

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

July 27, 2021

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Williamston met in special session on Tuesday, July 27, 2021 at 5:30 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, William Coffield, and Al Chesson
Town Administrator: Eric Pearson
Town Clerk: Jackie Escobar
Finance Officer: Christina Craft
Fire Chief: Michael Peaks
Police Chief: Travis Cowin
Planning and Zoning Administrator: Cameron Braddy
Planner and Downtown Marketing Coordinator: Zach Dickerson

ABSENT Commissioner Jerry Knox

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

The Mayor called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Police Chief Cowin led the pledge of allegiance. Fire Chief Peaks offered the invocation, after a moment of silence for the COVID victims and their families.

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 Chesson, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously passed to approve the agenda as presented.*

Discussion of Safety Concerns on Main Street

The Town Administrator Eric Pearson reported the purpose of the special meeting was to discuss safety concerns particularly the Tarheel Apartment Building. He outlined the following requests: constructing barriers in front of the Dog Branch Antique Shop, allowing SS Custom Cycle Shop to occupy space in the City Hall building, and allowing bids for the demolition of the Tarheel Apartment Building.

The Town Administrator reported structural engineers visited the Tarheel Apartment Building. The engineers gave precise instructions. The engineers allowed sidewalks to remain open as long as there were barriers in place. Barricades will be placed in front of the Dog Branch Antiques Shop. These barricades would prevent damage of a possible collapse. There are two bids for the barricades. The first bid is \$4,800 and the second bid may be lower. The Town Administrator requested the Board allow him to approve the lower bid. Once approved, the barriers could be constructed the next day. *It was moved by Commissioner Rodgers, seconded by Commissioner Chesson, and unanimously passed to authorize the Town Administrator to approve a bid for barricades in front of the Dog Branch Antiques Shop.*

Commissioner Coffield questions if Main street will remain closed. The Town Administrator stated Main Street will remain closed until the Tarheel Apartment Building is stabilized and no longer a threat to citizens.

The Town Administrator reported the Tarheel Apartment Building status is imminent. SS Custom Cycle, a downtown motorcycle business, shares a wall with the Tarheel Apartment Building. If the Tarheel Apartment Building were to collapse or be demolished, SS Custom Cycle could be damaged as well. The Administrator requested the Board to allow SS Custom Cycle to occupy Town Hall's vacant space temporarily. SS Custom Cycle would occupy the space left behind by the Police Department. After conversations with the Administrator, SS Custom Cycle would be content with the space at Town Hall. The Administrator reported the Town Attorney, Police Chief, and the Municipal League agree it is a legal option as long as SS Custom Cycle carries their own insurance. The Town Attorney would have to formulate an agreement between the Town and SS Custom Cycle. The Town Attorney reported there were no inconsistencies with the law regarding the move. However, the property is designed to serve the public not a private entity. The Town would have to charge SS Custom Cycle a rate, or it would be deemed an emolument. Town Administrator asked the Board to approve the monthly rate of \$50 to accommodate this rare circumstance. The rate would satisfy the emolument condition. This would allow SS Custom Cycle to continue operating. The Administrator stated it is the Town Staff and the Board of Commissioner's desire to keep SS Custom Cycle on Main Street. Commissioner Rodgers questions what would happen to the Town's insurance if something were to happen. The Administrator explained the agreement would require SS Custom Cycle to carry their insurance and there would be a

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hold harmless agreement. Commissioner Rodgers also questioned if the Town would cover expenses such as water and electricity. The Administrator stated all the available services would be provided with the \$50 monthly rate. Commissioner Rodgers questioned if allowing a business to use the Town Hall space would set a precedent. Commissioner Rodgers inquired if another business could request the space for the same rate. The Town Attorney explained if SS Custom Cycle is allowed to use the vacant space, it must be open to all citizens. Although it is a rare occurrence, the Town cannot show preference amongst citizens. The Town Attorney stated it is the business' responsibility to do their due diligence. The shared wall between SS Custom Cycle and the Tarheel Apartment Building is visible. However, the Town must keep citizens safe and mitigate any damage. The Town Attorney expressed it is legal to use the available space but does open the Town to future requests of the space. The Town Administrator noted the Town space would probably not be available in the future. The Planning and Zoning Department planned to occupy the space. The Town Administrator urged the Town Board to approve the request knowing the risk of setting a precedent. In this manner the Town would help SS Custom Cycle continue operating their business. Commissioner Moore inquired if SS Custom Cycle has been informed about the Engineer's Report. The Town Administrator has given SS Custom Cycle a copy of the Engineer's Report. *It was moved by Commissioner Chesson, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously passed to allow SS Custom Cycle to use the space for an undetermined amount of time, with the Town of Williamston listed as additional insured, for a monthly rate of \$50.*

The Town Administrator reported the Tarheel Apartment Building is beyond repair. Demolition is the only option for the building. The Administrator requested the Board allow the bid process for demolition to begin. Town Staff would be asking contractors to keep SS Custom Cycle safe. Town Attorney stated there is a conundrum regarding the bid. Although it is an urgent issue, the Town is legally restrained to the formal bidding process. There are some emergency exceptions, however, the definition of an emergency is narrow. If SS Custom Cycle moved its location and there are barricades in place, the emergency has been mitigated. According to the procurement statutes, a formal bid must be out for 7 days. It was the Attorney's recommendation to follow the formal bid process. If the process is sidestepped, it could open the Town to future litigation. The Town Administrator suggested opening bids for the 7-day process after the bid specifications are correct. Commissioner Chesson inquires how many bids are needed. The Attorney stated there needs to be 3 bids, if there are fewer than 3, the Town must rebid. There can be fewer than 3 bids during the second bidding process. Commissioner Chesson suggests reaching out to professionals. The demolition of the Tarheel Apartment Building requires a lot of work. Commissioner Chesson feared there will not be many bids. Attorney Sutton stated the Board could approve electronic bids to expedite the bidding process. Commissioner Moore questioned the ability of keeping the SS Custom Cycle shared wall intact. The Administrator explained the odds are favorable if the demolition is performed by a professional contractor. It is paramount to keep SS Custom Cycle safe. *It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Chesson, and unanimously passed to allow Town staff to seek bids to demolish the Tarheel Apartment Building.*

The Town Administrator reports he will meet with the owners of SS Custom Cycle once the memorandum of understanding is generated to further discuss the move into the vacant space at Town Hall. The bid process will begin on July 28, 2021.

There being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 6:08 p.m.

Submitted By:

Approved By:

Town Clerk

Mayor

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

July 12, 2021

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Williamston met in regular called meeting on Monday, July 12, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. at the Town Hall Assembly Room 102 E. Main Street, Williamston, NC.

PRESENT Mayor: Joyce Whichard-Brown
Commissioners: Ronell Rodgers, Jerry Knox, Al Chesson, and William Coffield
Town Administrator: Christina Craft, Interim
Town Clerk: Jackie Escobar
Finance Officer: Christina Craft
Planning and Zoning Administrator: Cameron Braddy
Fire Chief: Michael Peaks
Police Chief: Travis Cowan
Public Works Director: Kerry Spivey
Parks and Recreation Director: Allen Overby

ABSENT Commissioner: Alton Moore

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

The Mayor called the meeting to order. Commissioner Coffield led the pledge of allegiance. Commissioner Chesson offered the invocation, after a moment of silence for the tragedy in Florida and our country.

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 approved by Commissioner Chesson, seconded by Commissioner Rodgers, and unanimously passed to approve the regular agenda as presented.*

CONSENT AGENDA

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

Items approved in the Consent Agenda are as follows:

- (1) Approval of the Minutes of June 7 and June 29, 2021

PUBLIC HEARING

The Mayor opened the floor for a Public Hearing regarding the Adoption for Zoning Ordinance Update

Cameron Braddy reported the State of North Carolina updated their land use clause. Public hearing is required when there are amendments to the zoning ordinance. Cameron Braddy has not had any calls or letters with questions, accepts any questions at this moment. With no questions, Mayor closed public hearing.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Courtney Smith reported her father's home had tree limbs in May 2020. The limbs were cut with help from their family. Her father resided at 2006 W Main Street. Her father was very sick and unable to cut them himself. A family member offered the use of his bucket truck to help with the limbs. Her father has since passed away. Lee Haislip, the Public Works' General Operations Foreman, drove by and told Courtney Smith's family about the Town's policy to not pick up limbs removed by contractors. Lee Haislip's girlfriend, Virginia Gardner, posted a photo to Facebook with a caption implying the Smith's had contractors removing the tree limbs. The homeowner and his family spoke on separate occasions to the Mayor and the Interim Town Administrator about limb removal. The family was informed that limbs removed with professional equipment would not be picked up by Public Works. Courtney Smith states the homeowner has paid taxes to the Town of Williamston and tree limb removal is a service provided by the town.

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Courtney Smith questions who can and cannot use the Town's newly purchased Air Curtain Burner. Mayor gives condolences and says tree limb removal will go under advisement.

Paul Smith, in support of his granddaughter Courtney Smith, reported that his son had a stroke and was very sick while working on the house. The trees in his driveway had limbs falling on the vehicle and home and a large pecan tree fell once on part of the house. The homeowner was afraid another tree would fall on the house and he would not be able to move out of the way. They requested help from their cousin. The cousin owned a bucket truck as a hobby and not for commercial use. They cut the limbs as small as possible. Some limbs were used for firewood. Mayor noted that it is an excessive number of limbs, the weight exceeds what the Town's policy allows for pick up. Mayor states the limb removal was taken under advisement.

Bobby Williams, states he owns a bucket truck as a hobby and is not a contractor. He used the bucket truck to help Courtney Smith's family cut the tree limbs. Williams understands that the number of limbs is excessive, but thinks Town could have picked up the limbs if they had started early. Williams claims that Town employees spied on him by parking across the street at Fitness Unlimited and took a photograph of him using the bucket truck. Bobby Williams concluded his report by saying Public Works' new Air Curtain Burner could be used for the limbs at 2006 W Main Street. Mayor says it will be taken under advisement.

OLD BUSINESS

COVID UPDATE – VICKY MANNING

Vicky Manning reported there have been 4 new cases of COVID in Martin County since Friday. Manning noted 471 active cases on January 11th, whereas on July 12th there were only 5 active cases. Martin County lists 33rd on the nation's vaccination dashboard. 41% of the residents received at least the 1st dose. All 3 vaccines available are proving to effectively decrease COVID symptoms. Fortunately, there are no outbreaks to report. The Health Department has held popup vaccination clinics at Robersonville, Oak City, and Jamesville. The Health Department is willing to work with organizations to administer vaccines to people interested. Manning also reports that booster shots won't be seen until 2022 per CDC speculation. Commissioner Rodgers questioned why some people are hesitant to receive the vaccination. Manning speculates it is because of various reasons, including conspiracy theories. Commissioner Rodgers asks if we should still wear masks. Manning suggests that masks be worn when in contact with unvaccinated individuals. She believes it's safe to attend public events with the proper safety precautions.

TARHEEL APARTMENT BUILDING

Situation Update

Zach Dickerson reported a significant portion of the Tarheel Apartment Building's roof caved in. The wall fell down in June. Zach and Cameron have contacted contractors to see distinct viewpoints about the future of the building. The building has several cracks in the bricks. One contractor believes a bad storm could possibly take down the apartment building. Dickerson sent a request to the County to officially condemn the building. He is meeting with contractors to analyze quotes for the demolition of the building. The building is a serious safety hazard. The non-profit organization that legally owned the Tarheel Apartment Building as of July the organization is officially dissolved. Moving forward, Zach and Cameron continue to gather quotes from various contractors. The Mayor asks about the shared wall between the Tarheel Apartment Building and the neighboring business. Zach notes the building does share a wall with the SS Custom Cycle Inc. motorcycle business. When speaking to contractors, Zach asks for two numbers, one if both buildings must come down and another if the motorcycle business can be saved. The SS Custom Cycle Inc. being demolished along with the Tarheel Apartment Building is a possibility. Zach states he has been in contact with SS Custom Cycle Inc.'s owner and has asked them to reach out to their insurance agent. Town Attorney suggests SS Custom Cycle Inc.'s owner could be brought into discussions about the demolition. She suggests Town would do well to reach an agreement with the business owner. Commissioner Rodgers questions what could happen if someone is injured by the Tarheel Apartment Building. The Building and adjacent parking spaces are barricaded to prevent injuries. However, Town Attorney Watsi thinks if anybody is injured a lawsuit will be quick to follow. At this point no direct liability until the Town owns the building. Town only has to take ownership if the demolition grant is approved. Commissioner Rodgers asks about safety measures being taken at night, such as lights or signage. Commissioner Chesson asks if signage asking citizens to stay away could be an admission of guilt by association. Town Attorney Watsi says it is worth doing everything possible to prevent injuries. If an injury were to result in litigation any safety efforts would be noticed.

Consideration of Tarheel Apartment Building Exception

Town set barricades around the Tarheel Apartment Building for people's safety. The costs are usually added to property owner's tax levy and the owner is notified with a letter; however, this building has no owner. Jeneane Everett requested that the costs be added to code enforcement instead of tax lien. If the costs were added to the tax lien, it would lower the collection rate. *Commissioner Chesson made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Rodgers to allow costs of \$3,900 be charged to code enforcement and was unanimously passed.*

APPROVAL OF ADOPTION OF ZONING ORDINANCE UPDATE

Cameron Braddy reports that the State of North Carolina recently updated Land Use Zoning Laws. The Zoning Ordinance Update is mostly statute citation changes and verbiage change. 160A has been updated to 160D. Previously, Chapter 160A contained all statutes and laws used for all zoning. The Planning Board and Board of Adjustments laid out how things need to run. The update reworded roles and responsibilities. While there were no major changes it is required to adopt the Zoning Ordinance Update. *Commissioner Rodgers made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Coffield to adopt the Zoning Ordinance 2021-7 and was unanimously passed. Ordinance 2021-7 is hereby attached with the minutes of this meeting and incorporated in the Town's Ordinance Book for future reference.*

DISCUSSION OF DILAPIDATED PROPERTIES

Cameron Braddy reported a list of dilapidated properties to be demolished. 1 out of the 5 properties is a commercial property. He included visuals of the five properties. Braddy reported a letter from a resident expressing concern about a dilapidated property at 207 Center Street. Braddy has since contacted the owner of 207 Center Street. The homeowner was unaware of the state of the property and the junk cars parked there. The homeowner is interested in fixing the property. Commissioner Rodgers asked if the 207 Center Street property is dilapidated? Cameron Braddy informed that the property is not dilapidated, but it is deteriorating. Commissioner Rodgers notes that citizens fail to realize the Town doesn't have the power to get rid of properties. Commissioner Rodgers questions why the demolition process takes so long. Cameron Braddy states the list of properties includes 15 or 20 properties, but the department is focusing on the worst properties. Braddy expects demolitions will be finished by December. Commissioner Rodgers asked about tax base decreasing, people who maintain their property have legitimate concerns about the tax value. Interim Town Administrator explains that heirs to properties don't always stay and invest in their property. The Town cannot overstep until the house is dilapidated.

NEW BUSINESS

4-WAY STOP AT ROBERSON/CHURCH STREET

Christina Craft reports a complaint from a concerned citizen Mr. Goss. Mr. Goss wants a 4-way stop sign at the intersection at Roberson and Church Street. The intersection is wide, at a curb, and the main thoroughfare. While it is not an area prone to accidents, Mr. Goss has seen some close calls. His main worry is the children who play on that street. He requested a speed bump which was rejected. Madam Mayor considers a stop sign a good idea, issue tabled until next meeting.

ORDINANCE 2021-6 DECLARING A ROAD CLOSURE FOR THE 25TH ANNUAL CAROLINA COUNTRY STAMPEDE

Interim Town Administrator reports last year's 24th annual Carolina Country Stampede was cancelled due to the COVID pandemic. The Stampede brings in lots of people to spend money in Williamston. The Stampede gives family and community a place to share. The Stampede Committee is considering how the Tarheel Apartment Building is an obstacle to the safety of those attending the Stampede. A possibility is to cut off the part of the festival usually in front of the Tarheel Apartment Building. Commissioner Rodgers wants to wait for the solution from the committee. Tabled until next meeting.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Police

The Police Chief provided the following report:

- He reported officers are attending training.

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- Staff has begun involvement with community events such as the local job fair.
- Equipment for vehicles were on backorder due to COVID and understaffing, the vehicles are currently being equipped.
- Staff are currently operating of the new Police Department building.
- Police Department building will be finished soon.

Public Works

The Public Works Director provided the following report:

- The Director reported 5 new hires.
- New Air Curtain Burner is in place. Staff are working on positioning the Burner and putting it to use.

Fire/Rescue

The Fire Chief provided the following report:

- Staff has continued Hazmat training
- An Outer Banks fuel leak was successfully handled over the phone
- The Emergency Manager is retiring and will be presented a plaque
- Will Ray is the Emergency Manager replacement.
- Five officers completed Child Seat Installation training and became Car Seat Technicians
- Medicaid contracts were submitted
- New EMS Truck arrived and was equipped with \$17,000 CPR device
- Rating inspection will occur August 24
- EMS staff have been participating in community events
- He thanked the board for the new building
- The Fire Chief expects the building will be finished in two weeks.

Parks & Recreation

The Parks and Recreation Director reported the:

- Softball season is over.
- Summer programs have decreased numbers due to school remediation.
- Art Camp is happening Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays
- Back to School Event happened in June.
- They signed a contract with Rivers and Associates for a park.
- New staff will be presented in August meeting.
- Commissioner Rodgers questions if the gym has taken any measures regarding masks. The Parks and Recreation director stated that mask use is not enforced in the gym, but children are spread out at a safe distance. The Fire Chief explained that all the departments are doing the best they can to follow CDC regulations.

Planning

The Town Planner and Zoning Administrator reported:

- Zach Dickerson presented an updated copy of downtown events
- Chase Connor left the Chamber of Commerce, but scheduled community events through December
- Annual Main Street Conference coming up regarding revitalization efforts.

CLOSED SESSION

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

There being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 7:49 p.m.

Submitted By:

Approved By:

Town Clerk

Mayor

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

August 9, 2021

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Williamston met in special session on Monday, August 9, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Assembly room located at 102 East Main Street, Williamston, NC.

PRESENT Mayor Joyce Whichard-Brown
Commissioners: Alton Moore, William Coffield, and Jerry Knox
Town Administrator: Eric Pearson
Town Clerk: Jackie Escobar
Planning and Zoning Administrator: Cameron Braddy
Planner and Downtown Marketing Coordinator: Zach Dickerson

ABSENT Mayor Pro Tem Ronell Rodgers, Commissioner Al Chesson

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

The Mayor called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Commissioner Knox led the pledge of allegiance. Commissioner Moore offered the invocation, after a moment of silence.

CONSENT AGENDA APPROVED

Approval of Resolution 2021-2 to accept the Committee of 100 offer to purchase 108 N. Main Street Building. *It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously passed to accept the Committee of 100 offer to purchase 108 N. Main Street Building.*

OLD BUSINESS

OPEN BIDS TO DEMOLISH THE TARHEEL APARTMENT BUILDING

The Town Administrator, Eric Pearson, reported the purpose of the special meeting was to open bids for the demolition of the Tarheel Apartment Building. The Mayor explained the opening process. The Mayor would announce the bidder and their bottom line proposed costs. There would be no decisions on the acceptance of the bids at the special called meeting. Staff will review the bids. Staff will then make a recommendation to the Board. The successful bidder will then be voted on and announced during a public meeting.

The Town Administrator requested the Board call a special meeting for August 16, 2021. The purpose of the special called meeting would be to award a contract for demolition. *The motion was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Knox, and unanimously passed to set a special called meeting for August 16, 2021, to award a bidder.*

The Town Administrator explained the town staff would verify the bidder has appropriate insurance and proper resources. Staff will recommend the lowest bidder with the best qualifications. Commissioner Moore questioned if the contractor's insurance would cover costs related to SS Custom Cycle. The Administrator stated the contractor would be responsible for any damage done to SS Custom Cycle. The Administrator explained some contractors have asked to use SS Custom Cycle's roof to access the building. SS Custom Cycle authorized the use of its roof.

The Mayor opened the bids and listed their bottom line proposed costs:

PFTW Inc.	\$156,420.00
Chad Hardison	\$469,423.00
Roberson Contracting, LLC	\$386,098.50
Rick Bostic Construction & Demo	\$306,125.00
Dore & Associates, Inc.	\$285,700.00

Commissioner Moore inquired if a contractor encountered an unforeseen expense, would the contractor be allowed to request more money. The Administrator stated the contractor would have to negotiate the terms of the contract. The Town Attorney explained the contract would have to be followed and satisfactory to both parties. Any change in the agreement would have to be approved by the Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Moore questioned if contractors

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can assure there will be no damage to SS Custom Cycle. The Administrator informed the contractors of the importance of keeping the shared wall intact. It was the Administrator's position that all the proposals considered that the shared wall would be kept whole.

Commissioner Coffield inquired if anyone had checked the building for asbestos. The Administrator stated that contractors were made aware that asbestos was a possibility. The Planning and Zoning Administrator, Cameron Braddy, explained that the building is too unsafe for asbestos testing. The Planning and Zoning Administrator predicted the costs might go up if asbestos is in the building due to landfill costs. Commissioner Moore questioned if any precautions were available to protect against asbestos, such as protective uniforms. Commissioner Moore worried there could be future lawsuits if contractors were to become sick from asbestos. The Administrator stated the possibility of asbestos would be part of the staff review process of the bids.

CLOSED SESSION

It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Moore to go out of special called session into closed session per N.C.G.S. 143-318-11(2)(6). The motion passed unanimously.

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

There being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 6:39 p.m.

Submitted By:

Approved By:

Town Clerk

Mayor

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

August 10, 2021

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Williamston met in emergency session on Tuesday, August 10, 2021 at 5:30 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, William Coffield, and Jerry Knox
Town Administrator: Eric Pearson
Town Clerk: Jackie Escobar
Planning and Zoning Administrator: Cameron Braddy

ABSENT Commissioner Al Chesson

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

The Mayor called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Commissioner Rodgers led the pledge of allegiance. Commissioner Coffield offered the invocation, after a moment of silence for the pandemic.

OPEN ADDITIONAL BIDS FOR THE TARHEEL APARTMENT BUILDING DEMOLITION

The Mayor reported the purpose of the emergency called meeting was to address two missed bids. After the special called meeting adjourned on August 9, 2021, town staff discovered two bids that contractors had submitted on time. To ensure all bids were treated equally, the Town of Williamston called an emergency meeting to open the missed bids. The Mayor emphasized the only business permitted at the emergency meeting was the opening of the bids. The Mayor explained there would be no bids awarded or discussion about the bids. The Mayor reported a special called meeting scheduled for Monday, August 16, 2021, to award a bidder. The Board may discuss issues pertaining to the demolition of the Tarheel Apartment Building during the special called meeting on August 16, 2021.

The Administrator thanked the Board for attending the emergency meeting.

The Mayor called the name of the bid and its bottom line cost:

Jones & Smith Contractors	\$125,000
D.H. Wrecking Company Inc.	\$944,000

There being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 5:36 p.m.

Submitted By:

Approved By:

Town Clerk

Mayor

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

August 16, 2021

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Williamston met in special session on Monday, August 16, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Assembly room located at 102 East Main Street, Williamston, NC.

PRESENT Mayor Joyce Whichard-Brown
Commissioners: Ronell Rodgers, Alton Moore, William Coffield, and Jerry Knox, Al Chesson virtually
Town Administrator: Eric Pearson
Town Clerk: Jackie Escobar
Planning and Zoning Administrator: Cameron Braddy
Planner and Downtown Marketing Coordinator: Zach Dickerson

ABSENT

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

The Mayor called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Commissioner Rodgers led the pledge of allegiance. Commissioner Knox offered the invocation, after a moment of silence for the passing of the Oak City Mayor and an earthquake that occurred in Haiti.

OLD BUSINESS

AWARD A BID TO DEMOLISH THE TARHEEL APARTMENT BUILDING

The Planning and Zoning Administrator, Cameron Braddy, reported that the Town received and opened bids for the demolition of the Tarheel Apartment Building. Town staff reviewed bids and analyzed each bid's price, experience, start-end date, and quality. The staff's recommendation is to award the bid to Jones & Smith Contractors. Jones & Smith proposed the lowest bid and quickest completion rate. Their speedy timeline indicated the demolition would happen between August 23rd and the end of September. The Planning and Zoning Administrator noted no bids advised about potential asbestos. If asbestos testing resulted positive, the price would go up.

Commissioner Coffield questioned if the demolition would interfere with the annual Carolina Country Stampede set to occur the last weekend of September. The Planning and Zoning Administrator stated he would speak to the contractor. The Mayor pointed out the traffic would be rerouted with the street closing. Commissioner Rodgers asked for clarification about the asbestos abatement.

The Planning and Zoning Administrator reported the estimated costs would be \$30,000 to \$50,000 of asbestos disposing cost increase. Engineers took a fallen piece from the front of the building to test. Commissioner Moore questioned if Jones & Smith Contractors would handle asbestos removal. The Planning and Zoning Administrator explained that Jones & Smith Contractors would perform a wet demolition to release no dust. Commissioner Rodgers asked if surrounding buildings could have asbestos and what were the potential dangers of asbestos. The Planning and Zoning Administrator said other facilities could have had asbestos removed with recent renovations. The dust produced by asbestos removal is known to cause damage to the lungs. The Town Administrator noted there would be no dust since it would be a wet demolition. Commissioner Moore inquired how Town staff could gauge the fairness of asbestos removal costs. The Planning and Zoning Administrator explained the land field costs would be the same with any contractor. Commissioner Rodgers asked if the Town should inform neighboring businesses about the asbestos. The Town Administrator stated there was no requirement to tell neighboring businesses. However, the Town could make the asbestos testing report public. Commissioner Chesson noted he had spoken to the asbestos tester. He reported there was asbestos under the tiles and in the windows. The asbestos found would be priced by tonnage. Commissioner Chesson noted that asbestos is common in older buildings, including Town Hall. The dust of asbestos is what is truly harmful. Commissioner Chesson assured the Board that Jones & Smith Contractors were professionals and would handle the asbestos accordingly. *The motion was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously passed to award Jones & Smith Contractors the bid to demolish the Tarheel Apartment Building.*

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There being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Submitted By:

Approved By:

Town Clerk

Mayor

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

August 2, 2021

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Williamston met in regular called meeting on Monday, August 2, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. at the Town Hall Assembly Room 102 E. Main Street, Williamston, NC.

PRESENT Mayor: Joyce Whichard-Brown
Commissioners: Ronell Rodgers, Jerry Knox, Al Chesson, and William Coffield
Town Administrator: Eric Pearson
Town Clerk: Jackie Escobar
Finance Officer: Christina Craft
Planning and Zoning Administrator: Cameron Braddy
Planner and Downtown Marketing Coordinator: Zach Dickerson
Fire Chief: Michael Peaks
Police Chief: Travis Cowan
Public Works Director: Kerry Spivey
Parks and Recreation Director: Allen Overby

ABSENT Commissioner: Alton Moore

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

The Mayor called the meeting to order. Commissioner Coffield led the pledge of allegiance. Commissioner Chesson offered the invocation, after a moment of silence.

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. The Mayor added three items to the Agenda. Before the Public Comment section, the Parks and Recreation Director introduced new employees. She added the Town Administrator to the Tarheel Apartment Building discussion under Old Business. Closed Session per N.C.G.S. 143-318-11(a)(3) would be held at the end of the meeting. *It was approved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Chesson, and unanimously passed to approve the regular agenda as amended.*

CONSENT AGENDA

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

Items approved in the Consent Agenda are as follows:

- (1) Approval of the Minutes of July 12, 2021
- (2) Budget Amendment – Fire Department Project: Capital Projects

Capital Project Fund

Transfer from General Fund	\$94,400.00
Construction	<u>\$94,400.00</u>
	\$94,400.00

The purpose of this amendment is to transfer additional funds for Fire Department Project to cover change orders in the construction contract of \$94,400.

