

AI Summary: Fort White – Monday Night at the Town Council: Residents, non-residents, and the glitterati were in attendance

A contentious workshop was held in Fort White, FL, to discuss a proposal by Councilman Bill Koon to dissolve the town and revert governance to Columbia County. Approximately 140 residents attended, overwhelmingly rejecting the idea of dissolution despite the town's governance struggles. The current administration faces a "structural governance crisis," operating without a town attorney, code enforcement, or a qualified clerk following a mass exodus of institutional knowledge after Mayor George Jacob Thomas's election.

Despite the administrative chaos and a disorderly meeting filled with interruptions, a surprise financial presentation revealed the town is actually fiscally solvent. Fort White has zero debt, 16 months of reserves, and consistent surpluses, contradicting fears of financial ruin. However, officials warned that looming growth—specifically an imminent \$22 million sewer project — may require new ad valorem taxes to manage.

Residents and non-residents expressed a strong desire that Fort White maintain its small-town independence, but without hiring key staff and restoring board functionality, the town remains at risk.