

TOWN OF HOCHATOWN
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

February 16, 2023, at 1:00 p.m.
Hocha Town Hall
9983 N. U.S. Hwy 259, Ste A
Hochatown, OK 74728

SPECIAL BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES

1. Call to Order.

Who Ordered: Mayor Dian Jordan

Time: 1:01pm

2. Announcement of Posting of Notice and Agenda.

The Meeting Notice and Agenda for the Feb 16, 2023 Hochatown Board of Trustees Special Meeting was posted in prominent view at Chapel of the Pines, 9276 N US Hwy 259 and at the Hocha Town Hall, 9983 N US Hwy 259, Ste A, Hochatown by 1:00pm Feb 1, 2023.

The Cancellation Notice of the Feb 7 Hochatown Board of Trustees Regular Meeting was posted in prominent view at Chapel of the Pines 9276 US Hwy 259 and at the Hocha Town Hall, 9983 N US Hwy 259 Ste A, Hochatown by 1:00pm on Feb 3, 2023.

The Notice and Amended Agenda for the February 16, 2023 Special Meeting was posted in prominent view at Chapel of the Pines, 9276 US Highway 259 and the Hocha Town Hall at 9983 N US Hwy 259 Ste A, Hochatown by 1:00pm on February 15, 2023.

3. Roll Call of Trustees.

Trustee Name	Present	Absent
Janet Cress	Y	
Howard Haggard	Y	
Dian Jordan	Y	
Todd McDaniel	Y	
Chad Sargent	Y	

There was a Quorum.

4. Recognition of Guests.

The Guests were recognized and thanked for their attendance.

5. Approval of the January 24, 2023 Special Meeting Minutes.

Mayor Jordan asked the Board of Trustees for any corrections to the Jan 24, 2023 Special Meeting Minutes and there were no corrections brought forth.

Mayor Jordan asked if anyone would like to make a motion on this item.

Motion: To approve the Jan 24, 2023 Special Meeting Minutes.

By: Janet Cress

Second: Chad Sargent

Roll Call Vote

Trustee Name	Vote
Janet Cress	Y
Howard Haggard	Y
Dian Jordan	Y
Todd McDaniel	Y
Chad Sargent	Y

The motion carried to approve the January 24, 2023 Special Meeting Minutes.

6. Approval of the January 17, 2023 Special Meeting Minutes.

Mayor Jordan asked the Board of Trustees for any corrections to the January 17, 2023 Special Meeting Minutes and there were no corrections brought forth.

Mayor Jordan asked if anyone would like to make a motion on this item.

Motion: To approve the January 17, 2023 Special Meeting Minutes.

By: Janet Cress

Second: Chad Sargent

Roll Call Vote

Trustee Name	Vote
Janet Cress	Y
Howard Haggard	Y
Dian Jordan	Y
Todd McDaniel	Y
Chad Sargent	Y

Motion carried to approve the January 17, 2023 Special Meeting Minutes.

7. Approval of the January 10, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes.

Mayor Jordan asked the Board of Trustees for any corrections to the January 10, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes and there were no corrections brought forth.

Mayor Jordan asked if anyone would like to make a motion on this item.

Motion: To approve the January 10, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes.

By: Janet Cress

Second: Chad Sargent

Roll Call Vote

Trustee Name	Vote
Janet Cress	Y
Howard Haggard	Y
Dian Jordan	Y
Todd McDaniel	Y
Chad Sargent	Y

The Motion carried to approve the January 10, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes.

8. Finance Report.

Treasurer Charles Ward presented the Mayor, Trustees and Town Clerk each with a copy of the Corporate Authorization Resolution for the Town of Hochatown’s ‘General Funds Account’ at FirstBank, which notes as signatories Charles Ward, Janet Cress, Howard Haggard and Chad Sargent. This resolution gives a description of Power, Limitations of Power and Resolutions of the Corporation to be signed by the Clerk and attested by the Treasurer.