- (3) Budget Amendment – Fire Department Project: General Fund

General Fund

Transfer to Capital Projects	\$94,400.00
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The purpose of this amendment is to budget additional funds to be transferred to the Fire Department Project to cover change orders for the construction contract that were approved during the project in the amount of \$94,400.

The Mayor welcomed Antonio Wiggins as the new Youth and Recreation Specialist, introduced by the Parks and Recreation Director.

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PUBLIC COMMENT

Jason Steward, the owner of Dog Branch Antique & Auction shop, reported a collective community problem. His business is directly in front of the Tarheel Apartment Building. In 2006, the Tarheel Apartment Building was up for auction. The building listing stated the second floor had collapsed. The Town has known about the collapse for 15 years. The Tarheel Apartment Building has continued deteriorating. Since then, there has been reduced business in downtown Williamston. The Town Hall claimed there was no owner found for the Tarheel Apartment Building. During a vacation, Jason Steward and his spouse David Smith were informed that Main Street closed without notice. Jason Steward spoke to the Town Administrator and was assured Main Street would be back to normal soon. Jason Steward stated foot traffic has decreased 70% since July. Steward discussed that during his role on the Planning Board, he presented the Town with Commercial Vacancy Ordinances. Jason Steward presented ordinances that could eliminate any evidence of vacancy of commercial real estate. These ordinances also prohibit commercial spaces to be used for simple storage. Towns as small as Ayden and others have adopted these ordinances. Steward stated if there is no action taken, the town will continue decaying. The Supreme Court has upheld the ordinance even for aesthetic issues. The businesses that cannot afford to maintain their building should sell to someone who can maintain it. Main Street has about 11 properties that qualify as vacant or hazardous. Jason Steward expressed love for the Town of Williamston, and requests action be taken. Mayor took the issue under advisement.

Willie G. Roberson II reported a water leak at 407 Park Street. The tenants moved into the single bedroom apartment in February 2021. The tenants informed Roberson of a leak. The issue seemed to come from the water heater. Roberson installed a new water heater. However, the leak was under the house. Roberson called the Town of Williamston to see what could be done about the water bill. The current bill was \$1,618 while past bills were typically about \$70. An adjustment was not authorized due to the tenant living less than a year in the property. Roberson stated the tenant earns minimum wage and cannot afford the \$1,618 water bill. Commissioner Rodgers questioned if Roberson's tenants have received an adjustment before. Roberson noted the tenants have not received any adjustments. The Mayor stated she will be in touch.

Allen Lewis reported an issue with water cut-off. Lewis stated he has a good relationship with the Water Department staff. His property experienced a water leak. He called Town Hall and informed the staff of the water leak. The staff communicated they would analyze past bills and make an adjustment. However, at 3:30 the tenants informed him the water had been shut off. He once again called the Town Hall and was offered an adjustment. Lewis also expressed concern about the Tarheel Apartment Building. The Mayor suggested she would set an appointment to further discuss Lewis' concerns.

Lawrence Lilley thanked Commissioner Al Chesson for many years of service. After being asked to serve for one term, Commissioner Chesson served 33 years. Lilley emphasized his gratitude for Commissioner Chesson's hard work for the Town of Williamston. Lilley also thanked the Board of Commissioners and the Town Hall staff for their hard work.

Omar Pearsall, the funeral director at Paradise Funeral Homes, reported numerous concerns regarding the Woodlawn Cemetery. He stated the issues were outrageous. Pearsall stated the price increase vote is unfair as Williamston is a Tier 1 city. Pearsall noted neighboring towns charge less for cemetery plots in comparison to the Woodlawn Cemetery. For example, the Town of Jamesville charges \$500 and the Town of Hamilton charges \$300. Pearsall stated Williamston is poverty-stricken and cannot afford to pay the new cemetery fees. He stated people are being charged \$200 for a two-hour ceremony. Pearsall stated people celebrate funerals differently and some may need more time. Pearsall noted the cemetery is open from sunrise to sundown therefore ceremonies should not be so limited. He questioned what the \$200 are used for. Omar Pearsall noted the 48-hour notice rule is not enough time for funeral directors. He stated it is outrageous that cemetery plot owners cannot set up lights on their plots. Pearsall reported cemetery employees run over graves. Pearsall stated there should be a list of rules provided. Omar Pearsall noted the Woodlawn Cemetery is full of potholes and is unpaved. However, cemeteries in other towns are paved and charge less. Omar Pearsall questioned if the input of the community was consulted about the price increase.

OLD BUSINESS

COVID UPDATE – CHIEF PEAKS

Fire Chief Michael Peaks reported the COVID update on behalf of Vicky Manning. He reported 34 active cases in Martin County, with 15 new cases since July. 2,480 total cases of COVID in Martin County. Unfortunately, Martin County has had

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48 deaths. The Health Department notified of an added outbreak facility at the Carrolton on 119 Gatling Street. Two employees at the Carrolton have tested positive. The outbreak was expected to last 14 days. Regarding COVID vaccination, 43% of Martin County residents have received the first dose and 39% have received the second dose. Martin County is considered a high spread county. Martin County was recommended to wear a mask, vaccinated or unvaccinated. Chief Peaks reported a few breakthrough cases where fully vaccinated people contracted COVID. These breakthrough patients have not been hospitalized and experience low symptoms. The low symptoms were attributed to the COVID vaccines.

TARHEEL APARTMENT BUILDING

SITUATION UPDATE

The Planning and Zoning Administrator reported staff is working on the Tarheel Apartment Building situation since the previous meeting. Town staff contacted structural engineers and the Department of Public Safety. With the help of the Fire Department they looked at the Tarheel Apartment Building's roof. The structural engineers recommended constructing barricades and having SS Custom Cycle move temporarily. The Planning and Zoning Administrator reported a few contacts regarding the bid advertised on July 29, 2021. RFPs were sent to all the contractors. Bids are due on August 9th. The Planning and Zoning Administrator reached out to organizations such as FEMA or DPS about possible funding. Some funds were awarded too far out. The DPS grant available would prohibit future construction on the site. Town staff met with SS Custom Cycle about using the Town Hall vacant space. The Town Attorney would be formulating the agreement for the move. SS Custom Cycle has been working from home. The Planning and Zoning Administrator reported bids would be opened August 9th. Contractors started on the sidewalk barricades. Commissioner Rodgers questioned who seeks revitalization grants to improve Downtown Williamston. The Planning and Zoning department is in charge of seeking revitalization grants. The Main Street Program has not been funded for two years. The Planning and Zoning Administrator and the Planner and Downtown Marketing Coordinator have been seeking grants. Commissioner Rodgers suggested the Brownsfield Grant. The Planning and Zoning Administrator explained the Brownfield grant is for more industrial properties.

The Town Administrator reported the Board gave guidance on 3 topics in July 27th's special called meeting. The Administrator requested the Board to formally approve those decisions during the regular board meeting.

The Board had allowed opening the formal bidding process for the demolition of the Tarheel Apartment Building. The Administrator requested the Board formally approve the decision. *It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Chesson, and unanimously passed to approve the opening of a formal bid process for the demolition of the Tarheel Apartment Building.*

As approved previously, the Administrator requested authorization to allow SS Custom Cycle to temporarily occupy vacant Town Hall space. *The motion to allow SS Custom Cycle to occupy vacant Town Hall space for the rate of \$50 was moved by Commissioner Chesson, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously passed.*

The Administrator requested a revote on constructing barricades in front of the Dog Branch Antiques & Auction shop. *It was moved by Commissioner Chesson, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously passed to approve the construction of barricades in front of the Dog Branch Antiques & Auction shop without exceeding the cost of \$4,800.*

APPROVAL OF SPECIAL CALLED MEETING TO OPEN RFPs

The Administrator requested the Board to set a special called meeting to open Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for the demolition of the Tarheel Apartment Building. The bids are due at 3:00 p.m. on August 9th. The bids are required by law to be opened in a public setting. There must be 3 bids for the Board to formally approve a bid. The Planning and Zoning Administrator has received some interest in applying for the bids. In the event 3 bids are not received, the Board would be notified and the meeting cancelled. *It was moved by Commissioner Chesson, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously passed to set a special called meeting on August 9th at 5:30 to open bids for the demolition of the Tarheel Apartment Building.*

APPROVAL OF 4-WAY STOP AT ROBERSON/CHURCH STREET

The Finance Director reported at the July 12, 2021 Board meeting, the Board discussed a citizens' request to place a 4-way stop at the intersection at Roberson Street and West Church Street. The intersection currently has a 2-way stop. Roberson Street is the main thoroughfare through the neighborhood. There have been no significant traffic incidents noted in this intersection. The image provided demonstrated the street is slightly skewed. Additional stop signs may be difficult to see in one direction over a hill. The current town ordinance Chapter 70.072 stated no person shall stop, stand or park a vehicle,

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except when conflict with other traffic is imminent or when so directed by a police officer or traffic control device within 30 feet of any flashing beacon, stop sign, or traffic control signal located at the side of a street or roadway. This may be some concern for the residence in the intersection as parking has been noted on the street. 30 feet of parking space would be eliminated at that intersection. The staff requested Board direction in regards to the citizen's request to change from a 2-way stop to a 4-way stop. The Mayor stated a 4-way stop is needed at the intersection mentioned. Commissioner Coffield stated a 4-way stop was not useful near his home. *It was moved by Commissioner Rodgers, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously passed to allow a 4-way stop at the intersection at Roberson and West Church Street.*

REVIEW OF PV TRUCK/CAR WASH FACILITY

The Planning and Zoning Administrator reported questions raised by Commissioner Rodgers about the PV Truck/Car Wash. The Planning and Zoning Administrator presented a packet depicting the approval steps that were taken. He provided a zoning map, site plan, accidental discharge, and slug control plan, certificate of sedimentation plan approval by the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality, a certificate of coverage for Stormwater Discharge Elimination System by the North Carolina Department of Energy, Mineral, and Land Resources. The PV Truck/Car Wash is considered a "Use by Right" business, it does not require Board approval to operate. The PV Truck/Car Wash must acquire a permit from the Planning and Zoning department. The Planning and Zoning Administrator met with the business owners, the fire department, and Public Works in regards to the chemicals that could be produced by the PV Truck/Car Wash. Commissioner Rodgers questioned where the waste would be discarded and if inspections would be performed. The Planning and Zoning Administrator stated he would forward the questioned to the Waste Water Department. Commissioner Al Chesson noted the project had a NC Division of Water permit that is difficult to acquire. To acquire the permit, the business has done its due diligence and will be inspected by the state.

APPROVAL OF OFFER TO PURCHASE 108 W. MAIN STREET

The Finance Director reported the Committee of 100 submitted an option to purchase Town-owned property at 108 W. Main Street for \$8,000. Per the bidding process, the option to purchase was advertised in the Enterprise to allow for upset bids. One upset bid was received but was rescinded on July 11, 2021. No other upset bids have been received. The property was foreclosed on December of 2018. The Committee of 100 has committed to partner with the Town by taking the property to renovate it for a new business. The entire renovation has been estimated to cost around \$120,000. The Finance Director requested the board make a motion to approve the offer to purchase. *It was moved by Commissioner Coffield, seconded by Commissioner Chesson, and unanimously passed to approve the offer to purchase 108 West Main Street by the Martin County Committee of 100.*

NEW BUSINESS

SUMMER COLLEGE BASEBALL LEAGUE

Gary Manning went before the Board of Commissioners with good news. The Skewarkee Baseball Park is often ranked one of the best baseball high school facilities in North Carolina. The Skewarkee Baseball Park is controlled by the Board of Education. Local volunteers perform the park's maintenance. A high school coach also maintains the field, with a meager salary. Gary Manning suggested the park could be used to generate money for the town by bringing a Summer College Baseball League. As an example, the Edenton Steamers are prospering in Edenton. The Skewarkee Baseball Park had about 2,600 people for an in-county high school rivalry game. Williamston has a community highly involved in baseball. The Old North State League is interested in northeastern North Carolina. The Old North State League team would hire a coach and manager for a 2-month season, hosting about 18 games. Gary Manning stated the High School game schedule would not be affected. The Old North State League would profit from gate sales and concession stand sales. Manning noted the League would like to sell alcohol. Williamston's gas stations, restaurants, hotels, and stores would benefit from the out-of-town visitors shopping locally. The Old North State League is awaiting an invitation from the Town to evaluate the idea. The Board of Commissioners unanimously support and endorse Gary Manning's efforts to bring a Summer College Baseball League to Williamston.

APPROVAL OF TAX ORDER TO COLLECT FISCAL 2021 PROPERTY TAXES

The Tax Collector Tiffany White reported the original tax levy was \$2,773,250.89. The total levy was \$3,035,495.03. The deductions totaled \$2,871,282.07. The uncollected taxes as of June 30, 2021, were \$164,212.96. The tax collection rate for the 2020 levy was 94.57%. The Tax Collector requested the Board approve the tax report as a settlement of the 2020 Advalorem Tax Levy. The Tax Collector requested the Board authorize the collection of taxes set forth in the tax records filed in the Finance office. *It was moved by Commissioner Chesson, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously passed to approve the tax order to collect fiscal 2021 property taxes. The order is hereby attached with the minutes of this meeting.*

APPROVAL TO TEMPORARILY CLOSE TOWN HALL LOBBY

The Town Administrator reported that beginning August 2, 2021, the front office will be shorthanded. The front office currently has a new employee, one absent for surgery, and two expected to go to training. The new employee will need training. The backup to the position is also fairly new and needs training. Closing the front lobby would remove some pressure from the other employees. The Town Administrator requested Board approval to temporarily close the front lobby. The drive-thru window would remain open. CDC recommendations regarding COVID were also taken in to consideration for the closing of the front lobby. Commissioner Coffield questioned how long the front lobby would be closed. The Town Administrator expects the front lobby to be closed for a month until September 7. *The decision to close the front lobby until September 7, 2021, was moved by Commissioner Chesson, seconded by Commissioner Knox, and unanimously passed.*

APPROVAL OF THE FY21 AUDIT CONFIRMATION LETTER FROM CARR, RIGGS & INGRAM

The Finance Director reported the auditor would be back in August to analyze record. The Board already approved the Carr, Riggs, & Ingram contract. The letter detailed what follows the year's audit. *It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously passed to approve the FY21 Audit Confirmation Letter from Carr, Riggs & Ingram.*

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Parks & Recreation

The Parks and Recreation Director reported the following:

- Football registration is over. There is one team in each age group.
- Volleyball registration happened Saturday
- There was a baseball tournament in town from July 29 to August 1. Some Parks & Recreation staff assisted the tournament and cleaned up.
- The Director met with the Town Administrator and the Fire Chief to discuss COVID guidelines and how to implement the guidelines at the Parks & Recreation functions.
 - No masks for football team due to the wearing of helmets with mouthpieces
 - Kids required to bring own water bottle
 - Letter sent to parents requiring no sick kids be sent.
 - Disinfectant provided by the department.
 - Encourage spectators to wear a mask.
- The Gaylord Perry Park is awaiting a grant. Rivers and Associates is working on the drawing. The director stated they are close to finishing.

Public Works

The Public Works Director provided the following report:

- The Director reported the department has used the new air curtain burner a couple times. The team burned 10 tons of material which resulted in about a backhoe of ash.
- The fencing to close Tank Street has begun.
- The Director reported 4 new hires to be introduced at a later meeting.

Police

The Police Chief provided the following report:

- Staff has continued involvement with community events such as the "Stop the Hate" event at EJ Hayes.
- The Police Department helped the Health Department with a needle exchange program.
- Police staff have completed Officer Intervention Training.
- The Chief reported one new hire.
- After a new large-scale investigation, the Police Chief asked young people to put down the guns and cooperate with law enforcement.
- The new Police Department building is almost finished. The Police Department is 100% moved.

Fire/Rescue

The Fire Chief provided the following report:

- The Fire Department staff attended their first outreach meeting since March 2020
- The Fire Department attended the "Stop the Hate" event at EJ Hayes.
- The State Marshall with rate the Fire Department on August 24th.
- Currently the Fire Department is rated class four.
- The Fire Chief will meet with a radio vendor as the current radios will turn off in 2025. Upgrading the radios could be a half a million expense. The Fire Chief is researching grants for the radios.
- The Fire Chief expects the Fire Department building will be finished soon. He extends an invitation for the Board to go see the new building.

Planning

The Town Planner and Zoning Administrator reported:

- The Tarheel Apartment Building is being handled as efficiently as possible.
- There is a Main Street Managers Conference later in the week.
- The Magnuson Property Subdivision request was approved at the July 19 Planning Board Meeting.

CLOSED SESSION

It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Chesson to go out of regular session into closed session per N.C.G.S. 143-318-11(a)(6). The motion passed unanimously.

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

Commissioner Al Chesson stated his business requires him to stay in Elizabeth City for at least 3 days a week. He reports he is moving to Hertford. He cannot legally serve on board if he does not live in Williamston. Commissioner Chesson suggests Dr. Dean McCall could be his replacement. Dr. Dean McCall runs a physical therapy business. The Mayor stated Dean McCall was also her suggestion. Commissioner Al Chesson has served on the Board of Commissioners for 33 years.

There being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Submitted By:

Approved By:

Town Clerk

Mayor

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

September 13, 2021

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Williamston met in regular called meeting on Monday, September 13, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. at the Telecenter at 415 East Blvd #130, Williamston, NC.

PRESENT Mayor: Joyce Whichard-Brown
Commissioners: Ronell Rodgers, Jerry Knox, Al Chesson, and Alton Moore
Town Administrator: Eric Pearson
Town Clerk: Jackie Escobar
Finance Officer: Christina Craft
Planning and Zoning Administrator: Cameron Braddy
Planner and Downtown Marketing Coordinator: Zach Dickerson
Fire Chief: Michael Peaks
Police Chief: Travis Cowan
Public Works Director: Kerry Spivey
Parks and Recreation Director: Allen Overby

ABSENT Commissioner: William Coffield

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

The Mayor called the meeting to order. Commissioner Moore led the pledge of allegiance. Commissioner Chesson offered the invocation, after a moment of silence.

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. The Town Administrator Eric Pearson requested that Item 2: Consider revision to Attorney Sutton's contract, and Item 7: Consider approval of Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Calendar be removed. He also requested the addition of Item 12 to discuss the Christmas Parade. *It was approved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Knox, and unanimously passed to approve the regular agenda as amended.*

RESIGNATION OF COMMISSIONER CLESSON

Commissioner Al Chesson submitted a letter of resignation. He resigned because he is moving out of Williamston, and can no longer legally serve on the Board of Commissioners. *It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously passed to accept the official resignation of Commissioner Al Chesson.* The Mayor, Commissioner Moore, and Commissioner Rodgers expressed their gratitude to Al Chesson.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

Items approved in the Consent Agenda are as follows:

- (1) Approval of the Minutes of August 2, 2021
- (2) Approval of the Minutes of August 9, 2021 Called Meeting
- (3) Approval of the Minutes of August 10, 2021 Called Meeting
- (4) Approval of the Minutes of August 16, 2021 Called Meeting
- (5) Budget Amendment – RRT

General Fund

Transfer from Undesignated Fund \$29,631.73

Departmental Supplies \$ 2,000.00

Uniforms \$ 2,000.00

Garbage Collection \$ 2,500.00

Small Equipment \$ 2,500.00

Vehicle Reserve \$20,631.73

\$29,631.73

- (6) Budget Amendment – Committee of 100 Roof Grant at 108 W. Main St.

General Fund

Transfer from Undesignated Fund \$45,000.00

	Williamston Downtown Inc Façade Grant	<u>\$45,000.00</u>
		\$45,000.00
(7)	Budget Amendment – Demo of Tarheel Building	
	<u>General Fund</u>	
	Transfer from Undesignated Fund	\$225,000.00
	Code Enforcement - Tar Heel Building	\$125,000.00
	Contingency	<u>\$100,000.00</u>
		\$225,000.00
(8)	Confirm Contract with Jones and Smith Contractors LLC	
(9)	Appointment of Daniella Rinehart to the Library Advisory Board	

PUBLIC COMMENT

OLD BUSINESS

COVID UPDATE – VICKY MANNING

Vicky Manning reported 3,239 total COVID cases in Martin County. There were 58 COVID-related fatalities and 22 breakthrough cases. There had been 36 new cases since Friday, September 10th, 2021. Martin County had 449 active COVID cases. Manning reported that the Health Department was offering a 3rd dose of COVID vaccines to immunocompromised individuals. The 3rd dose would be available to the general public. Moderna, Pfizer, and Johnson and Johnson were the brands available for the 3rd dose. She reported high numbers were expected in the following weeks, although some regions saw cases level off. Of those who tested positive for COVID, 60% were female, 50% white, and 73% non-Hispanic. Vicky Manning emphasized the importance of vaccinations, personal protective equipment, and social distancing.

TARHEEL APARTMENT BUILDING

SITUATION UPDATE

The Planning and Zoning Administrator Cameron Braddy reported about the demolition of the Tarheel Apartment Building. He reported daily communication with Jones and Smith Contractors. The basement of the Apartment building was more extensive than expected. Jones and Smith Contractors planned to complete the demolition by September 30th. Jones and Smith Contractors were able to save the decorative capstone piece. The capstone adorned the center top part of the Tarheel Apartment Building. Some residents would like to see the capstone saved to display. Finally, the Planning and Zoning Administrator reported that the demolition was running on time and going well.

APPROVAL OF CLOSURE OF TOWN HALL FRONT LOBBY

The Town Administrator reported the Board had approved closing the front lobby of the Town Hall for various reasons at the August 2nd, 2021 Board meeting. There were employee training and absences considered for the closure. The Board approved the closure until September 7th for reevaluation. The Town Administrator requested the continued closure of the Town Hall due to a significant increase in COVID cases in Martin County and staffing issues related to COVID. He asked for Town Hall to remain closed until the October Board Meeting. *The decision to close the front lobby until October 2021 was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously passed.*

WATER BILL ISSUES

The Finance Officer reported that customers had complained about not receiving their water bill earlier in the year. When the complaints happened, the Post Office struggled to deliver mail promptly due to the COVID-19 pandemic. There were various options on how to handle the issue. Town staff could place the bill in envelopes. The Water Department could hire an individual part-time to take on the extra task. Outsourcing a portion of the billing process was another option. Outsourcing would be an increase of \$6,400 a year. The Water Department must send bills on the 25th of each month. The Board allowed the monitoring of complaints leading to the conclusion; less than 1% of customers do not receive their bills. The Water Department is planning to change to new software programs. The new software programs could allow customers to check their balance online and enroll in paperless billing. The Finance Officer asked the Board for direction on what option to pursue. The Mayor suggested hiring an individual for billing days. The Mayor recommended the use of envelopes to ensure bills are not lost amongst other mail and for customers' privacy. The Finance Officer stated that hiring someone for only two days a month would be difficult. The Mayor

noted hiring issues were related to COVID, and the Board could revisit the topic. The Finance Officer explained that the \$6,400 would come from the Fund Balance. The Finance Officer expressed concern about the Fund Balance decreasing. Commissioner Moore questioned if people could call Town Hall if they had not received their bill. Commissioner Moore stated it is ultimately a customer's responsibility to follow up on their account. Commissioner Knox and Commissioner Moore agreed it was a wrong time to budget for outsourcing or part-time hire. The Finance Officer recommended that the water bill process remain the same and evaluate what the new software offers. *It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously passed to allow the billing process to remain unchanged.*

NEW BUSINESS

FILLING DISTRICT 2 VACANT COMMISSIONER SEAT

The Town Administrator reported that the Board of Commissioners had absolute ability to move forward in any fashion to fill the District 2 vacant Commissioner seat. The Mayor noted that advertising the position was an option; however, this was not done for Commissioner Coffield and Commissioner Moore's spots. The Mayor entertained a motion to appoint Dean McCall as Town Board Commissioner. *It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously passed to appoint Dean McCall as Town Board Commissioner at the following October Board Meeting.*

AGREEMENT WITH ZACCHAEUS LAW FIRM TO COLLECT DELINQUENT TAXES

The Town Administrator reported that staff had researched how to collect property taxes in a manner that reduced Attorney Sutton's workload. Upon investigation, Attorney Sutton recommended Zacchaeus Law Firm. Zacchaeus Law Firm worked for other small towns such as Washington, Lumberton, Plymouth, and Maxton. Zacchaeus Law Firm would add their fee of \$1,200 to the property owner and not the Town of Williamston. The Town would have the ability to send two delinquent notices before turning over cases to Zacchaeus Law Firm. The law firm requested a three-and-a-half-year contract. The Town Administrator asked the Board to approve the negotiation of an agreement with Zacchaeus Law Firm with Attorney Sutton's guidance. Hiring Zacchaeus Law Firm would lessen the time of delinquent taxes. With the collection time shortened, the flow of money would be faster. Commissioner Moore questioned if there would be no probationary period. The Administrator explained that Zacchaeus Law Firm wanted to guarantee that they would complete any cases they begin. Commissioner Moore offered the possibility of a clause where Zacchaeus Law Firm could finish any unfinished case. The Mayor clarified that the Administrator had requested approval to negotiate a contract. He could request a probationary period in the negotiation. The Town Administrator would present the finalized contract at the October Board meeting.

Commissioner Rodgers questioned what risks were involved. The Administrator stated that if the Town were to back out from a case, the Town must pay the charge. The Town Administrator noted minimal risks. Attorney Sutton explained that within most cases, the taxpayer would pay the \$1,200 cost. Zacchaeus Law Firm would notify the Town of any out-of-the-ordinary cases. She also noted that the School of Government recognized Mark Bardill of Zacchaeus Law Firm as an expert. Attorney Sutton agreed that a probationary period was in the best interest of the Town. She emphasized that hiring Zacchaeus Law Firm would be beneficial in the long run. The Board postponed the issue for more investigation, with the possibility of inviting Zacchaeus Law Firm for any questions.

NUISANCE GRASS AND WEED ORDINANCE

The Planning and Zoning Administrator addressed questions about the code enforcement process. The process would begin with Penny Swain, the Code Enforcement officer, sending a notice of a violation. The Town gives property owners 10 days to fix the violation. After 10 days, the Town can legally fix the issue and bill the property owner. After 30 days, if the balance is unpaid, it is added to the property taxes. Commissioner Moore questioned why 207 Center Street had so many vehicles. The Planning and Zoning Administrator informed that the Code Enforcement Officer had contacted the residence owner. The vehicles do not belong to the residence owner. The Code Enforcement Officer contacted a towing company in regards to the vehicles. Since the property owner would not deal with the vehicles, Planning and Zoning would add the house to the demolition list. The Planning and Zoning Administrator and the Attorney worked on property deeds, in order to begin the demolition process. The Planning and Zoning Administrator expected demolitions to be complete by December.

LEAF AND LIMB ORDINANCE

The Public Works Director stated he was open to answering questions concerning sanitation ordinances and policies.

Commissioner Rodgers noted that citizens on Perry Street complained about rubbish on a vacant lot. Rubbish, on the same street, in front of a residence was picked up by Public Works. Commissioner Rodgers questioned why taxpayers should endure an eyesore. He acknowledged the Ordinance but asked what could the Town do. The Public Works Director commended the Commissioner's task of responding to citizen's complaints. However, the Public Works Director noted the importance of personal accountability. The Public Works Director explained how the ordinances serve as guidance on the extent of certain services. He reported 90% to 95% of residents comply with the ordinances, sometimes at their own expense. A small percentage of residents do not comply and attempt to rely on the Town's Public Works Department. The Town Administrator clarified that the Town could not pick up from vacant lots. The provided service is generous but must be controlled. If the Town expanded the leaf and limb removal service, it would become more expensive. The Town Administrator stated it was reasonable to offer service only to resident owners.

Commissioner Rodgers questioned why the service was available once before outside of the ordinance guidelines. The Town Administrator reminded the Board of their ability to expand the Ordinance. Attorney Sutton stated it would be reasonable not to set a precedent. Commissioner Moore said the neighbors could solve the issue by reporting whoever put the trash on the vacant lot. Commissioner Moore recommended not go against the Ordinance. Commissioner Rodgers questioned what if a natural disaster had placed the trash in a vacant lot. The Public Works Director stated that due to a storm, there would be no questions asked. Public Works staff would participate in cleanup efforts during the out of ordinary circumstances.

