

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

August 5, 2024

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Williamston met in a regular called meeting on Monday, August 5th, 2024, at 5:30 p.m. at the Town Hall Assembly Room at 102 East Main Street, Williamston, NC.

PRESENT Mayor: Dean McCall
Commissioners: Alton Moore, Ruth Coffield, Anthony Gianpoalo, Glinda Fox, and David Richmond
Town Administrator: Eric Pearson
Town Clerk: Jackie Escobar
Police Chief: Travis Cowan
Police Captain: Beth Coltrain
Public Works Director: Stacy Stalls
Planning and Zoning Administrator Andrew Brownfield
Planning and Downtown Marketing Coordinator: LaShonda Cartwright
Fire Chief: Michael Peaks
Parks and Recreation Director: Allen Overby
Finance Officer: Mandy Bullock
Town Attorney: Watsi Sutton

ABSENT

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

Mayor Dean McCall called the meeting to order. First, Commissioner Fox led the pledge of allegiance. Commissioner Moore offered the invocation.

AGENDA APPROVED

Commissioner Richmond moved, Commissioner Moore seconded, and the regular agenda was unanimously approved.

CONSENT AGENDA

It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously approved the consent agenda.

Items approved in the Consent Agenda are as follows:

- (1) Regular Board Meeting Minutes of June 28, 2024 1-3
- (2) Regular Board Meeting Minutes of July 1, 2024 4-8
- (3) Budget Amendment – Destination by Design 9

Contingency	25,000.00
<u>Destination by Design</u>	<u>(25,000.00)</u>
	25,000.00

- (4) Budget Amendment – Godwin Coppage Lights

Undesignated Fund Balance	7,000.00
<u>Repair Building and Grounds</u>	<u>7,000.00</u>
	14,000.00

INTRODUCTION OF NEW STAFF

The Finance Office introduced Megan Green and Kara Barmer as the new Utility Accounts Specialists. The Town Administrator introduced Shay Baggett, a School of Government AmeriCorps Fellow who will work at Town Hall for a year.

OLD BUSINESS

Discontinue Broadcasting Town Board Meetings

The Town Administrator reported that at the July meeting, the Board postponed the Agenda Item to the August 5 regular meeting. The Finance Officer presented high cost estimates for upgrading the sound and video system in the Board meeting room. The Board directed further research on this topic. New Business Item 3 is Resolution 2024-13 seeking Board authorization to apply for a Rural Downtown Economic Development (RDED) grant, which could fund a video and sound system for the Board meeting room and other Town Hall improvements. The Town Administrator recommended postponing a decision on discontinuing broadcasting meetings until the Town learns if it was awarded the RDED grant. *It was moved by Commissioner Fox, seconded by Commissioner Gianpoalo, and unanimously agreed to table the discussion.*

Ordinance 2024-07 Amended Mobile Food Vendor Ordinance

The Planning and Zoning Administrator reported that the town collaborated with local agencies and businesses to update the policy for mobile food vendors. The subcommittee proposed an ordinance to simplify the approval process for new small-scale mobile food businesses, remove fees, and clarify regulations. The amended ordinance aims to attract more vendors and ensure compliance with health, fire, and legal requirements. The Town Attorney reported that the amended ordinance aimed to clarify legal requirements for mobile food vendors, promote Town business, and ensure compliance with health, fire, and legal requirements. The amended ordinance removed fees, defined types of vendors, and listed enforcement procedures and requirements for acquiring a mobile food vendor permit. Commissioner Gianpoalo questioned the removal of permit fees. The Attorney explained that the subcommittee wanted to attract more vendors by removing barriers. The Mayor suggested trying a feeless approach for a year and then reconsidering. Commissioner Gianpoalo inquired about garbage disposal, to which the Attorney mentioned the ordinance did not list a specific person. However, the Town could use the penalty schedule for such a violation. The Planning and Zoning Administrator indicated that the Town of Williamston is cutting edge with the presented Mobile Food Vendor Ordinance compared to other towns. *It was moved by Commissioner Richmond, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously approved the Ordinance 2024-07 Amended Mobile Food Vendor Ordinance. Ordinance 2024-07 is hereby attached with the meeting minutes and incorporated in the Town's Ordinance Book for future reference.*

NEW BUSINESS

Order For The Town Tax Collector To Collect 2024 Property Taxes

The Mayor hereby authorized, empowered, and commanded the Tax Collector to collect the taxes set forth in the tax records filed in the office of Finance and in the tax receipts herewith delivered to the Tax Collector, in the amounts and from the taxpayers likewise therein set forth. Such taxes are hereby declared to be a first lien upon all real property of the respective taxpayers in the Town of Williamston, and this order shall be a full and sufficient authority to direct, require, and enable you to levy on and sell any real or personal property of such taxpayers, for and on account thereof, in accordance with law.

