

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF  
THE TOWN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
TOWN OF WILLIAMSTON, NC

December 4, 2023

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Williamston met in regular called meeting on Monday, December 4th, 2023, at 5:30 p.m. at the Town Hall Assembly Room at 102 East Main Street, Williamston, NC.

**PRESENT** Mayor: Joyce Whichard-Brown  
Commissioners: Alton Moore, Jerry Knox, Dean McCall, Ruth Coffield, Darnell Scales  
Town Administrator: Eric Pearson  
Town Clerk: Jackie Escobar  
Police Chief: Travis Cowan  
Police Captain: Beth Coltrain  
Public Works Director: Stacy Stalls  
Fire Chief: Michael Peaks  
Finance Officer: Mandy Bullock  
Town Attorney: Watsi Sutton  
Mayor-Elect: Dean McCall  
Commissioners-Elect: David Richmond, Anthony Gianpoalo, and Glinda Fox (via GoToMeeting)

**ABSENT** Parks and Recreation Director: Allen Overby

**CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION**

Mayor Joyce Whichard-Brown called the meeting to order. First, Larry Biggs led the pledge of allegiance. Pastor Mike Carson offered the invocation. The Mayor extended a special welcome to Martin County Commissioner Dempsey Bonds, Martin County Sheriff Tim Manning, Hamilton Mayor Larry Jackson, Parmele Mayor Jerry McCrary, and Robersonville Mayor Tina Brown.

**AGENDA APPROVED**

The Town Administrator requested adding a closed session for Attorney-Client Privilege. *It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and the amended agenda was unanimously approved.*

**CONSENT AGENDA**

*It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Scales, and unanimously approved the consent agenda as amended.*

Items approved in the Consent Agenda are as follows:

1. Approval of the Regular Board Meeting Minutes of November 6th, 2023
2. Budget Amendment – The purpose of this amendment is to add additional funds for replacing the gas pack at the Waste Water Treatment Plant.

Retained Earnings	<u>\$13,000.00</u>
Repair Building and Grounds	\$13,000.00

Mayor Joyce Whichard-Brown expressed that retiring as Mayor of the Town of Williamston was a bittersweet experience. Furthermore, she thanked all those who supported her during her time as Mayor.

**SWEARING IN NEWLY ELECTED MAYOR AND COMMISSIONERS**

Judge Regina Parker swore in the newly elected board in the following order:

- Dean McCall as Mayor
- Alton Moore as Town Commissioner
- Ruth Coffield as Town Commissioner
- David Richmond as Town Commissioner
- Anthony Gianpoalo as Town Commissioner

Glinda Fox was present via GoToMeeting video call; however, Judge Parker would perform her swearing-in ceremony at the January meeting. (Please note that Glinda Fox was sworn in at a Special Called Meeting on December 13, 2023.)

### **ELECT MAYOR PRO-TEMPORE**

*It was moved by Commissioner Coffield, seconded by Commissioner Gianpoalo, and unanimously elected Commissioner Alton Moore as Mayor Pro-Tem.*

### **ASSIGN DEPARTMENT-COMMISSIONER LIAISONS**

Mayor Dean McCall noted that the following Commissioners expressed interest in serving as liaisons to specific departments:

- Commissioner Alton Moore – Parks and Recreation
- Commissioner Alton Moore – Administration
- Commissioner David Richmond – Public Works Sewer and Water
- Commissioner Ruth Coffield – Fire
- Commissioner Anthony Gianpoalo – Police

*It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Richmond, and unanimously assigned the department liaisons.*

**PUBLIC COMMENT - None**

**OLD BUSINESS - None**

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Resolution 2023-13 Sale of 115 Griffin Avenue**

The Town Administrator reported that staff brought the sale of 115 Griffin Avenue before the previous Board during the August 2023 meeting. Yolanda Williams bid \$1,000 and submitted \$50 as required for a \$1,000 bid. As required by law, the Town Clerk properly advertised the bid, and no upset bids were received. The Board discussed the purchase and expressed concern that Mrs. Williams had mentioned building a home on that property and the zoning, Commercial District, does not allow residential as a primary use. The Board asked Cameron Braddy to get back with Mrs. Williams to discuss this and determine if she was still interested in making the purchase. This item is listed as New Business as it is a new board considering the sale. The Town Administrator followed up with the buyers, George and Yolanda Williams, and informed them of the zoning regulations. They requested to continue with the purchase. Staff had already met the proper bid and ad requirements. *It was moved by Commissioner Knox and seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and Resolution 2023-13 was unanimously adopted. Resolution 2023-13 is hereby attached with the meeting minutes and incorporated in the Town's Resolution Book for future reference.*

