

**MINUTES OF THE THIRD AMENDED REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE CAREFREE TOWN COUNCIL**

**WHEN:** TUESDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2021

**WHERE:** ZOOM WEB <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3229729660>  
MEETING ID: 322 972 9660

**TIME:** 5:00 P.M.

**Town Council Attending:**

Mayor Les Peterson  
Vice Mayor John Crane  
Vince D'Aliesio  
Tony Geiger  
Stephen Hatcher  
Michael Johnson  
Cheryl Kroyer

**Town Council Absent:**

None

**Staff Present:**

Gary Neiss, Town Administrator; Michael Wright, Town Attorney; Steve Prokopek, Economic Development Director; Kandace French, Town Clerk/Treasurer.

Mayor Peterson called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Mayor Peterson welcomed the Teachers from the Cave Creek Unified School District and commended them on their great work and dedication to the children throughout the area.

Additionally, Mayor Peterson welcomed the new Councilmember Michael Johnson and asked him to lead the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

- ITEM #1** Approval of the August 3, 2021, Town Council Regular Meeting Minutes.
- ITEM #2** Approval of the September 7, 2021, Town Council Regular Meeting Minutes.
- ITEM #3** Acceptance into the public record of the September 2021 paid bills.
- ITEM #4** Acceptance of the cash receipts and disbursements report for July 2021.

Councilperson D'Aliesio **MOVED TO APPROVE** items 1-4 of the **CONSENT AGENDA**. **SECONDED** by Councilperson Kroyer. **CARRIED**, unanimously.

**CALL TO THE PUBLIC**

**ITEM #5 Call to the Public.**

Mayor Peterson provided a statement regarding Public Comment protocol.

Mayor Peterson opened Call to the Public.

Public Comment letters were read from Peter Sample expressing concern regarding future development within the Town of Carefree and John Mattes Mattes regarding Resolution 2020-11, and the appointment of an Economic Advisory Board and the formation of a staff Technical Advisory Committee Panel. Verbal public comment was received from Evelyn Johnson extending an invitation to visit the Cave Creek Museum's newest exhibits. Noting, opening day of the Museum was a big success and great way to usher in the new season.

**REGULAR AGENDA**

**ITEM #6 Current Events.**

Council Member Kroyer provided information regarding the kickoff of the Town of Carefree, Ambassador Program. Thus far, there are 12 volunteer Ambassadors who will be walking through the Town, helping people by providing directions, making recommendations, and answering questions etc. These Ambassadors will be wearing turquoise vests that read "Ask me about Carefree" on the back. This will be a nice enhance and out in full force. The Ambassadors will be out during the Thunderbird Art Festival the first weekend in November. Councilperson Kroyer added this will be a nice enhancement to the Town of Carefree. Making the Town of Carefree even friendlier and more accessible.

Vice Mayor Crane noted, Restaurant Week was currently taking place in Carefree and running through the 10<sup>th</sup> of October and encouraged all to attend.

**ITEM #7 Presentation by Dr. Cort Monroe for Cave Creek Unified School District.**

Mayor Peterson welcomed Dr. Cort Monroe, Superintendent of the Cave Creek Unified School District. Acknowledging Dr. Monroe's excellent reputation within the community. Adding that the Town of Carefree fully supports the efforts of the Teachers and Staff at the Cave Creek Unified School District.

Dr. Monroe presented via PowerPoint facts of the upcoming school bond. Dr. Monroe informed the group that the CCUSDs boundary is 175 square miles and not only consists of Cave Creek and Carefree, but also includes Rio Verde, North Scottsdale, and North Phoenix. Adding, CCUSD is the largest employer in the Community and the graduation rate is above the State average at 97%.

Dr. Monroe shared a glaring fact, that the Cave Creek Unified School District is the only Unified School District in Maricopa County that does not have a current voter approved Maintenance and Operations Oooverride and/or Bond in place, which are both voter approved. Mr. Monroe presented the Unified School District Tax Rates in Maricopa County for FY 2022. Pointing out that Cave Creek Carefree primary and secondary tax rates are relatively low. 2022 tax rates have decreased by 13.4% due to loss of enrollment due to COVID. Adding, the average district home value of \$557,000 will save \$90.00 a year. Mr. Monroe provided an overview of how public-school

funding in Arizona has been set up and displayed a graph depicting voter support within different districts. Adding, CCUSD has not had a bond approved since 2014 or an override since 2007.

Line one of the tax bill pamphlets that will be sent out reads, *Additional Ed Tax, ARS 15-992B*. CCUSD is lobbying to have this language changed so taxpayers know that people that pay these taxes within our district boundaries, that those monies are not coming to the Cave Creek Unified School District.

