the Gondolita crossing were discussed, as it gets very slippery. A short meeting with VTSV, TSVI, USFS, and VTSV Chamber of Commerce will be held to discuss further signage options and recommendations. Special Events were also discussed and organizers were reminded that they require a permit and of the need to follow Village Ordinances.

C. Firewise Community Board: Councilor Caldwell reported there has been discussion regarding natural gas line extensions. A meeting will be scheduled with NM Gas Co. (Chris Baca) to see what the Village needs to do to make sure natural gas is available for all areas in the Village. Councilor Caldwell stated a meeting will be held with Mr. Luis Reyes (Kit Carson Electric) in hopes of getting an agreement signed stating the underground power project will be completed by the end of this year, as it has been a challenging project.

D. Parks & Recreation Committee: No reports, attachment report provided in Council packet by Committee Chair Woodard.

E. Lodger's Tax Advisory Board: Councilor Stagg reported no meeting, no report.

8. REGIONAL REPORTS: Administrator Bellis reported the Town of Taos Landfill Board held an emergency meeting on January 08, 2025. The Village of TSV is approved to haul sludge to the

landfill. In a second meeting of the Town of Taos Landfill Board they agreed and endorsed a plan to participate in a recycling initiative and will act as a fiscal agent on the property on which the facility is located. **(Attachments were provided in the Council Packet)**

9. MAYOR REPORT: Mayor Stanek sincerely thanked all the Village staff for going above and beyond during this busy Holiday Season. Mayor Stanek announced the retirement of long-time employee Village Clerk Ann Marie Wooldridge and expressed his gratitude for the dedication Ann Marie put into the Village for many years. Mayor Stanek wished Village Clerk Ann Marie Wooldridge well in her next chapter of retirement. Mayor Stanek welcomed Marlene Salazar as the Acting Village Clerk.

10. ADMINISTRATOR AND STAFF REPORT: Administrator Bellis reported that a proposal for the Regional Recycling Project was sent out in response to outreach from the Governor's Office. Administrator Bellis thanked Councilman Stagg and the staff at TSVI for helping put the connections together. A letter of Support will be submitted to the Governor's Office with the approval of the Mayor of VTSV. **(The letter attachment was provided in the council packet)** Administrator Bellis reported a discussion was held with CEO Luis Reyes (Kit Carson Electric) in regards to the approaching battery powered microgrid project. Mr. Bellis also had similar discussions with TSVI regarding coordinating efforts on the project location. The Village of TSV and TSVI will be collaborating with KCEC on this and potentially siting a solar back-up project in conjunction with the microgrid. Administrator Bellis recommends that the microgrid be constructed by the VTSV sewer plant. If the power becomes incapacitated the Village will have at least 6 hours of electrical capacity. If the solar panels are installed it will also benefit the Village by having another source of income on the utility side and reduce the Villages electrical bills.

Councilor Wittman recognized and congratulated the Public Safety/EMS Department run by Matt Rogers, TSVI, and Taos County Search and Rescue for their great efforts. They recently saved two people on the Mountain, and this is not any easy task, especially since it's been very cold. Councilor Wittman also recognized and congratulated Kevin Cisneros for obtaining his level II Water Certificate and sent well wishes on the retirement of longtime dedicated Village Clerk Ann Marie Wooldridge.

11. FINANCE REPORT: Village Finance Director Griesedieck briefly summarized the Village Financial report that was submitted in the Council Packet. Director Griesedieck stated the most significant subjects are the drops in GRT revenues, Lodgers Tax, and Water & Sewer revenues.

11. OLD BUSINESS: No reports

12. NEW BUSINESS

A. Presentation to Council on the FY 2023-24 Village Audit by the Village Auditors, Southwest Accounting Solutions. (Southwest Accounting Solutions presented the Village Audit Report via zoom) (The audit report was provided in the council packet)

Discussion: The Auditors highlighted the financial condition of the Village, internal controls, and that there were two findings in the audit the Village needed to provide responses/corrective actions for. Councilor Caldwell asked Robert Pexiotto (Southwest Accounting Solutions) if a rate study would benefit the Village of Taos Ski Valley in addressing on of the findings. Mr. Pexiotto stated a rate study would be a good idea if the Village Council would like to move in the direction of addressing the shortfall for utilities. He stated that all he can represent is what the audit report already shows, and that is that the numbers need upward pressure on the rates.

B. Discussion, consideration and possible approval of Resolution No. 2025-001 Acceptance and Approval of the FY 2024 Audit.