#### **Waive Water Fees for Martin County Public Safety Training Facility**

The Fire Chief requested that the Town of Williamston waive water fees at the Martin Community College Training Facility. He clarified that the Town would only waive fees for the tower and not

the classrooms. The training facility's water fees total approximately **\$1,200 annually**. The Fire Chief noted that while the Williamston Fire Department uses the facility the most, the various Fire departments in the county also use the facility. The Town Administrator noted that he also requested MCRWASA to waive the water fees. *It was moved by Commissioner Gianpoalo, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously approved to waive the water fees for the Martin County Public Safety Training Facility.*

## **DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS**

### **Fire/Rescue**

The Fire Chief provided the following report:

- The department responded to 248 calls.
- The Chief reported that the N.C. Hazardous Regional Response Team (RRT) is housed at the Williamston Fire/Rescue Department but covers 25 counties in North Carolina.
- The department hired three new employees. The Fire Chief explained to the new board that Martin County provided financial assistance following the hospital closure to hire additional EMTs. However, the financial assistance stipulated that the assistance would stop upon the hospital's reopening. The Chief's goal is to have two fully staffed trucks 24/7.
- Five employees finished hazardous chemistry training.
- The Chief thanked the Parks & Recreation Department for raising funds for the Fire and Police Department Toy Drive. The departments donate the toys to the Martin County Social Services department.
- The department assisted the Police Department's Christmas Downtown Event.

### **Police**

The Police Chief provided the following report:

- The department completed all mandated training. The Police Chief boasted that several police officers take on training not assigned or required.
- The department assisted Macedonia Church with traffic control.
- Four officers completed certified instructor training.
- All officers completed firearm training.
- The Police Chief invited all attendees to the Christmas Downtown event on December 5th at the Police Department. There will be carriage rides, Mr. and Mrs. Claus, hot beverages, food, and treats.

### **Public Works**

The Public Works Director reported the following:

- The department picked up 70 tons of leaves.
- The department was working on the \$350,000 Street Project list.
- The Public Works Director attended a Lead Line Service Seminar. The town must identify and replace lead lines.
- Commissioner Moore noted he had seen several complaints about sand used in holes. The Public Works Director reported that the department would be repairing those holes. The department had used a sand-like mix and would not continue using that particular mix. Commissioner Moore questioned if people can call Public Works with complaints or

questions. The Public Works Director replied that the public can call (252) 792-1024 with complaints or questions.

### **Parks and Recreation**

The Town Administrator reported on behalf of the Parks and Recreation Director:

- The director invited the public to the upcoming Christmas Parade on December 7th at 4:00 pm.
- The Football Superbowl raised \$1,000 to buy toys for the Fire/Rescue and Police Department's toy drive.
- Two volleyball teams will attend the All-Star tournament in Currituck County.
- The Gaylord Perry Park project was complete except for a few minor details.
- PartF offered the Parks & Recreation Department a \$200,000 grant due to the proper management of past grants. The grant will help offset the use of ARP funds to cover the Gaylord Perry Park renovation.

### **Finance**

The Finance Director reported:

- Due to late water billing, December would have no late fees and disconnects would be postponed until January 2nd, 2024.
- The annual audit was almost complete, and the Finance Director will present the findings at the next board meeting.
- The Finance Director was preparing for the budget retreat on January 25th and 26th, 2024.
- The department was working towards a bill notification system to notify customers of upcoming or past-due bills.
- Commissioner Moore questioned if there were many complaints regarding water billing. The Finance Director replied that there were complaints as the department underwent a software conversion and new meter installation. The Town Administrator reported that Public Works has been able to utilize the new meters and software to notify customers of leaks as they are happening.

### **Planning**

The Interim Planning and Zoning Administrator reported:

- He expressed that the Town of Williamston staff is excited to work with the new board.
- The interim Planning and Zoning Administrator contacted the Housing Authority regarding Public Comment concerns presented at the previous meeting. The Housing Authority would create an action plan to address residents' concerns.
- The Administrator provided the Newly Elected Officials Orientation guidebook to all board members.
- The 2024 Budget Retreat will be on **January 24th and 25th, 2024**, at the Moratoc building. This retreat is open to the public.

**Closed Session** – Attorney-Client Privilege N.C. 143-318.11(3)

*Commissioner Richmond moved, with a second by Commissioner Moore, to go out of regular session into closed session for Attorney-Client Privilege N.C. 143-318.11(3) at 6:50 pm. The motion passed unanimously.*

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*It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Gianpoalo, to go out of closed session into a regular session at 7:49 pm. The motion passed unanimously.*

There being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 7:49 pm.

Submitted By:

Approved By: