

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

January 4, 2016

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Williamston met in regular session on Monday, January 4, 2016 at 5:30 p.m. in the Assembly Room at Town Hall.

**PRESENT** Mayor: Joyce Whichard-Brown  
Commissioners: Mayor Pro Tem Al Chesson, Ronell Rodgers, Jerry Knox, William Coffield,  
and Junious J. Horton  
Town Administrator: Eric Pearson  
Town Clerk: Christina Craft  
Finance Officer: Linda Harrison  
Public Works Director: Kerry Spivey  
Recreation Director: Allen Overby  
Director of Planning and Development: Brent Kanipe  
Police Chief: Travis Cowan  
Fire Chief: James B. Peele, III  
Town Attorney: Daniel A. Manning

**ABSENT** None

**CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION**

The Mayor called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Commissioner Chesson led the pledge of allegiance. Commissioner Ronell Rodgers offered the invocation.

**AGENDA APPROVED AS ADJUSTED**

The Mayor asked if there were any items to be removed or added to the Regular Agenda or the Consent Agenda. The Town Administrator asked to the following removed from the agenda as the contracts were not received in time for the attorney to review:

- VII Old Business
  - (1) Amended Contract with Trillium Accessible Playground
  - (2) Contract with Gametime Accessible Playground Equipment

*With no further changes to be made to the Regular Agenda or the Consent Agenda, Commissioner Chesson made a motion to approve the removal of the items under old business as requested. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Knox and was unanimously approved.*

*With no additional adjustments requested, it was moved by Commissioner Horton, seconded by Commissioner Knox and unanimously passed to approve the agenda with the removal of the old business.*

Items approved in the Consent Agenda are as follows:

- (1) Approval of the Minutes of the December 7, 2015 Meeting
- (2) Tax Relief Orders
- (3) Budget Amendment – Public Works Truck
- (4) Budget Amendment – Leaf Machine
- (5) Approve Leader’s Edge Retreat Facilitation Proposal

**PUBLIC HEARING**

The Town Administrator reported that the Town’s budget calendar includes a public hearing to allow citizens to voice requests for the coming year’s budget. The public hearing was advertised in the newspaper. Although this hearing is not required by law, it gives the public the opportunity to come forward and share with the Board those

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things they would like to see in the budget. This public hearing was set prior to the annual board retreat to allow the Board to consider any requests that may be presented at the hearing.

The Mayor asked for public comment. Quentin Bivens, Parkdale Plant manager, reported that the price per gallon of water should be revised in the upcoming budget. The plant makes yarn and employs 140 people. As of June 2015, the plant's water bill doubled. The plant uses approximately 2.5 million gallons per month. The cost of the water could jeopardize the companies' competitive ability. Mr. Bivens reported that he is willing to offer solutions of how to move forward and would like to meet with the staff to discuss. Mayor Pro Tem Chesson encouraged Mr. Bivens to meet with the Town Administrator to discuss options.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

### **OLD BUSINESS**

None

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Carr, Riggs & Ingram (CRI) Presents Audit for FY 2014/2015**

Martin Amerson with CRI presented the draft Financial Statement for FY 2014/2015. The Financial Statement was submitted timely to the LGC. They are expecting LGC approval at any time.

Mr. Amerson reported that the Town's net position increased by \$1,932,752 for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2015. The largest portion (64.37%) reflects the Town's net investment in the capital assets such as land, buildings, machinery and equipment. The Town uses these capital assets to provide services to citizens and is not available for future spending. Although the Town of Williamston's net investment in capital assets is reported net of the outstanding related debt, the resources needed to repay that debt must be provided by other sources, since the capital assets cannot be used to liquidate these liabilities. An additional portion of the Town's net position (2.7%) represents resources that are subject to external restrictions on how they may be used. The remaining balance of \$8,413,353 is unrestricted. The Town allocated its proportionate share of the Local Government Employee' Retirement System's net pension asset, deferred inflows of resources and pension expense. Several aspects of the Town's financial operations positively influenced the total unrestricted governmental net position such as debt forgiveness, continued diligence in the collection of property taxes by increasing aggressive collection procedures through the debt setoff program, garnishments and bank account attachments; sales tax receipts increase due to increased tourist activity and continued low cost of debt due to the Town's sound financial position.