MOTION: Councilor Stagg **SECOND:** Councilor Caldwell

VOTE: PASSED: 4-0

- C. Presentation to Council by the Village's Financial Advisors, Stifel Public Finance, on their report, VTSV Financial Analysis and Debt Capacity. (Stifel Public Finance, Brad Angst presented the Finance report via zoom) (The finance report was provided in the council packet)**

DISCUSSION: The financial advisors presented a multi-year forecast of the financial capacity of the Village, based on historical performance. The key take away, according to the analysts was that the Village's capacity to borrow, provide grant matches, maintain adequate reserves in case of emergencies, and do other projects is increasingly being depleted by the use of the General Fund to subsidize unaddressed deficits in the Utilities Enterprise Fund, which should be financially self-sustaining. The Village Administrator requested that the Mayor & Council allow him to schedule a Council work session in the next 30 days with the Auditors and Financial Advisors to discuss their findings and recommendations in detail before we proceed with the FY 25/26 budget in order to develop a consensus for staff on the Village should proceed with the budget process. Council concurred.

- D. Council acceptance of the FY2025 2nd Quarter Financial to be submitted to the NM Dept. of Finance, Local Government Division by January 31, 2025.**

MOTION: Councilor Turner **SECOND:** Councilor Wittman

DISCUSSION: Councilor Caldwell requested that in the future, it would be nice to have the Council Packet separated by a table of contents so it's easy to scroll through this financial paperwork and any paperwork in the packet in general.

VOTE: PASSED: 4-0

- E. Discussion, consideration and possible approval of and permission to publish the Village FY 2026 Budget Calendar for financial planning and reporting.**

MOTION: Councilor Wittman **SECOND:** Councilor Turner

DISCUSSION: Village Finance Director Griesedieck requested and reminded the Council that a date needed to be scheduled for the Budget Workshop.

VOTE: PASSED: 4-0

- F. Discussion and possible reconsideration or reaffirmation of action by the Council at the December 20, 2024 Council Meeting on Agenda item 12. C of that agenda: Accept Donation of Condo Unit 103 of the Neal King Firehouse structure for use as a U.S Postal Service facility for placement of the Village Post Office boxes housed in the TSVI Sprung Structure Tent.**

MOTION: Councilor Wittman **SECOND:** Councilor Turner

DISCUSSION: Village Administrator Bellis reminded the Mayor & Council that a lot of work went on in the removal of a reversionary clause for the current building. If this is considered it should be considered a gift or be paid for with TIDD funds. If this item is accepted and paid for with TIDD funds it will become public property. **(Reports provided in the Council Packet)** Councilor Caldwell expressed concerns regarding the condo documents and budget that are referenced in the agreement. Councilor Caldwell requested an appraisal be conducted that the Village initiates.

VOTE: PASSED: 3-0

ABSTAIN: Councilor Stagg

- G. Discussion, consideration and possible approval of Resolution No. 2025-002 Approval of signatories**

for Village accounts maintained at Hillcrest Bank.

MOTION: Councilor Wittman **SECOND:** Councilor Turner

VOTE: PASSED: 4-0

H. Discussion, consideration and possible approval of Resolution No. 2025-003 and permission to publish the Village 2025 Holiday Calendar

MOTION: Councilor Wittman **SECOND:** Councilor Stagg

VOTE: PASSED: 4-0

13. MISCELLANEOUS: No reports

14. CLOSED SESSION

The following matters may or may not be discussed in closed session under the NM Open Public Meetings Act under exemptions 10-15-1.H(8): meetings for the discussion of the purchase, acquisition or disposal of real property or water rights by a public body, and, 12.J.; 10-15-1.H (2): limited personnel matters, regarding appointment of an Acting Clerk and adjusted compensation for filling multiple titles and duties.

MOTION: To enter into a closed session

VOTE: MOTION: Councilor Wittman **SECOND:** Councilor Stagg **PASSED: 4-0**

MOTION: to leave the Executive Session and to return to the Regular Meeting

ATTORNEY'S REPORT:

The Village Attorney reported that the Council had met in Executive Session under NM OPMA exemption 10-15-1.H(8) for the discussion of the purchase, acquisition or disposal of real property or property rights regarding 7 Firehouse Rd. and under exemption 10-15-1.H(2) regarding limited personnel matters regarding the appointment of an Acting Village Clerk and associated compensation for holding multiple titles, and that no formal action had been taken.

MOTION: The Chair asked for a motion to accept the report of the Attorney.

VOTE: MOTION: Councilman Wittman **SECOND:** Councilman Stagg **PASSED: 4-0**

15. ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE DATE, TIME & PLACE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE VILLAGE COUNCIL

The next meeting of the Village Council will be the regular meeting on Friday February 21, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. via zoom.

16. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting

VOTE: MOTION: Councilor Wittman **SECOND:** Councilor Stagg **PASSED: 4-0**



Mayor Chris Stanek

Attest: 

Acting Village Clerk Marlene Salazar