REMOVAL OF LIMBS AT 2006 WEST MAIN STREET

The Town Administrator reported an issue brought before the July 12th Board Meeting concerning limb removal at 2006 West Main Street. The speaker wanted the Town to remove leaf and limb debris from the property. The people openly admitted it was a contractor truck used to remove the limbs. After review, it was difficult to determine whether or not professional contractors removed the limbs. The Ordinance is clear for professional contractors to clean up the debris. The Town Administrator's recommendation was not to remove the limbs and allow the Code Enforcement Officer to enforce the nuisance ordinance. Thus, it would set a precedent for future issues. The Mayor questioned if there were photographs of people working on the limb removal with matching shirts. The Public Works Director confirmed there were photographs of people in matching shirts at the residence. The Public Works Director went by the home to confirm what an employee told him. There was no action on the issue, but only to follow the Ordinance.

AIA WATER STUDY – SCOPE OF WORK APPROVAL

The Town Administrator reported that the Town of Williamston was awarded a grant by the State Division of Water Infrastructure coming from the Viable Utility Study for \$150,000. There were conversations about combining the different town's monies. The Town received a notice of the grant on August 19th, 2021. By September 20th, the Town must submit a scope of work detailing what the Town would do with the money. The Town Administrator requested the Board approve the scope of work. *It was moved by Commissioner Rodgers, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously passed to approve the scope of work for the AIA Water Study. The scope of work is hereby attached with the minutes of this meeting and incorporated for future reference.*

APPROVAL TO AUTHORIZE STAFF TO APPLY FOR AN AIA GRANT – SEWER STUDY

The Town Administrator reported that the Town of Williamston could apply for a sewer study from the Viability Utility Study. The Town Board needs to adopt a Resolution to apply for the grant. The grant could be up to \$1,000,000. The staff must detail how the Town would use the money. The initial phase is to make the application. *It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Rodgers, and unanimously passed to adopt Resolution 2021-9 authorize staff to apply for an AIA grant. The resolution is hereby attached with the minutes of this meeting and incorporated in the Town's Resolution Book for future reference.*

APPROVAL OF WATER BILL RELIEF AT 406 PARK STREET

The Town Administrator reported a property owner requested an adjustment for 406 Park Street at the previous Board Meeting. The Water Department denied relief due to not meeting the requirement of 1 year of history. The landlord asked the Board for an adjustment on a \$1,600 bill. The landlord presented receipts on the steps taken to resolve the water leaks. The Town Administrator acknowledges sincere effort. The Town Administrator recommended the tenant should get an adjustment with a condition. *It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Moore to allow an adjustment after 6 months of water usage history for the tenant at 406 Park Street.*

CEMETERY FEES DISCUSSION

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The Town Administrator reported concern regarding the new cemetery fees was brought to the Board during the August Board Meeting during Public Comment. The Board approved the increase in fees during the July Board Meeting. Other towns may offer lower prices; however, they do not offer a perpetual care service similar to Woodlawn Cemetery. The Town Staff's recommendation is to vote no action. Commissioner Moore noted that the votes to increase the prices were determined by comparing the prices offered in Washington, NC. There was no action.

CHRISTMAS PARADE

Considering the Carolina Country Stampede was canceled due to COVID, the Parks and Recreation Director requested feedback from the Board about the Christmas Parade. The Parks and Recreation Director reported the Williamston Christmas Parade is scheduled for December 2nd. The spectators for the Christmas Parade tend to stand close to each other. The Mayor noted the steady spike in COVID cases. While the trend may level off by December, it may not be enough time to prepare for the parade. The Board postponed any decision regarding the Williamston Christmas Parade until the October Board Meeting.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Parks & Recreation

The Parks and Recreation Director reported the following:

- In collaboration with the Head Hunters Motorcycle Club, the Parks and Recreation Department hosted a "Back 2 School" event. The cosponsored event had food and music and donated backpacks.
- The Athletic Supervisor position was open.
- Soccer registration would begin October 1st.
- The Gaylord Perry Park is awaiting a grant. Rivers and Associates is working on the drawings. The director stated they are close to finishing.

Police

The Police Chief provided the following report:

- Paul Moore, Crime Prevention Officer, passed away from cancer. He served in the Police Department for 11 years. He held various positions, starting as a Patrol Officer and becoming the first Crime Prevention Officer.
- The new Police Department building has the sally port floor curing and awaiting paint.
- The Police Chief stated the new Police Department would have a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony within the next month.

Fire/Rescue

The Fire Chief provided the following report:

- The Fire Chief spoke about the loss of Paul Moore.
- The Fire Department helped Kinston with the handling of an unknown package.
- NC State Marshall Response Rating: After reviewing records and training, it will take 60-120 days to know the new insurance rating (currently, the Fire Department is rated class four).
- The Fire Department attended a Safety Conference. Two members from the Williamston Fire Department teamed up with two members from the Asheville Fire Department. They landed 2nd place in the Hazmat Challenge.
- The Fire Chief requested help from the Francis M Barnes Trust Foundation to install an AED, an automated external defibrillator, for 5 Town facilities. The Francis M Barnes Trust Foundation granted a check for \$13,900. An AED will be wall-mounted at each facility. A Fire Rescue employee will provide instruction.
- At the County Board Meeting, the County Board intended to increase funding for the EMS agencies. The Fire Chief speculated a \$40,000 increase for each agency; however, it is not finalized.

Public Works

The Public Works Director provided the following report:

- There has been training with new employees along with the high turnover.
- Some employees have tested positive for COVID
- The fencing on Tank Street has been finished.
- The Air Curtain Burner is working well.

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- The Public Works Department has been working with local businesses on fixing nuisance violations.
- The Department has received compliments on the new cemetery caretaker.

Planning

The Town Planner and Zoning Administrator reported:

- The Tarheel Apartment Building issues have decreased since the Town signed a contract with Jones and Smith Contractors.
- The Code Enforcement Officer is focused on abandoned vehicle violations.
- Commissioner Rodgers asked if Planning and Zoning gave a dilapidated property 30 days to fix violations on Center Street. The Planning and Zoning Administrator stated that the property owners were cooperating in fixing the home. They were granted additional time.

Finance

The Finance Officer reported:

- The billing department is understaffed.
- Money for the Tarheel Apartment Building demolition would be coming out of the Fund balance. She expressed concern about growing the Fund balance to where it was.

There being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Submitted By:

Approved By:

Town Clerk

Mayor

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

October 4, 2021

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Williamston met in regular called meeting on Monday, October 4, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. at the Telecenter at 415 East Blvd #130, Williamston, NC.

PRESENT Mayor: Joyce Whichard-Brown
Commissioners: Ronell Rodgers, Jerry Knox, Al Chesson, William Coffield and Alton Moore
Town Administrator: Eric Pearson
Town Clerk: Jackie Escobar
Finance Officer: Christina Craft
Planning and Zoning Administrator: Cameron Braddy
Planner and Downtown Marketing Coordinator: Zach Dickerson
Fire Chief: Michael Peaks
Police Chief: Travis Cowan
Public Works Director: Kerry Spivey
Parks and Recreation Director: Allen Overby

ABSENT

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

The Mayor called the meeting to order. Commissioner Knox led the pledge of allegiance. Commissioner Rodgers offered the invocation after a moment of silence.

SWEAR IN DR. DEAN MCCALL TO BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Judge Regina Parker swore in Dean McCall to the Board of Commissioners.

AGENDA APPROVED

The Mayor asked if there were any adjustments to the agenda or if the Board wished to remove or add to the agenda. The Town Administrator requested that Item 3 Tax Relief Order be added to the Consent Agenda. *Commissioner Coffield approved it, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously passed to approve the regular agenda as amended.*

PUBLIC HEARINGS

The Planning and Zoning Administrator Cameron Braddy reported a request for a zoning text amendment. The requestor asked for the addition of self-storage facilities as a permitted use in a CH zone. The local newspaper advertised the Public Hearing, and the Planning and Zoning Administrator received no request for public comment. The Mayor opened the floor for the public hearing. With no public comments, she then closed the floor.

The Planning and Zoning Administrator Cameron Braddy reported a request for a zoning map amendment. The request was for an ETJ Boundary adjustment on parcel 0504927. The local newspaper advertised the Public Hearing, and the Planning and Zoning Administrator received no request for public comment. The Mayor opened the floor for the public hearing. With no public comments, she then closed the floor.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

Items approved in the Consent Agenda are as follows:

- (1) Approval of the Minutes of September 13th, 2021
- (2) Approval of Request for Qualification for AIA Water Study
- (3) Tax Relief Order

OLD BUSINESS

COVID UPDATE – VICKY MANNING

Vicky Manning reported 3,545 total COVID cases in Martin County. Martin County had 424 active COVID cases. There were 57 breakthrough cases and 65 COVID-related deaths. The Carrolton of Williamston was a breakthrough facility with 58 total cases. Manning reported that 11,470 of Martin County had received the first dose of a COVID vaccine, and 10,440 had received the second dose. 63.9% of active cases had underlying health conditions. 75.9% of cases were female. COVID cases according to race were 48% white, 19.3% black, and 72% non-Hispanic. Manning reported that the health department offered the 3rd dose to immunocompromised individuals. She also noted, CDC had approved Pfizer booster shots for six months after the 2nd dose of the Pfizer COVID vaccine. Individuals should receive the same brand booster shot as their first doses of COVID vaccination. Commissioner Rodgers inquired if there were any adverse effects of receiving a COVID vaccine and the flu shot. Vicky Manning clarified that those vaccinated reported no issues with receiving both vaccines. Commissioner Rodgers questioned if Walmart Supermarket had any role in the large numbers of COVID cases of Martin County compared to neighboring counties. Vicky Manning explained that tracing COVID exposure had been a challenging task. Manning encouraged the public to receive their flu shot. The health department would be partnering with EJ Hayes Elementary School to administer flu shots on Tuesday, October 12th, from 3 pm to 6 pm. The Health Department would be allowing walk-ins for the flu shot on Sunday, October 17th, from 1 pm to 3 pm. Commissioner McCall questioned if there would be pop-up clinics for the booster shots similar to those held for vaccines. Manning stated there were discussions about hosting pop-up clinics, but no definite answer yet.

TARHEEL APARTMENT BUILDING

SITUATION UPDATE

The Planning and Zoning Administrator Cameron Braddy reported about the demolition of the Tarheel Apartment Building. Jones and Smith Contractors finished the demolition of the Tarheel Apartment Building on schedule. The site will be filled and seeded. The budget allotted \$120,000, with an additional \$50,000 for asbestos removal for the demolition. The final costs were below budget. SS Custom Cycle shared a wall with the Tarheel Apartment Building received minimal damage. The Planning and Zoning Administrator would be working alongside Jones and Smith Contractors to address issues with the shared wall. He reported that a structural engineer would analyze the building and decide if SS Custom Cycle staff could occupy it.

APPROVAL OF CLOSURE OF TOWN HALL FRONT LOBBY

The Town Administrator reported the Board had approved closing the front lobby of the Town Hall for various reasons at the August 2nd, 2021 Board meeting. At the September 13th Town Board meeting, the Board approved an additional month for the continued closure of the Town Hall lobby. The Town Administrator requested that the front lobby remain closed through the end of the year. He reported concern about the COVID variant and its potential medical threat to the front office staff and public. The Town Administrator requested the Board's approval to keep the lobby closed through the end of the year to alleviate the need for the Board to address the issue each month. He noted that the front lobby could open before January 1st, 2022, if the severity of the COVID variant decreases. Commissioner Coffield questioned if the missing employee was back at work. The Town Administrator stated Shenika Speller was back only part-time. Commissioner Coffield expressed his opinion that Town Hall should remain open. Commissioner Rodgers disagreed, considering the COVID cases. Commissioner Rodgers questioned if there were any issues with citizens. The Town Administrator stated there were no complaints, and the staff was serving citizens promptly. The upstairs staff continues to help downstairs. *The decision to close the front lobby until January 1st, 2022, was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and passed with a 4 to 1 vote with Commissioner Coffield opposed.*

FUND BALANCE DISCUSSION AND ALLOCATION OF FUNDS FOR NUISANCE ENFORCEMENT

The Finance Officer reported she submitted an estimate of the Town's current Fund Balance at the September Town Board meeting. Commissioner Rodgers had asked staff to add the information to the October Board Meeting for further discussion. She explained that the Fund Balance Summary was distributed annually at the January Budget Retreat using audited numbers, not estimated numbers. The Board uses the spreadsheet as a gauging tool to assist in decisions concerning the Town's finances. The Finance Officer estimated the fund balance would benefit if the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) program awarded a grant to the Town. The Finance Officer stated that the budget is adopted in June of each year and used as a legal guideline to spend funds. She explained that normal operations of any municipality include budget amendments.

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The Town staff submits all proposed budget amendments to the Town Board for consideration and approval. The Finance Officer presented a spreadsheet with estimated figures for the Board's analysis. Commissioner Rodgers expressed concern about trash on streets, grass nuisance, and dilapidated properties. He recalled the Town allotted money to grass nuisance and dilapidated properties. However, Commissioner Rodgers noted he hadn't seen the money utilized. He stated that the Board understands there is not enough money or staffing. He explained that the Board could resolve this by contracting outside bidders using the fund balance. Commissioner Rodgers questioned why there were fund balance issue discussions. The auditors urged the Finance Officer to bring awareness to the Board about fund balance. The Finance Officer stated the budget amendments were normal. Commissioners and staff create the budget amounts. Unexpected costs pull money from the Fund Balance, such as the demolition of the Tarheel Apartment Building. In 2016, Code Enforcement was allotted \$10,000 for demolitions and mowing lawns. A demolition costs about \$3,000 to \$5,000. In 2019, the Code Enforcement budget increased to \$26,000. The Town Administrator stated that the Finance Officer must always inform the Board about Fund Balance use.

Commissioner Rodgers questioned what the Town could do when tax-paying residents see their property value affected due to trash. He expressed appreciation of a letter sent to Perry Street residents regarding the leaf and limb ordinance. Commissioner Rodgers said he loves Williamston, and empathized with the want for clean neighborhoods. Attorney Sutton reported that criminal enforcement is an option for dumping trash in public spaces. Depending on the amount of trash dumped, NC Statute lists the penalties as a Class D or a Class I misdemeanor. While criminal penalties are a possible solution, they also require resources. After complaints of trash dumping on Perry Street, the Town Administrator reported the Police Chief had sent police officers to Perry Street to investigate. Perry St residents provided no information. Neighbors should call the police so the Town can follow up promptly. Commissioner Rodgers requested that the Town staff list the legal penalties in the local newspaper. Commissioner Moore asked if police presence would be beneficial on Perry Street. The Police Chief explained that an area becomes an attention spot when there is reoccurring dumping.

Commissioner Moore asked if the Town had solved the issue on Perry Street and the impact of the letters. The Town Administrator reported that the Town handled the trash on Perry Street, and the Town sent the letters afterward. Commissioner Rodgers asked what the total amount allotted to Grass Nuisance was. The Finance Officer agreed to give Commissioner Rodgers the information requested.

CHRISTMAS PARADE

Considering the Carolina Country Stampede was canceled due to COVID at the September 2021 meeting, the Parks and Recreation Director requested feedback from the Board about the Christmas Parade. The Board postponed any decision regarding the Williamston Christmas Parade until the October Board Meeting. The Parks and Recreation Director reported that the Williamston Christmas Parade was scheduled for December 2nd. The spectators for the Christmas Parade tend to stand close to each other. The Mayor acknowledged the steady spike in COVID cases. The Mayor noted that many spectators would go unmasked. While the trend may level off by December, it may not be enough time to prepare for the parade. Commissioner Knox stated that the Christmas parade could potentially spread the virus even more. Commissioner Rodgers agreed to cancel the Christmas Parade. The Parks and Recreation Director presented an alternative Christmas event. He introduced the idea of a residential Christmas lights contest with a cash prize. He would have more information at the next meeting but requested the Board's input. The Parks and Recreation Director explained that the idea was to have a map with the registered participants and vote by text. Commissioner McCall and the Mayor suggested the Town could be divided into sections or even by districts. The Board liked the residential Christmas lights contest idea. *It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously passed to cancel the Christmas Parade.*

NEW BUSINESS

APPROVAL OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2022 BUDGET CALENDAR

The Town Administrator reported that while the FY 2022 Budget Calendar is primarily for staff, a few dates are for the Commissioners. He provided the proposed calendar. The calendar proposes that the Budget Retreat will happen Friday, January 28th, for 8 hours. The Town Administrator requested the Board approve the Budget Development Calendar. A Budget Workshop is scheduled for April 22nd, and another workshop is on May 2nd. The third Budget Workshop would possibly happen on June 20th. The recommended dates need Board approval. Commissioner Moore questioned where the workshops would take place. The Town Administrator stated that the Board decides the location. *It was moved by Commissioner McCall, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously passed to approve the Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Calendar.*

APPROVAL FOR ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT

The Planning and Zoning Administrator reported Wayland Spruill's request for a self-service storage unit. The request was approved unanimously by the Planning Board. Commissioner Coffield questioned how many units the storage unit would have. Spruill expected it to have 118 units. Commissioner McCall noted there weren't similar services in Williamston.

APPROVAL FOR ZONING MAP AMENDMENT

The Planning and Zoning Administrator reported a discussion with Tracy Davis about a property on N 125 Highway. The requestors would use the area for a sand construction site. The request is to amend the Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) boundary that inconveniently bisects the property. He presented maps with the current line and the proposed line. Residences would stay within the zoning jurisdiction. The recommendation to approve was passed unanimously by the Planning Board. Commissioner Rodgers questioned if Davis had contacted the County. Davis contacted the County for the necessary permits; he didn't expect any unforeseen conflicts. Commissioner Moore asked if the requestors had notified residents of the future site. Davis stated that the residents were sent letters on August 29th. The Town Attorney suggested the vote be delayed until November for a proper notice process to adhere to State Statutes.

APPOINTMENT TO MCRWASA BOARD

The Town Administrator reported that Al Chesson's resignation to the Town Board followed his resignation to the MCRWASA Board, thus leaving one seat open at the MCRWASA Board. The Mayor recommended the motion to appoint Eric Pearson to fill Commissioner Chesson's unexpired term at MCRWASA. *It was moved by Commissioner Rodgers, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously passed to appoint Eric Pearson to the MCRWASA Board.*

WASTE INDUSTRIES LLC CONTRACT RENEWAL

The Town Administrator reported that the Franchise Agreement with Waste Industries (now GFL, Green for Life) to perform commercial refuse collection expires November 7th, 2021. Previously, it was a 5-year contract with automatic renewal. There is a good relationship between the Town of Williamston and GFL. The Town Administrator asked the Board to renew the Contract for another five years with GFL. *It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously passed to renew a 5-year contract with GFL.*

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Public Works

- The Public Works Director reported the following:
- Fence on Tank Street is completed.
- Air Curtain Burners has been saving the department money. Tons of debris turn into pounds. Commissioner Coffield questioned how often Public Works uses the Air Curtain Burner. The Public Works Director stated it is used typically once a week depending on the weather.
- Public Works will sell the chipper on GovDeals.com.
- The Sludge Removal Project for Waste Water has one event per year, costing about \$25,000 to \$30,000.
- A section of Martin Luther King Street has been closed due to an accident with a light post.

Police

The Police Chief provided the following report:

- The Police Department participated in an event for Jamesville Elementary Kindergarten with safety presentations.
- Firearm training will begin on October 5th. This training covers the Use of Force Policy. Officers train annually on Use of Force.
- Williamston Police Department assisted Robersonville in setting up an Assessment Center to hire a Police Chief. Captain Beth Coltrain was essential in the process.
- The Police Chief invited the Board to a Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony for the new Police Department on October 28th at 2:00 pm.
- The Police Department is attempting to fill Paul Moore's position.

Fire/Rescue

Board of Commissioner's Meeting

October 4, 2021

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The Fire Chief provided the following report:

- The Fire Department has had 229 EMS responses in the past year. There has been a steady increase
- Hazmat Training occurred in September.
- The Fire Prevention Officer would be inspecting hydrants.
- The Fire Department assisted the Ruritan Club with a fundraiser.
- They assisted with the Assessment center in Elizabeth City and Washington.
- He reported about Fire Prevention Week focusing on the sounds of safety.
- They presented an EMS truck at Williamston Primary.
- Staff will be wearing pink shirts in October for Breast Cancer Awareness Month.
- The City of Washington dealt with a fire resulting in 2 firefighters being injured by a brick wall. The Williamston Fire Department reached out and offered support.

Planning

The Town Planner and Zoning Administrator reported:

- The Tarheel Apartment Building's demolition has allowed the Planning and Zoning department to go back to normal operations.
- The Annual American Planning Association (APA) Conference will be held virtually.
- There will be a Fall Fest event at the Street Market on October 28th.
- Planning and Zoning staff were working on an ordinance for vacant buildings.

Parks and Recreation

The Parks and Recreation Director provided the following report:

- Mike Rodgers retired last month, currently looking for a replacement.
- Soccer had 248 kids register.
- Volleyball began and followed the same COVID guidelines as the schools.
- One football game was canceled due to COVID.
- An LWCF grant of ~~\$536,000~~ \$274,428 was awarded for the project. **CORRECTED AMOUNT**

Finance

The Finance Officer reported:

- Shenika Speller is back at work part-time.
- Town Hall is looking at new software programs since the current program would stop supporting some modules. They received three quotes and one demonstration.
- The 2021 audit is underway.
- The Williamston Town Hall received ARP funds. School of Government made seminars to educate about ARP Fund uses.

CLOSED SESSION

It was moved by Commissioner Coffield, seconded by Commissioner Moore to go out of regular session into closed session to discuss contract negotiations. The motion passed unanimously.

It was moved by Commissioner Rodgers, seconded by Commissioner Coffield to go out of closed session into regular session. The motion passed unanimously.

There being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Submitted By:

Approved By:

Town Clerk

Mayor

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

November 1, 2021

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Williamston met in regular called meeting on Monday, November 1st 2021, at 5:30 p.m. at the Telecenter at 415 East Blvd #130, Williamston, NC.

PRESENT Mayor: Joyce Whichard-Brown
Commissioners: Ronell Rodgers, Jerry Knox, Dean McCall, William Coffield, and Alton Moore
Town Administrator: Eric Pearson
Finance Officer: Christina Craft
Planning and Zoning Administrator: Cameron Braddy
Fire Chief: Michael Peaks
Police Chief: Travis Cowan
Public Works Director: Kerry Spivey
Parks and Recreation Director: Allen Overby

ABSENT Town Clerk: Jackie Escobar

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

The Mayor called the meeting to order. There was a special welcome for the honorable Mayor of Robersonville, Tina Brown. Commissioner Moore led the pledge of allegiance. Commissioner Coffield offered the invocation after a moment of silence.

AGENDA APPROVED

The Mayor asked if there were any adjustments to the agenda or if the Board wished to remove or add to the agenda. The Town Administrator requested Budget Amendment (2) of Consent Agenda moved to Old Business to be considered directly after Item 3 pertaining to the Town Attorney contract. *It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously passed to approve the regular agenda as amended.*

CONSENT AGENDA

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

Items approved in the Consent Agenda are as follows:

- (1) Approval of the Minutes of October 4th, 2021
- (2) Approval of an Influent Pump Control System for the Sewer Plant
- (3) Appointment Brandon Woody to the Planning Board

PUBLIC HEARINGS

The Mayor opened the floor for the public hearing. The Planning and Zoning Administrator Cameron Braddy reported that the Board had discussed a request for an Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction Boundary Adjustment amendment at the October Board meeting. The Town Attorney had suggested the vote be delayed until November for a proper notice process to adhere to State Statutes. The Town re-advertised the public hearing and mailed notices to adjacent property owners. The request would remove a small part of the parcel from the ETJ. Tracy Davis, a consultant for Indian Town Farms, attended the meeting via phone to answer any questions. Commissioner Rodgers stated he would like to view the property. The Planning and Zoning Administrator noted that the area discussed is located on Highway 125 a few miles outside town limits. However, the property is partially in the ETJ area, which the Town has zoning jurisdiction over. Since the property is outside of town limits, the Town would not be losing any tax base.

Commissioner Rodgers questioned if the requestors had contacted the County. The Planning and Zoning Administrator said the requestors had received their necessary permits. They have gone through the Building Inspection Office and contacted the County Manager. Tracy Davis stated they applied to the State North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality for a State Mining Permit, covering the potential activity on the farmland. Essentially, they would be digging sand to transport it to local construction sites but not pumping water. The State Mining permit, and State Stormwater permit were approved on October 15th, 2021. The state approved the permit and the application for the Mining plans, which included three separate sand pits. The last step is a reclamation bond to ensure reclamation and closure of the site of \$70,400. Once the applicant posts that bond with the state, the state will issue the mining permit and the stormwater permit to cover all the mine's environmental and public safety aspects.

Board of Commissioner's Meeting

November 1, 2021

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Finally, the Washington Regional Office of NC DEQ and the state inspectors will perform inspections to ensure compliance.

Barbara Roebuck stood before the Board and expressed her position against the sandpit. She worried the sandpit could impact the property values. Upon Ms. Roebuck's online research, properties adjacent to a sandpit can lose 30% of property value. Another concern of Ms. Roebuck's was the potential air quality degradation and the impact of vibrations of heavy equipment. Lolly Biggs, a property owner on highway 125, noted she was not in favor of the sandpit due to the number of children in the area. With no further comments, the Mayor closed the public hearing.

The Mayor opened the floor for the public hearing. The Planning and Zoning Administrator Cameron Braddy reported a request for the rezoning of 900 East Boulevard. The property is currently an underdeveloped parcel of land at the corner of Highway 17 and Gatling Street. Holy Trinity Catholic Church owns the adjacent property. The Church is hoping to buy the 900 East Boulevard property to expand its activities. The land is currently zoned Commercial Highway (CH), which does not allow Churches. They could utilize the land if it is rezoned to Office and Institutional (O&I). The Church had received support letters from community organizations and churches. A representative for the property owners and the Holy Trinity Catholic Church explained that the Catholic Church had a strong presence in Martin County for many years. The Church serves both Martin County catholic members and Bertie County catholic members. The property had been on the market for over ten years. The representative stated the Church reached out with available funding and was ready to invest. The Church was unable to expand on the opposite side since the area is a designated wetland. The Church has investigated the price of sewage. The expected costs are between \$30,000 and \$60,000 for the infrastructure to pump sewage. Father John Brown explained that the Church had discussed the expansion before the pandemic. The Church needs classrooms because the current fellowship hall is about 15 feet by 12 feet. With no further comments, the Mayor closed the public hearing.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Cindy Harrison questioned if the Town would sell the property where the old Tarheel Apartment building was. She was interested in buying the land. She also noted Williamston was highlighted in the Our State NC magazine. The magazine featured Hook Hand brewery on a list of best cider. Cindy Harrison congratulated the Town on the demolition of the Tarheel Building.

A written public comment was submitted via email, expressing gratitude to the Town of Williamston for the demolition of the Tarheel Building.

OLD BUSINESS

COVID UPDATE – VICKY MANNING

Vicky Manning highlighted that Martin County had 3,731 total cases, 76 fatalities, 126 breakthrough cases, and 68 active cases as of October 1st. The Martin-Tyrell-Washington Health Department district had 5,933 total cases, 182 breakthrough cases, 13 new cases, 105 active cases, and nine hospitalized. Commissioner McCall questioned what percentage of those tested resulted positive. 6.2% of those tested were positive for COVID. The Health Department continued to work with the Carrolton of Williamston and the Vintage Inn as breakthrough facilities. In Martin County, 52% of residents received their first dose of the COVID vaccine, and 48% are considered fully vaccinated. Manning noted that the Health Department was providing a booster shot. The FDA approved vaccines for ages 5 to 11 years of age. Then the ACIP, Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, will analyze the data and recommend it to the CDC for final revision. Finally, once approved, the Health Department would start issuing the vaccination to the 5-11-year-old age range. Manning emphasized that the Health Department had all three vaccines available. She encouraged individuals who had received the first doses to schedule an appointment to receive the third vaccine or booster shot.

ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS EVENT

In consideration of the Christmas parade being canceled due to COVID, Allen Overby presented the idea of an alternative Christmas Event. He proposed the idea of a Christmas lights contest called "Williamston Tour of Lights." The contest would be open to all residents within town limits. The contest would begin on December 4th. The winner would be voted by the public via text message. The prizes would be \$300 for first place, \$200 to second place, and \$100 to third place. The town staff was currently looking for sponsors. The main expense would be the reusable yard signs. The Town would promote the event on social media and in the local newspaper. *It was moved by Commissioner Rodgers, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously approved to allow the Alternative Christmas event Williamston Tour of Lights.*

APPROVAL OF AN AMENDED CONTRACT

The Town Administrator presented the Town Attorney's amended contract for the Board to consider. The Board discussed the contract at the previous meeting; however, the amended contract would require a budget amendment. The presented contract had no changes since the last Board meeting. *It was moved by Commissioner Moore and seconded by Commissioner McCall and unanimously passed to approve the Town Attorney's amended contract.*

APPROVAL OF A BUDGET AMENDMENT

The Town Administrator stated the budget amendment is for additional funding for the Town Attorney's contract. The budget amendment is for \$32,000. Once adopted, the Finance Officer will be able to sign off the pre-audit requirements. *It was moved by Commissioner Alton and seconded by Commissioner Knox and unanimously passed to approve the budget amendment for the Town Attorney's amended contract.*

Budget Amendment – Attorney Sutton Contract

General Fund

Transfer from Undesignated Fund	\$32,000.00
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Professional Services	<u>\$32,000.00</u>
	\$32,000.00

APPROVAL OF ORDINANCE ETJ BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT

The Planning and Zoning Administrator stated the ordinance was to adjust the ETJ line discussed in the public hearing. This decision would not be an approval of the project, only to approve the adjustment of the ETJ line. *It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Knox, and unanimously passed to approve the ordinance to adjust the ETJ boundary.*

APPROVAL OF ORDINANCE SELF STORAGE IN COMMERCIAL HIGHWAY ZONE

The Planning and Zoning Administrator stated Wayland Spruill requested self-storages be added to the Commercial Highway zone. A new definition would be added as a permitted use. Notice was posted, and there was no comment during the public comment period. *It was moved by Commissioner McCall, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously passed to approve the addition of self-storages be added to the Commercial Highway zone.*

NEW BUSINESS

APPROVAL OF AMENDED ORDINANCE ZONING MAP FROM CH TO O&I

The Planning and Zoning Administrator stated the amendment was for 900 E Blvd to be rezoned from CH to O&I, which was discussed during the public hearing. Commissioner Coffield questioned if the NC Department of Traffic (DOT) had any highway plans going through the location. According to the DOT office, Pastor John noted there were three possible routes for a highway expansion; however, the Church was willing to take the risk. *It was moved by Commissioner Dean, seconded by Commissioner Coffield to adopt the amended ordinance of rezoning the map from CH to O&I.*

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Public Works

The Public Works Director reported the following:

- The Public Works Director introduced Stacey Stalls to expose him to the board meetings, as Mr. Spivey plans to retire in a year.
- The department would be purchasing Influent Pump Station Controls. However, to offset the unscheduled purchase the sewer plant agreed to swap the purchase of the sewer jet cleaner.
- Air Curtain Burners has been operating for a couple of months. It has generated a small amount of ash.
- The Town sold the wood chipper for \$56,100. The original price was \$86,500.
- The sludge removal for the previous month was about a \$30,000 expenditure. The department improved this operation by limiting it to a once-a-year event rather than twice a year. It has been over \$60,000 in previous years.
- A truck wash facility at the Town's industrial park was issued an Industrial User Permit and was expected to begin operating soon.

Board of Commissioner's Meeting

November 1, 2021

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Finance

The Finance Officer reported:

- The Finance Officer and Town Administrator attended virtually a presentation about the American Relief Act by the UNC School of Government.
- With the changes approved for Public Works' Capital Improvement Plan, she noted that the plan is a five-year document. The first year is the most crucial because it links into the approved budget.

Police

The Police Chief provided the following report:

- The Police Department officers completed state-mandated requirements for service firearms.
- Officers attended service classes.
- The officers participated in a cancer walk, a Fall Festival at Hobgood Academy, and a community event hosted by Paradise Funeral Homes.
- For Halloween, officers wore orange undershirts and handed out candy.
- COVID affected one platoon; 4 out of 7 officers of the platoon were quarantined.
- The Police Department held their Ribbon Cutting Ceremony to celebrate their newly renovated building.

Fire/Rescue

The Fire Chief provided the following report:

- The Fire Department Regional Response Team (RRT) team provided tech advice in Currituck County.
- October was fire prevention month; the Fire Department was able to visit schools. Students toured the fire truck.
- The medical director reviewed the Patient Care Report (PCR) report.

Parks and Recreation

The Parks and Recreation Director provided the following report:

- He reported a new hire for the Athletic Program Supervisor.
- Football playoffs would be at Riverside High School.
- The department is awaiting a contract for the Land and Water Conservation Fund grant.

Planning

The Town Planning and Zoning Administrator reported:

- He provided a list of Code Enforcement completed properties and current tasks.
- The department had the Fall Y'all Festival downtown and the Town partnered with the Main Street Market.
- The Town partnered with the Martin Pitt Partnership for Children for their trunk-or-treat.
- He confirmed that NAPA Autoparts was moving into the old Walgreens location.

CLOSED SESSION

It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Rodgers to go out of regular session into closed session to discuss potential litigation. The motion passed unanimously.

It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Coffield to go out of closed session into regular session. The motion passed unanimously.

There being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Submitted By:

Approved By:

Town Clerk

Mayor

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

December 6, 2021

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Williamston met in regular called meeting on Monday, December 6th 2021, at 5:30 p.m. at the Telecenter at 415 East Blvd #130, Williamston, NC.

PRESENT Commissioners: Mayor Pro-Tem Ronell Rodgers, Jerry Knox, Dean McCall, William Coffield, and Alton Moore
Town Administrator: Eric Pearson
Town Clerk: Jackie Escobar
Finance Officer: Christina Craft
Planning and Zoning Administrator: Cameron Braddy
Fire Chief: Michael Peaks
Police Chief: Travis Cowan
Public Works Director: Kerry Spivey
Parks and Recreation Director: Allen Overby

ABSENT Mayor: Joyce Whichard-Brown

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

The Mayor Pro-Tem Ronell Rodgers called the meeting to order. Commissioner McCall led the pledge of allegiance. Commissioner Moore offered the invocation after a moment of silence for the passing of the Mayor's husband, Edwin C. Brown.

AGENDA APPROVED

The Mayor Pro-Tem asked if there were any adjustments to the agenda or if the Board wished to remove or add to the agenda. The Town Administrator requested that item #4 of Old Business about Cemetery rates be removed, and Commissioner Moore questioned why it would be removed. The Town Administrator explained that after speaking to the Public Works Director, he assessed that Public Works was applying the discount through a fair process; therefore, there was no need to bring the issue to the Board meeting. *It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Knox, and unanimously passed to approve the regular agenda as amended.*

CONSENT AGENDA

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

Items approved in the Consent Agenda are as follows:

- (1) Approval of the Minutes of November 1st, 2021
- (2) Approval of corrected Minutes of October 4th, 2021
- (3) Appointment Brandon Woody to the Planning Board

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ellen Shepherd reported a ditch near her home full of vegetation and animals, which she considered a safety hazard. She has found a snake and mice in her home due to the vegetation in the ditch. The Mayor Pro Tem stated the Board would take the issue under advisement.

OLD BUSINESS

COVID UPDATE – VICKY MANNING

Vicky Manning highlighted that Martin County had five new cases of COVID-19 since December 3rd. 8.7% of those tested resulted positive in Martin County. The Health Department worked with breakthrough facilities: the Carrolton had 58 cases, and the Vintage Inn had 3 cases. Manning explained the difference between the booster shot and the 3rd dose vaccine. For example, an immunocompromised would need more vaccination to match a healthy individual, and Moderna is offering only half a dose due to its effectiveness rate. While there is a new variant called omicron, the delta variant is dominant, and the CDC is encouraging booster shots.

ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS EVENT

The Parks and Recreation Director Allen Overby reported an update about the "Tour of Lights" Christmas lights contest which began December 4th with 14 participating homes. All the participating homes are within Town Limits,

and Overby hopes people will ride around to look at lights. Winners will be awarded after Christmas. The Town listed the sponsors on a banner at Barnes Plaza.

APPROVAL OF CONTRACT WITH ZACCHAEUS LAW FIRM

At the September 13th, 2021 Board meeting, the Town Administrator presented contracting with Zacchaeus Law Firm to collect delinquent taxes. The Board expressed concerns with the length of the contract of 3.5 years and the potential cost to the Town. The contract length is due to the lengthy initial process, which can take 6 to 9 months. Zacchaeus Law Firm will add attorney costs to the delinquent taxes owed.

Two of the current CDBG-NR (Community Development Block Grant – Neighborhood Revitalization) properties owe \$7,463.12 combined in back taxes. There are about 146 properties that owe taxes that are more than five years delinquent, totaling an estimate of \$627,935.79. There are approximately 268 accounts with past due amounts that total \$730,606.69. We have a total outstanding tax amount of about \$901,262.03. Commissioner Moore questioned how the properties with owed taxes received a CDBG grant. The Finance Officer Christina Craft explained that the criteria given by the CDBG were to consider how much the individual earns and if their home needed repair; the Town did not research if the CDBG recipients owed taxes. Commissioner Moore worried that the Town could default on the grant and affect Gaylord Perry Park's air conditioner project. The Town Administrator stated the Town had contacted the CDBG contract administrator about the Environmental Study.

Commissioner Moore stated the County could also benefit from contracting with Zacchaeus Law Firm, he questioned if the Town Administrator had contacted the County. The Town Administrator stated he would contact the County Manager.

The Town Administrator requested the approval of the contract with Zacchaeus to assist in collecting delinquent taxes. The Town should not continue allowing the amount of taxes to remain unpaid. The tax collector, Tiffany White, has had an average collection rate of 92.9% since 2008. The Town would initially turn over 50 to 100 accounts to Zacchaeus with the contract. Tiffany White will still have the initial notification process and a second follow-up notice before cases are turned over to Zacchaeus Law Firm. Commissioner Coffield questioned any guarantees that the property owners could pay the delinquent taxes. The Town Administrator explained that those who don't pay would remain delinquent, then move into foreclosure and auction. The Town Administrator noted that some of the properties that owe back taxes are also being mowed by the Town or are dilapidated properties.

Commissioner McCall questioned what would happen if heirs of properties entered a lawsuit against the Town and if there was a good faith clause for those who owe low taxes. The Town Attorney noted that only bankruptcy or an agreement could solve an heir's case. The Attorney also noted Tiffany could still collect taxes and would be in control of what cases are turned over to Zacchaeus Law Firm. The Town Administrator stated it was unfair to those paying taxes that we allow some not to pay taxes. *It was moved by Commissioner Moore and seconded by Commissioner McCall, and unanimously passed to approve the contract with Zacchaeus Law Firm to collect delinquent taxes.*

NEW BUSINESS

COMMISSIONER MCCALL PRESENTATION

Commissioner McCall introduced a presentation about downtown revitalization. Commissioner McCall's idea is to revitalize downtown by fixing the benches, changing the trees, and reaching out to downtown property owners. Commissioner Moore applauded Commissioner McCall's efforts. The Town Administrator requested the Board to appoint Commissioner McCall as the liaison with the Planning Department and the Mayor as the liaison with Public Works. *It was moved by Commissioner Knox and seconded by Commissioner Moore and unanimously passed to approve Commissioner McCall as the Planning Department liaison and the Mayor as the Public Works liaison. The presentation is hereby attached with the minutes of this meeting and incorporated in the Town's Minutes and Agendas Book for future reference.*

AIA WATER STUDY

The Town Administrator stated the Board reviewed and approved the Scope of Work (SOW) for the Water Asset Inventory and Assessment (AIA) study offered under the Viable Utility Reserve Fund \$150,000 grant at the September 13th Board meeting. Upon the Board's approval of the SOW, the Town advertised a Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) to consider awarding a contract to perform this Water AIA Study. The responses to the SOQ were due back to

us by November 12th, 2021. The Town received two responses: Rivers and Associates and The Wooten Company. Within the SOQ, respondents were provided a scoring sheet showing how the town staff would review and assess each submission. Copies of the proposals and score sheets are available upon request. Kerry Spivey, Stacy Stalls, and the Town Administrator reviewed the proposals. After reviewing the submissions, Rivers and Associates had a total score of 446, and The Wooten Company scored 385. Based on the scoring system, the Town Administrator recommended that the Board authorize staff to enter into a contract with Rivers and Associates to perform the Water AIA Study per the SOW when ready and reviewed by the Town attorney. Commissioner Moore questioned if the Town would work with Martin County on the Rate Study. The Town Administrator stated it made sense for all the municipalities to work together for the asset inventory study. *It was moved by Commissioner McCall, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously passed to authorize staff to enter into a contract with Rivers and Associates to perform the Water AIA Study.*

BUDGET RETREAT

The Town Administrator reported that the Board approved a budget calendar for the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Budget Year. That calendar called for a Board Retreat to be a one-day retreat on Friday, January 28th, 2022. However, the Board did not determine the location and time in that vote. The Town Administrator questioned where the Board would like the retreat to be conducted. The Town Administrator also offered to have tours of departments the Commissioners may not have seen. The Town Administrator requested the Board to approve holding the Board Retreat at the Telecenter beginning at 8:30 a.m. *It was moved by Commissioner Coffield, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously passed to approve the January 28th Board Retreat to be held at the Telecenter at 8:30 a.m.*

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Public Works

The Public Works Director reported the following:

- Air Curtain Burners had not been in operation due to the ongoing Burn Ban.
- The Town sold the wood chipper for \$56,100. The original price was \$86,500.
- Public Works completed the sludge removal the previous month for about \$30,000. The department improved this operation by limiting it to a once-a-year event rather than twice a year. It has been over \$60,000 in previous years.
- The Public Works Department spent about 200 hours installing Christmas décor for the Town.

Police

The Police Chief provided the following report:

- A Crime Prevention Officer attended the Chamber of Commerce's Christmas on Main Street.
- A homeschool group toured the Police Department and tested the fatal vision goggles.
- The Police Department partnered with Shaw's Bar-b-que on December 9th to host a horse-drawn carriage ride with Santa through downtown.
- An officer attended a homicide seminar in Florida at the University of Louisville.
- Two officers were promoted to Corporal.
- Officers Evan Phifer and Braxton Squires responded to a suicide call over the Roanoke River bridge. The officers handled the situation well; they were able to bring the subject away safely.

Fire/Rescue

The Fire Chief provided the following report:

- The Fire Department participated in the Chamber of Commerce's Christmas on Main Street.
- The Hazmat RRT (Regional Response Team) offered technical support in Currituck and an outreach program in Ahoskie.
- Fire Prevention month ended.
- The NC Department of Insurance Office of State Fire Marshall reported the rating changed from 4 to 3. The change indicates a reduction in property owner's insurance rates.

Parks and Recreation

The Parks and Recreation Director provided the following report:

- He reported a new hire for maintenance.
- Football has finished. The 5-6-year-old Flag team won the Superbowl.
- The Martin County Youth Soccer had its tournament on November 13th.
- Washington hosted the volleyball tournament.

Board of Commissioner's Meeting

December 6, 2021

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- Basketball registration finished December 4th.

Planning

The Town Planning and Zoning Administrator reported:

- He provided a list of Code Enforcement completed properties and current tasks.
- The Planner and Downtown Marketing Coordinator Zach Dickerson has moved on to another job opportunity.
- Williamston Downtown partnered with the Chamber of Commerce for Christmas on Main Street.
- He reported rezoning requests would be presented at the next meeting, following the Planning Board Meeting.
- Commissioner Moore questioned what could be done about illegal dumping. The Planning and Zoning Administrator explained that the Code Enforcement Officer had been handling the situation. She reached out to the property owners.

Finance

The Finance Officer reported:

- The Finance Officer reported that the Budget Retreat would occur on January 28th, 2022.
- The Town Clerk had sent out CIP (Capital Improvement Plan) Worksheets to department heads.
- CIP Worksheets are due December 17th.
- There would be a Public Hearing in January to allow citizen input.
- The Town is reviewing a financial system to replace Logics.

CLOSED SESSION

It was moved by Commissioner Coffield, seconded by Commissioner Knox to go out of regular session into closed session for Attorney-Client Privilege N.C. 43-318.11(3) at 7:52 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner McCall to go out of closed session into regular session at 9:07 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

There being no further business, the Mayor Pro-Tem declared the meeting adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

Submitted By:

Approved By:

Town Clerk

Mayor Pro-Tem

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

January 3, 2022

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Williamston met in regular called meeting on Monday, January 3rd, 2022, at 5:30 p.m. at the Telecenter at 415 East Blvd #130, Williamston, NC.

PRESENT Mayor: Joyce Whichard-Brown
Commissioners: Mayor Pro-Tem Ronell Rodgers, Jerry Knox, Dean McCall, William Coffield, and Alton Moore
Town Administrator: Eric Pearson
Town Clerk: Jackie Escobar
Finance Officer: Christina Craft
Planning and Zoning Administrator: Cameron Braddy
Fire Chief: Michael Peaks
Police Chief: Travis Cowan
Public Works Director: Kerry Spivey
Parks and Recreation Director: Allen Overby

ABSENT None

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

The Mayor called the meeting to order. Commissioner Coffield led the pledge of allegiance. Then, Commissioner McCall offered the invocation after a moment of silence for the families in Colorado affected by wildfires.

AGENDA APPROVED

The Mayor asked if there were any adjustments to the agenda or if the Board wished to remove or add to the agenda. The Town Administrator added Item 3 to New Business for an Audit Contract Adjustment. *It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously passed to approve the regular agenda as amended.*

CONSENT AGENDA

The Mayor asked if there were any adjustments to the Consent Agenda or if the Board wished any items to be removed or added. Commissioner Moore required clarification regarding Item 2 and Item 3. The Town Administrator explained that the Budget amendments were to move money from one account to another, but no addition or subtraction of money. Fire/EMS requested more flexibility in pay raises to aid employee retention. *It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Knox, and unanimously passed to approve the consent agenda.*

Items approved in the Consent Agenda are as follows:

- (1) Approval of the Minutes of December 6th, 2021
- (2) Budget Amendment - Pay Adjustments for Fire/EMS
 - FIRE \$4,300
 - EMS \$5,700
 - Grand Total \$10,000
- (3) Budget Amendment - Property Tax Collections
 - Undesignated Fund Balance \$10,000
 - Professional Services \$10,000
- (4) Zacchaeus Property Tax Collection Contract

PRESENTATION OF NCLM SAFETY AWARDS

The Fire Chief presented the annual awards given by the North Carolina League of Municipalities (NCLM) to the various departments for their outstanding contribution to safety in the workplace. Fire-Rescue-EMS, the Police Department, and the Recreation Department were awarded a First-Year Gold award. Sanitation Collection won Third Year Gold. Public Works Administration won a Fourth Consecutive Year Gold award. Town Administration, Garage Mechanics, the Waste Water Treatment, and the Zoning Department were awarded a Ninth Consecutive Year certificate. The Cemetery Department and Street and Road Maintenance received a 10th Consecutive Year award.

PUBLIC HEARING – COMMUNITY INPUT – FY 2022-2023

The Mayor opened the floor for the Public Hearing for community input for the upcoming Budget. The Town Clerk advertised the public hearing in the local newspaper as a public notice. With no comments, the Mayor then closed the floor.

OLD BUSINESS

COVID UPDATE – VICKY MANNING

Vicky Manning reported there were 4,079 total COVID cases, 150 breakthrough cases, 60 cases since December 30th, 2021, and 146 active cases. Manning noted that there were three reported hospitalized cases. Manning expected the following report to have higher numbers due to the holidays. The Health Department worked with the Carrolton and Vintage Inn to prevent additional cases. Positive cases from December 12th to December 25th were 6.5%. 52% of the Martin County population have received the 1st dose of the COVID vaccine, 48% have received the 2nd dose. The Health Department receives patients for the 1st dose, 2nd dose, booster, and pediatric vaccines. The CDC made new recommendations regarding the isolation period, reduced from 10 days to 5 days starting on the day of exposure or when symptoms began. Moderna and Phizer were creating post-infection treatments. Testing sites include Scout Hut and East End High School.

ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS EVENT

The Parks and Recreation Director Allen Overby reported an update about the "Tour of Lights" Christmas lights contest which began December 4th with 18 participating homes. There were 678 votes via text. First place was Robin Ann Perry, who would receive \$300. In second place, Angie and Don Torrence won \$200. Third place was Verna R. Boss, who would receive \$100. The prize money and signage costs were covered entirely by 12 sponsors.

CDBG GRANT UPDATE

The Town Administrator Eric Pearson introduced Ben Jones, a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program Administrator. Ben Jones updated on the status of the CDBG grant both for the housing revitalization and the air conditioning unit at Gaylord Perry. Ben Jones offered a detailed timeline of the CDBG grant process. The grant was awarded in 2020. The Town submitted an environmental review to determine environmental effects to the Department of Commerce on July 9th, 2021. Ultimately, the Town awaited the release of the approved funds to commence the various projects, including air conditioning in the Gaylord Perry Park Gymnasium. The Mayor questioned if the funds had been approved. Ben Jones reiterated that the funds were approved but required the release of funds to begin spending the money. With the release of funds, the Town would hire inspectors and contractors. The attorney would begin evaluating ownership of the properties and then bid out to contractors. Commissioner Moore questioned if the air conditioner project could be worked on separately from the home renovations. Ben Jones assured the Board that projects would be done separately, and the Board could decide where to begin.

NEW BUSINESS

AWARD AIA STUDY CONTRACT

At the December Board Meeting, the Town Administrator presented the results of the Town's review of submissions of qualifications from interested entities to perform an Asset Inventory Assessment (AIA) funded by the NC Department of Natural Resources (NCDENR) Viable Utility Reserve grant program. The Town Administrator recommended awarding Rivers and Associates the contract to perform this assessment. The Board unanimously approved the recommendation at the previous Board meeting. Town staff received a proposed contract including a Statement of Work (SOW) required by the AIA grant. Attorney Sutton reviewed the contract. Town staff recommended the approval of the contract with Rivers and Associates to perform the AIA Study. Greg Churchill detailed the various components of Rivers and Associates' services as part of the AIA Study. Rivers and Associates would evaluate the current information such as usage and rates, then make a recommendation to the Town to evaluate and make the needed modifications. *It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Rodgers, and unanimously passed to approve the contract with Rivers and Associates to perform the AIA Study.*

CONSIDER MARTIN COUNTY INVITE TO MEET WITH DEQ

The Town Administrator presented a letter from Martin County sent to the Mayor inviting the Town of Williamston to meet with the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). The meeting is to discuss the regionalization/merger of the water/wastewater systems of the various municipalities in Martin County. The Town Administrator stated that Kerry Spivey, Stacy Stalls, and himself should attend the meeting. The Mayor suggested Commissioner Moore should attend also. Commissioner McCall expressed interest in participating in the meeting; the Mayor approved Commissioner McCall's attendance. The Town Administrator requested that the Board approve the acceptance of the invitation and allow certain members to attend the meeting with DEQ. *It was moved by*

Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner McCall, and unanimously approved for the Town of Williamston to attend the meeting with DEQ.

AMENDMENT TO AUDIT CONTRACT

The Town Administrator reported that the auditors could not complete the audit on schedule for the fiscal year, June 30th, 2021. Therefore, he requested that the Board the audit contract until the end of January 2022. The extended contract had been reviewed and approved by the Town attorney. *It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously passed to approve the amended audit contract.*

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Public Works

The Public Works Director reported the following:

- The Garage has a new mechanic.
- The Burn ban was lifted, allowing the Air Curtain Burner to function again.
- The department completed grease trap inspections for commercial businesses, with two violations resulting in civil penalties.
- While typical in the Winter months, the department has dealt with several sewer blockages.

Parks and Recreation

The Parks and Recreation Director provided the following report:

- The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant was expected by the end of 2021. However, it has not been received yet; Allen Overby expects it should be soon.
- Rivers and Associates were close to completing the Gaylord Perry Park construction drawings.
- Basketball season would begin in two weeks with 16 teams. They had 5 to 6 teams more than other years.
- All sports games followed the same COVID guidelines as the school.

Planning

The Town Planning and Zoning Administrator reported:

- Mowing has decreased due to the Winter season.
- Williamston Downtown Inc received two vibrancy grants to replace awnings and signage.
- Commissioner Coffield questioned when demolitions of dilapidated properties would be completed. Cameron Braddy explained he was waiting for the Town Attorney as they were required to prove due notice to property owners before demolishing.

Fire/Rescue

The Fire Chief provided the following report:

- The hazmat team responded to two missions:
 - They assisted Hertford with a tipped-over liquid oxygen truck.
 - Elizabeth City had a valve leak.
- Christmas Day was busy with EMS calls.
- The Fire/Rescue Department completed a toy collection for Martin County Social Services.
- The department received a Frances M. Barnes grant for AED (automated external defibrillators) units for each Town facility.
- Williamston assisted Edgecombe county in the largest fire in North Carolina at QVC. Personnel worked for about 15 hours.

Police

The Police Chief provided the following report:

- Some officers were exposed or sick with COVID.
- A sleigh ride with Santa event hosted by the Police Department and Shaw's Barbeque had over 300 people assist.
- The department completed state-mandated training.

Board of Commissioner's Meeting

January 3, 2022

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Finance

The Finance Officer reported:

- The Town Board of Commissioners would hold their Budget retreat on Friday, January 28th, 2022, at 8:30 am at the Telecenter.
- The Town Hall Lobby doors reopened on January 3rd, 2022.
- Some staff were exposed to COVID but continued working from an isolated workspace.

There being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.

Submitted By:

Approved By:

Town Clerk

Mayor

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

January 28, 2022

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Williamston met in regular session for a Budget Retreat on Friday, January 28, 2022 at 8:45 a.m. at the NC Telecenter located at 415 East Blvd #130, Williamston, NC.

PRESENT

Mayor: Joyce Whichard-Brown
Commissioners: Mayor Pro Tem Ronell Rodgers, Dean McCall, William Coffield, Jerry Knox, and Alton Moore
Town Administrator: Eric Pearson
Town Clerk: Jackie Escobar
Finance Officer: Christina Craft
Recreation Director: Allen Overby
Town Planner and Zoning Administrator: Cameron Braddy
Fire Chief: Michael Peaks
Police Chief: Travis Cowan
Police Captain: Beth Coltrain
Public Works Director: Kerry Spivey and Stacy Stalls
Human Resources Administrator: Martha-Brown Lilley

ABSENT

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

The Mayor called the meeting to order. Commissioner McCall led the pledge of allegiance. Then, Commissioner Moore offered the invocation, followed by a moment of silence for the COVID victims and their families.

OPENING STATEMENTS

The Mayor welcomed everyone, and she also thanked the Board and Town staff for their support through her grieving. She noted that the Town had an excellent staff.

Commissioner Moore stated he was thankful for the renovated Police and Fire departments. However, he also noted that the Town needed to work on the budget to thrive.

Commissioner Knox voiced that the last months were very lovely. The Board and staff had worked together to satisfy the constituents' needs and give Town money the best use. He thanked the Board for their hard work.

Commissioner McCall conveyed excitement for the future.

Commissioner Rodgers expressed amazement at the Budget Retreat Packet. Commissioner Rodgers reminded the Mayor that his family keeps her in their prayers. Finally, Commissioner Rodgers thanked Department Heads. He particularly thanked Chief Cowan; he noted Williamston was free of issues happening in other places.

