

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to Town of Fort White, Columbia
3 County; amending ch. 57-1334, Laws of Florida;
4 deleting boundaries; revising general powers to borrow
5 money; revising the selection and terms of members of
6 the Town Council; providing for the registration of
7 voters; providing for the salaries of the Mayor and
8 members of the Town Council, powers of the town,
9 vacancies in Town Council, and the date of the first
10 meeting of each newly elected Town Council; removing
11 provisions relating to special meetings, ordinances
12 and resolutions, and publication of ordinances and
13 resolutions; removing provisions relating to the
14 municipal court; providing that the Columbia County
15 court system will handle all matters requiring court
16 hearings or appearances; revising provisions relating
17 to the police department and the fire department;
18 providing and revising requirements for the Town
19 Clerk; removing provisions relating to the town
20 auditor, town tax assessor, town treasurer, and tax
21 administration; revising and providing requirements
22 for the election of candidates to the office of Town

23 Council; removing a provision requiring elections to
 24 be conducted in a specified manner; authorizing the
 25 Town Council to agree to canvass the returns and the
 26 results of an election; requiring the Town Council to
 27 review the returns and declare a winner; revising the
 28 terms of office of councilmembers; providing an
 29 effective date.

30

31 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

32

33 Section 1. Section 5, subsection (25) of section 7,
 34 sections 8 and 10, subsections (8), (9), and (13) of section 12,
 35 sections 13, 15, 16, 20, and 22 through 82 of chapter 57-1334,
 36 Laws of Florida, are amended to read:

37 Section 5. BOUNDARIES. The corporate limits of the Town of
 38 Fort White, a municipal corporation in Columbia County, Florida,
 39 shall extend to and include all certain territories
 40 comprehending and comprising within Section 8 (5) (a) ~~the~~
 41 ~~following described limits, to-wit: Commence at the center of~~
 42 ~~the intersection of Florida State Highway No. 47 and United~~
 43 ~~States Highway 27 and run due South three-quarters of a mile,~~
 44 ~~thence run due North a mile and a half, thence run due West a~~

45 ~~mile and a half, thence run due South a mile and a half, thence~~
 46 ~~run due East three quarters of a mile to the point of beginning.~~

47 Section 7. GENERAL POWERS. The town shall have the powers,
 48 functions and immunities granted to municipal corporations by
 49 the constitution and general laws of this state, as now or
 50 hereinafter existing, together with the implied powers necessary
 51 to carry into execution all the powers granted. The enumeration
 52 of particular powers by this charter shall not be deemed to be
 53 exclusive, and in addition to the powers enumerated herein or
 54 implied hereby, or appropriate to the exercise of such powers,
 55 it is intended that the town shall have and exercise all powers
 56 which it would be competent for this charter specifically to
 57 enumerate. The following are among the powers of the said town,
 58 subject to the limitations hereinafter expressed:

59 (25) To borrow money ~~for a period not longer than the~~
 60 ~~remainder of the fiscal year in which the loan is made,~~ and this
 61 power shall be in addition to the other powers to borrow money
 62 set forth in this charter, or granted by the general laws of
 63 this state;

64 Section 8. NUMBER, ELECTION ~~SELECTION~~, TERM.

65 (1) The Town Council shall consist of five (5) electors
 66 who shall be designated as follows:

67
68
69
70
71
72
73
74
75
76
77
78
79
80
81
82
83
84
85
86
87
88

Mayor
Councilmember ~~Councilman~~ Seat One
Councilmember ~~Councilman~~ Seat Two
Councilmember ~~Councilman~~ Seat Three
Councilmember ~~Councilman~~ Seat Four

(2) The Mayor ~~and the other four councilmen~~ shall be elected at large, and shall hold office for four (4) ~~three (3)~~ years. The members of the Town Council shall be elected by a vote of the qualified voters from respective districts in which councilmembers run for office. Councilmembers shall be elected for a term of four (4) years. The election of the Mayor and councilmembers shall be in the manner provided for in this charter and under general law except as otherwise provided for in this charter, and shall be elected in the manner provided for in this charter.

(3) The term of office of all members of the Town Council shall commence at the beginning of the next regular or special meeting after the election results are final in accordance with this charter ~~8:00 O'clock P. M. on the fourth Tuesday of August of the year in which such councilmen are elected.~~

89 (4) The first elections of the Mayor and Town
 90 Councilmembers under this provision shall be held on the first
 91 (1st) Tuesday of November 2020 and shall affect those elected on
 92 that date for their terms of office. The Mayor shall be elected
 93 for a term of four (4) years, and an election for the seat of
 94 Mayor shall be held every four (4) years thereafter.
 95 Councilmembers from Districts 3 and 4 shall be elected for a
 96 term of four (4) years, and thereafter said district seats shall
 97 be filled every four (4) years. Councilmembers from Districts 1
 98 and 2 shall be elected for an initial term of two (2) years and
 99 thereafter shall be elected for a term of four (4) years.

100 (5)(a) The districts from which members of the Town
 101 Council of the Town of Fort White shall be elected are defined
 102 as follows:

103 1. District 1: Start on the town's northern boundary at SW
 104 State Road 47 and go south on State Road 47 to US Highway 27 to
 105 SW County Road 18, thence east on County Road 18 to the Town's
 106 boundary, including all property in said northeast quadrant of
 107 the Town of Fort White.

108 2. District 2: Start on the town's eastern boundary at SW
 109 County Road 18, thence west to SW US Highway 27, thence go south
 110 on SW US Highway 27 to the town's southern boundary, including

111 all of the property in said southeast quadrant of the Town of
 112 Fort White.

113 3. District 3: Start on the town's western boundary as SW
 114 Wilson Springs Road and thence go east on Wilson Springs Road to
 115 SW Skye Avenue thence go north on SW Skye Avenue to SW Jordan
 116 Street, thence go east on SW Jordan Street to SW Highway 237
 117 thence go east and southeast on SW US Highway 27 to the town's
 118 southern boundary, including all of the property in said
 119 southwest quadrant of the Town of Fort White.

120 4. District 4: Start on the Town's northern boundary at
 121 State Road 47 and thence go south on State Road 47 to US Highway
 122 27, thence go west on US Highway 27 to SW Jordan Street, thence
 123 go west on SW Jordan Street to SW Skye Avenue, thence to south
 124 on SW Skye Avenue to SW Wilson Springs Road, thence go west on
 125 SW Wilson Springs Road to the Town's western boundary, including
 126 all of the property in said northwest quadrant of the Town of
 127 Fort White.

128 (b) The districts provided in subparagraphs (a)1.-4. are
 129 intended to be a division of the Town of Fort White into four
 130 (4) districts which are to have equal numbers of citizens and
 131 equal numbers of voters. It is the further intent of this
 132 charter amendment that the boundaries of said districts shall be

133 changed when necessary to provide an approximate numerical
134 equalization of citizens and voters in each of said districts.
135 It is contemplated that the said changes will be made only when
136 differences are substantial and it is not contemplated that said
137 districts will always have, or will ever have, the same number
138 of citizens and voters without any variation. Said changes shall
139 be made in the same manner as other amendments to this charter.

140 (c) Only qualified voters residing in a particular
141 district shall be allowed to vote in the election of the
142 Councilmember to represent said district. However, any citizen
143 of the Town of Fort White otherwise qualified may run for the
144 office of Mayor or Councilmember from any district, regardless
145 of whether said member resides in the particular district in
146 which he or she runs for office.

