

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

September 17, 2015

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Williamston met in special called session on Thursday, September 17, 2015 at 5:30 a.m. in the Assembly Room at Town Hall.

PRESENT Mayor: Tommy Roberson
Commissioners: Mayor Pro Tem Al Chesson, Jerry Knox, William Coffield, Herman B. Daniels
and Junious J. Horton
Town Administrator: Eric Pearson
Town Clerk/Executive Assistant: Christina Craft
Town Attorney: Daniel A. Manning

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

The Mayor called the meeting to order and asked Commissioner Knox to give the invocation.

AGENDA/CONSENT AGENDA APPROVED

The Mayor asked if there were any adjustments to the Regular Agenda.

It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Horton and unanimously passed to approve the agenda as presented.

WELCOME

The Mayor welcomed County Commissioners Dempsy Bonds and Ronnie Smith who were in attendance at the meeting.

WATER ISSUES

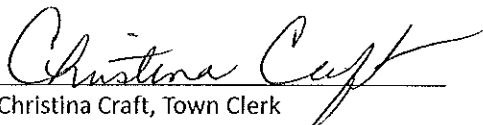
The Mayor reported that he had requested this meeting to discuss the water issues. Eric Pearson discussed a cost analysis if the rates were changed to one penny per gallon. Currently there are four rates in place: in-town rate, out of town rate, our water district rate and the county's revised water district rate. When the rates were set, the rates were selected at a "break even" amount and were not set to make a profit. Per the Enterprise Newspaper article, the Martin County districts are not breaking even but are being funded by the General Fund. As far as the Town, the districts have been breaking even as that is our goal as several expenses in the budget based on the current rates. There are roughly \$20,000 annually in water accounts that are written off every year and this amount is included in the budget. Another expense is that the Town's payment to the county for infrastructure being served by the town. The Town never acquired all of the customers that originally agreed to sign up for water when it became available which should have covered the cost of the infrastructure that still must be paid to the County, causing an additional strain on the Town. The Town has not increased taxes in 8 years nor has it used tax funds to subsidize the water rates while the County has increased taxes twice in the same time frame and have been funding the deficit in year's past with money from the General Fund that includes taxes from everyone in the county, including Williamston. The water fund should be self-supporting. Commissioner Chesson reported that it is not fair that everyone in the county is subsidizing the water district by the County utilizing the general fund. The Town has not lost money nor has it made money. As the County Manager David Bone has stated repeatedly in previous meetings, there was no choice as the reduction in groundwater use was mandated by the Department of Agriculture. While the price per gallon is different per area due to the cost of the area, more due diligence will be required before making decisions that will affect the life of loan and the sustainability of the Enterprise Fund. The Town Administrator is to review the cost analysis and bring it back to the Board for consideration. The Mayor opened the floor for comments by any one present. County Manager David Bone reported that District I has been repaying the debt to the General Fund in the last couple of years and is in much better shape while District II is still being subsidized. The Mayor reported that the County is still subsidizing District II with tax money. Richard Clayton stated that the state tried to do the same to Greene County but the county proved that the state data was not accurate on their aquifer. Mr. Clayton also reported that he was more concerned with the people that are on a fixed income and cannot afford the big increase. He also stated that landlords should be responsible for what their tenants leave without paying. It is not legal to require the landlord to pay if the tenants skip out without paying per the Town Administrator. Wilson Fairall also expressed concern for the people on a fixed income not being able to afford the increase and feels there are issues with the meters as he has requested his to be checked.

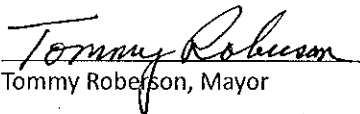
ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 6:19 p.m.

Submitted By:

Approved By:


Christina Craft, Town Clerk


Tommy Roberson, Mayor