Charles Ward further explained there are limitations of the account specifically that there will be no credit or debit cards issued unless the Trustees approve in the future.

There was a brief discussion regarding the Town Clerk’s ability to retrieve bank statements. It was agreed that the statements would be included in the monthly Treasurer’s Report at the Regular Board of Trustee’s Meetings and would be available to the Clerk at that time.

Treasurer Charles Ward has received Hochatown’s Tax ID Number from the Federal Internal Revenue Service and gave a copy to the Town Clerk for the Records.

Mayor Jordan asked if anyone would like to make a motion on this item.

Motion: To approve the Corporate Authorization Resolution for the General Funds Account.

By: Janet Cress

Second: Chad Sargent

Roll Call Vote

Trustee Name	Vote
Janet Cress	Y
Howard Haggard	N
Dian Jordan	Y
Todd McDaniel	Y
Chad Sargent	Y

The Motion carried to approve the Corporate Authorization Resolution for the General Funds Account.

9. Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action regarding hiring a bond company.

Janet Cress noted that her committee is still researching options, there is a dependency on when we begin collecting sales tax, lodging tax or implement TIF's. She hopes to be closer to a decision recommendation by the March regular meeting.

There was a discussion regarding the possible timing of the sales tax percentage approval, the citizens' vote, when taxes would begin to be collected, and when taxes most likely would be received.

There was a brief discussion on the need to have a Sales Tax Resolution ready by the March meeting.

It was agreed to include Sales Tax item on the March agenda.

10. Discussion Only of Safety and Communications Committee.

Discussion notes:

Janet Cress reported she has been in conversations regarding emergency communications, in particular with Don Cook of the Oklahoma Forestry Service. Mr. Cook has a wildlife preparation plan for Hochatown, which includes an evacuation plan,

a URL code that can be scanned for emergency information and phone alerts available. Mr. Cook will be traveling to Oklahoma City this coming week to have his plans approved and then will meet with Janet Cress in March to start addressing how she and her committee can be a part of his team.

Janet Cress also noted that she would like Ray Gaston, a Hochatown resident, who is responsible for safety at Huber, to be on the Board's Safety and Communications Committee. She added that he is aware of the eclipse planning meetings and has been working on evacuation routes in case of an emergency.

11. Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action regarding establishing a Hochatown website.

Discussion notes:

Mayor Jordan noted that the paperwork has been submitted for the domain and once we have funds to be able to operate the website, it will be a place where the Trustee Meeting Agenda and Notices, and the Minutes can be posted. She further stated that we don't have funds to implement the website at this time and asked for patience. Janet Cress reported that additionally she and Chad Sargent have been working on Hochatown logo ideas.

12. Discussion Only of Highway 259 road improvement.

Discussion notes:

Howard Haggard reported he has met with ODOT representatives and business owners regarding their concerns on the several options available.

Chad Sargent stated the purpose for improving 259 traffic flow is to make it safe and functional and over the last 16 months there has been a lot of progress. ODOT is interested in making sure the community has the opportunity to preserve our 'strip' as much as possible. There has been a lot of debate on what is best, and ODOT continues to be willing and open to work with the Town of Hochatown, if the bypass option comes to pass. He further stated that the only way ODOT would consider not increasing to a 3 lane or 5 lane would be if Hochatown had an alternate plan, and ODOT will work with Hochatown to give us more time to work out a viable bypass alternative.

Todd McDaniel reported that he participated in a meeting with a group of municipal engineers on different renditions of a Hochatown masterplan, with a baseline of where to start. He is now working with ODOT, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (CNO), and Weyerhaeuser on the possibility of a 259 bypass, which he believes will remove enough traffic on 259 to be a viable alternative to ODOT's 5 lane plan. He further stated that Weyerhaeuser should be making a decision on a land grant or land sale soon, and he described the proposed bypass route. Todd also noted Oklahoma's Governor, Lieutenant

Governor, and the USDA have all expressed a willingness to help find funding for the bypass alternative, as it has a projected cost of an estimated \$100 million.