147 (6) The registration of voters shall be as provided in
148 this charter. Registration of voters in order to qualify to vote
149 in elections shall be made in the office of the Supervisor of
150 Elections of Columbia County, Florida. The registration of a
151 voter shall include a designation as to the district in which
152 said voter resides within the Town of Fort White. Registration
153 of voters shall be made at least thirty (30) days before the day
154 of any town election. An oath shall be given by the registration

155 officer or the person appointed to make such registrations by
 156 the Town Council, which oath shall be that the information given
 157 by the registrant is true and correct. The information required
 158 shall be that required by this charter, including information
 159 regarding the residence of the voter for the purpose of
 160 determining whether said registrant is a qualified voter of the
 161 Town of Fort White, and for the purpose of determining in which
 162 district of this Town of Fort White the registrant resides.

163 Section 10. SALARY. The Mayor shall ~~may~~ receive a minimum
 164 salary of \$600 per month and members of ~~to be fixed by~~ the Town
 165 Council of the Town of Fort White shall receive a minimum salary
 166 of \$200 ~~provided, however, the salary of the Mayor shall not~~
 167 ~~exceed Twenty (\$20.00) Dollars per month~~ to be paid on the first
 168 (1st) day of each and every month hereafter. The Town Council
 169 shall set the salaries of the Mayor and councilmembers by
 170 ordinance enacted pursuant to general laws which shall provide
 171 notice to the members of the public regarding the readings of
 172 such ordinance and the proposed enactment thereof. This action
 173 shall be effective immediately upon adoption.

174 Section 12. POWERS. Except as otherwise provided in this
 175 charter, all powers of the town, and the determination of all
 176 matters of policy shall be vested in the Town Council. Without

177 limitation of the foregoing, the Town Council shall have power
 178 to:

179 (8) Remit, upon the recommendation of a county judge ~~the~~
 180 ~~municipal judge~~, fines or other penalties imposed by the
 181 municipal court;

182 (9) Pass ordinances and laws for the preservation of the
 183 public peace and order, and impose penalties for the violation
 184 thereof; ~~provided, that the maximum penalty to be imposed shall~~
 185 ~~be a fine of not more than five hundred dollars and imprisonment~~
 186 ~~for a period of time not longer than sixty days;~~

187 (13) Appoint, remove and fix the compensation of the Town
 188 Attorney, ~~municipal judge, town prosecutor, town auditor,~~ town
 189 clerk, town tax assessor, and all other town employees;

190 Section 13. VACANCIES IN TOWN COUNCIL. In the event of a
 191 ~~Any~~ vacancy in the office of the Mayor or a member of the Town
 192 Council, the remaining members of the Town Council shall appoint
 193 a qualified citizen to fill the balance of the term of the
 194 vacancy of either the Mayor or the Town Council seat. Such
 195 appointment shall be made within sixty (60) days of the vacancy
 196 unless such time period is extended by the Town Council. In the
 197 event that there is not a quorum to appoint a replacement for a
 198 vacancy, within a reasonable time, the seat of Mayor or member

199 of the Town Council ~~be filled until the next regular municipal~~
 200 ~~election by vote of the; provided, that if such vacancy is not~~
 201 ~~filled within ten (10) days after it shall have occurred, it~~
 202 shall be filled by appointment of the Governor. Any such
 203 appointments shall continue until the end of the unexpired term
 204 of such seat and until a successor is elected and sworn into
 205 office.

206 Section 15. INDUCTION OF TOWN COUNCIL INTO OFFICE; MEETING
 207 OF TOWN COUNCIL. The first meeting of each newly elected Town
 208 Council, for induction into office, shall be held at 6:00 ~~8:00~~
 209 O'clock P. M., on the fourth (4th) Monday in the month ~~day~~
 210 following its election, after which the Town Council shall meet
 211 regularly at such times as may be prescribed by its rules, but
 212 not less frequently than once each month. All meetings of the
 213 Town Council shall be open to the public.

214 Section 16. SPECIAL MEETINGS: HOW CALLED. The Mayor, or any
 215 two (2) members of the Town Council may call special meetings of
 216 the Town Council, upon at least six (6) hours written notice to
 217 each member, ~~served personally or left at his usual place of~~
 218 ~~residence or place of business.~~ All meetings of the Town Council
 219 and of the committee thereof shall be public, and any citizens
 220 shall have access to the minutes and records thereof at all

221 reasonable times.

222 Section 20. ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS. Every proposed
223 ordinance or resolution shall be introduced in written or
224 printed form and shall not contain more than one (1) subject,
225 but general appropriation ordinance may contain the various
226 subjects and accounts for which moneys are to be appropriated.
227 The enacting clause of all ordinances shall be "Be It Enacted by
228 The People of the Town of Fort White, Florida." No ordinance,
229 unless it shall be an emergency measure, shall be passed until
230 it shall have been read at two (2) meetings, ~~not less than one~~
231 ~~week apart, or unless the requirement of such readings has been~~
232 ~~dispensed with by unanimous vote of the Town Council.~~

233 Section 22. AUTHENTICATING: PUBLICATION. Every ordinance or
234 resolution shall, upon its final passage be recorded in a book
235 kept for the purpose and shall be authenticated by the
236 signatures of the presiding officer and the clerk of the Town
237 Council. ~~Every ordinance of a general or permanent nature shall~~
238 ~~be published once within ten (10) days after its final passage~~
239 ~~in a newspaper of general circulation in the Town of Fort White,~~
240 ~~Florida, or by posting said ordinance in three (3) separate~~
241 ~~public places for a period of ten (10) days after its final~~
242 ~~passage.~~

243 Section 23. APPOINTMENT; LEGAL ADVISOR TO TOWN; PREPARATION
 244 AND APPROVAL OF LEGAL INSTRUMENTS; DEFEND AND PROSECUTE IN
 245 BEHALF OF TOWN. The Town Council shall appoint a Town Attorney
 246 who shall act as the legal advisor to, and attorney and
 247 counselor for the municipality and all of its officers in
 248 matters relating to their official duties. The Town Attorney ~~He~~
 249 shall prepare all contracts, bonds and other instruments in
 250 writing, in which the municipality is concerned, and shall
 251 endorse on each his or her approval of the form and correctness
 252 thereof. When required to do so, the Town Attorney ~~he~~ shall
 253 prosecute and defend for and in behalf of the town, all
 254 complaints, suits, and controversies in which the town is a
 255 party. The Town Attorney ~~He~~ shall furnish the Town Council, the
 256 head of any department or any officer, not included in any
 257 department, his or her opinion on any question of law relating
 258 to their respective powers and duties. For these services, the
 259 Town Attorney ~~he~~ shall receive such compensation as the Town
 260 Council may determine by record vote.

261 Section 24. TO PERFORM DUTIES REQUIRED BY TOWN COUNCIL,
 262 STATE LAW AND CHARTER. In addition to the duties, specifically
 263 imposed under the preceding section, the Town Attorney ~~he~~ shall
 264 perform such other professional duties as may be required of him

265 or her by ordinance or resolution of the Town Council or as
 266 prescribed, for Town Attorney under the general laws of the
 267 State which are not inconsistent with the charter and with any
 268 ordinance or resolution which may be passed by the Town Council.
 269 The Town Attorney ~~He~~ shall receive such compensation as the Town
 270 Council may determine by record vote.