Renew Emily Miller Grant Writer Agreement

The Town Administrator reported that the Board approved entering into an agreement with Emily Miller, McAdams & Associates, LLC, to write grants for the Town of Williamston. The Town has been using her expertise, in addition to writing grants, to research grants as well as assist in the administration of the grants. Administration of the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) The \$750,000 Downtown Revitalization grant is one example. The presented agreement needs to be renewed. Town staff believe the relationship with Emily Miller is a worthy one to continue so we present the agreement to the Board for consideration to renew. The money for this service, \$15,000 for the year, is in the budget. There are no changes in the agreement from last year's, other than the dates of the agreement. *It was moved by Commissioner Fox, seconded by Commissioner Gianpoalo, and unanimously approved the Agreement with Emily Miller, McAdams & Associates LLC for grant writing and administration services.*

Resolution 2024-13 Rural Downtown Economic Development Grant

The Planning and Zoning Administrator reported that the town has the opportunity to obtain additional funding for downtown economic development projects through the Rural Downtown Economic Development grant. This grant aims to spur economic growth and development. The staff recommends renovating parts of the town hall to provide the most significant public benefit. The town could receive \$350,000 in grant funds, with a required \$17,500 match, to cover costs such as new floors, improvements to meeting spaces and kitchen area, enhanced video and audio equipment, and potential upgrades to the A/C unit. *It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Richmond, and unanimously approved Resolution 2024-13 Rural Downtown Economic Development Grant. Resolution 2024-13 is hereby attached with the meeting minutes and incorporated in the Town's Resolution Book for future reference.*

Memorandum of Understanding – Williamston Downtown, Inc.

The Planning and Downtown Marketing Coordinator reported that the MOU between Williamston Downtown Inc. and Town clearly defined the role of the Planning and Downtown Marketing Coordinator/ WDI Director. Board approval would allow the Downtown Planning and Marketing Coordinator/WDI Director the authority to continue to promote the downtown on behalf of the Town and allow continued revitalization efforts with WDI, which allows the town to continue the affiliation with Main Street America. *It was moved by Commissioner Richmond, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and approved the Memorandum of Understanding between Williamston Downtown Inc. and Town. The motion carried with 4 in favor and 0 opposed. Commissioner Glinda Fox recused herself from the vote.*

Resolution 2024-12 Accepting the Lead and Service Line Loan/Grant

The Town Administrator reported that the Town was awarded the Lead and Service Line Grant, which allows the Town to contract the work to identify all the lead and copper lines on the system to an outside agency. The Board approved the task order with Rivers and Associates to do the Lead and Service Line survey. A required step is to adopt a resolution officially accepting this grant award. Staff used the NC Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) suggested resolution format. The loan with principal forgiveness is for a total amount of \$490,000. The Town must pay \$24,500 of that amount, which will come from the Water Fund. The remaining \$465,000 is referred to as principal forgiveness. There is also a 2% closing fee totaling \$9,800. The Town's total investment will be \$34,300. Attorney Sutton has reviewed and approved the resolution. *It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Gianpoalo, and unanimously approved Resolution 2024-12, Accepting the Lead and Service Line Loan/Grant. Resolution 2024-12 is hereby attached with the meeting minutes and incorporated in the Town's Resolution Book for future reference.*

Ordinance 2024-06 Road Closure EJ Hayes Homecoming

The Police Captain presented Ordinance 2024-06 Road Closure EJ Hayes Homecoming. The Homecoming parade has been occurring annually since 1958 and is scheduled for Saturday, September 14th, 2024. The Ordinance is required for the North Carolina Department of Transportation to approve the road closure. *Commissioner Richmond moved it, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously approved Ordinance 2024-06 Road Closure EJ Hayes Homecoming. Ordinance 2024-06 is hereby attached with the meeting minutes and incorporated in the Town's Ordinance Book for future reference.*