Chad Sargent added that if the bypass alternative does not prove to be an option, which would result in ODOT's 5 lane plan being implemented, there is a contingency plan for community parking.

Howard Haggard commented that he would like to see attention on Hochatown's gravel roads. Mayor Jordan stated she has spoken to John Wayne Williams, he has a Hochatown map and has agreed to grate Hochatown roads two days a week, and as soon as one of his employees returns to work, he will increase that time to 5 days a week. She further stated that she is hoping for better communication from them and a better relationship with them. Mayor Jordan also cautioned that until Hochatown has funding, we can not repair any roads, or force the Commissioners to do so.

13. Discussion Only of Ordinances update.

Discussion notes:

Mayor Jordan reported that work continues on Ordinances, and hopefully by the March meeting we will have a baseline.

Todd McDaniel stated that he has requested basic copies of other community's Ordinances and is reviewing them. He stated he has been reviewing those copies to select what would be appropriate for Hochatown, with a goal to make sure our first round of Ordinances is a good one.

Chad Sargent added that some of the Ordinance examples have come from Tourism.

Mayor Jordan noted that there will be a lot that will have to be grandfathered, as there has been a lot of building in Hochatown over the years with no ordinances in place.

Todd McDaniel added that regarding construction codes, that Hochatown should start with the uniform building codes as a baseline.

14. Discussion only of Insurance.

Discussion notes:

Mayor Jordan began by asking Hochatown's General Counsel Liz George, who was attending as a guest, if all Trustees needed to be bonded or only those on the checking account. Liz George responded that there are several forms of insurance and that we would need to contact OMAG for options.

15. Discussion Only of Plat Approval Process update.

Discussion Notes:

Mayor Jordan stated that she is working on plat approvals, and some are coming up quickly. She stated the Trustees may need a Special Meeting when those plats are ready for approval, and noted that there would be 48 hours notice prior for such a meeting if the Public would want to view the plat signing.

Howard Haggard asked for an explanation on how those plats would be approved as Hochatown currently has no plat approval process or guidelines.

Todd McDaniel answered that Hochatown would use the same basic process as the County.

Mayor Jordan furthered that most of the guidelines come from the State and DEQ.

General Counsel Liz George added that she would provide a checklist to the Trustees, and confirmed that most of the guidelines do come from the State, and she will make sure that the Trustees have the information they need.

16. Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action regarding appointing an interim Hochatown Town Manager.

Discussion Notes:

Mayor Jordan noted that Hochatown does not currently have a budget so will not be able to hire as yet. She explained that due to the size of Hochatown, we would have a Town Administrator vs. a City Manager, and that it would be a 'boots on the ground' professional position. The Town Administrator would be working daily on the business of Hochatown instead of relying solely on the volunteer Trustees. The Town Administrator would need to have experience.

No action was taken.

17. Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action regarding Southeastern Oklahoma Library System.

Discussion notes:

Mayor Jordan reported that Hochatown qualifies for a Reading Room through the Southeast Oklahoma Library System (SEOLS), and was in receipt of an agreement to be approved by the Trustees. A few of the many benefits that SEOLS provides would be WIFI, which would be available to residents and tourists, and office/Reading Room

equipment. One of the requirements to qualify for the Reading Room is to have a location staffed at least 15 hours a week. The SEOLS is excited to add Hochatown, and is hoping for it to become a ‘technology center’.

Motion: To approve the Agreement for a Reading Room from the Southeast Oklahoma Library System.

By: Todd McDaniel

Second: Chad Sargent

Roll Call Vote

Trustee Name	Vote
Janet Cress	Y
Howard Haggard	Y
Dian Jordan	Y
Todd McDaniel	Y
Chad Sargent	Y

Motion carried to accept the Agreement for a Reading Room from the Southeast Oklahoma Library System.