FINANCIALS

Financial Overview

The Town Administrator thanked the Board, Department Heads, and Town Administration staff for their hard work. The Finance officer explained the attached financial dashboard. The General Fund Revenue and Expenditures demonstrate that the Town did not exceed any budgeted expenses. The Enterprise Fund Revenue was over in Water Districts Services. The Powell Bill Revenue is a portion of the General Fund that the town monitors.

Commissioner Rodgers requested clarification about the financial dashboard. He questioned what the numbers depict in relation to the General Fund. The Finance Officer noted the numbers were estimated numbers, but it was beneficial to the Town for Revenue and Expenditures to break even.

The first six months of 2021's General Fund do not reflect all the revenue as some numbers come in later in the year. Enterprise Fund Water Expenditure numbers will come later in the year but are moving along as expected. The Powell Bill Revenue is awaiting one payment. The Town has spent 83% of Powell Bill Revenue for this year. The Mayor questioned if any streets needed repair. Stacy Stalls listed a few streets that needed repairs, such as Carolina Avenue

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January 28, 2022

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and Roberson Street. Stalls stated he and the Public Works Director Kerry Spivey could create a list of streets to present to the Mayor and Board.

The Finance Officer typically presents the Fund Balance section of the Financial Overview with audited numbers; however, Carr Riggs & Ingram had not completed the audit. Therefore, the numbers would change with audit entries. Currently, the Town of Williamston has under six months of emergency Fund Balance. When the emergency funds were down to 1.8 months, the Local Government Commission (LGC) sent the Town a letter. The Town Administrator noted the letter was awakening. He also explained that Department Heads had sacrificed over the past few years to build the Fund Balance. The Town of Williamston must increase fund balance to stay within LGC guidelines. Commissioner Rodgers inquired if the Board must say no to Budget requests, to which the Finance Officer replied the Board should be more conservative with Town money. The Town Administrator noted it was the staff's responsibility to bring the Board a budget that benefits fund balance. Commissioner Rodgers questioned if the Town Administrator had conversations with Department Heads about cutting or compromising on expenditures. The Finance Officer noted the Administrator worked diligently with Department Heads on timing; they can request some items in a later year. The Capital Improvement Plan was essential to analyze future big-ticket items. Commissioner Moore noted that sometimes waiting incurs more costs, and he wondered if American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds helped. The Town Administrator explained that the ARP funds could offset future costs. While it wouldn't aid with inflation, it would help with funding. The Finance Officer commended Department Heads for constantly searching for deals to buy items at the best price. For example, the Police Chief and Fire Chief purchased tires to offset price increases.

The Town Administrator noted that the total financial obligations of 21/22 were \$447,040. The annual payments for the Police and Fire Department had a 2.25% USDA interest. The Wastewater Plant, a 20-year investment, has been paid off; however, it is now an aging plant. The Administrator stated the Town should set money aside for repairs. The 21/22 combined commitment fell under 1 million dollars. Commissioner Rodgers inquired who pays when the Town performs water flushing of hydrants. The Town Administrator replied that citizens pay with the MCRWASA bill. The Finance Officer stated that MCRWASA refunds the Town for some flushing. Stacy Stalls explained that the Town runs wells to compensate during the flushing. There was much flushing recently due to water main breaks. The Administrator noted that the rates charged by the Town cover the water used.

The Finance Officer noted that remounts of EMS trucks occur to minimize costs. Chief Peaks explained that the Rescue Department took the box off the back of an old EMS and only changed the cab. This process ensures the box is repurposed to cut costs. The department gets 15 to 18 years out of each truck. The Fire Department cannot remount the next truck.

The Town Administrator noted the Board just approved Zacchaeus Law Firm to handle delinquent taxes. The Town had almost 1 million in outstanding taxes. Personal property owners owe a quarter of the outstanding taxes. If the Town collected the outstanding taxes, the Town would have the funding needed for other projects. Zacchaeus Law Firm would begin soon. The Town Administrator offered the example of the Tarheel Apartment Building where the Town could not collect taxes. Therefore, the Town had to find another way to offset the costs. The Finance Officer noted that the Town-owned properties could be foreclosed and bought by a responsible property owner. Commissioner Moore inquired if the Town could sell the Tarheel Apartment Building and the Mitchell Building with the promise to place a business on the property. The Planning and Zoning Director explained that the grant for the Mitchell property had a stipulation that the buyer must use it for commercial business during the first three years. He stated he would look into the legality of a time frame and the requirements. As for the Tarheel Apartment Building, the Town Administrator noted that the Town does not own it, so it cannot sell it.

Capital Improvement Plan

The Finance Officer presented the Capital Improvement Plan. The Board questioned the River Landing Phase listed under the Summary of Capital Improvements for Planning. The Planning and Zoning Administrator explained that the River Landing Phase could extend the Moratoc Boat Ramp. In addition, there was a typo in the Fire/Rescue Summary of Capital Improvements. The Town Administrator noted that the Board would approve a refined CIP approved at a later date.

The Finance Officer explained that the Historical Property Tax Rates depicted the rate had been raised to \$0.89 in 2020 and not raised since. The Town Administrator provided property tax rates of other municipalities and counties for comparison. He noted that Williamston's rate was not much different from surrounding areas. The Finance Officer included that the services offered by the Town influences the rates. Other towns do not offer as many services as the

Town of Williamston. Commissioner Moore stated it was difficult to compare Greenville to Williamston, as industries influence tax rates.

The Town Administrator noted that the Vehicle and Equipment report depicted the mileage and age of the vehicles and equipment of various departments. The Finance Officer stated that when equipment cycles out, it is sold on GovDeals.com by auction at a fair price. However, the departments analyze if the equipment is usable in another department before auctioning the vehicle. Commissioner Rodgers questioned if it was normal for an F-150 Truck in the Police Department to have only 7,000 miles. The Police Chief noted the F-150 is an unmarked vehicle assigned to a Police officer; however, the Police uniform car is used more aggressively. Those vehicles are cycled out within a few years. The Police Department tries to reduce costs to have a quality fleet. The Police Department regularly purchases three cars one year and two cars the following year. An unmarked vehicle can last 7 to 10 years, whereas a marked vehicle only lasts about four years. The Town Administrator included this is to keep equipment and vehicles in usable shape. Commissioner Moore asked if the Town had a snowplow. The Town Administrator noted that the Town relied on the North Carolina Division of Traffic (NCDOT) due to insufficient snow frequency. The Administrator also considers publicly explaining why the Town does not plow the snow.

Employee Benefit Discussion

The Human Resources Administrator reported that the Health Saving Reimbursement program was working well and used by 26 employees. There had been 94% of recommended increases.

The Town Administrator stated the Board had not increased their stipend; the Board could discuss it during the open session. The Human Resources Administrator noted that the stipend increased 2% each July.

The Human Resources Administrator indicated the employer contribution increased almost double the previous year's amount.

The Town Administrator explained Other Post-Employees Benefit (OPEB). The Town offered OPEB to employees before 2013. The latest study for future liability in 2021 looked at the age of retirement, cost of benefits, and age of covered employees to determine that 5 million dollars was the future liability. The Town's OPEB is currently funded directly from General Fund. The Town started the account for OPEB in 2015. Several of the current employees close to retirement would receive the OPEB benefit. The Finance Officer noted it was \$100,000 a year to fund OPEB.

Commissioner Moore questioned if the Town matched the 401K contribution. The Town Administrator stated the Town matched the contribution at 1% but hoped it would increase to 3%. Commissioner Moore also questioned how salaries were in comparison to surrounding areas. The Administrator pointed out that the Fire and Police salaries were some of the lowest in the state.

The Mayor stated she saw fit for the 1% match to increase to 3% of the 401K budget.

TOUR OF WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT

The Mayor, Commissioners, Town Administrator and Town Clerk toured the Wastewater Treatment Plant guided by Gene Reed, returning to the NC Telecenter at noon for lunch with the Department Heads and the continuation of the Budget Retreat.

The Town Administrator requested Public Works to give their Department Report ahead of schedule.

Stacy Stalls reported:

- The \$117,000 Air Curtain Burner replaced the chipper sold for \$56,000. The Air Curtain Burner has saved the Town \$10,000 in landfill fees.
- The department currently struggled with employee applicants.
- Rivers & Associates Engineering Firm identified a project for a sewer line to run from Skewarkee Park to Godwin Coppage Park. The project would cost \$6.3 million; however, there would be grant opportunities in the Spring of 2022.
- Stacy Stalls welcomed sellers of an Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) system that the Town could potentially purchase. The company is based in Concord, NC, thus providing local support. The seller stated that the ultrasonic water meter was the most accurate, reliable, and easy-to-use meter on the market. The meter sends real-time data, eliminating driving around to read meters. The new meter system would decrease maintenance costs and reduce meter reading time. The metering system would identify leaks on both the customer and utility sides. The data can be uploaded to the financial system; the billing interface can mirror

the current system or be built from scratch. Commissioner McCall questioned what the warranty was for the meters. The seller explained that the meters had a 20-year warranty and detailed that out of 60,000 meters sold, buyers had returned only 50 meters. The meters also have a tamper alarm if the antenna is broken. Chief Cowan asked if there was a way to update and resolve issues with the meter. The seller stated that issues could be fixed over the controller or through the airway. The Mayor asked what the price was for the meters. Stacy Stalls stated it would be 1 million to 1.5 million dollars with a return of investment of 5 years. Commissioner McCall inquired how to add units in the future. There is no need for a new contract; meters can be added and ordered via shipment. The Finance Officer questioned if there was a monthly maintenance fee. Maintenance would cost \$7,000 annually for hosting and \$900 for notifications.

WILLIAMSTON VISION AND MISSION STATEMENT REVIEW

The Town Administrator reported on the Long-Range Visioning Plan, which was developed in 2017 by the Board. The document details six Vision Statements and goals, and strategies for each goal. He also reported about the Mission and Vision Statement adopted in 2013, a more concise statement of what the Board envisioned for the Town of Williamston. The Administrator's presented these documents to gain direction from the Board. Commissioner Dean McCall noted that the six Vision Statements detailed in the Long-Range Visioning Plan were attainable goals but lacked a clear strategy to achieve them.

The Town Administrator noted that Neighborhoodscount.com listed Williamston with a high crime. Chief Cowan stated that perception was vital and the way reporting was vetted. While there is violent crime in Williamston, there has not been a drastic increase. The Chief noted that the Crime Prevention Officer works to reduce crime. Commissioner Rodgers noted that Williamston had no major scandals similar to those heard on national news. Commissioner Knox expressed astonishment that Williamston is deemed more dangerous than a larger city like Greenville. The Town Administrator stated that Google, Facebook, and statistics such as crimes per thousands were misleading. Chief Cowan stated that the police department staff are careful of the image to promote positive perception. In addition, the Police Department maintains engagement with the community through community events.

The Mayor stated Williamston needed a Greyhound bus station.

The Town Attorney explained that a Marketing Campaign would benefit the Town. For example, Washington has a Tourist Authority in charge of marketing and promoting Washington.

Commissioner McCall suggested that 24 goals were too many, the number of goals should be limited. Ideally, the Town should have six goals with their progress tracked by the Town.

Commissioner Rodgers stated his vision was to utilize the land by the river for businesses, such as a seafood restaurant. However, the Planning and Zoning Administrator noted the land by the river was a Brownsfield site which limits what business could be put there.

MARTIN COUNTY RURAL WATER AND SEWER AUTHORITY (MCRWASA)

The Town Administrator reported his appointment to the MCRWASA Board. MCRWASA analyzed its budget on January 27th with a Budget Workshop. MCRWASA also discussed a regionalization/merger study. The Administrator noted that the Town of Williamston is the primary payer of massive debt service for the MCRWASA plant. MCRWASA is in an unsustainable condition. While the plant is capable of 2 million gallons of water, only 1 million gallons of capacity is used, causing wear and tear. The plant was designed too large for its actual use. The Town of Williamston charges the highest rate for water and sewer compared to surrounding areas. The Town Administrator requested permission from the Board to push for Williamston to run the plant at the regionalization meeting with DEQ. If the Town of Williamston ran the plant, it would save MCRWASA \$100,000. Commissioner McCall questioned the Attorney what the Town's options were. The Town Attorney stated she had not examined the issue. The Town Administrator noted that if the Town could not run the plant, dissolving the agreement was an option. Commissioner McCall stated that the Town should stop hemorrhaging money from a business standpoint. The Town Administrator noted the County was not willing to match Town's contribution towards a repair and maintenance fund. Another example of the County's control is the County appointed Board Member Julius Patrick was made ORC (Operator Responsible of Charge) without the Town's input. The Board was all in favor of the Town Administrator being more aggressive in the representation of the Town at the regionalization meeting with DEQ.

DEPARTMENT HEAD UPDATES

Fire/Rescue/Emergency Services (EMS)

Board of Commissioner's Budget Retreat Meeting

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The Fire Chief reported

- The Department's mission statement is to serve and protect its citizens from the dangers of fire, emergency medical incidents, and other emergencies through the efforts of prevention, education, training, and safety.
- The Core Values follow the acronym HALLIGAN - Honesty, Accountability, Leadership, Loyalty, Integrity, Gratitude, Attitude, and Neighborly
- He depicted the Chain of command for Paid Personnel. There are 19 full-time employees, 28 volunteer firefighters, 15 volunteer EMS, 10-second call volunteers (3 have a 12-minute ETA), 45 hazmat members
- Williamston Fire-Rescue-EMS operates with (4) personnel on duty, twenty-four hours daily. These (4) are split up into assignments with (2) personnel assigned to EMS and (2) assigned to a Fire Engine. These crew members respond to most responses unless the call is outside the Engine response area or in Bear Grass or Griffins Township Fire Districts.
- All of the Captains have over 20 years of experience. One Lieutenant has 40 years with the Town. These men are the leaders of the department. The department cannot afford any turnover, or else there will be no one with experience to lead the department when these men retire.
- There are as many as 164 hours of training required annually.
- The department has 24 apparatus well equipped with an insufficient workforce to operate.
- An average number of calls a day is 7-10, the average time to run a call is 1 hour.
- Each fire and EMS apparatus unit's inspections are staggered throughout the week/month to ensure all units are inspected. The average inspection takes around 3 hours
- The CPR procedure takes a minimum of 6 EMS providers to be efficient.
- Minimum Staffing Requirements: Standard- 1 engine staffed with one officer and one Firefighter Advanced Emergency Medical Technician (ff/AEMT), Residential- 2 engines, one truck company, officer and EMS unit, Commercial- 2 engines, one truck company, one ladder company, officer and EMS
- Average fire call- 292.38, Average EMS call- 2332.5; the department answered 559 more calls in 2021 than all EMS agencies in Martin County combined.
- Average of 1,646.38 Hours with no second call team.
- Although we are a smaller municipality than most neighbors, we're still competing for the same applicants for new hires and often find ourselves losing both short-term and even longer-term employees. These other agencies are paying substantially more for entry-level firefighters with comparable qualifications, and most do not provide transport EMS services or serve as advanced-level EMS providers. Our pay is among the lowest in the state for our population. However, we provide service and have training that larger agencies do not have.
- Recommended Solution: Add two employees to each shift (total of 6). This would allow two individuals for a second call.
- Equipment replacement and upgrade needs: Apparatus, Radios, Firefighting Foam
- Consider contract with Management Solution for Emergency Services, LLC

Planning and Zoning

The Planning and Zoning Administrator reported:

- There were 2 million dollars invested downtown.
- 111 nuisances abated.
- The Planning Department will take over the old Police Department. The renovation will cost about \$20,000.
- The Planning and Zoning Administrator presented a Vacancy Ordinance initiated by the Planning Board. The ordinance would require vacant businesses to register as vacant. The Town would charge \$15 for vacant buildings.
- Regarding the trash on the private property issue, the Police can charge the perpetrator but not enforce clean up. The Planning Department's only recourse is to charge the property owner.

Recreation

- A Safety Grant was awarded from NCLM for cameras indoors and outdoors at the Gaylord Perry Park. There will be two cameras in the gymnasium and two in the lobby.
- The Recreation Specialist passed away.
- The updated mission statement was as follows: 1. Quality of life through fitness, 2. Personal, 3. Growth, 4. Education, and 5. Stability.
- Playgrounds encourage physical activity and socialization. There is a new playground in Gaylord Perry Park.

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- Commissioner McCall questioned where the skate park would be. The skate park would be located on Pine Street behind the tennis court.
- Commissioner McCall questioned if there were enough hotels for travel sports. Allen Overby replied that he thought there were enough hotels for travel sports.

Police

- The Police Department had 21 full-time sworn officers, one civilian officer, one recruitment officer, and ten auxiliary officers.
- Higher ranking officers have the most experience as the department hires young trainees.
- Yearly mandated training includes: Firearms, Juvenile, and Minority sensitivity Training, Legal Update, Mental Health Awareness for Officers, Narcotics, and other classes selected by the Chief.
- Retention efforts include: State of the art facility, Safe fleet equipped with necessary tools, equipment supplied and maintained, multiple firearms issued for officer safety, versatile uniforms, training expectations, and opportunities, paid recruitment position, competitive salaries, good working relationships with other departments and community partners, positive morale through trusted relationships, and tertiary education encouraged.
- Challenges for retention are that other law enforcement jobs offer high pay, raises or education and experience, better benefits, take-home cars, a more relaxed dress code, hired then sent through the academy and specialized units. On the other hand, civilian jobs sometimes offer better pay, job security, less public scrutiny, and safer.
- The Police Chief described the rise in salaries of surrounding areas as a wage war cycle. For example, when one Town raises the salary for its Police Department, the surrounding areas also raise the salary, thus creating a never-ending cycle.
- The Police Chief reported the fleet going up in price, having limited availability, no V8 cars available, and a strong push for electric vehicles.
- Another request of the Police Department is for small equipment radios by 2024. An unfunded mandate has required narrow banding on all radios making the current radios antiquated. The administration was currently researching funding sources to lessen the economic impacts.
- The Police Chief reported about the Senate Bill 300: Criminal Justice Reform Act.
 - The Criminal Justice Reform Act would include the decriminalization of ordinances which the Town Attorney was reviewing. An ordinance enforced by the Town as a misdemeanor would now be enforced with a civil penalty.
 - The Act also called for a nationwide Law Enforcement Status Database to keep track of issues with officers. The database would hold officers' fingerprints.
 - An officer's use of force or serious injury/death would be in a database.
 - The Giglio Database: Local prosecutors in NC won't reveal which officers are too untrustworthy to testify. Prosecutors can issue the documents, known as Giglio letters when they become aware of information about a police officer or sheriff's deputy that would call into question their credibility on the stand.
 - The Criminal Justice Reform Act called for an Early Warning System. This system would provide documentation that allowed agencies to identify training needed or problem officer.
 - The Duty to Intervene is another section of the Criminal Justice Reform urging officers to intervene when a situation is wrong.
 - The Town requires psychological evaluations for each police officer.
 - The Criminal Justice Reform requires the viewing of police camera recordings.
 - The State Governor is authorized to request a State Bureau of Investigation.
- Future Advancement Interests: Exterior cameras on town facilities, additional public housing cameras, strategically placed cameras at intersections, shot spotter, and license plate readers.
- The Town Attorney listed some ordinances that the Board would need to amend to comply with the Criminal Justice Reform Act.
 - Planning and Zoning Ordinance violations that resulted in a misdemeanor would have to be changed to a civil penalty.
 - Mobile Food Ordinance would have language changed from misdemeanor to civil penalty.
 - Taxi Cab Ordinance
 - Some areas of conduct where the Board had the authority will now be handled civically.

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Finance

The Finance Officer reported

- Out of three vendors of financial software researched, Southern Software was the preferred vendor. The Town could combine the project with the Automated Meter Infrastructure project. These projects could be potentially paid with American Rescue Plan funds. The new software includes conversion. The Finance Officer forwarded the Southern Software contract to the Town Attorney for review. There was a consensus to bring the Southern Software amendment to the March meeting.

USE OF AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN (ARP) FUNDS

The Town Administrator reported that the Town could not use money from the American Rescue Plan until the Attorney review.

USDA – REGINALD SPEIGHT – POTENTIAL FUNDING

The Town Administrator reported Reginald Speight's potential USDA grant funding for the area. The Administrator indicated the Board and Administrator should meet with Reginald Speight to discuss.

CLOSED SESSION – §143-318.11(3) – §143-318.11(6)

It was moved by Commissioner McCall, seconded by Commissioner Rodgers to go out of regular session into closed session for Attorney-Client Privilege N.C. §43-318.11(3) and Administrator Performance Evaluation N.C. §143-318.11(6) at 6:13 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner McCall to go out of closed session into regular session at 7:30 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Submitted By:

Approved By:

Town Clerk

Mayor

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

February 7, 2022

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Williamston met in regular called meeting on Monday, February 7th, 2022, at 5:30 p.m. at the Telecenter at 415 East Blvd #130, Williamston, NC.

PRESENT Mayor: Joyce Whichard-Brown
Commissioners: Mayor Pro-Tem Ronell Rodgers, Jerry Knox, Dean McCall, William Coffield, and Alton Moore
Town Administrator: Eric Pearson
Town Clerk: Jackie Escobar
Finance Officer: Christina Craft
Planning and Zoning Administrator: Cameron Braddy
Fire Chief: Michael Peaks
Police Captain: Beth Coltrain
Public Works Director: Kerry Spivey
Parks and Recreation Director: Allen Overby

ABSENT Police Chief: Travis Cowan

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

The Mayor called the meeting to order. Commissioner Knox led the pledge of allegiance. Then, Commissioner Rodgers offered the invocation.

AGENDA APPROVED

The Mayor asked if there were any adjustments to the agenda or if the Board wished to remove or add to the agenda. The Town Administrator removed Item 3: American Rescue Plan Project Ordinance, Item 4: American Rescue Plan Allowable Costs Policy, Item 8: Southern Software Contract, and Item 13: Consider Leaf and Limb letter from Michael Weeks from New Business and added an item to Closed Session N.C.143-318.11(4). *It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously passed to approve the regular agenda as amended.*

CONSENT AGENDA

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

Items approved in the Consent Agenda are as follows:

(1) Approval of the Minutes of January 3, 2022

(2) Tax Relief Order NO. 2

Year	Name	Remarks	Total
2021	DL PETERSON TRUST	DOUBLE ASSESSMENT	\$472.39
2021	Distinct Advantage	US Gov owns (exempt for 2021)	\$1,464.05
2017	Robert Chadwick Perry	Overbilled	\$3.11
2018	Robert Chadwick Perry	Overbilled	\$11.00
2019	Robert Chadwick Perry	Overbilled	\$10.72
2020	Robert Chadwick Perry	Overbilled	\$11.77
2021	Robert Chadwick Perry	Overbilled	\$11.48

(3) Tax Relief Order NO. 3

Year	Name	Remarks	Total
2021	Coastal Carolina Seed INC	Outside City Limits	\$303.48

PRESENTATIONS

COVID Update

Health Director Wes Grey reported that the United States had experienced several waves of the COVID disease, such as the Delta variant wave and the Omicron variant wave. COVID cases and deaths in North Carolina had decreased. On December 1st, 2021, there were 4,000 cases, whereas on February 7th, 2022, there were 5,970 cases. There were 84 total deaths. The Delta wave contributed 23% of total cases. The district had eight hospitalizations. Four thousand four hundred twenty-nine Martin County residents received the booster vaccine. Commissioner Rodgers questioned if the consumption of vitamin C and vitamin D aided in preventing COVID. Wes Grey responded that both vitamins were helpful. Going outdoors could decrease the COVID numbers, as outdoors people can socially distance themselves. Moving forward, Grey does not expect more major waves as there are now two antibiotic options. He voiced the pandemic would probably resemble the flu season.

Proclamation of Appreciation – MTW Health Department

Chief Peaks read a proclamation of appreciation for the Martin-Tyrell- Washington Health Department and their COVID-19 Pandemic Work.

HOME Consortium Presentation

Caroline Wells, of Halifax county, presented via phone call a request for a resolution or letter of support for a HOME Consortium. Bertie, Halifax, North Hampton, Hertford, and Martin County would form a consortium to apply for numerous grants. Banded together, the counties would qualify for minimum requirements of funding. The participants could use the funding for affordable housing, rental assistance, or housing renovation. Caroline Wells requested support from counties and individual municipalities. Funding could reach \$657,000. It would cost \$93,000 to form the HOME Consortium. A representative from each county would form the Board for the Consortium. There would be a 5-year plan with a consultant paid by a non-profit.

Commissioner Rodgers questioned if the Consortium would allocate the funds based on income. Caroline Wells replied that the funds would target low to moderate-income families. The Town Administrator noted it would be an opportunity for investments. He also indicated that the Consortium could spread the money within the five counties. Caroline Wells noted the Consortium would follow the 5-year plan designed to meet each county's housing needs. Projects could happen simultaneously, or the Consortium could shift the money to fulfill individual needs. Commissioner Moore questioned if the counties must pay upfront. Wells voiced that the Counties would need to pay the first year of funding to qualify for \$657,000. The counties would have to make up a difference of \$93,000 which would be \$18,000 per county.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Rezoning of 2745 US 17 – Parcel 0500511

The Mayor opened the floor for the Public Hearing for the rezoning of 2745 US Highway 17. The Planning and Zoning Administrator explained that Elisha Hardison had submitted a request on behalf of the property owner to amend the zoning classification for the parcel at 2745 US Highway 17. According to the submitted request, the applicant wishes to use the parcel for their real estate services office building. The property is currently zoned R15AO and requested the Town rezone it to CH, which allows for commercial and office-type uses. The Planning and Zoning Administrator noted that a majority of the Planning Board had approved the request. Levi Oglesby of 1175 Windy Ridge Drive, a resident of the White Oak Subdivision, reported that there was more trash in the area since the Dixie Mart arrived. While he understands the business in the request is a real estate office, he worried a fast-food restaurant or gas station could go in its place. Randy Gardner, who resides at 1080 White Oak Drive, presented a list of reasons not to allow a commercial business in a residential area. His list included that a commercial business could create more crime, welcome more strangers, increase traffic, decrease property value, and diminish neighborhood aesthetics. Ricky Coltrain 1144 White Oak Drive acknowledged the economic development importance of the request. However, Mr. Coltrain stated he pioneered the White Oak Subdivision and hoped it would remain residential. He recalled a promise of only allowing single home dwellings in the area. Commissioner Moore questioned why it did not pass unanimously in the Planning Board meeting. The Planning and Zoning Administrator noted it did not pass unanimously. The opposing member was a resident of White Oak Subdivision. The Mayor closed the floor for the public hearing at 6:24 p.m.

Rezoning of 3003 West Main St – Parcel 0503190

The Mayor opened the floor for the Public Hearing for the rezoning request of 3003 West Main Street. The Planning and Zoning Administrator explained that Betty Rodgerson and Patricia Dillenkofer submitted a request to amend the zoning classification for the parcel at 3003 West Main Street. According to the submitted request, the applicants wish to use the structure located on the parcel for residential purposes. There is currently a previously occupied apartment

on the structure's second floor. The property is currently zoned CH and requested the Town rezone to O&I, allowing residential, office, and light commercial-type use. The Mayor closed the floor for the public hearing at 6:26 p.m.

OLD BUSINESS

Alternative Christmas Event

The Parks and Recreation Director listed the Tour of Lights Contest winners. First place was Robin Ann Perry, who received \$300. In the second place, Angie and Don Torrence won \$200. Third place was Verna R. Boss, who received \$100.

CDBG Grant update

Ben Jones reported an update on the CDBG Grant. On February 2nd, 2022, staff were ready to release funds. Commissioner Moore questioned if, once the Town received funds, could the air-conditioner project at Gaylord Perry Park initiate promptly. Jones indicated that the process was simple and should move fast. However, housing renovations would take longer due to required attorney reviewal and inspections. He estimated the project could be completed by summertime. Commissioner Moore inquired if the increase in supplies costs would affect the project. Ben Jones expressed that they would reevaluate the budget with the cost changes.