271 Section 25. QUALIFICATIONS. The Town Attorney shall be a
 272 lawyer with ~~lawyer of~~ at least five (5) years of experience,
 273 admitted in and having authority to practice in all courts of
 274 the State.

275
 276 ARTICLE IV

277 COURT MATTERS

278 ~~MUNICIPAL COURT~~

279 Section 26. ~~ESTABLISHMENT; APPOINTMENT OF MUNICIPAL JUDGE;~~
 280 ~~POWER OF MAYOR DURING ABSENCE OF JUDGE;~~ SESSIONS OF COURT. All
 281 matters requiring court hearings or appearances for any resident
 282 of the Town of Fort White will be handled by the Columbia County
 283 Clerk of Courts ~~There shall be and there is hereby established~~
 284 ~~in the Town of Fort White a municipal court to be known as the~~
 285 ~~"Municipal Court of the Town of Fort White, Florida," for the~~
 286 ~~trial of all offenders against the municipal ordinances. Such~~

287 ~~court shall be presided over by a municipal judge who shall be~~
288 ~~the Mayor. Sessions of the municipal court may be held daily~~
289 ~~except Sundays and holidays.~~

290 ~~Section 27. POWERS AND DUTIES, GENERALLY. The municipal~~
291 ~~judge shall have power by his warrant to have brought before him~~
292 ~~any person or persons charged with violation of the town~~
293 ~~ordinances, and shall have exclusive original jurisdiction over~~
294 ~~all proceedings of a criminal nature for the violation of any~~
295 ~~ordinance of the town. In the proper exercise of the functions~~
296 ~~of the municipal court within its jurisdiction as herein~~
297 ~~defined, the municipal judge shall have power and is authorized~~
298 ~~to issue and cause to be served search warrants and any and all~~
299 ~~other writs and processes such as are issued and used by county~~
300 ~~judges and justices of peace in the State of Florida, and the~~
301 ~~police of the Town of Fort White are authorized and it is made~~
302 ~~their duty to execute and serve any and all such writs and~~
303 ~~processes issued out of the said municipal court by the~~
304 ~~municipal judge, and to make proper returns upon the same to~~
305 ~~such municipal court in the same manner as is required of~~
306 ~~constables, sheriffs, deputy sheriffs, and any other officer in~~
307 ~~the execution of similar papers. The municipal judge shall have~~
308 ~~power and authority to take bail for the appearance of an~~

309 | ~~accused person, if such person fail to appear, to declare such~~
 310 | ~~bond or security estreated; to require the attendance of~~
 311 | ~~witnesses for the town and for the accused person, to administer~~
 312 | ~~oaths, take affidavits; and to inquire into the truth of falsity~~
 313 | ~~of all charges preferred; to decide on the guilt or innocence of~~
 314 | ~~the accused, and to fix and to impose penalties by sentences as~~
 315 | ~~are prescribed and provided for under the ordinances of the~~
 316 | ~~town, and to have all powers incidental and usual to the due~~
 317 | ~~enforcement of such town ordinances.~~

318 | ~~Section 28. AUTHORITY TO PRESERVE ORDER; DISPOSITION OF~~
 319 | ~~MONEYS COLLECTED. The municipal court shall have authority to~~
 320 | ~~preserve order and decorum and shall be invested with the same~~
 321 | ~~powers to that end, by fine and imprisonment, as are possessed~~
 322 | ~~and authorized to be exercised by criminal courts of records~~
 323 | ~~within the State. All fines, penalties and fees collected in the~~
 324 | ~~municipal court and by the police of the town shall be part of~~
 325 | ~~the revenue of the town and shall be paid to the finance~~
 326 | ~~department on the date on which collected, and receipt taken~~
 327 | ~~thereof. The moneys so paid into the Town Treasury may be by~~
 328 | ~~ordinance of the Town Council, appropriated to any particular~~
 329 | ~~fund and shall thereafter be used in accordance with such~~
 330 | ~~ordinance.~~

331 ~~Section 29. REMISSION OF FINES AND PENALTIES. The municipal~~
 332 ~~judge may, in his discretion, remit all, or part of any fines,~~
 333 ~~costs or penalties imposed in said court and may suspend the~~
 334 ~~enforcement of any sentence imposed in such court.~~

335 ~~Section 30. ENTRY ON DOCKET SUFFICIENT FOR TRIAL.~~
 336 ~~Entry of the charge on the docket of the municipal court of the~~
 337 ~~Town of Fort White shall be sufficient for the purpose of trying~~
 338 ~~any person charged with an offense against the town ordinances.~~

339 Section 27. ~~31.~~ POLICE DEPARTMENT. The police force of the
 340 Town of Fort White shall consist of a Chief of Police and as
 341 many subordinate officers, policemen and employees as the Town
 342 Council shall by ordinance determine. The Chief of Police shall
 343 have exclusive control of the stationing and transfer of all
 344 patrolmen and other officers and employees constituting the
 345 police force, subject to and under such rules and regulations as
 346 the Town Council may prescribe or as may be prescribed by the
 347 ordinances of the town. ~~Any police officer of the Town of Fort~~
 348 ~~White shall have and is hereby empowered with the full right and~~
 349 ~~authority to make arrests beyond the corporate limits of said~~
 350 ~~town for violation of Chapters 317, and 901.15, Florida Statutes~~
 351 ~~Annotated, as amended where the violation occurs within the~~
 352 ~~limits of said Town of Fort White and the violator is~~

353 ~~immediately pursued to a point outside the boundary limits of~~
 354 ~~said town.~~

355 Section 28. ~~32.~~ POLICE DEPARTMENT-POWERS AND DUTIES OF
 356 CHIEF OF POLICE. The Chief of Police shall attend all meetings
 357 of the Town Council and aid in the enforcement of orders under
 358 the direction of the presiding officer. He or she shall execute
 359 the commands of the Town Council and all processes issued by
 360 authority thereof which shall be issued to him or her by the
 361 Mayor. He or she shall attend in person or by deputy the
 362 municipal court during its sittings, execute the commands and
 363 processes of said court, aid in the enforcement of orders
 364 therein and perform such other duties appropriate to his or her
 365 office as may be imposed upon him or her by law, the ordinances
 366 of the town, consistent with this Act.

367 Section 29. ~~33.~~ FIRE DEPARTMENT. The fire force of the town
 368 shall be provided by Columbia County ~~fire warden and as many~~
 369 ~~subordinate officers, firemen and employees as the Town Council~~
 370 ~~shall by ordinance determine.~~ The Columbia County fire chief
 371 shall have exclusive control of the stationing and transfer of
 372 all firefighters ~~firemen~~ and other officers and employees of the
 373 fire force subject to such rules and regulations as may be
 374 prescribed by ordinance of the town; the fire chief ~~he~~ shall

375 have exclusive management and control of such officers and
 376 employees as may be employed in the administration of the
 377 affairs of the fire chief's ~~his~~ force. ~~In case of riot,~~
 378 ~~conflagration of like emergency,~~ the Mayor may appoint
 379 ~~additional firemen for temporary service.~~ The fire chief shall
 380 ~~have the right to suspend any officer or employee of the fire~~
 381 ~~force because of incompetency, neglect of duty, drunkenness,~~
 382 ~~failure to obey orders given by proper authority or for any~~
 383 ~~other just or reasonable cause,~~ and he shall immediately report
 384 ~~the fact of such suspension to the Town Council for final~~
 385 ~~action.~~

386
 387 ARTICLE VI

388 ~~TOWN AUDITOR, TOWN CLERK, TOWN TAX ASSESSOR~~
 389 ~~AND TOWN TREASURER~~

390
 391 Section 30. ~~34.~~ TOWN CLERK. The Town Council shall appoint
 392 an officer of the town who shall have the title of Town Clerk.