18. Presentation and Discussion of Town Public Policy Matters – J. J. Francais

NOTE: Due to time constraints of the General Counsel, the Guest Presentation was deferred until after the Agenda Item 19 – Discussion Only of Lodging Tax.

Notes:

Mr. Francais is the Mayor of Elgin, OK, which is a 2A school town of 3100 citizens with 2600 children in school. He described his town as having a two lane highway, with one way in and one way out of town, and they experience similar traffic issues as Hochatown. Mr. Francais is also the publisher of a newspaper that covers government corruption.

Mr. Francais began his discussion by saying that what he had observed at Hochatown’s Trustee meeting was “wonderful”. He gave his views on the council meetings that he has attended, with some of them being “not wonderful”.

He noted to the Trustees that as they review Ordinances, the one Ordinance that is most overlooked is Rules and Decorum. He advised to ‘do your best’ to make sure the Trustees can replace themselves in the future. He encouraged the Trustees to look for ways to encourage citizen engagement, and engagement among Trustees. He shared his experience of not being able to find Trustees in small rural populations because it had become too difficult and time consuming to serve on the towns’ boards.

He also shared his experience that town business takes time to take place, and encourages the Trustees to share this information with the residents.

19. Discussion Only of Lodging Tax.

Discussion notes:

Mayor Jordan began the discussion by asking for advice, and noted that local residents would be exempt from the Lodging Tax.

General Counsel Liz George advised the Trustees to have an open discussion regarding percentage, adding that a vote would not happen until there was a resolution and town vote.

Mayor Jordan stated that Hochatown will not want to price themselves out of competition. She explained that Hochatown is the only town in the county that would be required to pay both county and city lodging tax. She also asked Counsel for what purpose the Lodging Tax could be used.

General Counsel Liz George responded that it must have a stated purpose.

Chad Sargent stated that it must benefit those being taxed.

Todd McDaniel suggested that the minimum should be minimum 3%, maximum 5%.

A brief discussion followed regarding lodging taxes collected by neighboring counties and cities, the collection process options, and timing.

General Counsel offered to circulate an email individually among the Trustees with information and would be available to answer any questions they may have.

A brief discussion continued again regarding percentages, and how they should be collected.

General Counsel also suggested that the Trustees should be looking for a CPA firm that could handle the collection and disbursement of the Lodging Taxes. Mayor Jordan confirmed that the Trustees have been calling on CPA firms to gather information.

20. New Business; any matter not known, or which could not have been reasonably foreseen prior to the time of posting the agenda.

Discussion Notes:

Howard Haggard noted the timing of reelecting Trustees and asked if that date would be April 4th.

Mayor Jordan reminded that the Board is currently interim.

There was a discussion regarding election process and Trustees' term limits.

Mayor Jordan reminded the Trustees that Hochatown's election process will follow the Town Meeting Act.

There was discussion regarding the dates, times, and location of the remaining meeting dates, with a decision to keep the March 7th, 5:00pm, at Chapel of the Pines, with the remaining dates thereafter to be reviewed month-to-month.

There was a discussion regarding the need to keep discussions and business to only the agenda items, and the requirement to take no questions and no interjections from guests during the meeting. After the meeting, there can be discussion with individual Trustees and citizens one-on-one.

Howard Haggard asked the Treasurer if the bank asked for funds to open the account. Treasurer Charles Ward noted that they did not. Mayor Jordan stated that she has donation checks waiting to be deposited.

21. Discussion and Possible Action to adjourn.

Motion: To adjourn the meeting.

By: Janet Cress

Second: Todd McDaniel

Roll Call Vote

Trustee Name	Vote
Janet Cress	Y
Howard Haggard	Y
Dian Jordan	Y
Todd McDaniel	Y
Chad Sargent	Y

Motion carried to adjourn the meeting.

Time Meeting Adjourned: 2:14pm