

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

March 25, 2021

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Williamston met in special session on Thursday, March 25th, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. in the Town Hall Assembly room located at 102 East Main Street, Williamston, NC.

PRESENT Mayor Joyce Whichard-Brown
Commissioners: Mayor Pro Tem Ronell Rodgers, Alton Moore and William Coffield,
Commissioner Al Chesson
Interim Town Administrator: Christina Craft
Town Clerk: Jessica Godard
Human Resources Administrator: Martha-Brown Lilley

ABSENT Commissioner Jerry Knox

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

The Mayor called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Commissioner Coffield led the pledge of allegiance. Commissioner Chesson offered the invocation, after a moment of silence for the victims and their families in Colorado.

AGENDA APPROVED

The Mayor asked if there were any adjustments to the Agenda or if the Board wished any items to be removed or added to the Agenda. *It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously passed to approve the agenda as presented.*

APPROVAL OF AIR CURTAIN BURNER CHANGES

Interim Town Administrator Craft explained reviewed the memo in the agenda packets, describing the original purchase price and plan. She further explained the previous bid was no longer valid, and the current price for the air curtain burner was \$117,780.29. Craft explained Public Works decided not to get a dump truck that was previously budgeted for the department. Additionally, Public Works was planning to auction a wood chipper on Govdeals.com, and staff anticipated \$25,000 - \$30,000 from the sale of the chipper. The remaining amount to cover the cost of the air curtain burner would be \$34,481, which would come out of general operating fund, if approved.

Administrator Craft explained the original plan was to get a loan for the air curtain burner, which would equate the obligation of interest, and being "tied up" in the budget for years to come. If the purchase could be made in the current fiscal year, it would save the Town on interest, and there was money available to cover the cost of the purchase. Landfills were around \$3,000 for the first ten days of February. That cost would be directly reduced with the implementation of the air curtain burner.

Commissioner Coffield asked what could be put in the air curtain burner. Public Works Director Spivey stated leaves and limbs, according to regulations. Next, Commissioner Coffield asked about any ashes that would be produced from the burner. Public Works Director Spivey stated the ashes would equate to 2-4% of the beginning weight of any yard debris. He further explained the remains would be less than what is produced by a wood chipper. He explained the ash could be beneficial for soil and it could be disposed of at the landfill as much less waste. The smaller amount of waste would save money on landfill fees.

The machine was shaped like a large dumpster with a motor, and a rake would also be purchased for the machine. The equipment was self-containing, and Director Spivey stated it would likely last around 20 years. Director Spivey anticipated the machine would pay for itself in approximately three years, making it a good investment for the Town.

Mayor Pro-Tem Rodgers asked if there were any licenses required to operate the equipment. Director Spivey stated an air quality permit from the State was required, and the Town did obtain an air quality permit. There was training available to get certified for operation of the unit. The figure presented was only for the cost of the unit and transport of the unit from the manufacturer to the Town of Williamston. Mayor Pro-Tem Rodgers reiterated the potential cost savings to the Town with the use of the equipment, and Director Spivey stated this equipment was unique and would pay for itself in three years. Director Spivey stated he had leaned toward the air curtain burner because it had been identified as a best practice from the EPA (carbon footprint was low, emissions were low, and the method was considered favorable.) Director Spivey stated the wood chipper was purchased by the Town for approximately \$85,000 back in March of 2015, and it paid for itself in three years. He was hopeful significant monies would come from the sale of that chipper.

Mayor Pro Tem Rodgers asked if the equipment would remain stationary. Director Spivey stated it could be moved, but Town staff was not equipped to be able to move the equipment. Staff generally operates in the same area all the time. Movement of equipment would be rare. Mayor Pro-Tem Rodgers asked about any negative effects on the environment from the machine. Director Spivey discussed the remains from the machine (ash versus wood chips). When using a wood chipper, there were also effects on the environment from the dust created from the chipping, the use of diesel fuel, and the pollution from a wood chipper. The air curtain burner is configured so that a curtain of air is circulated inside the fire box, where the burning is taking place. There is very low smoke emission, as the air is recirculated inside the machine. Training was required to be able to properly and safely operate the machine.