393 The Town Clerk ~~He~~ shall:

394 (1) Serve at the pleasure of the Town Council and shall be
 395 under its direction and control.

396 (2) ~~He shall~~ Receive a salary to be fixed by the Town

397 Council.

398 (3) He shall Give notice of the meetings of the Town
 399 Council ~~and;~~ ~~shall~~

400 (a) Keep the journal of its proceedings;

401 (b) ~~shall~~ Be custodian of the town's seal;

402 (c) ~~shall~~ Authenticate by his or her signature and record
 403 in full a book kept for that purpose all ordinances and
 404 resolutions.

405 (4) Ensure that town elections are conducted in accordance
 406 with Florida law, including the qualification of all candidates,
 407 receiving and maintaining candidate reports, and assisting with
 408 Canvassing Board meetings.

409 (5) Exercise financial budgetary control over every
 410 department, board, mission, and agency of the town to ensure
 411 that all moneys are legally expended, and that budget
 412 appropriations are not exceeded.

413 (6) Prescribe the forms of accounting and the forms of
 414 receipts, vouchers, bills, claims or other forms to be used by
 415 all the offices, departments, boards, commissions, and agencies
 416 of the town government, in and about its fiscal affairs.

417 (7) Audit all bills, invoices, payrolls, and other
 418 evidence of claims, demands or charges against the town

- 419 government.
- 420 (8) Inspect and audit any accounts or records which may be
 421 maintained in any office, department, or agency of the town
 422 government.
- 423 (9) Manage the Town of Fort White Water Utility including
 424 requests for service, billing, and collections.
- 425 (10) Coordinate with all elected officials of Columbia
 426 County and the City of Lake City in matters of interest to the
 427 Town.
- 428 (11) Maintain the Town of Fort White website.
- 429 (12) Receive applications on behalf of the town for
 430 development orders, permits, and licenses ensuring that all
 431 orders, permits, licenses are complete and meet the requirements
 432 of applicable law and policy.
- 433 (13) Coordinate, plan, and work with the Town Attorney, as
 434 necessary.
- 435 (14) Review applicable federal, state, and local laws as
 436 needed.
- 437 (15) Oversee the operations of the town including, but not
 438 limited to, maintenance and repairs.; ~~shall perform the duties~~
 439 ~~of registration officer and shall~~
- 440 (16) Perform any other duties required by this charter. If

441 ~~a person qualified to fill the positions be available, the~~
 442 ~~office of town clerk may, at the discretion of the Town Council,~~
 443 ~~be combined with that of the town auditor, town tax assessor and~~
 444 ~~town treasurer. Notwithstanding any other provisions of law, or~~
 445 ~~of this charter, the office of the town clerk shall never be~~
 446 ~~combined with any office other than town auditor, town tax~~
 447 ~~assessor, or town treasurer, or given any other duties except~~
 448 ~~those specifically delegated in this charter to either the town~~
 449 ~~auditor, town tax assessor or town treasurer.~~

450 ~~Section 35. TOWN AUDITOR. The Town Council shall appoint an~~
 451 ~~officer of the town who shall have the title of town auditor. He~~
 452 ~~shall serve at the pleasure of the Town Council and shall be~~
 453 ~~under its direction and control. He shall receive a salary to be~~
 454 ~~fixed by the Town Council. He shall have knowledge of accounting~~
 455 ~~and shall have had experience in budgeting and financial~~
 456 ~~control. If a person qualified to fill the positions be~~
 457 ~~available, the office of the town auditor may, at the discretion~~
 458 ~~of the Town Council, be combined with that of town clerk, town~~
 459 ~~tax assessor and town treasurer. Notwithstanding any other~~
 460 ~~provision of law, or of this charter, the office of town auditor~~
 461 ~~shall never be combined with any office other than that of town~~
 462 ~~clerk, town tax assessor, or town treasurer, or given any other~~

463 ~~duties except those specifically delegated in this charter to~~
 464 ~~either the town clerk, town tax assessor or town treasurer. The~~
 465 ~~town auditor shall have power and be required to:~~

466 ~~(1) Exercise financial budgetary control over every~~
 467 ~~department, board, commission and agency of the town to insure~~
 468 ~~that all moneys are legally expended, and the budget~~
 469 ~~appropriations are not exceeded;~~

470 ~~(2) Prescribe the forms of accounting and the forms of~~
 471 ~~receipts, vouchers, bills, claims or other forms to be used by~~
 472 ~~all the offices, departments, boards, commissions, and agencies~~
 473 ~~of the town government, in and about its fiscal affairs;~~

474 ~~(3) Audit all bids, invoices, payrolls and other evidences~~
 475 ~~of claims, demands or charges against the town government;~~

476 ~~(4) Inspect and audit any accounts or records which may be~~
 477 ~~maintained in any office, department or agency of the town~~
 478 ~~government.~~

479 ~~Section 36. TOWN TAX ASSESSOR. The Town Council shall~~
 480 ~~appoint an officer of the town who shall have the title of town~~
 481 ~~tax assessor. He shall serve at the pleasure of the Town Council~~
 482 ~~and shall be under its direction and control. He shall receive a~~
 483 ~~salary to be fixed by the Town Council. He shall prepare tax~~
 484 ~~maps, assess all properties within the corporate limits of the~~

485 ~~town for taxation and shall perform all the usual duties of a~~
486 ~~tax assessor. If a person qualified to fill the positions be~~
487 ~~available, the office of the town tax assessor may, at the~~
488 ~~discretion of the Town Council, be combined with that of town~~
489 ~~clerk, town auditor and town treasurer. Notwithstanding any~~
490 ~~other provision of law, or of this charter, the office of town~~
491 ~~tax assessor shall never be combined with any office other than~~
492 ~~that of town clerk, town auditor, or town treasurer, or given~~
493 ~~any other duties except those specifically delegated in this~~
494 ~~charter to either the town clerk, the town auditor, or the town~~
495 ~~treasurer.~~

496 ~~Section 37. TOWN TREASURER. The Town Council shall appoint~~
497 ~~an officer of the town who shall have the title of town~~
498 ~~treasurer. He shall serve at the pleasure of the Town Council~~
499 ~~and shall be under its direction and control. He shall receive a~~
500 ~~salary to be fixed by the Town Council. He shall have knowledge~~
501 ~~of municipal accounting and taxation and shall have had~~
502 ~~experience in budgeting and financial control. If a person~~
503 ~~qualified to fill the position be available, the office of the~~
504 ~~town treasurer may, at the discretion of the Town Council, be~~
505 ~~combined with that of the town auditor, town clerk, and town tax~~
506 ~~assessor. The town treasurer shall provide a bond with surety~~

507 ~~and in such amount as the Town Council may require. The town~~
 508 ~~treasurer shall have charge of the administration of the~~
 509 ~~financial affairs of the town under the supervision of the Town~~
 510 ~~Council.~~