Code Enforcement Action updates

The Planning and Zoning Administrator reported that he received property titles. It is a lengthy process, as he must give owners due notice. The Planning and Zoning department added 207 Center Street to the list of code enforcement properties. Commissioner Rodgers asked if the Town then owns demolished properties. The Planning and Zoning Administrator detailed that the cost of demolition is added as a lien, and the property could be foreclosed.

NEW BUSINESS

Consider Contract – Leaders Edge to Facilitate a Planning Session

The Town Administrator requested Board approval to negotiate and enter into a contract with Gregg Piburn of Leaders Edge Consulting to facilitate a meeting in March. It was the consensus of the Department Heads that a facilitated planning session would be productive for future vision and budget planning. The Administrator requested consideration of a planning session sometime in the second half of February 2022 or March 2022. Commissioner Moore inquired about prices. The Administrator noted the Town would pay for flight and pickup from the airport. *It was approved unanimously.*

Decriminalization of Town Ordinances

The Town Administrator reported that, at the Retreat, Chief Cowan and Attorney Sutton informed about the new Criminal Justice Reform bill. Our Police Department is already meeting most requirements. The Town Attorney summarized several ordinances to amend the Town's Code of Ordinances to comply with the new law. The Town Attorney asked the Board to provide a civil penalty amount to be charged. The Town Administrator recommends the civil penalty be \$50.00. Each day would be a separate violation; thus, ten days of non-compliance would total \$500 in penalties. The Town Attorney requested approval of her suggested language in drafting the correcting ordinances. Section 9 of the Town Attorney's summary letter discussed curfew for minors. Her recommendation was to consider amending the Ordinance to be more consistent with the decriminalization Amendment and law enforcement needs. The Town Attorney would discuss with the Police Chief how the Ordinance should be worded to adapt to the Criminal Justice Reform. Captain Coltrain explained that the curfew ordinance was to keep kids safe and not commit crimes. The Ordinance allowed police officers to encounter juveniles and keep parents accountable. Commissioner McCall questioned why the amount of \$50 for the penalty. The Town Administrator recommended \$50 as it was a fairly standard rate in his experience. *There was a consensus to authorize the Town Attorney to return to the Board with corrected ordinances.*

Parks & Rec User Fee Adjustments

The Parks and Recreation Director presented an adjusted fee schedule for the newly renovated shelter at Gaylord Perry Park. The shelter is larger than the shelter at Godwin Coppage Park. The Godwin Coppage Park charges \$20 for residents \$30 for nonresidents. The Gaylord Perry Park would charge \$30 for residents \$40 for nonresidents. The Park will also have a 2-hour water spigot fee and the necessary staff to turn it on. *It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Knox, and unanimously passed to approve the adjusted Parks and Recreation User Fee Schedule.*

Consider LWCF Grant Contract

The Parks and Recreation Director presented the LWCF Grant Contract and requested the approval of the contract. The Town Attorney reviewed the contract before the Board meeting. *It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously passed to approve the LWCF Grant Contract.*

Ordinance 2022-05 – Amend Gaylord Perry Project Ordinance

The Parks and Recreation Director reported the Ordinance 2022-05 to amend the Gaylord Perry Project Ordinance to include the LWCF Grant. *It was moved by Commissioner Coffield, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously passed to approve the Ordinance 2022-05 to Amend the Gaylord Perry Project Ordinance.*

Ordinance 2022-03 – Rezoning of 2745 US 17 – Parcel 0500511

The Planning and Zoning Administrator presented Ordinance 2022-03 Rezoning of 2745 US Highway 17. The Mayor expressed that the matter should be postponed after listening to the public hearing comments. *It was postponed by a consensus.*

Ordinance 2022-04 – Rezoning of 3003 West Main St – Parcel 0503190

The Planning and Zoning Administrator presented Ordinance 2022-03 Rezoning of 3003 West Main St. *It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner McCall, and unanimously passed to approve the Ordinance 2022-04 Rezoning of 3003 West Main Street.*

Amusement Request – Fun Fest

The Planning and Zoning Administrator reported that the annual “Fun Fest” event would occur in the Roses Parking Lot from March 3rd to March 6th if the Board approved their request. *It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously passed to approve the annual “Fun Fest” event.*

Resolution 2022-01 – Establishing a HOME Program Housing Consortium

The Town Administrator noted the resolution was a show of support for the HOME Consortium C. Wells spoke about at the beginning of the meeting. Therefore, the Administrator’s recommendation was to adopt the resolution. *It was moved by Commissioner McCall, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously passed to adopt Resolution 2022-01 to establish a HOME Program Housing Consortium.*

VIII Closed Session – Attorney Client Privilege N.C. 43-318.11(3) and Economic Development N.C.143-318.11(4).

It was moved by Commissioner Rodgers, seconded by Commissioner Moore to go out of regular session into closed session for Attorney-Client Privilege N.C. 43-318.11(3) and Economic Development N.C.143-318.11(4). at 7:21 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

It was moved by Commissioner Coffield, seconded by Commissioner Knox to go out of closed session into regular session at 8:18 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

Board of Commissioner's Meeting
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There being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Submitted By:

Approved By:

Town Clerk

Mayor

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

March 7, 2022

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Williamston met in regular called meeting on Monday, March 7th, 2022, at 5:30 p.m. at the Telecenter at 415 East Blvd #130, Williamston, NC.

PRESENT Mayor: Joyce Whichard-Brown
Commissioners: Mayor Pro-Tem Ronell Rodgers, Jerry Knox, Dean McCall, William Coffield, and Alton Moore
Town Administrator: Eric Pearson
Town Clerk: Jackie Escobar
Finance Officer: Christina Craft
Planning and Zoning Administrator: Cameron Braddy
Fire Chief: Michael Peaks
Police Chief: Travis Cowan
Police Captain: Beth Coltrain
Public Works Director: Kerry Spivey
Public Works and Utilities Supervisor: Stacy Stalls
Parks and Recreation Director: Allen Overby

ABSENT

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

The Mayor called the meeting to order. Commissioner McCall led the pledge of allegiance. Then, Commissioner Moore offered the invocation.

AGENDA AMENDED

The Mayor asked if any adjustments to the agenda or if the Board wished to remove or add to the agenda. The Town Administrator requested to move the Audit Presentation to Item #4 under Presentations. He also requested Item #11, considering a 4-day work week, to be removed. *It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously passed to approve the regular agenda as amended.*

CONSENT AGENDA

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

Items approved in the Consent Agenda are as follows:

- (1) Approval of the Minutes of February 7th, 2022
- (2) Approve Retreat minutes of January 28th, 2022
- (3) Budget Amendment to move funds into the Police Department Budget
The purpose of the budget amendment is to budget additional funds to allow the Police Department to enhance drug enforcement. The additional funding is to be provided by Code Enforcement Salaries due to the opening for a Planner.

Regular Salaries	\$8,000.00
<u>Drug Control</u>	<u>\$8,000.00</u>
	\$8,000.00

- (4) Set First Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Budget work session for April 22nd, 2022
- (5) Approve moving Town Board of Commissioner's meeting back to the Town Hall

PRESENTATIONS

CDBG Update

Board of Commissioner's Meeting

March 7, 2022

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Ben Jones, via video call, reported he sent the required documents to the state on February 3rd, 2022. Ben Jones began the initial home walkthroughs and consultations with homeowners. He would create the bid documents when the funds are released. Commissioner Moore requested an update regarding the Gaylord Perry Park Project. Ben Jones explained that the Town could begin the bid process when the program approved the funds' release.

Commissioner Rodgers inquired if there would be stipulations for the homeowners following the project completion. One stipulation included that homeowners could not sell the home for at least eight years. There would be another walkthrough before the construction. Commissioner Rodgers questioned if the CDBG recipients would pay relocation costs. Ben Jones replied that recipients usually have a place to stay during renovations. However, if not, then specific accommodations are made. The Mayor requested for Ben Jones to attend the next meeting in person.

COVID Update

Vicky Manning reported there were a total of 6,105 reported cases in Martin County. The report included 91 fatalities, 379 breakthrough cases, 16 current active cases, and 4 new COVID cases since March 4th. The Martin-Tyrell-Washington Health Department worked with the Carrolton, the Williamston House, and Vintage Inn as breakout centers. 53% of Martin County residents have received the 1st dose of a COVID vaccine, 49% have received the 2nd dose, and 43% have received the booster or 3rd vaccination. The CDC evaluated COVID hospital admissions per 100,000 people and produced a Community Burden Map. The Martin-Tyrell-Washington district was at a medium level of the Community Burden Map.

The NC Governor Cooper and State Health Officials updated mask recommendations. Governor Cooper encouraged schools and local governments to end their mask mandates. Vicky Manning recommended that wearing a mask was a personal choice keeping in mind personal health.

Karey Blanchard - BHM Regional Library Director

Karey Blanchard, who began her library career at Martin Memorial Library, introduced herself as the new BHM Regional Library Director. She emphasized that funding for the library stayed in Williamston. The Martin Memorial Library offered community resources such as one-on-one tech support, free-library maintenance, proctoring, interdisciplinary programs, print/digital resources, homebound literacy options, book clubs, and public computer access. She requested a 2% increase in funding for supplies and books. The state then matches money from the local government. The Town Administrator thanked her for her dedication and attendance at the meeting.

Audit Presentation

James Overton, a Carr, Riggs & Ingram representative, reported the audit report was more involved due to the large Police Department and Fire Department projects. He thanked the Town of Williamston staff for their cooperation during the audit. While the Local Government Commission had not yet approved the audit report, James Overton did not foresee any changes. He noted that the Town of Williamston was in good financial shape. The revenue total in 2021 for governmental activities was \$6,844,898; governmental activities increased the Town's net position by \$44,787. The Town's total debt is \$12,742,332. The debt decreased by \$620,751 (4.65%) during the current year, primarily due to principal payments on existing loans of \$937,651. The Town's total assets are \$42,829,750, with total liabilities being \$20,100,315. The total fund balance is \$4,181,772, covering eight months of expenses. James Overton noted that having \$3,078,365 in an unassigned category was good for a small town. Total revenue was \$6,889,535 and total expenditures were \$6,618,543. The Town was \$292,685 over the budget revenue.

Total operating revenue income for the Water and Sewer Fund was \$4,127,714, and the net loss of \$129,468. The Storm Water Fund had a net loss of \$29,901. The OPEB Trust Fund had a total net position of \$1,305,529. The Martin Memorial Library Trust Fund is down to \$3,800 after purchasing a \$7,815 heater. The Capital Project for the Fire/EMS department borrowed \$2,115,552 but only spent \$1,787,167. The Police Department Project borrowed \$2,308,942 and spent \$2,731,419. There are \$145,223 set for the purchase of radios. The Gaylord Perry Park Partf Grant Project was \$80,000.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jason Steward, 208 E Main Street, reported about the Vacancy Ordinance. He remarked that the Ordinance was a priority. Multiple towns have adopted the Ordinance to revitalize downtowns. Jason Steward mentioned he is the planning board chair, owns a business downtown, and lives downtown.

Board of Commissioner's Meeting

March 7, 2022

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Ricky Coltrain, 1144 White Oak Drive, reported he wished to keep the White Oak Subdivision a residential area for single-family dwellings only.

Sheniqua Morgan, 108 S Haines, requested the Board to change her daycare license's wording not to include "Home Occupation." She owns a daycare named God's Little Angels.

OLD BUSINESS

The Mayor postponed Item #1 through Item #14 to the April meeting to allow the Board to analyze the Ordinances.

Ordinance #2022-15 Rezoning Request

The Mayor stated she works for the citizens. She noted there were plenty of commercial spaces available in Williamston. *It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner McCall, and unanimously moved to deny the rezoning request.*

NEW BUSINESS

American Rescue Plan Project Ordinance #2022-04

The Finance Officer reported that the Board had signed a resolution to participate in the ARP fund allocation. Towns with 10 million dollars or less of ARP Grant Funds were eligible for a standard allowance of ARP money. The salary replacement would free up money for the meter and financial software projects. *It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner McCall, and unanimously passed to approve the American Rescue Plan Project Ordinance 2022-04.*

Approve Bid to purchase Financial Software

The Finance Officer reported that the Town needed to purchase new or upgraded financial software. The current version of Logics, the existing financial software, would no longer be supported as of July 1st, 2022. Logics informed that the Town could purchase an upgraded version of Logics. However, the staff has had issues with the Logics software, such as manual entering information and no interactive payroll. Therefore, the administrative staff requested the Town post a Request for Proposals (RFP) to evaluate other software financial systems. In addition, the staff had the opportunity to invite various vendors' demonstrations of their software. The RFPs were due March 4th, 2022, but they urgently need to approve a bid due to the conversion time of about two to three months.

The Town received three bids. Town staff recommended Southern Software, an N.C. local software company. While they were the middle price bidder, their annual fee is half of the annual fee of the other bidders. Southern Software's conversion cost is \$87,645. Commissioner Rodgers inquired about the software's longevity. The Finance Officer indicated that the company would update the software annually. Commissioner Moore questioned if the software would create letters for customers notifying them of past due bills. The Finance Officer noted that letters would take too long; however, the new system can send emails and text messages to customers. Commissioner McCall inquired if the annual fee was permanent or would rise throughout the years. The Finance Officer replied that the annual fee was not locked in and could potentially raise in the future but remain the same price for the first year. *It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Knox, and unanimously passed to approve the Bid to purchase Southern Software.*

Software Contract

The Finance Officer presented a software contract in anticipation of the approval of bid. The staff recommended that the Board authorize the Mayor to sign the contract to purchase the recommended software. The Town Attorney raised concern with the technology liability associated with the contract. The Town Attorney believed the contract put the Town at a significant disadvantage. The clause should be mutual and limit the number of recoverable direct damages. Her recommendation is to approve the contract pending the Seller's modifications. The Town Administrator reminded the Board that the software conversion needed to be completed by July 1st per Logics' expiration. Commissioner Moore questioned if other software contracts would be similar. The Town Attorney noted the clause was standard. Commissioner Moore suggested approving the contract pending negotiation. *It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Rodgers, and unanimously passed to approve the Southern Software Contract pending negotiation.*

Budget Amendment – Software Purchase

The Finance Officer reported that the purpose of the budget amendment was to allocate money to purchase the new financial software by Southern Software. *It was moved by Commissioner McCall, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously passed to approve the budget amendment.*

Vacant Building Ordinance

The Planning and Zoning Administrator reported that the Ordinance would enhance downtown. The Ordinance would be effective July 1, 2022. In addition, the Planning and Zoning Administrator would send letters notifying the downtown business owners. Commissioner Moore inquired if the Planning and Zoning Administrator could expand on the problems downtown. *It was moved by Commissioner Rodgers, seconded by Commissioner McCall, and unanimously passed to adopt Ordinance 2022-08 and hereby included in the Ordinance book.*

Approve purchase of Police and Fire Department Radios

Police Chief Cowan and Fire Chief Peaks presented the contract for radios. The infrastructure owned by the state can only interact with specific equipment. The Police and Fire Department need to purchase new radios by 2025 due to an unfunded mandate from the state that makes their current radios inoperative. Chief Peaks noted he received quotes for radios for both departments resulting in \$525,000. The Ordinance 2020-14 allotted \$145,223 for radios. Town staff searched for funding options to not affect the fund balance. Chief Cowan found another seller that met seller requirements. The radios were tested and had no issues. The quoted price was about \$228,000. The Police Chief was able to find \$25,000 within the Police budget. There was also \$12,000 to \$14,000 set aside for small equipment. The Fire Chief indicated the savings totaled \$278,000. They asked the Board's approval to purchase radios. *It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously approved to purchase radios for the Police and Fire Department.*

Budget Amendment Police and Fire Department Radios

The Police and Fire Chief reported that the purpose of the budget amendment was to move money from small equipment to the capital project ordinance. *It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously passed to approve the budget amendment.*

Project Ordinance 2022-07 purchase of Police and Fire Radios

The project authorized is to purchase new "VIPER" radios required for all Police and Fire Department starting in 2025. The creation of Capital Project Ordinance 2020-14 allowed the Town to set aside \$145,223 in funds to purchase radios, limiting the impact on our annual budgets. The Ordinance 2020-14 anticipated an additional General Fund contribution of \$359,734 to complete the project. The Police Chief found radios at a significantly reduced amount for an additional \$25,386.80. Immediate purchase is anticipated to limit the impact on future budgets. *It was moved by Commissioner McCall, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously approved to adopt the Capital Project Ordinance 2022-07 to purchase Police and Fire radios.*

Ordinance 2022-09 Clarifying Town Hall Handicap Space

The Town Administrator presented an ordinance to limit the parking spot directly in front of Town Hall on Main Street, currently used for handicap space, for town hall use only. The intended use of this space was to provide easier access to the Town Hall. Under NC Statute, it is illegal to put a time limitation on a handicap space. The space can remain filled for any time as long as a valid sticker is associated with the vehicle. The Town Attorney advised the Town to present this Ordinance that states the parking spot is for only town hall use. It would allow an option to move a vehicle if it remained parked in that spot for an excessive amount of time. Enforcement of the Ordinance would not take effect until the Town posts a sign of the limited use. A more accessible handicap space would be adjacent to the Mayor's parking space on one side of the Town Hall building. The Town Administrator's recommendation was to adopt Ordinance 2022-09 as presented. Commissioner Moore questioned if the change would be possible if Main Street was state-owned. The Town Administrator noted it was state-owned, but the Town could still designate the spot for Town Hall use. *It was moved by Commissioner Rodgers, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously passed to adopt Ordinance 2022-09.*

Ordinance 2022-24 – Project Ord Viable Utility Reserve AIA Study

The Town Administrator reported the Town was awarded \$150,000 from the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) under their Viable Utility Reserve (VUR) fund for an Asset Inventory Assessment (AIA) study. The Town was given notice of intent to fund but awaits the funds. The Town Administrator requested the Board to approve the Ordinance 2022-24 Viable Utility Reserve AIA Study. *It was moved by Commissioner Rodgers, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously passed to adopt Ordinance 2022-24.*

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Public Works

The Public Works Director reported the following:

- There were water leaks and sewer blockages.
- The Public Works Department struggled with only one mechanic handling all Town vehicles.
- Commissioner Moore questioned if low salaries were affecting the department turnover rate. The Public Works Director confirmed that people were leaving for better pay.
- Commissioner Rodgers questioned if bills are increased for a neighborhood when hydrants are flushed. The director noted that a specific neighborhood is not charged for the flushing.

Finance

The Finance Officer reported:

- A water department employee will be absent for a month, leaving the Town Hall short-staffed.
- She reported that Carr, Riggs, & Ingram almost completed the audit.
- There would be a Paper Shred Day at the Police Department parking lot on June 8th from 11 am to 2 pm.

Police

The Police Chief provided the following report:

- The Crime Prevention Officer participated in a "Reading with Kindergarteners" program.
- Officers attended various non-mandated training.
- The Police Chief reported a homicide in Williamston on March 7th, 2022. The Williamston police, Williamston Fire/EMS, local Sheriff's office, and SBI (State Bureau of Investigation) worked together on the tragic event.
- He introduced new officers to the board. Rachel Ross had worked six months for the town, and Anthony Hudson was sworn in a few hours before the March meeting.

Fire/Rescue

The Fire Chief provided the following report:

- There were 225 calls in the past month, accounting for a 91-call increase from the previous months.
- The department completed radiological training.
- Fire Prevention staff installed smoke alarms.
- Bear Grass Charter School would start a program for high school students to graduate and go into firefighting.
- Inflation was affecting the Fire/EMS department negatively. For example, they paid \$2,000 for gloves last year, whereas they paid \$5,000 this year.

Parks and Recreation

The Parks and Recreation Director provided the following report:

- The basketball season ended on February 26th.
- Softball registration had begun in March.
- The Parks and Recreation Department was finalizing Summer Program plans in coordination with the local schools.
- The League of Municipalities Grant covered installing security cameras at Gaylord Perry Park.
- Bids for the park renovation would start the week of March 14th.

Planning

The Town Planning and Zoning Administrator reported:

- The Annual Main Street Conference will be virtual.
- East Carolina University students will complete a Planning Department Project based on Williamston Downtown.
- Audubon recertification is due in April.
- Code enforcement has focused on mowing as temperatures rise.
- The Department waits for EPA and DEQ input on the Disc Golf idea for land near the river.

- The Planner and Downtown Marketing Coordinator position remained unfilled. However, the Planning and Zoning Administrator set up interviews for the position.
- Commissioner Moore requested an update on 108 W Main Street. The Planning and Zoning Administrator explained that it was being cleared for renovation.
- Commissioner Coffield questioned how the CDBG demolitions were progressing. The Planning and Zoning Administrator worked with the Town Attorney to schedule hearings for the demolitions.

VIII Closed Session – Attorney Client Privilege N.C. 43-318.11(3)

It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Coffield to go out of regular session into closed session for Attorney-Client Privilege N.C. 43-318.11(3) at 815 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

It was moved by Commissioner Coffield, seconded by Commissioner Moore to go out of closed session into regular session at 9:35 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

It was moved by Commissioner Coffield, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously passed to approve the deobligation of the CDBG Grant #15-E-2904 grant.

There being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 9:40 pm.

Submitted By:

Approved By:

Town Clerk

Mayor

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

April 4, 2022

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Williamston met in regular called meeting on Monday, April 4th, 2022, at 5:30 p.m. at the Town Hall Assembly Room at 102 East Main Street, Williamston, NC.

PRESENT Mayor: Joyce Whichard-Brown
Commissioners: Mayor Pro-Tem Ronell Rodgers, Jerry Knox, Dean McCall, William Coffield, and Alton Moore
Town Administrator: Eric Pearson
Town Clerk: Jackie Escobar
Finance Officer: Christina Craft
Planning and Zoning Administrator: Cameron Braddy
Fire Chief: Michael Peaks
Police Chief: Travis Cowan
Police Captain: Beth Coltrain
Public Works Director: Kerry Spivey
Public Works and Utilities Supervisor: Stacy Stalls
Parks and Recreation Director: Allen Overby

ABSENT

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

The Mayor called the meeting to order. Commissioner Coffield led the pledge of allegiance. There was moment of silence for the people of Ukraine. Then, Commissioner Knox offered the invocation. The Mayor welcomed Tina Brown the Mayor of Robersonville.

AGENDA AMENDED

The Mayor asked if there were any adjustments to the agenda or if the Board wished to remove or add to the agenda. The Town Administrator requested to remove Item 1 COVID update under Presentations, Item 1 Ordinance 2022-24, and Item 3 Approve Bid for Gaylord Perry Park Renovations under New Business. He also requested to move Item 4 from Consent Agenda to be Item 17 under Old Business. The Town Administrator requested to add Item 8, Amending of the Audit Contract, to New Business. *It was moved by Commissioner McCall, seconded by Commissioner Knox, and unanimously passed to approve the regular agenda as amended.*

CONSENT AGENDA

The Mayor asked if any adjustments to the Consent Agenda or if the Board wished any items to be removed or added. *It was moved by Commissioner McCall, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously passed to approve the consent agenda.*

Items approved in the Consent Agenda are as follows:

- (1) Approval of the Minutes of March 7th, 2022
- (2) Affirm Southern Software Contract
- (3) Confirm Leaders Edge Mini-Planning Retreat for April 21st, 2022.
To be held at the Telecenter beginning at 1 pm.
- ~~(4) Confirm Board Budget Work Session — April 22nd, 2022—~~

PRESENTATIONS

BHM Regional Library – Request for Funding

The BHM (Beaufort-Hyde-Martin) Regional Library director, Karey Blanchard, reported that the library requested a \$2,040 increase. She noted a shift from children's interest in the library to more adult interest. Not as many children are visiting the library due to COVID concerns. As COVID numbers decrease, Karey Blanchard is hopeful that more children will attend library activities. She thanked the Mayor and Board for their continued support.

OLD BUSINESS

The Town Administrator reported that the Ordinances listed under Old Business were presented at the March Board meeting. However, the Board postponed until the April meeting. The Ordinances responded to the newly passed state's Criminal Justice Reform law. Additionally, Ordinances 2022-26 & 2022-27 are amendments to the Subdivision

Board of Commissioner's Meeting

April 4, 2022

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ordinance and Planning Ordinance. Amendments to Planning Ordinances need a public hearing. Subdivision ordinance amendments must first go through the Planning Board, so they are not included in this grouping. Each ordinance will need to be considered individually with a motion to adopt on the first reading. The ordinances will then be brought back to the Board for adoption at a second reading at the May 2nd, 2022 meeting.

Ordinance 2022-10 Amending Section 10-99 Williamston Code of Ordinances

It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously passed to approve Ordinance 2022-10 Amending Section 10-99 Williamston Code of Ordinances.

Ordinance 2022-11 Amending Section 36.01 Williamston Code of Ordinances Willful Violation or Failure to file/Pay Rental Car Use Tax.

It was moved by Commissioner McCall, seconded by Commissioner Knox, and unanimously passed to approve Ordinance 2022-11 Amending Section 36.01 Williamston Code of Ordinances Willful Violation or Failure to file/Pay Rental Car Use Tax.

Ordinance 2022-12 Amending Section 37.04 Williamston Code of Ordinances Violation of Civil Emergency & Emergency Management Restrictions

It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner McCall, and unanimously passed to approve Ordinance 2022-12 Amending Section 37.04 Williamston Code of Ordinances Violation of Civil Emergency & Emergency Management Restrictions.

Ordinance 2022-13 Amending Section 38.99 Williamston Code of Ordinances Violation of Municipal Policies

It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously passed to approve Ordinance 2022-13 Amending Section 38.99 Williamston Code of Ordinances Violation of Municipal Policies.

Ordinance 2022-14 Section 51.99 Williamston Code of Ordinances Violation of Public Works Ordinances

It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Knox, and unanimously passed to approve Ordinance 2022-14 Section 51.99 Williamston Code of Ordinances Violation of Public Works Ordinances.

Ordinance 2022-15 Amending Section 52.99 Williamston Code of Ordinances Violation of Nuisance Abatement

It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner McCall, and unanimously passed to approve Ordinance 2022-15 Amending Section 52.99 Williamston Code of Ordinances Violation of Nuisance Abatement.

Ordinance 2022-16 Amending Section 70.999 Williamston Code of Ordinances Violation of Traffic Ordinances

It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Knox, and unanimously passed to approve Ordinance 2022-16 Amending Section 70.999 Williamston Code of Ordinances Violation of Traffic Ordinances.

Ordinance 2022-17 Amending Section 90.999 Williamston Code of Ordinances Violation of Animal/Fowl

It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner McCall, and unanimously passed to approve Ordinance 2022-17, Amending Section 90.999 Williamston Code of Ordinances Violation of Animal/Fowl.

Ordinance 2022-18 Amending Section 93.99 Williamston Code of Ordinances Violation Nuisance Ordinance

It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner McCall, and unanimously passed to approve Ordinance 2022-18, Amending Section 93.99 Williamston Code of Ordinances Violation Nuisance Ordinance.

Ordinance 2022-19 Amending Section 94.99 Williamston Code of Ordinances Violation of Certain Provision of Cemetery Ordinance

It was moved by Commissioner Rodgers, seconded by Commissioner Knox, and unanimously passed to approve Ordinance 2022-19 Amending Section 94.99 Williamston Code of Ordinances Violation of Certain Provision of Cemetery Ordinance.

Ordinance 2022-20 Amending Section 95.02 Williamston Code of Ordinances Violation of Public Assembly Ordinance

It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously passed to approve Ordinance 2022-20 Amending Section 95.02 Williamston Code of Ordinances Violation of Public Assembly Ordinance.

Ordinance 2022-21 Amending Section 95.03 Williamston Code of Ordinances Violation of Parade Permit Ordinance

It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously passed to approve Ordinance 2022-21 Amending Section 95.03 Williamston Code of Ordinances Violation of Parade Permit Ordinance.