Language at the bottom of the District property tax pamphlet will now read;

*Cave Creek USD does not receive the property taxes generated by the Additional Ed Tax, ARS 15-992B. Local property taxes are deposited into the state general fund to assist other schools in Arizona, which totaled over \$4 Million in 2020 and will be over \$8 Million in 2021. The district does not receive any state aid either, all the district's state equalization formula revenue is generated by the local property tax owners.*

Dr. Monroe presented a chart, produced by the Auditor General's office, showing operational measures relative to peer averages. The chart compared CCUSD to other districts that are approximately the same size. Dr. Monroe provided financial facts regarding Arizona's standing in Survey of U.S. School System Finances.

Concluding, CCUSD is looking for long term, sustainable sources of revenue to maintain their schools and programs as enrollment that has been slowly declining and are confident that a bond will help in many ways and believes will serve CCUSD's capital needs until 2028-2030 with regards to technology, facilities, and transportation.

Dr. Monroe responded to questions and comments from Town Council. Councilperson Hatcher raised question regarding the loss in enrollment. Asking, where are the families going? Dr. Monroe responded that data shows that several families are leaving the public schools and moving their children to private/charter schools. In addition, there are students that were lost to online learning. Dr. Monroe concluded that enrollment is the driver for the budget.

A great believer in public schools, Vice Mayor Crane asked what the Cave Creek Unified School District is doing to let those who are not attending the school aware of what the school offers along with the advantages of public school? Dr. Monroe explained that the principals market the schools by talking to parents, giving tours of the schools and reaching out to the community on Social Media. CCUSD is on a great mission to campaign and inform of all the great things that are happening in the Cave Creek Unified District schools.

Dr. Monroe responded to questions regarding the equalization formula.

Councilperson D'Aliesio asked why should people who don't have children in the Cave Creek Unified School District, that live in this area, care? Dr. Monroe responded:

1. The fact is, when surrounded by excellent schools, not only will the value of your home maintain itself, but it also will increase in value.
2. Taxpayers, back in the day, paid their education. Today's taxpayers should now also that paid it pay it forward.

3. If you own a home in the average 557,000.00, it's a wash, saving \$90.00 in taxes while paying \$96.00 for the bond. The investment is miniscule and the right thing to do for the students.

Councilperson Johnson shared that his children just moved from the Paradise Valley schools to the Cave Creek Unified School District and are very happy. Additionally, Mr. Johnson has a daughter who is a special needs teacher and aspires to teach in the Cave Creek Unified School District.

Mayor Peterson thanked Dr. Monroe for his insightful presentation.

**ITEM #8 Presentation of the "Carefree Cares" / CCUSD Excellence Award in conjunction with Cave Creek Unified School District, honoring a teacher from each school in the district each quarter.**

Mayor Peterson announced that the Excellence Award honoring CCUSD teachers, is one of the highlights of the year for himself and the Town Council as a whole and the ability to meet these teachers is an honor.

Councilperson Kroyer presented via PowerPoint details of the Carefree Cares Excellence Awards., recognizing one outstanding Cave Creek Unified School District staff member from each school or department each quarter of the school year. A fifty-dollar gift card will be given to the honored teachers, funded by Notary proceeds donated by the Town of Carefree Clerks Department.

The following are the Excellence Award Teachers honored for this quarter:

Miss Haley Arnold, English Teacher, Sonoran Trail Elementary School (STMS)  
Mrs. Ayako Holtz, ESS Resource Teacher, Black Mountain Elementary School  
Ms. Randee Huffer, Teacher Aide, HTES  
Miss Danielle Michalizysen, 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Teacher, Desert Sun Academy (DSA)  
Mrs. Melinda (Lindy) Murillo, Title 1 Reading Specialist, Lone Mountain Elementary School  
Ms. Lisa Tibbits, 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Teacher, Desert Willow Elementary School (DWES)  
Ms. Allison Zilka, Social Studies Teacher, Cactus Shadows High School (CSHS)

Council congratulated all the Carefree Cares Excellence Award Winners. Recognizing their countless hours of dedication and commitment. Mayor Peterson, Councilperson Kroyer and Councilperson D'Aliesio will be presenting the awards to the selected Teachers in person at next weeks meeting.

**ITEM #9 Review, discussion, and possible action to amend the Kimley Horne contract previously approved on or about February 4, 2020.**

Economic Development Director Steve Prokopek presented via PowerPoint, background of the Kimley Horn Contract, and details of Amendment #2.

The Town received a proposal from Kimley Horn to amend the current contract, adding redevelopment area planning element by bringing in Michael Baker International, (who compiled the original village center master plan) would be adding in a redevelopment and land use component to the original village center master plan along with ESI Consulting who performed the market study will update that information that is now 7 years old, for the market analysis.