511 ~~Section 38. PROPERTY SUBJECT TO TAX; METHOD OF ASSESSMENT.~~
 512 ~~All property within the town, not expressly exempted by law,~~
 513 ~~shall be subject to annual taxation at its true cash value. For~~
 514 ~~the purpose of assessment, the soil shall be known as "Land,"~~
 515 ~~and everything attached thereto shall be known as~~
 516 ~~"Improvements," and such "Improvements," when owned by the~~
 517 ~~tenant, may be assessed in his or her name, apart from the land.~~
 518 ~~Articles other than "Land" or "Improvements" shall be known as~~
 519 ~~"Personal Property." All property shall be assessed as of the~~
 520 ~~1st day of January of the fiscal year for which such assessment~~
 521 ~~is made, and the town tax assessor shall begin his work of~~
 522 ~~assessing real property on such date. On or before the 1st day~~
 523 ~~of May of each fiscal year, he shall present to the treasurer~~
 524 ~~and collector a true copy of the assessment roll of the property~~
 525 ~~taxable within the town, to be known as the assessor's~~
 526 ~~duplicate. The treasurer and collector shall make such copy of~~
 527 ~~the assessment roll available for public inspection during the~~
 528 ~~period from the 1st day of May to the 15th day of May.~~

529 ~~Section 39. ASSESSMENT OF PROPERTY OF PUBLIC UTILITY~~
 530 ~~COMPANIES. Public utility companies shall be subjected to~~
 531 ~~taxation on all real and personal property owned or operated by~~
 532 ~~them within the limits of the municipal corporation, in the same~~
 533 ~~manner and at the same rate of valuation as all other property.~~
 534 ~~Franchises and privileges owned by public utility companies and~~
 535 ~~other corporations, part of which is, and part of which is not,~~
 536 ~~subject to taxation for the various purposes other than ordinary~~
 537 ~~municipal purposes, shall be so assessed as to show the~~
 538 ~~valuation or part of the whole valuation subject to taxation for~~
 539 ~~each purpose. The town tax assessor shall specify what portion~~
 540 ~~of the property assessed is used for right of way and depot~~
 541 ~~purposes, by such description as will clearly define the~~
 542 ~~property covered by that assessment, and their property, other~~
 543 ~~than that so described, shall be separately assessed by~~
 544 ~~sufficient description as is other property, each lot, part of~~
 545 ~~lot, or tract being assessed separately, except that the town~~
 546 ~~tax assessor may, at the request of the company or its agents,~~
 547 ~~assess several pieces together.~~

548 ~~Section 40. CORRECTION OF ASSESSMENT. If the town tax~~
 549 ~~assessor shall discover that any land in the town was omitted in~~
 550 ~~the assessment roll of either or all of the three previous~~

551 ~~years, or that any land was illegally sold for taxation and is~~
 552 ~~then liable to taxation, he shall assess such lands for the next~~
 553 ~~fiscal year, and shall also assess the same separately for each~~
 554 ~~such year or years as may have been omitted, or was illegally~~
 555 ~~sold for taxes, at the cash value thereof at the time, noting~~
 556 ~~distinctly the year or years when such omission occurred, and~~
 557 ~~such assessment was omitted, and taxes shall be levied and~~
 558 ~~collected thereon in like manner, together with the taxes for~~
 559 ~~the year in which assessment is being made; but no land shall be~~
 560 ~~assessed for more than three years arrears of taxes, and all~~
 561 ~~land shall be subject to be assessed into whomsoever's hands~~
 562 ~~they may come.~~

563 ~~Section 41. BOARD OF EQUALIZATION. There shall be an~~
 564 ~~equalizing board of the town composed of the members of the Town~~
 565 ~~Council, and it shall meet on the first Monday in July each~~
 566 ~~year. The town clerk shall be the clerk of such board, and shall~~
 567 ~~keep an accurate record of all the changes made in the valuation~~
 568 ~~of the property, and all other proceedings of such board.~~

569 ~~Section 42. THE EQUALIZING BOARD; POWERS AND DUTIES. The~~
 570 ~~equalizing board shall have power to review all complaints of~~
 571 ~~property owners assessed for the purpose of taxation of real~~
 572 ~~property within the town made by the town tax assessor,~~

573 ~~administer oaths, take testimony, hold hearings, and adopt~~
574 ~~regulations regarding the procedure of assessment review.~~

575 ~~Section 43. MEETINGS. The equalizing board may adjourn~~
576 ~~from day to day until its work is completed, and three members~~
577 ~~shall constitute a quorum to transact business. If no quorum is~~
578 ~~present, the town clerk may adjourn the board from day to day,~~
579 ~~and publicly announce the time to which the meeting is to be~~
580 ~~adjourned.~~

581 ~~Section 44. PUBLIC HEARING ON COMPLAINTS; NOTICE. Beginning~~
582 ~~on the first Monday of July of each fiscal year, and as long~~
583 ~~thereafter as may be necessary, the equalizing board shall hear~~
584 ~~and determine the complaint of any person in relation to the~~
585 ~~assessment roll. Complaints to the equalizing board shall be in~~
586 ~~writing. The procedure before such board shall be informal, and~~
587 ~~of a nature calculated to effect justice as simply as possible.~~
588 ~~Hearings on such complaints shall be held in the order as~~
589 ~~received and as promptly after the filing thereof as possible,~~
590 ~~and the determination of the equalizing board shall be made~~
591 ~~within twenty days after such filing. Such determination shall~~
592 ~~be immediately certified by the equalizing board to the town tax~~
593 ~~assessor, whose duty it shall be to make such corrections upon~~
594 ~~the assessment roll and duplicate as the board may determine.~~

595 ~~Section 45. NOTICE. Not earlier than fifteen days and not~~
 596 ~~later than five days prior to the annual meeting of the~~
 597 ~~equalizing board, the town clerk shall cause to be published in~~
 598 ~~a newspaper of the town a notice that the town assessment roll~~
 599 ~~is open to the public for inspection, and that the assessment~~
 600 ~~roll will be submitted to the equalizing board for approval on~~
 601 ~~the date and at the time and place fixed for such meeting.~~

602 ~~Section 46. EQUALIZATION AND CORRECTION OF ASSESSMENT ROLL.~~
 603 ~~The equalizing board shall have the right to change the~~
 604 ~~valuation or assessment of any real or personal property upon~~
 605 ~~the roll, by increasing or decreasing the assessed valuation~~
 606 ~~thereof as shall be reasonable and just to render taxation~~
 607 ~~uniform, provided, that the valuation of any real or personal~~
 608 ~~property as assessed by the town tax assessor shall not be~~
 609 ~~increased without first giving the owner notice of the intention~~
 610 ~~of the board to so increase it. Such notice shall be by personal~~
 611 ~~service upon the owner, or by leaving a copy of the written~~
 612 ~~notice at his usual place of business, or last place of~~
 613 ~~residence, and if a non-resident by mailing such notice of his~~
 614 ~~last known address, and such notice shall state therein the time~~
 615 ~~when the board will be in session to act upon the matter.~~

616 ~~Section 47. SESSIONS TO BE OPEN. The sessions of the~~

617 ~~equalizing board shall be open to the public.~~

618 ~~Section 48. COMPLETION OF THE ROLL. All changes made by the~~
619 ~~equalizing board shall be noted in the preliminary assessment~~
620 ~~roll by the town tax assessor, and, within 10 days after the~~
621 ~~equalizing board shall have concluded its examination and~~
622 ~~correction of the assessment roll, it shall be submitted in~~
623 ~~corrected form, duly Certified to by the town tax assessor as~~
624 ~~having been corrected and equalized by the equalizing board to~~
625 ~~the Town Council, and shall stand as the assessment for the year~~
626 ~~of the taxable property within the town.~~

