

**MINUTES OF THE
REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMON
COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF STAR VALLEY**

**Tuesday, January 4, 2022 at 5:15 pm
3675 East Highway 260, Star Valley, AZ
(Star Valley Town Hall)**

The Agenda for the meeting is as follows:

- PRAYER was offered by Vice Mayor McKinney.
- PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
- CALL TO ORDER
- ROLL CALL:
Vice Mayor McKinney X, Council Member Davis X, Council Member Armington X,
Council Member Binney X, Council Member Rappaport X, Council Member McDaniel X,
Mayor Coon X.

- **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

During this portion of the meeting, members of the public may address the Town Council on items that are not on the printed agenda. Any remarks shall be addressed to the Council as a whole and not to any individual member. Speakers are limited to three (3) minutes per person unless additional time is granted by the Mayor. The Council may not discuss or act upon matters raised during public comments.

The Mayor opened up this portion of the meeting for public comment. There were no comments and the Mayor closed the public comment portion.

- **CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS:**

All items listed under the Consent Agenda will be voted on with one motion. If discussion is desired regarding any Consent Agenda item, that item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and voted on separately.

- A. Approval of Claims Payable from December 16, 2021 through December 31, 2021 for the General Fund and for the Water Department.**

A motion to approve consent agenda item A was made by Council Member Davis and was seconded by Council Member Armington.

A roll call vote was taken:

Vice Mayor McKinney X, Council Member Davis X, Council Member Armington X, Council Member Binney X, Council Member Rappaport X, Council Member McDaniel X, Mayor Coon X.

The motion was voted on and passed 7 - 0.

- **DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

1. **Discussion of Gary Coon's arrest (not an action item). Requested by Council Member Rappaport.**

Council Member Rappaport stated she wanted this on the agenda because she thinks council needs to address it. She doesn't want this to be a big black eye for the Town. She hasn't read an arrest report or anything and she is going by what she read in the newspaper. In all fairness, stated Council Member Rappaport, we need to hear what Mayor Coon has to say. Mayor Coon responded this is a pending case so he can't really say anything other than he is disappointed and sad about what happened. He wishes he could speak but he can't at this time. Council Member Binney stated he has been a council member for numerous years and this is the worst start of a new year that he has seen. Council is not here to judge whether Mayor Coon is innocent or guilty, that's between Mayor Coon and the courts. Council is here to determine if Mayor Coon is fit to be an ambassador for Star Valley. Council Member Binney reported he has picked up the different reports and he turned in a request before Council Member Rappaport, but he withdrew it because he felt he wasn't being fair to Mayor Coon. He has received phone calls today and the town is not happy about this at all. Council Member Binney disclosed he does not believe Mayor Coon is fit to be an ambassador to Star Valley. Several of the mayors in the past that have had trouble, reported Council Member Binney, all resigned. Council Member Binney stated he does believe that is the case that should be carried out today and added he was a little surprised that Mayor Coon didn't already resign. It has nothing to do with innocence or guilt at this point, concluded Council Member Binney, the Town can't have a mayor act like that.

Council Member Armington stated he doesn't know who knows the so-called victim, but if anyone spent a lot of time digging into the report then maybe they should have done a background check on her. Council Member Armington reported she's living out of a car. She had a fight with her parents and they kicked her out of the house. The cops chased her and she was arrested for evading police and assaulting an officer. The woman is a fraud, announced Council Member Armington. The only thing our mayor is guilty of, stated Council Member Armington, is making friends with her and feeling sorry that she was living in her car. The mayor is innocent until proven guilty, concluded Council Member Armington. Council Member Binney responded we are not judging innocence or guilt; we are judging fitness to represent the Town. The employees have to have pride in where they work and it's hard for them right now. It's a choice of action, a bad choice from what Council Member Armington has reported. If he is going to judge, stated Council Member Binney, he is going to judge Council Member Armington for the email he sent to everyone. Council Member Binney began getting upset and Mayor Coon recommended to stay with the subject and then stated that Council Member Binney was out of order. Heated discussion ensued.

