

# TOWN OF JEROME

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## MINUTES

### SPECIAL MEETING OF THE JEROME TOWN COUNCIL COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 600 CLARK STREET, JEROME, ARIZONA THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2022 AT 10:00 A.M.

*Notice is hereby given pursuant to A.R.S. 38-431.02 that members of the Town Council will attend this meeting.*

<p><b>ITEM #1:</b> <b>10:02 (0:09)</b></p>	<p><b>CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL</b></p> <p>Mayor/Chairperson to call meeting to order.</p> <p><i>Mayor Jack Dillenberg called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.</i></p> <p>Town Clerk to call and record the roll.</p> <p><i>Town Manager/Clerk Candace Gallagher called the roll. Present were Mayor Dillenberg, Vice Mayor Mandy Worth, and councilmembers Jane Moore, Alex Barber, and Sage Harvey. Also present was Deputy Town Clerk Rosa Cays.</i></p>
<p><b>ITEM #2:</b> <b>10:03 (0:47)</b></p>	<p><b>INTERVIEWS WITH ZONING ADMINISTRATOR APPLICANTS</b></p> <p>Council will interview applicants for the position of Zoning Administrator/Code Enforcement Officer. Following the interviews, Council may convene in executive session for discussion, pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.03 (A)(1).</p> <p><i>Mayor Dillenberg said a few words, then apologized for not being at the meeting in person. He introduced the first job applicant, George Gehlert and asked Councilmember Moore to start the interview.</i></p> <p><i>Mr. Gehlert answered several questions from Council and shared his experience as the community development director in Cottonwood. He said he was not very experienced with historic preservation and that he had not read the town General Plan and zoning ordinance. Mr. Gehlert asked if the hours were flexible due to his frequent trips to Phoenix and said he would like to work from home at times. Mr. Gehlert said he was not looking for a “heavy enforcement” job and that he was more experienced with planning. He also stated that the reason he was before Council was because he was asked to apply but didn’t know a lot about the job.</i></p> <p><i>Councilmember Barber stated she was concerned that Mr. Gehlert was not interested in doing code enforcement.</i></p> <p><i>Ms. Gallagher confirmed with Mr. Gehlert that he would not object to being discussed in executive session.</i></p> <p><i>(33:10) Jerome resident Nancy Robinson asked if the salary had been mentioned to Mr. Gehlert. Ms. Gallagher said it had and that it was in the range of \$50k.</i></p> <p><i>Mr. Gehlert stated that he was moving toward retirement and a job less intense than the last three years.</i></p> <p><i>(35:33) Council took a break at 10:37 a.m. and returned at 10:56 a.m.</i></p> <p><i>(35:54) Mayor Dillenberg introduced the next job applicant, Ed Arico, and Ms. Moore began the interview.</i></p> <p><i>Mr. Arico explained his experience with code enforcement and said he had served on his local board of adjustment in New Jersey for 12 years. He said the key is to educate the public so they know what is permitted and what is not. Mr. Arico also said he had read the General Plan and asked a few questions regarding historic qualifications and requirements and how new homeowners are informed, which the councilmembers answered. Ms. Moore clarified that the town cannot legally mandate people</i></p>

keep their homes the way they are but can encourage them. Ms. Gallagher clarified that the town as a whole is a national landmark, which is the primary concern.

Mr. Arico said regarding residents versus economic contributors, it is necessary to strike a balance, keep property taxes steady, and that the town should not be swayed either way. As for Jerome's future, he said it is important to preserve some of the old properties; that the business influx is good for overall survival, and that the town should maintain what it has, but progress and keep its identity.

Mr. Arico said with the historic aspect of Jerome, code enforcement is needed and he understands it is part of the job, and that planning is not as applicable. He said he was also aware of SB1350 and that Jerome is limited as it is; that vacation rentals are a burden on the resources.

Mr. Arico said the key to a general plan is the execution of it and that they should be done more often, every 5 years, not 10, because things change so quickly in the current environment.

(1:06:34) Ms. Robinson asked Mr. Arico what brought him to the Verde Valley. He said they had visited seven or eight years ago, kept returning to the area, and decided to move.

Mr. Arico then asked a variety of questions about the General Plan and code enforcement, which councilmembers answered.

Ms. Gallagher confirmed with Mr. Arico that he would not object to being discussed during executive session.

(1:25:58) Council took a break at 11:46 a.m. and returned at 11:53 a.m..