Mr. Prokopek provided advantages of the amended contract and explained, we are taking this already approved imbedded plan, as far as what the vision is for Town Center, taking it to the next level to learn exactly what those tangible steps are that will be recommended to Town Council and the community for review and approval and additionally, how these things are paid for. Expressing, this is not a race to get this done as fast as possible, but getting it done well.

Councilperson Geiger asked that the Town perform a considerable amount of outreach to the residents, ensuring that we are bringing them along in this process. Mr. Prokopek responded, there has been, and will continue to be, extensive outreach to the citizens and businesses owners and landlords. Adding, there has been a lot of interest to move forward. Vice Mayor Crane reminded the group of the number of upcoming meetings regarding this. Adding, these meetings are in place to field questions, and create familiarity, to help the community better understand what this process is all about. He concluded that it is critical that the citizens provide input and gain value from this along with the businesses and landlords. Councilperson Kroyer proposed reaching out and meeting with the HOA's as well as staging a booth at the post office to engage with residents and provide information. Ms. Kroyer hopes for a more executable document this time that will enable the Town to move forward with this plan.

Councilperson Geiger MOVED TO APPROVE the 2<sup>nd</sup> amendment to the Kimley Horn contract. SECONDED by Councilperson Kroyer. CARRIED, 7-0.

**ITEM #10** Review, discussion, and possible action to approve a street closure on Veterans Day, November 11<sup>th</sup> from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. Closure to include Ho-Hum Drive from Easy Street to behind the Sanderson Lincoln Pavilion to allow safe pedestrian traffic between the Carefree Veterans Day event to be held in the Pavilion and at the Veterans Memorial in the Carefree Desert Gardens.

Vice Mayor Crane provided information regarding the Veterans Day Charity run on November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The Veteran's Day program will be from 3:00-5:00 p.m. in the Sanderson Lincoln Pavilion. This being the first year that the Veteran's Memorial is in place. The Town is expecting a lot of foot traffic to and from the event. Concluding, that to keep people safe, the request to Town Council is to close the short portion of Ho Hum Drive from Easy Street to behind the Sanderson Lincoln Pavilion from 1:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. on November 11, 2021.

Councilperson Kroyer MOVED TO APPROVE the proposal of the street closure on Veteran's Day. SECONDED by Councilperson Johnson. CARRIED, 7-0.

**ITEM #11** Presentation, discussion and possible action for approval of street closures for walking/running routes, as set forth on the attached application and maps, for the AT&T Veterans Day Charity Three Miler on November 13, 2021, from 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Kelsey Hughes, with AT&T Veterans, will appear and speak in regarding to the safety and COVID -19 precautions being implemented for the event.

Kelsie Hughes presented via PowerPoint providing details of the 3rd annual charity 3 miler. Displaying the racecourse and layout exhibited how the race route has been altered to incorporate the memorial, where the starting line will be and be more in line with the Kiwanis pancake breakfast. AT & T Veterans in partnership with Kiwanis this year, the utilize stage at Sanderson

Lincoln Pavilion to announce the kickoff of the race as well as hand out metals at the conclusion of the race.

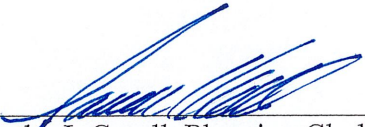
Vice Mayor Crane MOVED TO APPROVE the street closures for the running/walking routes as set forth on the application and maps from 7:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. SECONDED by Councilperson Hatcher. CARRIED, 7-0.

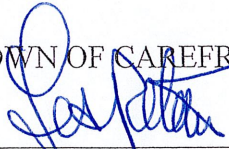
ITEM #12 Adjournment.


The meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 6:32 p.m.

DATED this 5th day of October 2021.

TOWN OF CAREFREE

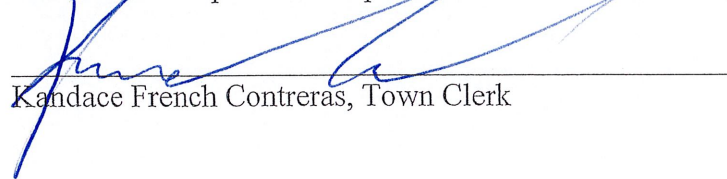
BY:   
\_\_\_\_\_  
Samantha J. Gesell, Planning Clerk

TOWN OF CAREFREE  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Les Peterson, Mayor

Attest:  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kandace French Contreras, Town Clerk

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the Regular Meeting of the Town of Carefree held October 05, 2021. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kandace French Contreras, Town Clerk