There are two trust funds, the OPEB Trust Fund and the Martin Memorial Library Trust Fund. The monies in the library trust fund originated from the citizens and can only be used for repairs to the library. Of the \$260,919 in the OPEB Trust Fund, \$194,802 was contributed by the Town in the 2014/2015 fiscal year. Funds held in the employee retirement system are restricted.

Mr. Amerson noted that the Town's decision to borrow from the Enterprise Fund instead of a traditional loan had resulted in higher interest earnings for the Enterprise Fund and a lower interest rate for the General Fund.

The unassigned fund balance represents 42.86% of total General Fund expenditures, while total fund balance represents 56.03% of that same amount. During the fiscal year, the Town revised the budget on several occasions. Generally, budget amendments are made to adjust the estimates that are used to prepare the original budget ordinance once exact information is available, to recognize new funding amounts from external sources, such as grants, or to increase appropriations that become necessary to maintain services.

The Town of Williamston's proprietary funds provide the same type of information found in the governments-wide statements but in more detail. Unrestricted net position of the Water and Sewer Fund at the end of the fiscal year amounted to \$6,964,451. The total increase in net position for the fund was \$1,636,575.

The Town's investment in capital assets for its governmental and business-type activities as of June 30, 2015, totals \$21,095,249, net of accumulated depreciation. These assets include buildings, infrastructure, land, machinery and equipment, park facilities, and vehicles. The total debt decreased by 14.57% during the current year.

He pointed out that the property tax collection rate for the 2014/2015 budget year was 89.94%, a slight decrease from last year and there was an increase in the vehicle tax collection rate of 100% as the taxes must be paid when the tags are renewed. The increase in vehicle tax collection resulted from the State's collection of vehicle property tax when tags are renewed. This has resulted in an increase in vehicle tax collection percentages for cities and counties across the state.

Overall, Mr. Amerson noted that this was a very good audit. He noted that staff had been very cooperative during the audit process. The Board and the Town Administrator complimented the Finance Department and the Department Heads for their hard work in watching their budgets during the budget year.

#### **Board Accepts Fiscal Audit for FY 2014/2015**

*It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Horton and unanimously passed to accept the FY 2014/2015 audit.*

#### **Revised Inter-Local Agreement with BHM Regional Library**

Hannah Easley, Executive Director of the BHM Regional Library, requested an amendment to the current contract to allow the addition of Bath, NC to the regional library system. Attorney Manning had reviewed the contract and noted that there were no references to the contract superseding the current contract. If the new contract is to be approved, he recommended to superseding the prior contract adopted in July 2013.

*It was moved by Commissioner Chesson, seconded by Commissioner Knox and unanimously passed to accept the contract with BHM Regional Library with the understanding that this contract supersedes the prior contract adopted July 1, 2013 whereas to the end that this the latest agreement.*

#### **Purchase of RRT Truck**

Chief Peele requested the approval to purchase a pickup truck on behalf of the Regional Response Team. The RRT program is funded through a contract with NC State. The truck is not a budgeted item nor is it listed in the Capital Improvement Plan as this line is funded by the RRT contract and is rolled over from year to year and is designed to provide funding to support the RRT program with a vehicle to be used for pulling trailers and training. The vehicle that is being replaced has multiple maintenance issues. Chief Peele recommends the purchase from Feyer Ford for \$27,820.48 and taxes not included in the quote.

