

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

October 5, 2015

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Williamston met in regular session on Monday, October 5, 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  
Police Chief: Travis Cowan  
Fire Chief: James B. Peele, III  
Planning and Development Director: Brent Kanipe  
Public Works Director: Kerry Spivey  
Recreation Director: Allen Overby  
Finance Director: Linda Harrison  
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 or if the Board wished to have any items removed from the Consent Agenda and added to the Regular Agenda.

Items approved in the Consent Agenda are as follows:

1. Approval of the Minutes of the Minutes of September 14 and September 17, 2015 meetings
2. Approval of Budget Amendment – Handicap Playground Equipment  
Undesignated Fund Balance  
Trillium Health Resources Grant \$250,00

The purpose of this amendment is to budget funds for the Trillium Health Resources Grant in the amount of \$250,000.00. Construction will be for an inclusive playground at Godwin-Coppage Park. Trillium will have no on-going commitment to the playground once construction is complete. The Town of Williamston is not required to provide any matching funds to this grant. Our obligation is the upkeep after construction. Construction to start as soon as possible after receiving approval from Trillium Health Resources on playgrounds and is to be completed by June 30, 2016.

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

**WELCOME**

The Mayor welcomed State Representative Shelly Willingham, and County Commissioners Dempsey Bond, Ronnie Smith, Butch Lilley, and Tommy Bowen who were in attendance at the meeting.

#### **E J HAYES UPDATE**

Mr. Earl Newsome, Vice President of the EJ Hayes Alumni Association, reported that EJ Hayes Alumni Association is an integral component in the cultural, social and economic growth of Williamston and Eastern Martin County. Smithwick Chapel and EJ Hayes Alumni work together to provide an enrichment of 60 children. The classroom used for children with appropriate activities from K-12 to include tutorial, other educational programs and recreational activities. Classes promote self-esteem, motivation, modeling appropriate actions, and promote academic enrichment with a strong emphasis on black males. This is done by partnering with school counselors, psychiatrist, behavior specialists, community resource leaders, and the University of North Carolina Basketball Player and Alumni Board Members. The lack of supplies and computer network connections are ongoing challenges. Other services or accommodations provided by the center for a few include weddings, receptions, family reunions, retirement services, baby showers, birthday celebrations, Black History programs, magic shows, political fund raisers, community meetings, and funeral services. With the annual homecoming, the Center was used for activities and functions of participants to include a community parade.

#### **WATER RATES**

Commissioner Chesson gave a presentation of the Town of Williamston water rates to report the reasons behind the new rates. A copy of this presentation is on file and attached as part of these minutes. Mayor Roberson allowed any citizen present to ask questions in regards to the water rates. Mr. Jimmy Mobley questioned the different rates for the different districts. Commissioner Chesson reiterated the different costs per district and the corresponding funding contracts to cover the cost of the infrastructure per district. The debts were incurred in the WD1 and WD2 before the water system was formed. The districts were formed as a result of a mutual contract between Martin County and the Town of Williamston. The Town can hopefully reduce the consumer's monthly cost after some of the debt is paid off in 2016. A question was raised as to why rates were increased in July since the new water plant is supposed to be online in September. July began the new rates as, per the loan agreement, payments on the loan began in July 2015. It was questioned if the water rates would decrease once the surface plant is operational. Commissioner Chesson reported that the rates will be reviewed to verify if adjustments can be made but it is a possibility once the debt has decreased. A question was raised as to what fees would be instituted if they revert back to their old well. Commissioner Chesson reported that there are no fees to revert back to using private wells in the districts but in-town customers can not revert back to private wells. The Town Administrator reported that if a customer reverted back to the private well, the water meter would be removed at no cost. If the customer later decided to rejoin the water system, there would be a reconnect fee. The Mayor reported that the Town of Williamston, just like the County, must have reserve funds in case of emergencies. County Manager David Bone had previously reported in *The Enterprise* newspaper that the County had two options to make up the difference if everyone removed themselves from the system. One option is to require everyone in the county to hook onto the system which would not work as the water lines are not available in all areas. The second option was to tax everyone in addition to paying for the water to make up the difference in the funds. The county did reduce the water rates and are now taking a loss. The loss has to come out of reserves. The State requires the Town and the County to maintain a certain level of reserves and the Local Government Commission can take over an entity if the reserve level is not maintained. The Town needs to review all options on the water rates before any decisions can be made as the Town does not want to access reserve funds.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Wilson Fairall, residing at 1399 Popular Point Rd, Williamston, NC, asked if there would be any relief for the citizens in the ETJ area as they have no vote and pay the highest rates. He reported that the County is reviewing the one cent per gallon and he hopes that the Town is also looking into this option. In the next few years, the Town should consider training local staff to operate the new treatment plant.