627 ~~Section 49. OMISSIONS FROM ASSESSMENT ROLL. The equalizing~~
628 ~~board must place upon and add to the assessment roll any~~
629 ~~property, real or personal, subject to taxation, which has been~~
630 ~~omitted therefrom by the town tax assessor, and enter the same~~
631 ~~at such valuation that will bear an equal and just proportion of~~
632 ~~taxation.~~

633 ~~Section 50. APPEAL TO THE COURTS. Any person feeling~~
634 ~~aggrieved by any decision of the equalizing board in any matter~~
635 ~~that he is called upon by such board to correct, alter or change~~
636 ~~with reference to the listing of valuation of his own property,~~
637 ~~may appeal to the Circuit Court not later than thirty days after~~
638 ~~the certification to the town tax assessor.~~

639 ~~Section 51. TAXES; WHEN PAYABLE. All taxes shall be due and~~
 640 ~~payable on the first day of November, in each year, or as soon~~
 641 ~~thereafter as the assessment roll may come into the hands of the~~
 642 ~~town treasurer and collector, of which he shall give notice in a~~
 643 ~~newspaper published in said town, or published in the county~~
 644 ~~where said town is situated, that the taxes are then due and~~
 645 ~~payable. The same discounts shall be allowed on tax payments due~~
 646 ~~the town, as are allowed on tax payments due the counties under~~
 647 ~~the general statutes of the State of Florida.~~

648 ~~Section 52. WHEN TAX BOOKS CLOSE. The tax books shall close~~
 649 ~~on the 31st day of March, in each year, and the town treasurer~~
 650 ~~and collector shall proceed as hereinafter provided.~~

651 ~~Section 53. MAY ISSUE DISTRESS WARRANTS. The town treasurer~~
 652 ~~and collector shall have power to issue distress warrants in the~~
 653 ~~name of the state and town to enforce collection of taxes on~~
 654 ~~personal property and privileges. Such warrants may be executed~~
 655 ~~by the chief of police, or by any constable or sheriff,~~
 656 ~~according to the method provided by law for the collection of~~
 657 ~~state and county taxes lawfully assessed on personal property.~~

658 ~~Section 54. CONSTITUTE A LIEN. Taxes and assessments,~~
 659 ~~together with the interest imposed for delinquency and cost of~~
 660 ~~collection, shall be and continue a lien upon the property~~

661 ~~assessed, superior to all other liens or claims until the same~~
 662 ~~shall be paid.~~

663 ~~Section 55. COLLECTION OF TAXES. The town treasurer and~~
 664 ~~collector shall, unless otherwise provided, proceed~~
 665 ~~substantially in the same manner in the collection of taxes, and~~
 666 ~~sale of personal property for non-payment of taxes and licenses~~
 667 ~~as is provided for state collectors under the state law, and he~~
 668 ~~shall be subject to the same penalties as are prescribed by the~~
 669 ~~laws of Florida for any violation of the duties imposed upon him~~
 670 ~~by this charter. Delinquent taxes due the town on real estate~~
 671 ~~shall be collected in the manner provided by the laws of~~
 672 ~~Florida, and the amount thereof shall be certified to the Town~~
 673 ~~Attorney for that purpose, after the tax books shall close. Such~~
 674 ~~delinquent taxes may be paid to said Town Attorney at any time~~
 675 ~~after such certification, and before sale, upon payment of the~~
 676 ~~amount of such tax, and also all costs and expenses incurred to~~
 677 ~~the date of such payment, including a reasonable attorney fee~~
 678 ~~for such collection. The amount of all taxes, real and personal,~~
 679 ~~shall bear interest at the rate of one per cent per month after~~
 680 ~~the tax books shall close, and the amount of such interest shall~~
 681 ~~be collected when such tax is collected.~~

682 ~~Section 31 56. LICENSES. The Town Council is authorized to~~

683 | levy and impose license taxes by ordinance, for the purpose of
684 | regulation and revenue, upon all occupations, and upon any and
685 | all privileges, and to create and fix the amounts to be paid; to
686 | provide for the collection of the same, and to provide penalties
687 | for failure to pay such license taxes; all such license taxes,
688 | so imposed, shall constitute a legal indebtedness to the town,
689 | which may be recovered in any court of competent jurisdiction.
690 | The Town Council may, by ordinance, provide for licensing the
691 | keeping of dogs, and for the destruction of dogs, the owner and
692 | keeper whereof shall not comply with the regulations prescribed
693 | by ordinance in effect thereto, and for the punishment of
694 | persons violating the ordinances on this subject.

695 | Section 32 ~~57~~. PERIOD COVERED BY LICENSES. Licenses shall
696 | be issued for the periods and be transferable as provided by the
697 | general law for state licenses. The agent or agents of non-
698 | resident proprietors shall be severally responsible for carrying
699 | on business in like manner as if they were proprietors. The fact
700 | that any person, firm or corporation reporting himself or itself
701 | as engaged in any business calling, profession or occupation for
702 | the transaction of which a license is required, or that person,
703 | firm or corporation exhibiting a sign or advertisement
704 | indicating engagement in such business calling, profession or

705 occupation, shall be conclusive evidence of the liability of
 706 such person, firm, or corporation to pay a license.

707 Section 33 ~~58~~. AUTHORITY OF TOWN TO PURCHASE, OWN AND
 708 OPERATE CERTAIN PUBLIC UTILITIES. The Town of Fort White,
 709 Florida, is hereby authorized by and through its officers,
 710 agents, employees, and representatives, to purchase, build,
 711 construct, own, control, repair, lease, operate, manage, extend,
 712 or sell an electric light plant, a water works plant, and an ice
 713 plant, and any and all other public utility plants, and to
 714 prescribe and enforce rates, rules and regulations necessary
 715 thereto.

716 Section 34 ~~59~~. SERVICE OF UTILITIES TO CONSUMERS OUTSIDE OF
 717 TOWN. ~~That~~ The Town Council shall have the power to supply
 718 water, electricity, and gas for domestic and other purposes to
 719 individuals or corporations outside of said town and to charge
 720 and collect reasonable rates, prices and compensation therefor,
 721 but the Town Council shall charge a higher rate to such
 722 consumers than it charges for a like class of consumers within
 723 the corporate limits of said town.

724 Section 35 ~~60~~. AUTHORITY OF TOWN TO SELL PUBLIC UTILITY
 725 PLANTS; PROCEDURE. The Town Council may sell the public utility
 726 plants owned by the Town of Fort White, or any one or all of

727 | them, after the Town Council shall have first passed an
 728 | ordinance in which is stated the terms of purchase, and after
 729 | such ordinance has been submitted to the qualified electors of
 730 | said town, who are freeholders, for a period of at least sixty
 731 | (60) days prior to said election, and such action as is
 732 | provided, in and by such ordinance is ratified by a majority of
 733 | those voting at such election. In all other respects not herein
 734 | specially provided for, such election shall be called and held
 735 | as is provided by law for calling and holding bond elections of
 736 | said town.

737 | Section 36 ~~61~~. CONTRACT WITH PERSONS OUTSIDE TOWN TO
 738 | FURNISH TOWN WITH ELECTRICITY. The Town Council together with
 739 | the Mayor are hereby authorized and empowered to contract with
 740 | persons, firms or corporations beyond the limits of said town to
 741 | furnish electric current to said town, and to construct such
 742 | lines, wires, poles, towers and conduits as may be necessary to
 743 | obtain such current.