*It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Rodgers and unanimously passed to approve the purchase of the truck in the amount of \$27,820.48 plus taxes from Feyer Ford.*

#### **DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS**

##### **Fire/Rescue**

The Fire Chief provided the following report:

- Department had a high call volume for the year, totaling 2,597 calls.
- The RRT Team is currently working on the proposal contract for the next fiscal year. If approved, the contract will be brought to this board for review.
- The staff completed the second month of the Advanced EMT course.
- The staff has been busy during the month participating in parades.
- They participated in a tabletop exercise through the RRT in Hyde County.
- They had a live-burn exercise on Highway 64.

#### Police

The Police Chief reported:

- They participated in a quarterly Panic Button test with the Town Hall staff to better prepare them for emergency situations.
- The Training Checklist has been sent to NC State which shows that the department is compliant with all state-mandated training.
- They are preparing for a promotional process and will hopefully bring a new corporal before the board at the next meeting.
- There is one FTE open.
- They are moving forward with the purchase of two patrol vehicles so that the cars can be outfitted and put into service before the fiscal year end. The vehicles that are being rotated offline have been holding their value and most are being sold at auction. They do retain some older models to use during inclement weather.
- They have discussed the body-worn cameras and with the District Attorney and are reviewing grants to discuss what the grants will mean for Williamston Police Department.

#### Planning

The Planning Director reported:

- The Town has closed on the old theatre property on Main Street last week. The property was donated to the Town.
- They are receiving bids on the Royster-Clark property to excavate and clean up the property. He will receive a detailed cleanup schedule once all contractors are in place.
- The Martin County Commissioners have submitted a recommendation to the Planning and Zoning Board. Per Town Policy, the advisory board members are chosen from different neighborhoods so that the citizens can go to their neighbor with their concerns. The County selected someone from the northern side of town.
- They have been gathering zip codes of shoppers in the downtown area through the Small Business Saturday. It shows that there has been an increase in amount of regular shoppers within the downtown trade area which is supported by the sales tax revenue.
- Annexation construction has started with creating temporary access roads.

#### Public Works

The Public Works Director reported:

- Sanitation tonnage for the December totaled 188 tons.
- Limited asphalt availability and inclement weather has made street repairs difficult. 17% man-hours were spent repairing streets. There are various pipeline types and ages of the lines all over town which are directly related to the needed street repairs.
- Two pumps at the waste water treatment plants need to be replaced and have been purchased.
- There are a high number of requests to locate water and sewer lines.
- There were six grease trap inspections in the month and all were in compliance.

#### Parks & Recreation

The Parks & Recreation director reported the following:

- The inclusive playground is moving forward. Currently, they are waiting on a 3-dimensional design to review. The Trillium contract changes are necessary as the grant funding has increased by \$40,000. The contract will be brought before the board once the contract has been reviewed by the Town Attorney.
- Basketball season is in full-swing as practices have begun with over 100 children registered. The games will begin January 19, 2016.
- Application process for the Perry Center has begun as the memberships to the gym are annual.
- The maintenance department is currently fully staffed. The newest employee has passed the tests and received his pesticide license.

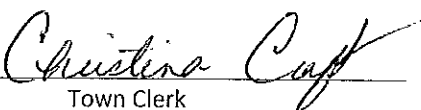
- The first online newsletter has been emailed and will be done quarterly. The newsletter is informational and will promote the different programs that are offered.

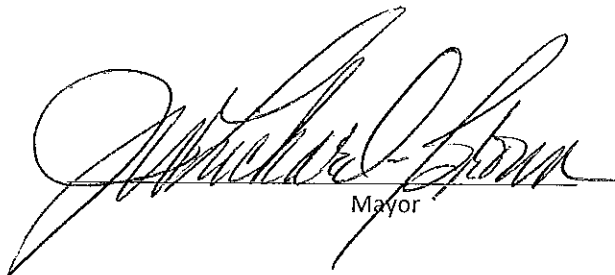
**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

Submitted By:

Approved By:

  
Town Clerk

  
Mayor