#### **CONTRACT AMENDMENT - SKEWARKEE CANAL**

Greg Churchill, President of Rivers and Associates, presented a contract amendment to the Skewarkee Canal – Phase 4 Railroad Crossing. The Amendment has been modified to reflect a \$10,000 lump sum fee for the scope of services associated with “No-Rise” Certification required by FEMA. The scope of services excludes field work associated with property or topographic surveys.

*It was moved by Commissioner Chesson, seconded by Commissioner Horton and unanimously passed to approve the Engineering Amendment No. 1 as presented.*

#### **TRILLIUM CONTRACT FOR HANDICAP PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT**

Allen Overby recommended a contract to be approved for that Trillium Health Resources for professional services for the construction of an inclusive playground at Godwin-Coppage Park. Trillium will have no on-going commitment to the playground once construction is complete. The Town of Williamston is not required to provide any matching funds to this grant as this expenditure is covered by the “Play Together Construction” grant received from the East Carolina Behavioral Health. Our obligation is the upkeep after construction. Construction to start as soon as possible after receiving approval from Trillium Health Resources on playgrounds and is to be completed by June 30, 2016.

*It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Coffield and unanimously passed to approve the Trillium contract for Handicap Playground Equipment as presented.*

#### **DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS**

##### **Parks & Recreation**

The Parks & Recreation director reported the following:

- All soccer and football games have been postponed for a week due to weather
- Volleyball season begins this week
- The Christmas Parade will be held December 3.
- Design meetings to include staff, parents, vendors and teachers are being scheduled to move forward with the new playground design.
- The new town website and facebook are being utilized to promote the Park and Recreation activities.

##### **Police**

The Police Chief reported:

- The department was planning for the possible hurricane.
- Firearms training has been rescheduled
- Community Policing Meeting is to be held October 6<sup>th</sup>.
- 25% short on staff for various reasons

##### **Planning**

The Planning Director reported:

- The weather was not favorable for most of the Stampede except for the most part of Saturday
- The main act, Trick Pony, was able to perform a complete set and stayed for over an hour afterwards signing autographs.
- A special thanks to the Police, Fire/Rescue and Recreation departments for all the hard work during the Stampede.
- The Fall Ya’ll festival is scheduled for October 15<sup>th</sup> in Barnes Plaza, targeted towards small children.
- A letter was received from the Audubon informing the Town was recertified as a Sustainable Community and expressing their for appreciation of the Town’s efforts toward sustainability

**Public Works**

The Public Works Director reported:

- The Town has received 9.25 inches of water since September 25<sup>th</sup> which raised the normal waste water from a half a million gallons to 2 million gallons a day.
- Sanitation tonnage for the May totaled 182 tons.
- 10 tons of asphalt has been reclaimed during the month.

**Fire/Rescue**

The Fire Chief provided the following report:


- The sustainable community project is to maintain and exercise a disaster plan which is done concurrent the Stampede.
- October was a routine month with 201 EMS responses.
- There will be a free car seat safety check station from 10am - 1 pm this Saturday at the Dairy Queen.
- The Grillin' on the Green will be held October 21-22 with the funds to be used to refurbish an antique fire truck.

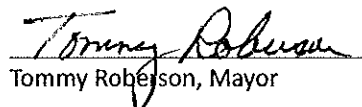
**ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 7:19 p.m.

Submitted By:

Approved By:

  
Christina Craft, Town Clerk

  
Tommy Roberson, Mayor