Vice Mayor McKinney stated there are two issues that are all tangled up together, which makes it really hard to separate them. Mayor Coon has a difficult situation legally. Quite rightly he points out that it's not proper for him to discuss it and there are a lot of reasons why that is true. Vice Mayor McKinney then suggested that council not direct their comments towards the legal situation. The other situation, stated Vice Mayor McKinney, is the good name of the Town of Star Valley. Vice Mayor McKinney then acknowledged he was taken aback by the color photo of Mayor Coon in the newspaper. In going forward, recommended Vice Mayor McKinney, council should keep their comments and the direction of the conversation towards what is best for Star Valley and stay away from trying to judge a legal process that may go on for who knows how long. Council Member Rappaport commented she agrees it's between Mayor Coon and law enforcement. Being on a council we have to judge behavior and if it's good or bad for the Town. Council Member Rappaport acknowledged she is concerned about that. Council Member

Rappaport reported she was a battered wife and she feels like she has a duty to the women and girls of this Town to feel that they are safe. She is upset, announced Council Member Rappaport. Council can and should rationally discuss this and council needs to stay on top of this.

Mayor Coon commented that Council Member Rappaport's point of view is neutral and fair and that's all he asks for. This is embarrassing and he wishes he could talk about it and at some point he will. He respects council and they have a right to address this. He knows there is always this assumption of guilt. This type of citation is bad and makes him shudder. It happened and it will work its way out. Mayor Coon reported he plead not guilty and he knows he has to work through the system. It's a new experience for him as he has never been arrested in his life. Mayor Coon apologized to council and the Town that he is involved in this. Mayor Coon stated he doesn't appreciate being falsely accused, but he does appreciate councils input and he respects council. Council Member Davis stated he is not trying to pre-judge the Mayor. He is concerned of the appearance and how the Town of Star Valley is perceiving this and how it is perceived all over. It's embarrassing, announced Council Member Davis. He can understand that the Mayor feels he would be admitting guilt if he resigns, stated Council Member Davis, but he doesn't see it that way. He is concerned about how it appears and how it is received by the citizens of Star Valley. Mayor Coon responded we would have no government if everyone accused of something resigned. We have to defend ourselves until we are proven guilty. Council Member Davis responded he disagrees with Mayor Coon's comment. He has never seen too many mayors that have been accused of this. It is just the perception of how a sitting mayor is still sitting in that position and council is letting it go forward. Because you're assuming guilt, responded Mayor Coon. He's not assuming anything, responded Council Member Davis. He's talking about for the preservation of the position as mayor of this Town, Payson or any other town. It's just the perception of that mayor sitting in that seat, concluded Council Member Davis.

Queried Council Member Rappaport – You were arrested and booked? “Yes,” responded Mayor Coon. With domestic violence there's always an arrest because they need to separate you. Queried Council Member Rappaport – They cuffed you and took you to jail? “Yes,” responded Mayor Coon. That doesn't make you guilty. Council Member Rappaport stated she agreed. Council Member Binney stated there are different levels of prosecution. At our level it's just what's good for Star Valley. That's all everyone at the table should be concerned about. Mayor Coon responded he is. Council Member Binney stated he doesn't believe Mayor Coon is and that's the problem. Right now there are too many people out there that are upset. You really have to decide whether this is good for Star Valley or you. Or both, responded Mayor Coon. Not every domestic violence case ends up with an arrest, stated Council Member Binney. Council Member Rappaport commented he is accurate on that. Nowadays, reported Council Member Binney, if there's an error they usually err on the side of hauling someone away. They can't do it if there's not a presumption of guilt. Council Member Binney reported he went down and got both the reports and the video. Council Member Binney admitted he had a real hard time with Mayor Coon telling the police he was mayor of this Town. The mayor is guilty of not being responsible for this Town, concluded Council Member Binney. Queried Council Member Rappaport – You've never been arrested or cited for this type of thing ever? “No, never” responded Mayor Coon. There was no further discussion.

- **ADJOURNMENT**

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Council Member Armington and was seconded by Council Member Davis.

The motion was voted on and passed 7 – 0.

APPROVED:

Gary Coon, Mayor

Date: _____

ATTEST:

Eddie Chapin, Town Clerk

CERTIFICATION:

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the regular meeting of the Town Council of the Town of Star Valley held on the 4th day of January 2022. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held, and that a quorum was present.

Dated this 18th day of January 2022.

Eddie Chapin, Town Clerk