Request to Close Town Hall Administration on November 14, 2024, for Training

The Finance Officer requested to close Town Hall on November 14th for all customer-facing employees in the Finance Department to attend training provided by the North Carolina League of Municipalities. The training will cover ethics, customer service, de-escalation techniques, and improving customer relations. Training will occur from 10 am to 3 pm. The requested date is low-traffic, and the training will improve fiduciary responsibility and customer relations. *It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously approved the Request to Close Town Hall Administration on November 14, 2024, for Training.*

Request to Close Town Hall Administration on November 18, 2024 Longevity Luncheon

The Finance Officer has requested to close the Town Hall for customers on November 18th from 11 am until 2 pm. This is to allow the staff to prepare for and attend the Town's annual Longevity Luncheon, which celebrates the staff with years of service to the Town. The Finance Department helps serve the meal to Town staff, and this closure has been an annual request made to the board. The two-hour closure will provide staff with the necessary time to travel to the luncheon, participate, and return. Additionally, a fifteen-minute window before and after the event will be given for staff travel time, as well as for the proper procedure for closing and reopening the utility office. She requested the Board to approve this annual closure to allow for the celebration of the staff that has faithfully served citizens for several years. *It was moved by Commissioner Fox, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously approved the Request to Close Town Hall Administration on November 18, 2024 Longevity Luncheon.*

Consider a Joint Sidewalk Project on East Main with NCDOT

The Town Administrator reported that the NC Department of Transportation (NCDOT) has proposed a joint sidewalk project on Main Street near the Rail Trail. The project is part of the State's Transportation Improvement Program and will be funded by NCDOT's Bicycle and Pedestrian Unit using Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funds. The NCDOT has provided multiple concept designs, with one recommended by the staff. The NCDOT has also provided estimated costs for the recommended design.

Concept #4 – Most Expensive

- Construction & Oversight ~ \$550,000
- Design & Letting~ \$125,000
- Total Costs~ \$675,000

Concept#2 – Recommended by Staff

- Construction & Oversight~ \$275,000
- Design & Letting~ \$75,000
- Total Costs~ \$350,000

NCDOT can further refine these estimates if the Board is interested in pursuing the project. The most expensive concept involves adding sidewalks on the northern side of Main from Harrell Street to NC 13, while the concept that makes the most sense is adding sidewalks from the rail trail to NC 13. This project will require a 20% match from the Town, which can be funded using Powell Bill funds. Choosing Concept #2 would leave \$225,000 for street improvements after using an estimated \$75,000 of Powell Bill funds.

Commissioner Fox questioned whether the project would interfere with the paving of Main Street. The Town Administrator assured that the two projects would not interfere with each other. The Town Administrator also noted that the agreement will come to the Board for consideration. Commissioner Gianpoalo commended staff for planning with future development in mind. *It was moved by Commissioner Fox, seconded by Commissioner Richmond, and unanimously approved the Joint Sidewalk Project on East Main with NCDOT.*

Audit Engagement Letter and Contract, Carr, Riggs, and Ingram Fiscal Year 2023-2024

The Finance Officer presented the contract from Carr, Riggs, and Ingram to complete the audit for Fiscal Year 2023-2024. The Town of Williamston qualifies for a single audit due to the grant money received during this time period and thus requires a more detailed audit review. Carr, Riggs, and Ingram have completed single audits for the Town of Williamston. Prices in this contract reflect the complexity required of a single audit and Town projects. The total cost is \$59,200, and the auditors are scheduled to visit the Town on August 26th.

Commissioner Moore questioned if Zacchaeus Law Firm has paid off. The Tax Collector noted that in the first batch in 2022, most did not settle. Most payments resulted from preforeclosure letters. *It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Fox, and approved the Audit Engagement Letter and Contract, Carr, Riggs, and Ingram Fiscal Year 2023-2024.*

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Finance

The Finance Officer reported:

- The Finance Officer completed a Cash Management class at the School of Government.
- The new staff are completing their training program.
- Point&Pay integration training will occur soon.
- DocuSign launched on August 1st.
- Staff completed Arctic Wolf Cybersecurity Onboarding.