Ordinance 2022-22 Amending Section 111.99 Williamston Code of Ordinances Taxi Cabs

This ordinance was postponed to the May meeting for further discussion.

Ordinance 2022-23 Amending Section 114.99 Williamston Code of Ordinances Amusements

It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously passed to approve Ordinance 2022-23 Amending Section 114.99 Williamston Code of Ordinances Amusements.

Ordinance 2022-25 Amending Section 131.99 Williamston Code of Ordinances Offenses against Morals

This ordinance was postponed to the May meeting for further discussion.

Ordinance 2022-28 Amending Section 130.99 Williamston Code of Ordinances Offenses against Morals

This ordinance was postponed to the May meeting for further discussion.

Confirm Board Budget Work Session

The Town Administrator requested to move the Budget Work Session to another timeframe to accommodate a Commissioner's prior commitment. Instead of holding the meeting from 1 pm to 5 pm, the Town would hold it from 10 am to 2 pm at the Town Hall Assembly Room. *It was moved by Commissioner Rodgers, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously passed to approve the Budget Work Session from 10 am to 2 pm at the Town Hall Assembly Room.*

NEW BUSINESS

Fire Department Services Contract

Chief Peaks reported about the service contract. If approved, the service contract would be budgeted for annually. The contract provides the Fire Department employee, volunteer, and grant-writing services. The Fire Chief requested Board approval pending Attorney revisions. Chief Peaks included that the grant-writing service was essential to the department. The Town Administrator added that various grants were available for the Fire Department. Commissioner McCall noted he liked the contract's autorenewal. *It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously passed to approve the Fire Department Services Contract with the Attorney's revisions.*

Approve Purchase of AMI Water Meters from Fortiline

The Public Works and Utilities Supervisor, Stacy Stalls, presented the Advanced Meter Infrastructure project. He informed the meter system would improve customer service. The new system would allow the Public Works Department to be proactive about water leaks. In addition, it would save work hours and redirect employee time to other essential tasks. Fortiline was the lowest bidder. After much research by Town staff, Fortiline had good references. Dare County uses Fortiline and had no issues with the system. The Public Works and Utilities Supervisor noted that the Attorney reviewed one Fortiline contract. Commissioner Coffield questioned how many meters would be purchased. Stacy Stalls indicated Public Works would purchase 3,000 residential meters, and larger meters would be purchased as needed. Stacy Stalls also noted that Fortiline would handle meter and software installation. Commissioner Rodgers inquired if Fortiline would alleviate concerns with the present meter system. Stacy Stalls responded that the current system required employees to read meters with handhelds. In contrast, Fortiline meters would be read from a desktop using antennas for communication. The Town Administrator clarified that ARP money would supplement salary, thus relieving money for the AMI Project. *It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Knox, and unanimously passed to approve the purchase of AMI Water Meters from Fortiline.*

Approve Fortiline Contract for Purchase of Water Meters

In anticipation of Board approval, the Town Administrator presented a proposed contract from Fortiline. The Town Administrator requested for the Board to approve a contract with Fortiline. Commissioner Rodgers questioned if the water price for residents would increase. The Town Administrator replied that there would not be a price increase due to the meter purchase. However, he did include that the Martin County Regional Water and Sewer Authority, MCRWASA, increased their water price. The Town Administrator hoped the meter purchase would offset the

MCRWASA change. *It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously moved to approve the bid and contract with Fortiline to provide water meters.*

Capital Project Ordinance 2022-29 Purchase of AMI Water Meters

The Town Administrator reported that the Capital Project Ordinance would allow the Town to spend money from the Capital Project Ordinance during the 6-month installation of the meters. *It was moved by Commissioner McCall, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously passed to approve the Capital Project Ordinance 2022-29 Purchase of AMI Water Meters.*

Budget Amendment – Purchase AMI Water Meters

The Town Administrator reported that the final step for purchasing AMI Water Meters was a budget amendment. The budget amendment would allow the Town to move money from the water fund to the Capital Project Fund. The ARP (American Rescue Plan) money will replenish the money that the budget amendment will move. Commissioner Coffield inquired what the price for water meters was. Stacy Stalls noted that the price was \$1.213 million. Commissioner Rodgers questioned if the water fund balance was strong enough to support the purchase. The Town Administrator replied that the fund balance was strong enough. However, ARP money would replace the funds used to purchase the meters, and the fund would not change. *It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner McCall, and unanimously passed to approve the budget amendment to purchase AMI water meters.*

Amend Audit Contract

The Finance Officer reported that the audit took multiple months. She requested that the Board amend the contract to show the completion date to be March 31st. The original contract date was October 31st. She also noted there was no monetary change. *It was moved by Commissioner McCall, seconded by Commissioner Knox, and unanimously passed to approve the budget amendment to purchase AMI water meters.*

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Public Works

The Public Works Director reported the following:

- After nine months of successfully using the Air Curtain Burner, a state representative visited Public Works after concerns regarding a state required report. However, the state representative was pleased with the visit. Unfortunately, Public Works learned that another permit was required to handle ash during the visit. The department was currently working on the required permit.
- The Public Works department lost a key employee and has only one mechanic in the shop.
- Commissioner Moore questioned if salaries had to do with a lack of applicants. The Public Works Director indicated that salaries played a significant role in losing employees and lacking applicants. The Town Administrator included that the Town was due for a salary study.

Planning

The Town Planning and Zoning Administrator reported:

- The Town Planning and Zoning Administrator sent notices for the Vacancy Ordinances #2022-08, effective July 1st.
- Illegal dumping on Perry St. The Code Enforcer solved the issue and would have dumping cleaned up soon.
- The Planning and Zoning Department held public hearings for demolitions on April 1st. Of 5 homes contacted, only 4 received the certified mail notice. Orders to demolish would hopefully be out the following week.
- He attended the Annual Main Street Conference, which focused on ARP funds and grants.
- The Planner and Downtown Marketing Coordinator position remained open; there would be interviews soon.

Parks and Recreation

The Parks and Recreation Director provided the following report:

- The security cameras installed at Gaylord Perry Park had one damaged. The Parks and Recreation Department awaited the replacement of the damaged camera. A Safety Grant provided the cameras.
- The All-Star basketball tournament had six teams.
- Parks and Recreation had completed softball registration. For the first time, there was T-ball team for 4-5-year old.
- Six travel tournaments were scheduled through September.

- Gaylord Perry Park renovations bids would be re-advertised, because the necessary bid limit of three bids was not received.

Fire/Rescue

The Fire Chief provided the following report:

- There were 75 calls more compared to the same time last year.
- The Fire Department Regional Response Team (RRT) gave tech advice in Greene County when a group home caused a chlorine gas cloud. The Fire Chief noted that the Williamston Fire Department RRT serviced 25 counties.
- The Fire Prevention Officer was busy painting fire hydrants. The different colors specify the amount of water available in the fire hydrant.
- The Fire Department purchased reflectors to bolt on to the fire hydrants instead of using reflective tape.
- The Fire Department participated in the Chamber of Commerce's Family Safety Day on March 19th.
- They also participated in the Career Day at the Martin County School's Innovation Campus.
- The Fire Chief thanked the Town Clerk for Spanish interpreting during an emergency.
- He also thanked the Board, as the floor project for the Fire Department was almost completed.
- The Fire Department assisted Jamesville during a brush fire.
- The Fire Chief explained what occurred in Williamston on Sunday, April 3rd, when dark smoke appeared near Walmart. A controlled burn came out of the containment site, but there was no harm to the public.

Police

The Police Chief provided the following report:

- Police officers completed training in the Police law institute and taser recertifications.
- Commanders and Supervisors learned about the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS). NIBRS is the new system required by the Criminal Justice Reform law.
- Police Officers distributed books about safety to 1st graders at Williamston Primary and 3rd graders at EJ Hayes.
- The Police Department participated in the Chamber of Commerce's Family Safety Day on March 19th.
- They also participated in the Career Day at the Martin County School's Innovation Campus.
- The Police Officers also participated in World Down Syndrome Day and Autism Awareness Day at the Williamston Primary School.
- A violent act in Williamston was taken to the Superior Court Session and was found guilty of armed violence.
- Armed individuals robbed a smoke shop in Williamston again.

Finance

The Finance Officer reported:

- The Finance Department had staff absent due to medical procedures.
- The Finance Officer reported that the Tax Collector sent out notices to citizens who owed taxes, notifying them that the Town would turn over cases to Zacchaeus Law Firm for collection. The process would be done in sections, beginning with 100 parcels. Following the notices, some citizens have set up payment plans.

VIII Closed Session – Attorney-Client Privilege N.C. 43-318.11(3)

It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Moore, to go out of regular session into closed session for Attorney-Client Privilege N.C. 43-318.11(3) at 7:15 pm. The motion passed unanimously.

It was moved by Commissioner Coffield and seconded by Commissioner Moore to go out of closed session into regular session at 8:15 pm. The motion passed unanimously.

Board of Commissioner's Meeting

April 4, 2022

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It was moved by Commissioner Coffield, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously passed to affirm the amended contract with J&S Contractors for further cleanup of the Tarheel Apartment Building site.

There being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Submitted By:

Approved By:

Town Clerk

Mayor

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

April 21, 2022

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Williamston met for a Planning Session meeting on Thursday, April 21st, 2022, at 1:00 p.m. at the Martin County Telecenter at 415 East Blvd #130, Williamston, NC 27892.

PRESENT Mayor: Joyce Whichard-Brown
Commissioners: Mayor Pro-Tem Ronell Rodgers, Jerry Knox, Dean McCall, William Coffield, and Alton Moore
Town Administrator: Eric Pearson
Town Clerk: Jackie Escobar
Finance Officer: Christina Craft
Planning and Zoning Administrator: Cameron Braddy
Fire Chief: Michael Peaks
Police Chief: Travis Cowan
Police Captain: Beth Coltrain
Public Works Director: Kerry Spivey
Public Works and Utilities Supervisor: Stacy Stalls
Parks and Recreation Director: Allen Overby

ABSENT

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

The Mayor called the meeting to order. Commissioner Moore led the pledge of allegiance. Then, Commissioner Knox offered the invocation.

AGENDA APPROVED

The Mayor asked if there were any adjustments to the agenda or if the Board wished to remove or add to the agenda. *It was moved by Commissioner McCall, seconded by Commissioner Knox, and unanimously passed to approve the regular agenda as amended.*

RESOLUTION 2022-2

The Mayor noted the presented Resolution 2022-2 for the Town of Williamston Skewarkee Outfall Application. *It was moved by Commissioner Coffield, seconded by Commissioner Knox, and unanimously passed to approve the Resolution 2022-2 for the Town of Williamston Skewarkee Outfall Application*

PLANNING SESSION – FACILITATED BY LEADER’S EDGE CONSULTING

The Town Administrator introduced Gregg Piburn of Leader’s Edge Consulting to facilitate a planning session. He indicated that staff required additional guidance from the Board. Gregg Piburn detailed his agenda would be

1. Quick set stage
2. Goal setting
3. Alternative important topics
4. Closing comments: significant/memorable part of the session.

Gregg Piburn detailed the difference between management and leadership. Management is the science of administration, and leadership is the art of inspiring strategic progress. The department heads noted that their role was good management and leadership, whereas the Board involved leadership. Gregg Piburn introduced a concept called Noble Selfishness, which he defined in 2 ways: (1) Taking care of yourself so you are better able to support and care for others. (2) Understanding success and satisfaction go hand in hand. Next, Gregg Piburn explained the Three Fs as (1) Focus, (2) Fences (3) Freedom. The focus would be what the Board focuses on, fences would be deadlines, and freedom would be the freedom felt by staff to achieve the outlined goals. Gregg Piburn told two stories where companies used extensive goal plans that were not clear enough to follow. He also noted that 10-year plans were too long, and it would be more beneficial to shorten the time to 14 months. Finally, Gregg Piburn gave the Board two tips (1) less is better and (2) leave the HOWs to the staff.

Gregg Piburn explained how a 3-Level Strategic Plan works, starting with high-level objectives, measurable milestone goals, and a tactical action plan. Next, he had the Board write down one significant achievable and measurable goal for the Town of Williamston.

One high-level objective was downtown development. The measurable milestone goals included:

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- Securing 1 to 2 new businesses
- Filling 25% of the vacant buildings
- Removing all the diseased trees
- Starting two building rehabs

These goals were to be completed before June 30, 2023. The tactical action plan was to:

- Develop a plan for dealing with vacant buildings.
- Having businesses open after 6 p.m., addressing building conditions.
- More police presence
- Offering tax incentives for targeted businesses
- Recruiting a seafood restaurant.

Another high-level objective was industry development. The measurable milestone goals were to have two sites occupied by new industries and have five potential new industry visit sites by June 30, 2023. The tactical action plan was to:

- Identify the existing vacant commercial and industrial properties.
- Identify open land already zoned for industrial sites.
- Determine if the Town has enough open land, partner with EDC to recruit industrial prospects, and develop a marketing plan.

The final high-level objective was employee salaries. The measurable milestone was to complete an emergency plan to address salary issues by July 1, 2022. The Board's tactical action plan was:

- Find new sources of revenue.
- Conduct pay studies that look at competitive organizations.
- Analyze long-term sustainable salary solutions.
- Consider the viability of offering bonuses.
- Market the increase in population to bring in more tax dollars.

The Board's closing comments were the following:

- The Mayor noted how nice it would be to have a seafood restaurant in Town.
- Commissioner Coffield remarked that if other towns could achieve their goals, the Town of Williamston could also do it.
- Commissioner Moore emphasized that the Town needed to share a vision to stay afloat.
- Commissioner McCall appreciated the interconnectivity of all the departments.
- Commissioner Knox expressed that the Board and Town staff were all on the same page.
- Commissioner Rodgers indicated he felt more energized than he had in a long time.

The Town staff's closing comments were:

- The Town Clerk indicated the importance of concise goals.
- The Human Resources agreed regarding the emergency phase of salaries by July 1.
- The Finance Officer agreed with the Human Resources Administrator.
- The Police Captain appreciated the consensus and agreeability among the Board and staff regarding the Town's direction.
- The Police Chief valued the affirmation from the Board of the importance of staff and quality of work.
- The Fire Chief was thankful that the Board allows and trusts Department Heads to guide their departments.
- The Public Works Director expressed surprise that the meeting identified the same concerns for many years. He emphasized that the Town needs to do things differently to reach solutions.
- The Public Works and Utilities Supervisor appreciate the excellent communication between Board and staff.
- The Parks and Recreation Director also noted the importance of keeping the plan simple.
- The Planning and Zoning Administrator indicated that every Department has some skin in the game.
- The Town Administrator stated, "we can't do it alone."

Finally, Gregg Piburn thanked the Board for their participation. He referenced the Chinese proverb "after enlightenment comes the laundry" a metaphor that laundry was the duty of leadership to achieve the Town's goals. He also noted Pablo Picasso's quote, "some painters turn the sun into a yellow spot. Others turn a yellow spot into the sun." He believed the leaders took steps to make the community shine brighter.

There being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

Submitted By:

Approved By:

Town Clerk

Mayor

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

April 22, 2022

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Williamston met for a Budget Work Session meeting on Friday, April 22nd, 2022, at 9:00 a.m. at the Town Hall Assembly Room at 102 East Main Street, Williamston, NC 27892.

PRESENT Mayor: Joyce Whichard-Brown
Commissioners: Mayor Pro-Tem Ronell Rodgers, Jerry Knox, Dean McCall, William Coffield, and Alton Moore
Town Administrator: Eric Pearson
Town Clerk: Jackie Escobar
Finance Officer: Christina Craft
Planning and Zoning Administrator: Cameron Braddy
Fire Chief: Michael Peaks
Police Chief: Travis Cowan
Police Captain: Beth Coltrain
Public Works Director: Kerry Spivey
Public Works and Utilities Supervisor: Stacy Stalls
Parks and Recreation Director: Allen Overby

ABSENT

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

The Mayor called the meeting to order. Commissioner Moore led the pledge of allegiance. Then, Commissioner Coffield offered the invocation.

AGENDA APPROVED

The Mayor asked there were any adjustments to the agenda or if the Board wished to remove or add to the agenda. *It was moved by Commissioner McCall, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously passed to approve the regular agenda as approved.*

CONSIDER GAYLORD PERRY PARK BIDS

The Town Administrator reported that the Part-F (Parks and Recreation Trust Fund) and LWCF (Land and Water Conservation Fund) grants required additional steps for the renovation of the Gaylord Perry Park. The Town went out for bids for the picnic shelter and site work. The Parks and Recreation Director explained the timelines for each grant. The project completion deadline would be December 1st, 2022. The bid prices came in over the estimated price. Site work would include parking lots, sidewalks, plumbing, and erosion work. Former Commissioner Al Chesson helped with the estimated prices. The Town Administrator noted the only way to cover the unexpected amount would be to use money from the fund balance. The Fund balance was currently healthy with money available, however, using fund balance money was not a good way to manage the money.

The Town Administrator explained that the Town had already gone out for bids twice, as there were not enough bidders in the first round. The Parks and Recreation Director anticipated there would not be lower bids. Commissioner Rodgers questioned if the required criteria could be adjusted to save money. However, the grants set specific requirements and must be followed as is. The Parks and Recreation director disclosed the low bidder mentioned minor savings could be available. Commissioner Moore requested clarification on how healthy the fund balance was and if it could cover an unforeseen occurrence. The Town Administrator noted the fund balance was within the LGC (Local Government Commission) guidelines. Commissioner Moore worried that the price would only continue to rise. Commissioner McCall pointed out that the price could go down, and rebidding would be better. The Parks and Recreation Director noted many contractors were too busy for the Gaylord Perry Park Project. Commissioner Knox recalled LGC's visit to the Town of Williamston regarding the low fund balance and voiced that he would not like that to happen again. The Town Administrator included that staff had worked hard to achieve a good amount in fund balance. The Finance Officer noted if money was spent from the fund balance for the Gaylord Perry Park Project, the Town would then have 5 months of emergency funds. The LGC recommends having 6 months of emergency funds. LGC visited when the Town had only one month of emergency funds, and it has taken 12 to 13 years to build a fund balance.

Commissioner McCall would like to see the project completed, but did not agree with spending \$500,000. He also questioned if grants could have additional funding. The Town Administrator replied there weren't additional funds. The Town Administrator suggested reaching out to elected officials. He recommended the Board not approve the bids, and allow the Town to rebid and search for additional funding. Commissioner McCall emphasized he was willing to

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make calls and help research contractors. The Town Administrator recommended not taking action at the moment. There was a consensus to not take action.

WORK SESSION

The Town Administrator thanked Department Heads for their understanding of budget cuts. There would be a 5% COLA (cost-of-living adjustment) increase in salary, with a 1/2% merit available. There's not an increase in the property tax rate as the rate of \$0.89 is already high. The increase in the water rate was due to MCRWASA's cost per gallon. He reminded the Board that the Town buys each gallon, including credits, adjustments, and flushing of hydrants. The Town currently pays \$5.79 per gallon if we use water from our own wells. Sewer rates will remain the same.

The Mayor questioned the salary increase, expressing concern with the salary crisis within the Fire, Police, and Public Works departments. She questioned why all employees would receive an increase. The Town Administrator indicated if the Town focused only on those departments the Town would risk losing other employees or not hiring a second planning position. The Finance Officer noted the COLA increase is typically for every employee, focusing on certain departments would be a Merit increase. The Human Resources Director explained pay was split into three categories, COLA, merit, and salary. The Public Works Director explained the Town needs to address the 3 department's salary emergency, however, the COLA increase is due to the approximate CPI (consumer price index) 8% increase. COLA is to prevent salaries from not keeping up with the economy. The Mayor questioned how other Towns are able to pay a decent salary, but the Town of Williamston cannot. The Town Administrator indicated other Towns have a better tax base, capitalize better on the collection rate, or they are able to cut down expenses. Chief Cowan agreed with Eric; other places have attempted to attract quality employees by raising their wages. He expressed that all employees could benefit from the COLA increase so the Town stays marketable. After the COLA increase, then salary adjustments should be analyzed. The Police Chief voiced his support of a COLA increase for all employees. The Fire Chief supported the COLA increase as the Town must take care of current employees.

Commissioner Rodgers questioned how the Town could satisfy the salary needs. Commissioner McCall inquired where the money for the COLA increase came from. The Town Administrator explained the COLA increase would happen due to the increased collection rate and cut expenses. Commissioner McCall proposed passing the COLA increase and then focusing on the salary emergency for specific departments. The Town Administrator indicated Town staff would have to find unrealized revenue and cut expenses. The town staff was working well on a slim budget. Another solution would be to pass a 4% COLA increase and put the remaining amount towards the struggling departments. Commissioner McCall suggested committing to the 5% COLA increase.

The Town Administrator noted the Board made clear that salaries were an important goal and that salaries were the most expensive part of the budget. He included that there was a potential increase for EMS from the County. Chief Peaks spoke to Cindy Ange, the County's finance officer, and James Bennet, the County Manager, regarding the increase. EMS charges for services offered, but still falls short of about \$100k that the Town pays for. The Town Administrator included EMS should be profitable, not have losses. Chief Peaks explained the department receives \$65 per call from the County.

The Mayor questioned what the starting pay rate was for the struggling departments. Police officers' starting pay is within \$34k to \$35k, the Fire department's starting pay is \$34k to \$35k, the Public Works Department offers \$28k to \$30k, and the Planning Department offers \$38k and requires a 4-year degree.

The Mayor proposed giving a sign-on bonus with a requirement to work a certain amount of time. Chief Cowan indicated the Town would have to look into the legality of a bonus with a requirement to work a certain amount of time. He also expressed a sign-on bonus would not be fair to current employees. Commissioner Rodgers asked if it was becoming a trend for police employees to receive training and then leave for higher-paying jobs. Chief Cowan noted that unfortunately, that was the trend. There was a consensus for the 5% COLA increase.

The Town Administrator noted that there was an actuarial study done regarding the Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB). There would be a \$100,000 transfer to the OPEB Trust Fund in the current budget. \$60,000 would come from General Fund and \$40,000 from Enterprise (Water/Sewer) Fund.

The Town Administrator noted the Administrative Department transferred \$706,852 from Enterprise Fund to General Fund. The transfer was the amount of salary and benefit costs staff identified that should be charged to the Enterprise Fund and these employees are paid totally out of General Fund. Employees including the Finance Officer,

Board of Commissioner's Meeting

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Administrator, etc. whose duties efforts in both the General Fund and Enterprise Fund. The Planning Department had \$18,000 in the Code Enforcement line to support demolition and nuisance properties. There was \$24,245 included under Public Buildings, for the purchase of the new phone system for the town hall as the current system was failing and outdated to paint the lobby and offices for the relocation of the Planning Department to the old Police Department area in the Town Hall. The Police department planned to purchase 3 patrol cars with operating funds. The Police Department purchased patrol cars on a rotation cycle. There was no change in RRT (Regional Response Team) revenue and expenditures as those funds were restricted. The total amount funded by the State of North Carolina was \$69,000. Street's Powell Bill included payments for the \$78,474 for the Street Sweeper. \$71,015 has been allocated for a possible Powell Bill project. There was no use of the Powell Bill Fund Balance anticipated for the 2022 budget.

The Finance Officer noted a higher collection rate allowed for more money in the budget. The total Enterprise fund revenue was \$4,270,361. She indicated the budget was balanced as presented at \$11,735,454. She presented the recommended expenses with budget cuts. For example, Cemetery requested a dump truck which was cut from the budget. Under debt service, there was \$327,532 allocated to cover the debt. The Fire department had a utility truck cut. The garage was to purchase gas pumps, one was allocated to the garage and the other to water. Planning had \$18k for code enforcement. Police would continue vehicle replacement from CIP. Public Building's budget included renovation of the old Police department and a new telephone system. The Mayor questioned what were the Police Dues. The Police Chief explained that the dues included payments to Regional Operations Intelligence Center (ROIC), NC Narc Organization, and others. Recreation had the gym floor cut from the budget, but would replace the exterior door and refurbished gator. Rescue listed an ambulance as Chief Peaks explained the original manufacturer was no longer in business and the parts are now obsolete. Sanitation kept a dump truck in their capital improvement plan (CIP). Sewer listed a \$114k sewer jet cleaner, mag meter, and coastal lift station. Sewer's future replacement line of \$135,747 was for the Waste Water Plant since it is an aging plant. Street kept the asphalt saw in the budget. The Town is contractually required to put money in funds for Stormwater. The water budget had a backhoe to be financed upon Board approval. The replacement of gas pumps was split between Water and Sewer. Finally, the Finance Officer noted the budget was balanced as presented.

The Town Administrator reported that the Capital Improvement Plan listed \$843,224 for the total General and Enterprise Funds for the Fiscal Year 2022/2023 to provide the Department Heads the adequate equipment. The Police Chief reminded the Board of the difficulty of purchasing vehicles for the Police Department. The price listed in the budget includes the equipment required also. The vehicles purchased need to be equipped by the Department.

Commissioner Rodgers questioned how much training Police Officers receive. The Police Chief detailed that the officers complete many mandated training hours. However, they also complete additional training. The Fire Chief included the Fire/EMS employees to complete mandated training and the required certifications. The Public Works Department must have their CDL license to drive a truck. Water system operations, distribution system operations, and wastewater treatment operations are a few that require special licenses.

The Mayor commented on a situation in 2020 regarding accusations of racism involving the Williamston Police Department. The Police Chief reassured the Board that police officers receive training to respond to situations without prejudice. For example, his officers are encouraged to pursue Crisis Intervention Training (CIT). While the officers are not mental health professionals, CIT allows them to recognize the signs of a mental illness. He proudly noted that the Williamston Police Department had a higher performance level than surrounding areas. The Town Administrator emphasized that other places put their money towards salaries; however, the Town of Williamston focuses on additional training. Commissioner Rodgers noted Williamston did not have issues like those seen in other places. The Police Chief explained how social media posts could spread false information. The Town employees are held to a higher standard and cannot engage in social media banter. Specifically, police cannot compromise details of an investigation, even if false information is posted online.

Commissioner Moore noted that the Boys and Girls Club was not operational during 2021 due to the pandemic. He questioned how the Boys and Girls Club used the money allocated by the Town. The Town Administrator was unsure of the answer, but he would call the Boys and Girls Club to find an answer.

Commissioner McCall inquired if there were any savings with MCRWASA with the purchase of new meters. He also questioned if there was any negotiating of the contract that could aid the Town's expense structure. The Town Administrator explained that the new water meters would help detect leaks earlier, thus saving the Town money in water adjustments and credits. He expressed that the Town of Williamston had the required expertise and experience

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to run the MCRWASA plant, which could, in turn, save about \$100,000. Commissioner Knox questioned why the Town did not run the plant. The Town Administrator explained that MCRWASA was under a 5-year contract with Veolia. He announced interest in a solar plant farm built on the MCRWASA plant's unused land. The solar plant would generate income for MCRWASA. The Public Works Director questioned if there were any possibility to adjust the contract to not charge the Town for water used from the Town's wells. The Town Administrator explained that the Town must cover a certain amount of the debt. If the Town reduces water use, the cost per gallon will increase. To describe the MCRWASA partnership between the Town and County, the Public Works Director recalled a meeting where Martin County did not want the MCRWASA tank to read "Williamston."

The Town Administrator extended an invitation to the Board of Commissioners and Mayor for May 23rd, 2022, at 5:00 p.m.

With no further business, the Mayor adjourned the meeting at 1:56 p.m.

Submitted By:

Approved By:

Town Clerk

Mayor

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

May 2, 2022

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Williamston met in regular called meeting on Monday, May 2th, 2022, at 5:30 p.m. at the Town Hall Assembly Room at 102 East Main Street, Williamston, NC.