Director Spivey stated now seemed like a good time to purchase the burner. Money was saved in the department with in-house repairs and the deferment of the dump truck purchase, in anticipation of the air curtain burner purchase. The project had been considered for a couple of years.

When asked by Mayor Pro Tem Rodgers, Director Spivey stated there was a fan generating the circulating air that was powered by a diesel engine, but the engine was smaller than the wood chipper. The maintenance of the machine would be significantly lower than current equipment.

Commissioner Coffield asked if only one person would be trained to operate the machine, and Director Spivey stated he would like to have more than one person trained to operate the machine. Commissioner Moore asked about any costs for training. Director Spivey stated the company would offer an optional 2-day virtual training would cost \$800.

Commissioner Coffield asked where the equipment would be set up, and Director Spivey stated in the same location where the wood chipper was being operated (end of Willow Drive).

Mayor Pro-Tem Rodgers reviewed the cost of the machine, the discussed the money that would be coming from the sale of the chipper and from the general operating fund. Administrator Craft stated it was originally in the budget to borrow the money for the air curtain burner, so staff was asking to be able to take money from the general operating revenues to purchase the air curtain burner, instead of getting a loan. The dump truck was budgeted to come out of the general operating fund (which is not being purchased), and any money received from the sale of the chipper would go in to the general operating fund. The motion would be to allow staff to spend up to \$117,780.29 and to fund the purchase from the general operating fund. Commissioner Coffield asked about the ash rake, and Director Spivey stated the rake was an accessory to the air curtain burner. Commissioner Moore inquired about the original quote of \$96,920 and where those funds were to come from. Administrator Craft stated it was originally budgeted for that amount to be a loan. Commissioner Moore asked about Powell Bill money, Director Spivey stated those funds were limited to street repair.

Commissioner Chesson stated staff had done a great job thinking through the process, and stated it was a well-planned business decision. He recalled the return on investment of only three years.

Administrator Craft stated since this particular project was \$20,000 over what was originally approved, staff was bringing this back for approval from the Board. Administrator Craft it was better if the purchase could be made without a loan.

Commissioner Moore made a motion to allow the \$117,780.29 to come out of the general fund for the air curtain burner purchase. Commissioner Chesson seconded, and the motion was unanimously passed.

CLOSED SESSION

It was moved by Mayor Pro-Tem Rodgers, seconded by Commissioner Moore to go out of special session into closed session to under Personnel per N.C.G.S. 143-318-11(a)(6). The motion passed unanimously.

It was moved by Commissioner Moore to go out of closed session and back into open special session. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Coffield and passed unanimously.

APPOINTMENT OF TOWN ATTORNEY

Once in open session, Mayor Pro-Tem Rodgers entertained a motion to send a draft contract to Ms. Watsi Sutton, specifying the amount to be paid as \$175/hour and 160 billable hours per year. *It was moved by Commissioner Moore,*

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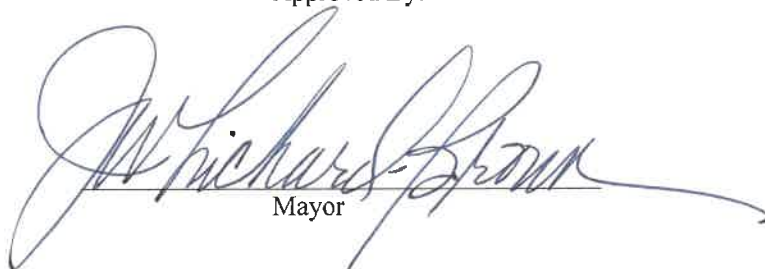
seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and passed on a 3-1 vote to send the draft contract as described by Mayor Pro-Tem Rodgers to Attorney Watsi Sutton. (Aye – Moore, Coffield, Rodgers; Nay – Chesson).

There being no further business, the Mayor pro-Tem declared the meeting adjourned at 6:26 p.m.

Submitted By:

Approved By:


Town Clerk


Mayor