(1:26:13) Mayor Dillenberg greeted the next candidate, William Blodgett, and Ms. Moore started off the interview with her questions. She asked Mr. Blodgett about his experience with code enforcement and how he would handle difficult situations. Mr. Blodgett described his experience enforcing HOA codes and dealing with parking issues. He said conflict resolution is one of his strongest skills and that he managed to resolve the HOA issues each time.

The interview continued as councilmembers each asked Mr. Blodgett questions. He said that he had read the General Plan, and that he was impressed with how concise, readable, and well organized it was. As for the zoning ordinance, he has familiarized himself with where it is "and the general trends therein." He informed Ms. Barber that he has worked with blueprints, surveys, and plans, though not on a daily basis, and that he is able to work independently but prefers to be a team player. Mr. Blodgett said he was also comfortable asking for help and was fine with the work schedule.

Vice Mayor Worth asked Mr. Blodgett if he would be okay with the zoning administrator's "one-man show," which he replied was something he has had to do in the past as an archaeologist with no budget for a crew, and that he could handle the administrative, coordinating, and on-site aspects of the job.

As for balancing the needs of residents and local businesses, Mr. Blodgett said compatibility was very important and that it was a matter of putting in the time and effort to understand the process, especially for residents. He also said he did not have experience with development grants but was willing to learn. When asked about his experience with housing, Mr. Blodgett shared his background with the Council; that he was from Idyllwild, a small artists community in California, where he saw similar issues affecting housing such as the rise in costs and short-term rentals.

Mr. Blodgett said he sees Jerome at a crossroads moment, with unparalleled historical stock, and that with the population rising in Arizona, it is important to maintain the town's historic integrity and manage room for sustainable growth, especially for local residents. He said he was also aware of Jerome's issues with wastewater management and infrastructure.

Ms. Moore asked about Mr. Blodgett's historic preservation experience. He said his whole career has been in archaeology but that his parents were planners. He shared how he was exposed to historic preservation through his work and his parent's work. Ms. Moore then asked if code enforcement and dealing with applications would bore him. Mr. Blodgett replied, "If you've ever known an archaeologist, you surround us with old stuff and we're never bored."

Ms. Harvey talked about her familiarity with Idyllwild, then explained SB1350 to Mr. Blodgett. He said his feelings about the situation fall in line with hers.

Ms. Barber asked Mr. Blodgett if he saw what the job would pay and if he was okay with it. He replied, "I did not see and I'm still okay with that." He said it would be an honor to work for Jerome. Asked

about relocating, Mr. Blodgett shared that he and his fiancée are living in their RV in Camp Verde and looking for property.

Ms. Gallagher confirmed with Mr. Blodgett that he would be alright with being discussed during executive session.

(1:43:21) Jerome resident Nancy Robinson asked Mr. Blodgett what brought him to the Verde Valley. He said he worked for three years at an archaeological site near Fort Mohave and liked the area, and that his fiancée, a competitive equestrian with a horse and barn in Munds Park, is working on her master's degree at NAU.

Mr. Blodgett was informed that all the board members and Council were volunteers.

Ms. Moore asked for input from the public regarding the candidates.

(1:46:08) Ms. Robinson said she liked the third candidate, Mr. Blodgett. (She was not at the microphone, so it was difficult to hear all that she said). Someone else in attendance (not identified) also indicated that they liked Mr. Blodgett.

**Motion to enter executive session at 12:14 p.m.**

COUNCILMEMBER	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
BARBER		X	X			
DILLENBERG			X			
HARVEY	X		X			
MOORE			X			
WORTH		X	X			

(0:06, Pt. 2 audio recording) Council returned to open session at 12:32 p.m.

Ms. Harvey announced that councilmembers unanimously decided Mr. Blodgett would be "most useful and beneficial" to the town of Jerome as zoning administrator. She then directed staff to offer the position to Mr. Blodgett at a salary of \$45K; that professional training would be provided; and that at his six-month review, a raise would be considered.

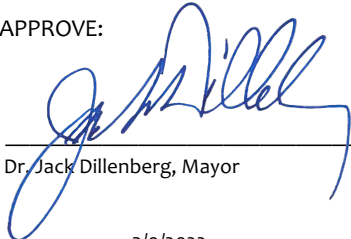
ITEM #3:

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion to adjourn at 12:34 p.m.**

COUNCILMEMBER	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
BARBER		X	X			
DILLENBERG			X			
HARVEY	X		X			
MOORE			X			
WORTH			X			

APPROVE:



Dr. Jack Dillenberg, Mayor

ATTEST:



Candace B. Gallagher, CMC, Town Manager/Clerk

3/9/2022

Date: \_\_\_\_\_