744 | Section 37 ~~62~~. GRANTING OF FRANCHISES. The town shall have
 745 | power to grant a franchise to any private corporation for the
 746 | use of streets and other public places in the furnishing of any
 747 | public utility service to the town and to its inhabitants. All
 748 | franchises and any renewals, extensions and amendments thereto,

749 shall be granted only by ordinance.

750 Section 38 ~~63~~. FRANCHISES NOT AFFECTED. The provisions of
 751 this charter shall not apply to any franchise granted any public
 752 utility company prior to the effective date of this charter.

753 Section 39 ~~64~~. ELECTIONS. A regular or general election of
 754 candidates to the office of Town Council shall be held in
 755 accordance with the dates established for general elections as
 756 provided for by the Florida Election Code. The candidate for each
 757 seat to be filled receiving the greatest number of votes in said
 758 election shall be declared elected. In the event of a tie
 759 between two (2) candidates for any seat upon the Town Council,
 760 a run-off special election will be held on a date to be
 761 established by the Town Clerk in accordance with s. 105.051,
 762 Florida Statutes, of the Florida Election Code ~~The Town Council~~
 763 ~~shall, by ordinance, make all regulations which it considers~~
 764 ~~needful or desirable, not inconsistent with this charter, for~~
 765 ~~the conduct of municipal elections, and for the prevention of~~
 766 ~~fraud therein. Inspectors and clerks of elections shall be~~
 767 ~~appointed by the Town Council.~~

768 Section 40. ~~65~~. ELECTORS. Any person who is a qualified
 769 elector of the State of Florida, and who has resided in the town
 770 for one (1) year, shall be an elector of this town.

771 Section 41. 66. REGISTRATION OF VOTERS. The town clerk
772 shall be the registration officer for the town and shall
773 register all persons applying to him or her whose names are not
774 already borne upon the registration book and who are qualified
775 as electors under the provisions of this charter. ~~For this~~
776 ~~purpose~~ The registration book shall always be open at the office
777 of the town clerk, except that same ~~shall~~ be maintained in
778 accordance with s. 97.055, Florida Statutes, of the Florida
779 Election Code ~~closed for five days before and during the day of~~
780 ~~any town election.~~ Each person applying to be registered shall
781 make the following oath, which will be administered by the
782 registration officer or his or her duly appointed deputy: "I do
783 solemnly swear that I am a bona fide resident of the Town of
784 Fort White and possess all of the qualifications of an elector
785 of said town." Any person taking such oath who shall swear
786 falsely shall be guilty of perjury. The name of each person so
787 registered shall be entered in a book prepared for that purpose,
788 which book shall show, under appropriate heading, the ~~age,~~
789 ~~color, occupation and~~ exact place of residence of each person so
790 registered, and whether the registrant is a free holder. The
791 Town Council may, by ordinance, provide for revision of the
792 registration list of voters when, in their opinion, a revision

793 | is necessary.

794 | Section 42. ~~67.~~ NOMINATIONS. Any qualified elector of the
795 | town may be nominated for the council by petition. A petition
796 | for this purpose shall be signed by not less than 10 qualified
797 | electors. Each petition shall designate the seat for which the
798 | candidate is nominated. The form of the nominating petition
799 | shall be substantially as follows:

800 | We, the undersigned electors of the Town of Fort
801 | White, hereby nominate
802 | , whose residence
803 | is, for the office
804 | of Councilman, Seat No....., Mayor (strike out
805 | portion not applicable), to be voted for at the
806 | election to be held on the day of,
807 | 20 19 ; and we individually certify that our
808 | names appear on the rolls of registered voters, that
809 | we are qualified to vote for a candidate for the
810 | council.

811 | Name Street and Address from which last Date of Number
812 | Registered (if different) Signing

814 | (SPACES FOR SIGNATURES AND REQUIRED DATA)

815
816 For the November 8, 2022, election each petition must be
817 received prior to 12:01 P. M. on August 2, 2022. Thereafter,
818 each petition must be submitted before noon of the 28th day
819 preceding the first day of the qualifying period for the office
820 sought to the town clerk. The town clerk shall make a record of
821 the exact time at which each petition is filed, and shall take
822 and preserve the name and address of the person by whom it is
823 filed. The town clerk shall check the signatures on the
824 petitions to verify their status as voters in the Town. If a
825 petition is found insufficient, the town clerk shall return it
826 immediately to the person who filed it with a statement
827 certifying wherein the petition is found insufficient. No later
828 than the 7th day before the first day of the qualifying period,
829 the town clerk shall certify the number of valid signatures.

830
831 Each petition must be submitted before noon of the 28th day
832 preceding the first day of the qualifying period for the office
833 sought to the Town Clerk. The Town Clerk shall check the
834 signatures on the petitions to verify their status as voters in
835 the Town. If a petition is found insufficient, the Town Clerk
836 shall return it immediately to the person who filed it with a

837 statement certifying wherein the petition is found insufficient.
 838 No later than the seventh (7th) day before the first day of the
 839 qualifying period, the Town Clerk shall certify the number of
 840 valid signatures.

841 Section 43. ~~68.~~ ELECTIONS. A regular or general election of
 842 candidates to the office of Town Council shall be held in
 843 accordance with the dates established for general elections as
 844 provided for by the Florida Election Code ~~each year on the~~
 845 ~~second Tuesday in August for each seat on the Town Council which~~
 846 ~~shall become vacant at 8:00 O'Clock P. M. on the fourth Tuesday~~
 847 ~~in August of the same year.~~ The candidate for each seat to be
 848 filled receiving the greatest number of votes in said election
 849 shall be declared elected. In the event of a tie between two
 850 candidates for any seat upon the Town Council, a run-off special
 851 election will be held on a date to be established by the town
 852 clerk in accordance with section 105.051, Florida Statutes
 853 (2019), of the Florida Election Code ~~in the general election,~~
 854 ~~another general election shall be held on the Tuesday following~~
 855 ~~the general election and the two candidates receiving the equal~~
 856 ~~votes shall be the only candidates on the ballot for such~~
 857 ~~general election.~~

858 Section ~~69.~~ ELECTIONS; GOVERNED BY STATE LAW OR ORDINANCE.

859 ~~Except as herein specifically provided, all elections in the~~
 860 ~~town shall be conducted substantially on the principles~~
 861 ~~governing state elections, or as the Town Council shall by~~
 862 ~~ordinance prescribe.~~

863 Section 44 70. ELECTIONS; CANVASS OF RETURNS.—The Town
 864 Council may agree with the Columbia County Supervisor of
 865 Elections and the county canvassing board to canvass the returns
 866 and the results of the election in accordance with the Florida
 867 Election Code. The Town Council shall review the returns and the
 868 results provided by the county canvassing board and declare the
 869 winner of the election at a meeting of the Town Council.