Planning

The Planning and Zoning Administrator reported:

- The Planning Department made progress on the execution of the boardwalk renovation grant. The CAMA Permit has been received, and the Order to Proceed has been issued. Staff will be meeting for bids in the upcoming weeks.
- The department was in the process of pursuing the demolition of two at-risk/vacant properties. The next step in the process should occur on the 16th of August. Will begin drafting an ordinance for Board approval to begin contracting for building removal
 - a. 219 MLK Jr. Dr. – overgrown grass, dilapidated porch, multiple code violations, appearance of vacancy.
 - b. 107 Ormond Dr. – overgrown with kudzu, dilapidated façade, and boarded windows.
- Potential partnerships:
 - a. DOT – Met to discuss a potential sidewalk project along E. Main near Highway 17 as an expansion of the existing trail and an improvement to the future waterfront district.
 - b. Farmer's Market – Discussed the possibility of future "Downtown Market" events and other ideas to promote foot traffic downtown.
 - c. RDED Grant – In discussion with grant representatives to procure funds for improvements to the Town Hall, including updated floors, improved communal spaces, and potentially a rentable space within the old Police Station.
- Staff attended two Main Street America trainings and a conference this month:
 - a. 7/17 – Small-Scale Development and Historic Tax Credit workshop. Informed on tactics downtown property owners can use to increase their revenue and improve their buildings at a lower cost.
 - b. 7/29 – Destination Marketing Meeting. Taught how to make towns and businesses a destination that will attract both community members and tourists.
 - c. 8/6-8/8 – NC Main Street Conference. This is a required yearly meeting that will allow staff to speak to other Main Street directors and planners and gain more information on how to improve the downtown area.
- The Planning Department was informed of the roof collapse at 126 W. Main St. on 7/25/2024. The Planning and Zoning Administrator contacted the property owner immediately. The property owner is currently seeking private demolition rather than forcing the cost on the town.

- The Planning and Downtown Marketing Coordinator reported that the Town of Williamston was the third of 100 entities to complete Main Street training successfully.
- The Planning and Downtown Marketing Coordinator met with a Downtown property owner who planned to sell soon.

Fire/Rescue

The Fire Chief provided the following report:

- The Fire Chief noted flash flooding concerns related to Hurricane Debby.
- The department responded to 254 calls.
- Staff attended the Hazmat Quarterly meeting in Raleigh.
- Mrs. Wendy Sales. EMT Sales was the recipient of the Darrell Taylor Scholarship. Miss Kylie Stone received a department scholarship. Lt. Michael Pierce. Lt. Pierce received his Advanced Firefighter Certification from the North Carolina State Firefighters Association. Lt. Pierce not only serves as a member of the command staff in Williamston, but he is also the Fire Chief for the Jamesville Community Volunteer Fire Department.

Police

The Police Captain provided the following report:

- The Fun in the Sun event, held on July 20th, was attended by about 200 people. The Captain thanked the Local Government Credit Union, Builders Discount, and Piggly Wiggly for sponsoring the event. The department hosted an employee luncheon with leftover hotdogs.
- The department answered 680 calls for service, consisting of 131 incident reports and 49 arrests.
- The Captain spoke about the homicide on the 4th of July. Officers stepped up, resulting in a successful resolution. Five juveniles were arrested. The Captain noted that the community was hurting and urged the community to provide positive guidance for the community's youth.
- Sergeant Michael Pope became the Community Liason Officer. Lieutenant Kevin Banks was promoted to Patrol Lieutenant.

Parks and Recreation

The Parks and Recreation Director reported:

- 25 kids signed up for Football Camp
- Seven people attended the Tennis Clinic
- Baseball Camp was scheduled for mid-month August.
- Football registration closed and practice and games would begin in September.
- Soccer registration was ongoing.
- The soccer field at Godwin Copping Park was top-dressed with sand.
- The department encountered and exterminated armyworms at the soccer field.
- Power at the tennis courts will be off until repairs are made.
- The Parks and Recreation Director should have an update regarding the soccer field playground.

Public Works

The Public Works Director reported the following:

- The department prepared for the expected rainfall from Hurricane Debby.
- Street Project Request for Proposals was underway.
- The department worked with 10 tons of asphalt in the month of July.
- The department installed two water taps.

Closed Session – N.C.143-318.11(a)(3) Attorney-Client Privilege and N.C.143-318.11(a)(6) Employee Matter

Commissioner Richmond moved, with a second by Commissioner Fox, to go out of regular session into closed session for N.C.143-318.11(a)(3) Attorney-Client Privilege and N.C.143-318.11(a)(6) Employee Matter at 7:20 pm. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Moore moved, seconded by Commissioner Richmond, to move out of the closed session into a regular session at 8:57 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

There being no further business, it was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously declared the meeting adjourned at 8:58 pm.

Submitted By:

Approved By:


Town Clerk


Mayor