870 ~~Otherwise, The polls shall open at seven o'clock A. M. and shall~~
 871 ~~close at seven o'clock P. M. the result of the voting, when~~
 872 ~~ascertained, shall be certified by return in duplicate, signed~~
 873 ~~by the clerk and a majority of the inspectors of election, one~~
 874 ~~copy being delivered by such clerk, and inspectors to the mayor~~
 875 ~~and the other to the town clerk, both of whom shall transmit~~
 876 ~~such returns to the Town Council. At such meeting the Town~~
 877 ~~Council shall canvass the returns and the results as shown by~~
 878 ~~such returns shall be by the Town Council declared as the result~~
 879 ~~of the election. The town clerk shall, not later than noon of~~
 880 ~~the second day after the canvass of said election, furnish a~~

881 certificate of election to each person shown to have been
 882 elected. The Town Council agrees with the Columbia County
 883 Supervisor of Elections and the county canvassing board to
 884 canvass the returns of the election in accordance with the
 885 Florida Election Code. The Town Council shall review the returns
 886 and results provided by the county canvassing board and declare
 887 the winner of the election at a meeting of the Town Council.
 888 Otherwise, the result of the voting, when ascertained, shall be
 889 certified by return in duplicate, signed by the clerk and a
 890 majority of the inspectors of election, one copy being delivered
 891 by such clerk, and inspectors to the Mayor and the other to the
 892 Town Clerk, both of whom shall transmit such returns to the Town
 893 Council. At such meeting, the Town Council shall canvass the
 894 returns and the results as shown by such returns shall be by the
 895 Town Council declared as the result of the election. The Town
 896 Clerk shall, not later than noon of the second day after the
 897 canvass of said election, furnish a certificate of election to
 898 each person shown to have been elected.

899 Section 45. 71. FIRST ELECTION; DUTIES TO CALL. It shall
 900 be the duty of the Town Council now in office to call and hold
 901 the first election for members of the Town Council ~~Councilmen~~
 902 under this charter, which shall be held on the Second Tuesday in

903 August, 1957, for the election of a Town Councilmember
 904 ~~Councilman~~ for Seats One, Two, Three and Four and for Mayor. The
 905 election of the councilmembers ~~Councilman~~ for Seats One and Two
 906 shall be for a two year term, commencing at 8: 00 O'Clock P. M.
 907 on the fourth Tuesday in August, 1957, and the election of
 908 councilmembers ~~Councilman~~ for Seats Three and Four and Mayor
 909 shall be for a three year term, commencing at 8: 00 O'Clock P.
 910 M. on the fourth Tuesday in August, 1957. The terms of all
 911 councilmembers in office as of August 1, 2020, shall be extended
 912 in order to accomplish the goal of holding the Town Council
 913 elections on the general election date established by the
 914 Florida Election Code. The election of councilmembers for Seats
 915 3 and 4 and Mayor shall be held on November 8, 2022, in
 916 accordance with the Florida Election Code and thereafter the
 917 councilmembers for Seats 3 and 4 and Mayor shall serve for a
 918 four year term. The terms of councilmembers for Seats 1 and 2
 919 shall be extended to the general election date established by
 920 the Florida Election Code for the calendar year 2022, and
 921 thereafter the councilmembers for Seats 1 and 2 shall serve for
 922 a four year term. Thereafter all members of the Town Council
 923 shall be elected for a three year term.

924 Section 46. ~~72.~~ PUBLICITY OF RECORDS. All records and

925 accounts of every office, department or agency of the town shall
926 be open to inspection by any citizen, any representative of a
927 citizens' organization or any representative of the press at all
928 reasonable times and under reasonable regulations established by
929 the Town Council.

930 Section 47. ~~73.~~ OFFICIAL BONDS. The Town Council shall
931 determine whether or not each officer, clerk, or employee shall
932 give bond, and the amount thereof, but all officers, clerks and
933 employees handling any funds or property of the town shall be
934 required to give bond to the town, which bonds shall be procured
935 from a regularly accredited surety company authorized to do
936 business under the laws of Florida, the premiums on such bonds
937 to be paid by the town. All such bonds shall be filed in the
938 office of the Town Clerk ~~treasurer and collector.~~

939 Section 48. ~~74.~~ OATH OF OFFICE. Every officer of the town
940 shall, before entering upon the duties of his or her office,
941 take and subscribe to the following oath or affirmation, to be
942 filed and kept in the office of the town clerk:

943 "I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support
944 the Constitution and will obey the laws of the United
945 States and of the State of Florida, that I will, in
946 all respects, observe the provisions of the charter

947 | and ordinances of the Town of Fort White, and will
 948 | faithfully discharge the duties of the office of
 949 | "

950 | Section 49. ~~75.~~ EFFECT OF THIS CHARTER ON EXISTING LAW.
 951 | All laws and parts of laws relating to or affecting the town in
 952 | force when this charter shall take effect are hereby repealed
 953 | and superseded to the extent that the same are inconsistent with
 954 | the provisions of this charter.

955 | Section 50. ~~76.~~ WHEN GENERAL LAWS OF STATE APPLICABLE. All
 956 | general laws of the state, applicable to municipal corporations
 957 | now or which may hereafter be enacted, and which are not in
 958 | conflict with the provisions of this charter or with the
 959 | ordinances and resolutions hereafter enacted by the Town Council
 960 | shall be applicable to this town; provided, however, that
 961 | nothing contained in this charter shall be construed as limiting
 962 | the power of the Town Council to enact any ordinance or
 963 | resolution not in conflict with the Constitution of the state or
 964 | with the express provisions of this charter.

965 | Section 51. ~~77.~~ GENERAL LAW OF STATE GOVERNING CITY
 966 | COUNCILS TO APPLY TO TOWN COUNCILS. That any right or authority
 967 | given or permitted by the Constitution and laws of the State of
 968 | Florida to City Councils not inconsistent with the provisions of

969 | this Act shall be given, permitted and extended to the Town
 970 | Councilmen of the Town of Fort White.

971 | Section 52. ~~78.~~ DEDICATION OF STREETS. No street or alley
 972 | hereinafter dedicated to public use by the owner of any land
 973 | within the town shall be deemed a public street or alley, under
 974 | the care or control of the town, unless the dedication be
 975 | accepted and confirmed by ordinance passed for such purpose.

976 | Section 53. ~~79.~~ FISCAL YEAR. The fiscal year of the town
 977 | shall be from October ~~January~~ 1st to September 30th ~~December~~
 978 | ~~31st~~ of each year.

979 | Section 54. ~~80.~~ EXECUTION OF CONTRACTS AND VALIDATION OF
 980 | TOWN WARRANTS FOR EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS. In addition to all other
 981 | requirements of this charter regarding contracts, no contract
 982 | entered into by the town shall be valid until executed on behalf
 983 | of the town by the Mayor or a Councilmember and Town Clerk. In
 984 | addition to all other requirements under this charter regarding
 985 | the disbursement or payment of town funds, no warrant for the
 986 | payment of town funds shall be valid unless signed by the Mayor
 987 | and the Town Clerk ~~Treasurer~~. In addition to the requirements of
 988 | this section regarding the disbursement of funds, the Town
 989 | Council may, by ordinance, prescribe additional requirements.

990 | Section 55. ~~81.~~ SHORT TITLE. This charter, adopted by the

HB 1043

2022

991 people of the Town of Fort White, shall be known and may be
992 cited as the "Fort White Charter."

993 Section 56. ~~82.~~ SEPARABILITY CLAUSE. If any section or part
994 of section of this charter shall be held invalid by a court of
995 competent jurisdiction, such holding shall not affect the
996 remainder of this charter nor the context in which such section
997 or part of section so hold invalid may appear, except to the
998 extent that an entire section or part of section may be
999 inseparably connected in meaning and effect with the section or
1000 part of section to which such holding shall directly apply.

1001 Section 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.