PRESENT Mayor: Joyce Whichard-Brown
Commissioners: Mayor Pro-Tem Ronell Rodgers, Jerry Knox, Dean McCall, William Coffield, and Alton Moore
Town Administrator: Eric Pearson
Town Clerk: Jackie Escobar
Finance Officer: Christina Craft
Planning and Zoning Administrator: Cameron Braddy
Fire Chief: Michael Peaks
Police Chief: Travis Cowan
Police Captain: Beth Coltrain
Public Works Director: Kerry Spivey
Public Works and Utilities Supervisor: Stacy Stalls
Parks and Recreation Director: Allen Overby

ABSENT None

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

The Mayor called the meeting to order. Commissioner McCall led the pledge of allegiance. Then, Commissioner Rodgers offered the invocation. There was a moment of silence for the families in Ukraine.

AGENDA AMENDED

The Mayor asked if there were any adjustments to the agenda or if the Board wished to remove or add to the agenda. The Town Administrator requested to remove Item #7 from New Business as the Town did not advertise one property. He also requested to remove Items #1, #2, and #10. The Town Administrator added Item #11, the conveyance of 1 foot of the property. He requested the addition of a closed session for Attorney-Client privilege and moved Item #4 to the closed session. *It was moved by Commissioner McCall, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously passed to approve the regular agenda as amended.*

CONSENT AGENDA

The Mayor asked if there were any adjustments to the Consent Agenda or if the Board wished any items to be removed or added. The Town Administrator removed Items #3, 6, 7, 8, and 9 as the ordinances were copied wrong. Commissioner Moore questioned if the Town dropped the price from \$500 to \$300. The Town Attorney clarified that the price referenced by the Commissioner was \$50-\$500 outlined by the state statute. However, the actual amount the Town charged was \$25, as outlined in Section 1. *It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Rodgers, and unanimously passed to approve the consent agenda as amended.*

Items approved in the Consent Agenda are as follows:

- (1) Approval of the Minutes of April 4th, 2022
- (2) Re-appoint Jean Spruell-Boyd to the Library Board
- ~~(3) Ordinance 2022-11 Amending Section 36.01 Williamston Code of Ordinances Willful Violation or Failure to file/Pay Rental Car Use Tax~~
- (4) Ordinance 2022-12 Amending Section 37.04 Williamston Code of Ordinances Violation of Civil Emergency & Emergency Management Restrictions
- (5) Ordinance 2022-16 Amending Section 70.999 Williamston Code of Ordinances Violation of Traffic Ordinances
- ~~(6) Ordinance 2022-17 Amending Section 90.999 Williamston Code of Ordinances Violation of Animal/Fowl~~
- ~~(7) Ordinance 2022-18 Amending Section 93.99 Williamston Code of Ordinances Violation Nuisance Ordinance~~
- ~~(8) Ordinance 2022-19 Amending Section 94.99 Williamston Code of Ordinances Violation of Certain Provision of Cemetery Ordinance~~
- ~~(9) Ordinance 2022-20 Amending Section 95.02 Williamston Code of Ordinances Violation of Public Assembly Ordinance~~
- (10) Ordinance 2022-21 Amending Section 95.03 Williamston Code of Ordinances Violation of Parade Permit Ordinance

PRESENTATIONS

COVID Update

Board of Commissioner's Meeting

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Vicky Manning reported that COVID numbers were improving. Martin County had five active cases and only one patient hospitalized in the entire district. There were nine new cases since Tuesday, April 26th. Testing numbers were not as accurate due to increased at-home testing. However, 7 of 366 tests administered by the Martin-Tyrell-Washington testing were positive. There were no current outbreak facilities. 53% of residents had received the 1st dose, 49% received the 2nd dose, and 22% received at least one booster shot. Vicky Manning announced the 2nd booster shot is available. Wastewater was used to analyze the level of COVID in the community. The State's map deemed the area a low-risk area. The State Health Director anticipated a small wave, but nothing major compared to past COVID waves.

Vicky Manning highlighted services offered at Martin-Tyrell-Washington Health Department. The services included:

- Environmental Health
- Mandated Public Health Services
- Communicable Disease Control
- WIC Supplemental Program
- Dental Program Mobile Unit
- Home Care Service
- Behavioral Health Service
- Health Education Outreach Program
- HOPE Exchange Program
- Care Management for At-Risk Children and High-Risk Pregnancy
- Medication Assistance Program
- Clinics: Adult, Child, Maternal Health, and Family Planning

CDBG Update

Ben Jones reported that on April 14th, the State approved the release of funds. The renovations were a two-part program; housing and the Gaylord Gym Air Conditioning. Ben Jones started housing paperwork to begin the project. There were no disqualifications due to income. The next step would be to procure inspectors and surveyors. After that, Ben Jones would present homeowners with available house plans. Ben Jones met with the Town Administrator and the Parks and Recreation Director to tour the facility and analyze the HVAC needs. After completing the design and plan, he put together the specifications. The Town would put out the project to bid for contractors in the following week. The bid process would take about 30 days. Ben Jones explained that after the 30-day bid process, they would open the bids, identify low bids, and, once approved, have a pre-construction meeting. Attorney Sutton updated and completed the titles for the housing renovation. Commissioner Moore questioned how inflation was taken into consideration for the CDBG projects. Ben Jones commented that the current prices are within the budget. However, the renovations could reduce elective items to save money. He assured the Board that the HVAC was sufficiently budgeted for the Gaylord Perry Park gym. The Mayor thanked Ben Jones for his presentation.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Marvin Hillard of Hamilton extended an invitation to the Board to attend the Goose Neck Festival. The Goose Neck Festival parade would happen on May 21st at 10 am until 7 pm.

OLD BUSINESS

The Town Administrator reported that the Ordinances under Old Business were part of the Decriminalization ordinances presented at the April 2022 Board meeting. After concerns with the \$500 maximum fine, the staff reduced the fine to \$300.

Ordinance 2022-22 Amending Section 111.99 Williamston Code of Ordinances Taxi Cabs

It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner McCall, and unanimously moved to approve Ordinance 2022-22 Amending Section 111.99 Williamston Code of Ordinances Taxi Cabs.

Ordinance 2022-25 Amending Section 131.99 Williamston Code of Ordinances Offenses against Morals

It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Rodgers, and unanimously moved to approve Ordinance 2022-25 Amending Section 131.99 Williamston Code of Ordinances Offenses against Morals.

Ordinance 2022-28 Amending Section 130-99 Williamston Code of Ordinances Offenses against Morals

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It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Knox, and unanimously moved to approve Ordinance 2022-28 Amending Section 130-99 Williamston Code of Ordinances Offenses against Morals.

NEW BUSINESS

Ordinance 2022-26 Amending Section 152-3-G Williamston Code of Ordinances Subdivision Ordinance

It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously moved to approve Ordinance 2022-26 Amending Section 152-3-G Williamston Code of Ordinances Subdivision Ordinance.

Advisory Board Appointments

The Parks and Recreation Director reported one reappointment and two new appointments to the Advisory Board. Chowanda Godard requested reappointment for her third and final term. McGarrett Smith and Don Mills were the new appointments for the Advisory Board. *It was moved by Commissioner Rodgers, seconded by Commissioner McCall, and unanimously moved to approve the Advisory Board's appointments.*

Tackle Ball Fee Adjustment

The Parks and Recreation Director requested the adjustment of tackle ball fees as the price of equipment and uniforms had increased. *It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously moved to approve the tackle ball fee adjustment.*

Approval of Offer to Purchase 108 E. Lanier Street

The Town Administrator reported that Colonel Walter Whitfield submitted the appropriate bids for 108 E. Lanier street. Colonel Whitfield offered \$1,000 to purchase the property. The Town advertised properties for upset bids, with no responding bids. *It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously moved to approve the bid.*

Approval of Offer to Purchase 107 Jamesville Road

The Town Administrator reported that Colonel Whitfield submitted the appropriate bids for 107 Jamesville Road. Colonel Whitfield offered \$1,500 to purchase the property. The Town advertised properties for upset bids, with no responding bids. *It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously moved to approve the bid.*

Conveyance of Small Property

The Town Administrator reported that Jim Everett, a Williamston resident, had a pole planted in a neighboring access area owned by the Town. Jim Everett requested the Town to convey 1 foot of the property to correct the issue. Jim Everett would handle the paperwork. The Town Administrator requested the Board to approve the conveyance of the one-foot property. He noted that the Town would still have ample access to its property. Commissioner Rodgers questioned if the Town could legally convey the property. The Town Attorney indicated that while the Town would lose no tax revenue, she requested the Board to table the decision. *The Board postponed the conveyance of the small property.*

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Public Works

The Public Works Director reported the following:

- The department received many awards at the Safety Awards Banquet.
- The second permit for ash handling for the Air Curtain Burner was in the process of being completed.
- After ten months of using the Air Curtain Burner, Public Works carried one load of ash to the landfill.
- The department currently only has one mechanic in the Public Works Shop.

Planning

The Town Planning and Zoning Administrator reported:

- The Town Planning and Zoning Administrator completed the Audubon Re-certification.
- Williamston Downtown ordered new banners for the light posts to be installed along Main Street in late spring or early summer.

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- He updated the Board about the demolition process. Some property owners agreed to repair their property. Those property owners have 60 days to improve their property or demolish it. The Town Planning and Zoning Administrator would present an ordinance for demolition at the June meeting.
- The Town Planning and Zoning Administrator worked on a Downtown Event Calendar for the upcoming summer events.
- Commissioner Rodgers questioned what legal action was available for illegal dumping. The Town Planning and Zoning Administrator noted that the Planning Department could only send a letter to the property owners.

Finance

The Finance Officer reported:

- The department was fully staffed since one employee was back from a medical leave.
- The conversion to Southern Software had begun.
- The Finance Officer submitted the first report for the American Rescue Plan. The second ARP payment to the Town was due in August.

Parks and Recreation

The Parks and Recreation Director provided the following report:

- Softball season had begun.
- He would advertise summer programs soon.
- Martin County Special Olympics will occur Wednesday, May 4th, at the Godwin Coppage Park at 9 am.

Fire/Rescue

The Fire Chief provided the following report:

- The Fire Chief would renew the Debris Management Contract as per usual.
- Hazard Material Team responded to Halifax County on Good Friday.
- The department handled a diesel fuel spill at the Speedway gas station in front of Food Lion.
- The department had good communication with the Water department while flushing hydrants.
- The Fire Department will attend the Martin County Special Olympics on May 4th.
- Chief Peaks informed the Board that he would be attending the Martin County Board of Commissioners Meeting on May 11th. He will advocate for more funding for the Fire Department per the County Manager's request.
- Town Hall had a visit from OSHA. OSHA inspected the Parks and Recreation Building. The visit was not a result of a complaint or injury; the Town was due for a visit since the pandemic. The Fire Chief requested a scheduled OSHA visit on June 21st and 22nd for each department.

Police

The Police Chief provided the following report:

- Police officers participated in the Autism Day and World Down Syndrome Day at Williamston Primary School.
- The Police Department would participate in the Special Olympics hosted at Godwin Coppage Park.
- The Police Department will give away 100 free bicycle helmets to the community.
- Police officers would participate in the school's upcoming field days.
- They provided police presence at the Arts Council's 5k Color Run.
- Officers completed field training, crisis intervention training, and toxicology training.
- Chief Cowan updated the Board regarding a recent gang shooting on April 21st near the Martin County Governmental Center. The Chief recognized it was youth gang activity, but there were no injuries. The Police Department arrested 12 to 13 suspects. Chief Cowan detailed the saturation patrol method utilized by the Police Department. Saturation patrol required increased stopping of cars in order to follow ALL leads. Commissioner Rodgers noted the community was a victim of this shooting due to the fear caused by the shooting.

There being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 7:08 pm.

BUDGET WORK SESSION

The Town Administrator reported there were minimal changes to the Budget since the April 22nd Planning Session. The main change was a dump truck added to the Sewer budget. In order to keep the budget balanced, the money was taken from the "Future Replacement" line under Sewer. The money set aside for future replacement was to cover any

Board of Commissioner's Meeting

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upcoming repair costs for the Wastewater plant as it is a twenty-year old plant. The budget was balanced and ready to be adopted at the June Board Meeting. Commissioner Rodgers questioned what employees were included in the 5% COLA salary adjustment. The Town Administrator noted all employees were included. He noted it was important for the Town to retain employees with certifications and licenses.

VIII Closed Session – Attorney Client Privilege N.C. 43-318.11(3)

It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Coffield to go out of regular session into closed session for Attorney-Client Privilege N.C. 43-318.11(3) at 7:24 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

It was moved by Commissioner Coffield, seconded by Commissioner Moore to go out of closed session into regular session at 8:20 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Knox, and unanimously passed to approve the Ordinance 2022-30 to Amend the Town Leaf and Limb Ordinance.

Submitted By:

Approved By:

Town Clerk

Mayor

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

May 16, 2022

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Williamston met in special session on Monday, May 16, 2022 at 3:00 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, Jerry Knox, Dean McCall, William Coffield, and Alton Moore
Town Administrator: Eric Pearson
Town Clerk: Jackie Escobar
Finance Officer: Christina Craft
Planning and Zoning Administrator: Cameron Braddy
Fire Chief: Michael Peaks
Police Chief: Travis Cowan
Police Captain: Beth Coltrain
Public Works Director: Kerry Spivey
Public Works and Utilities Supervisor: Stacy Stalls
Parks and Recreation Director: Allen Overby

ABSENT

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

The Mayor called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Commissioner Knox led the pledge of allegiance. Next, Commissioner Moore offered the invocation after a moment of silence for the tragedy in Buffalo, New York. Finally, the Mayor extended a welcome to Attorney Phil Hornthall.

NEW BUSINESS

APPROVAL OF ORDINANCE 2022-32 USE OF ARP FUNDS

The Town Administrator reported the item was related to the funding of the Gaylord Perry Park project but would also assist the General Fund Balance. At the May 2022 Board of Commissioners meeting, the Board did not approve the low bidder for the Gaylord Perry Project due to insufficient funds to ensure the completion of the project as required by the LWCF and PartF grants. Since then, the Administrator and Finance Officer have researched other options as to how to use ARP funds. Via vote of the Town Board of Commissioners, the Town was using ARP funds as revenue replacement. This option had been reviewed thoroughly by the School of Government (SOG). It was their recommended method for using these funds. A recently passed ARP Project ordinance allocated these funds to offset Enterprise Fund salaries. That action allowed the Town to use Enterprise Fund revenues for any NC authorized use, such as the water meter purchase. The Town's Enterprise Fund Retained Earnings were healthy, exceeding the Local Government Commission (LGC) requirements. Thus, putting ARP funds into the Enterprise Fund was not necessary.

The Town Administrator requested Board approval to allocate the ARP funds into the General Fund. The funds would still be used as revenue replacement to offset the salaries of General Fund employees. With ARP funds allocated in the General fund, funds for the Gaylord Perry Project would be available. Town staff checked with the SOG to ensure that the change met the requirements of ARP funds. The SOG informed the action complied with ARP requirements.

Commissioner Rodgers questioned if the Board passed the Ordinance 2022-32, would there be more future ordinances to pass. The Town Administrator explained that the ordinance would cover the ARP allocation. However, there would be more ordinances for significant projects. The Town Administrator clarified that the ARP funds would be removed from the Enterprise Fund and allocated in the General Fund. Commissioner Rodgers questioned how the moving of money would affect the COVID Relief Fund. The Town Administrator assured the Board that the COVID Relief Fund would remain available.

Commissioner McCall recalled the April Planning Retreat where the Board prioritized the Town's salary emergency. He questioned how the Budget was lining up with the Board's goal. The Town Administrator expressed weariness with using the one-time ARP money for reoccurring salaries. Commissioner McCall worried about perception. He did not want to portray that the Town wasn't willing to spend money on a project while losing personnel. The Mayor noted that the project was not new. Commissioner McCall emphasized that he did not want the Town to lose focus on the salary emergency.

Commissioner Moore questioned if there was a timeline to spend the ARP money. The Town Administrator explained that the money needed to be fully allocated by 2024 and spent by 2026. Commissioner Moore indicated that salaries required a long-term plan; thus, ARP funds were not applicable. The Town Administrator agreed that raising salaries with ARP funds was not sustainable. Commissioner Moore added that the salary solution must come from Town revenue. Commissioner Rodgers recognized the importance of keeping employees by way of salary and noted the importance of taxpayers seeing their money at work. He noted that the Gaylord Perry Park Project had been in the works for about 2 to 3 years with no visible progress.

Commissioner McCall inquired if there were any cost reductions for the project's overall price. The Parks and Recreation Director commented that the low bidder Doug Chesson gave a total cost reduction of \$17,600. There were other possible reductions but not recommended if money was available. Those possible reductions included: \$25,000 savings if the Town cut out the parking lot and \$10,000 savings if the contractor used wood beams instead of steel beams.

The Town Administrator explained that if the Board approved the ordinance, he would recommend the low bidder. Then, staff would continue negotiating for a lower price without hurting the project. Commissioner Moore agreed that cutting out elements of the project may affect the Town in the long run.

The motion was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Knox, and unanimously approved the Ordinance 2022-32 Use of ARP Funds.

CONSIDERATION OF GAYLORD PERRY PARK BIDS

The Parks and Recreation Director reported that the Gaylord Perry Park Bids for the picnic shelter and restrooms were:

Doug Chesson General Contractor \$326, 500
Davis Company, Inc. \$374,368

The Director requested the Board approve the low bidder. *The motion was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously passed to award Doug Chesson, General Contractor, the bid to complete the Gaylord Perry Park picnic shelter and restrooms.*

The Parks and Recreation Director reported that the Gaylord Perry Park Bids for the site work was:

Doug Chesson General Contractor \$495,000

The bid did not reflect the possible cost reductions. The Director requested the Board approve the bidder. *The motion was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Rodgers, and unanimously passed to award Doug Chesson, General Contractor, the bid to complete the Gaylord Perry Park site work.*

Commissioner Moore questioned how long was the validity of the bid prices. The Town Administrator indicated the bidders agreed to hold prices for the Board's decision at the May 16, 2022 Special Called Meeting.

FY 2022-2023 BUDGET DISCUSSION

The Town Administrator reported that Town staff continued to find ways to save money. The Town bid out Medicare costs. The Town was formerly with MedCost, which had an increase of 8%. BlueCross offered a lower price. Once the Town notified NCLM of the change. NCLM negotiated with MedCost for a lower price. The Town Administrator reminded the Board that there would be a public hearing to adopt the FY 2022-2023 budget at the June Board Meeting.

DEED MODIFICATION – NDOT HWY 125 PROJECT

The Town Administrator reported that the *North Carolina Department of Transportation* (NCDOT) is widening Highway 125. In 2019 a section of Godwin-Coppage Park was transferred to NCDOT to provide them with an easement. The transfer did not require a permanent easement. The Town built Godwin-Coppage Park with a grant; thus, the grant terms prohibited a transfer of property. NCDOT presented a correcting deed that returned the property to the Town. The correction deed shows the subject section along 125 as a temporary easement. There is no cost to the Town for the deed correction. The Town Administrator requested Board authorization for the Town Administrator and Town Clerk to sign the correcting deed as offered by NCDOT.

Board of Commissioner's Meeting

May 16, 2022

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The Mayor questioned why the 2019 deed, signed by the former Town Administration and current Finance Officer, was not presented to the Board for approval. The Town Administrator replied he was unsure, but maybe it was viewed as merely an administrative step. Commissioner Moore asked how much the Town charged for the small property segment. The Town sold it for \$1,475. *The motion was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously passed to authorize the Town Administrator and Town Clerk to sign the NCDOT Deed Modification.*

CLOSED SESSION

It was moved by Commissioner McCall, seconded by Commissioner Moore, to go out of regular session into closed session for Attorney-Client Privilege NC. 43-318.11(3) at 4:00 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

It was moved by Commissioner Rodgers, seconded by Commissioner Moore, to go out of closed session into regular session at 5:02 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

There being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 5:07 p.m.

Submitted By:

Approved By:

Town Clerk

Mayor

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

June 6, 2022

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Williamston met in regular called meeting on Monday, June 6th, 2022, at 5:30 p.m. at the Town Hall Assembly Room at 102 East Main Street, Williamston, NC.

PRESENT Mayor: Joyce Whichard-Brown
Commissioners: Mayor Pro-Tem Ronell Rodgers, Jerry Knox, Dean McCall, William Coffield, and Alton Moore
Town Administrator: Eric Pearson
Town Clerk: Jackie Escobar
Planning and Zoning Administrator: Cameron Braddy
Fire Chief: Michael Peaks
Police Chief: Travis Cowan
Police Captain: Beth Coltrain
Public Works Director: Kerry Spivey
Public Works and Utilities Supervisor: Stacy Stalls
Parks and Recreation Director: Allen Overby

ABSENT Finance Officer: Christina Craft

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

The Mayor called the meeting to order. Commissioner Rodgers led the pledge of allegiance. Then, Commissioner Coffield offered the invocation. There was a moment of silence for the victims of mass shootings.

AGENDA AMENDED or APPROVED

The Mayor asked if there were any adjustments to the agenda or if the Board wished to remove or add to the agenda. The Town Administrator requested the removal of Item 3: Budget Amendment for Gaylord Park Project under Old Business. He also requested the addition of Item 15, Item 16, and Item 17 consisting of Budget Amendments to New Business. *It was moved by Commissioner McCall, seconded by Commissioner Knox, and unanimously passed to approve the regular agenda as amended.*

CONSENT AGENDA

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

Items approved in the Consent Agenda are as follows:

- (1) Approval of the Board Planning Session Minutes of April 21, 2022
- (2) Approval of the Budget Work Sessions Minutes of April 22, 2022
- (3) Approval of the Regular Board Minutes of May 2, 2022
- (4) Approval of the Special Called Minutes of May 16, 2022
- (5) Appoint Beth Lamb to Martin Memorial Library Advisory Board
- (6) Ordinance 2022-11 Amending Section 36.01 Williamston Code of Ordinances
Willful Violation or Failure to file/Pay Rental Car Use Tax
- (7) Ordinance 2022-18 Amending Section 93.99 Williamston Code of Ordinances
Violation Nuisance Ordinance
- (8) Ordinance 2022-19 Amending Section 94.99 Williamston Code of Ordinances
Violation of Certain Provision of Cemetery Ordinance
- (9) Ordinance 2022-20 Amending Section 95.02 Williamston Code of Ordinances
Violation of Public Assembly Ordinance
- (10) Ordinance 2022-21 Amending Section 95.03 Williamston Code of Ordinances
Violation of Parade Permit Ordinance
- (11) Ordinance 2022-26 Amending Section 152-3-G
Williamston Code of Ordinances Subdivision Ordinance
- (12) Ordinance 2022-27 Amending Section 153-99
Williamston Code of Ordinances Zoning Ordinance
- (13) Approve renewal of NCDOT Bridge Inspection Contract
- (14) Approve Sale of 709 W. Church Street, Williamston NC

PUBLIC HEARING - Ordinance 2022-34 the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Budget Ordinance

The Mayor opened the floor for the Public Hearing for Ordinance 2022-34 Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Budget Ordinance. The Town Administrator noted that the Ordinance summarized the 2022-23 budget. It laid out the revenue and

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expenses of the General Fund, balanced at \$7,107,205. The Enterprise fund's revenue and expenditures are balanced at \$4,270,618. The Ordinance listed Stormwater and Powell bill revenue and expenditures. The presented budget ordinance was balanced. With no further comments, the Mayor closed the floor.

OLD BUSINESS

Resolution 2022-07 Accepting Viable Utility Reserve Funds

The Town Administrator reported that the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) awarded \$150,000 to the Town under their Viable Utility Reserve (VUR) fund for an Asset Inventory Assessment (AIA) study. Then, the Town received a Notice of Intent (NOI) to fund. After a Request for Proposal (RFP), the Board approved Rivers and Associates to perform the work. The Town notified DEQ of the contract, and Rivers began the work. Rivers and Associates billed the Town for a portion of the work. The Town was unable to make payments to Rivers and Associates until the Notice of Funding letter arrived. The notice letter required that the Board adopt a resolution accepting the award. Resolution 2022-07 uses DEQ's suggested language. By adopting this resolution, the Town can submit the resolution to DEQ and will be able to pay Rivers and Associates. The Town will then request DEQ to reimburse the funds paid to Rivers and Associates. *It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously approved Resolution 2022-07 Accepting Viable Utility Reserve Funds.*

Ordinance 2022-33 Capital Project Ordinance Gaylord Perry Project

The Town Administrator reported that the Ordinance would allocate funds from the General Fund for the Gaylord Perry Park Project. The Town received two bids and approved the low bidder Doug Chesson Contractor. American Rescue Plan funds would offset the money for the project. *It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner McCall, and unanimously approved Ordinance 2022-33 Capital Project Ordinance Gaylord Perry Project.*

NEW BUSINESS

Ordinance 2022-34 Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Budget Ordinance

The Town Administrator reported the Ordinance 2022-34 Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Budget Ordinance summarized the FY 22-23 Budget. *It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously adopted the Ordinance 2022-34 Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Budget Ordinance.*

FY 2022-2023 Capital Improvement Plan

The Town Administrator presented the 2022-23 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for Board approval. The CIP details a future look at capital needs and capital investments for the 2022-23 fiscal year. The Town Administrator recommended the adoption of the CIP. *It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner McCall, and unanimously adopted the Fiscal Year 2022-23 Capital Improvement Plan.*

Resolution 2022-05 Setting FY23 Water and Sewer Charges for Related Services

The Town Administrator requested the Board to adopt the new water and sewer rates for the upcoming budget year. For in-town customers, the water rate per thousand gallons would now be \$9.75 and \$11.75. However, the base rates and sewer service rates would not change. The resolution listed increased tap fees. The Town Administrator noted that when a contractor does the tap on the Town's behalf, the customer will be charged the cost of the contractor's fee plus 20% to cover the staff's time.

Commissioner Moore questioned the water rate increase. The Town Administrator noted that MCRWASA raised the rate at which the Town buys water. Commissioner Moore emphasized that the increase was due to MCRWASA and not the Town. Commissioner McCall inquired if there were any initiatives to change the MCRWASA relationship with the Town. The Town Administrator indicated MCRWASA had a tight contract and large debt service and electrical fees. The Town Administrator was exploring solar farm options to lower costs. Commissioner McCall voiced that if the Town had the required certifications to run a water plant, then the Town should explore the option to save money. *It was moved by Commissioner Knox and seconded by Commissioner Moore. The motion carried with 4 in favor and Commissioner Rodgers opposed to adopt the Resolution 2022-05 Setting FY23 Water and Sewer Charges for Related Services.*

Resolution 2022-06 Establishing Storm Water Rates for FY23

The Town Administrator reported that each year the staff request the Board to adopt the stormwater fees for the upcoming budget year, Fiscal 2022-23 (FY23). For FY23, the Town staff did not recommend any changes to the fees from the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 (FY22). *It was moved by Commissioner McCall and seconded by Commissioner*

Board of Commissioner's Meeting

June 6, 2022

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Moore. The motion carried with 4 in favor and Commissioner Rodgers opposed to adopt Resolution 2202-06 Establishing Storm Water Rates for FY23.

Consider Board of Commissioners Meeting Schedule for FY 22/23

The Town Administrator presented a meeting schedule for the Fiscal Year 2022/23 for Board approval. While most meetings are held on the first Monday of each month, the Town Administrator pushed specific meetings to the second Monday for the observance of July 4th, Labor Day, and New Year holidays. *It was moved by Commissioner Coffield, seconded by Commissioner Knox, and unanimously approved the Commissioner's Meeting Schedule for FY 22/23.*

Consider Approval of CDBG Bids

The Town Administrator reported that Ben Jones advertised for bids for the AC installation project at the Gaylord Perry Park gymnasium. Jones advertised the specifications with a due date of June 2nd, 2022. Unfortunately, the Town only received one bid. Therefore, Ben Jones would advertise for bids a second time. The second Request for Proposals required seven days of notice; however, Ben Jones will give additional time to provide sufficient time for bidders. If there are no more bids, the Town can open the one bid with the State's permission and accept the bid.

Gaylord Perry Park Contract for Site Work/ Gaylord Perry Park Contract for Picnic Shelter and Restrooms

The Town Administrator presented the contracts for the Gaylord Perry Park Site Work, Picnic Shelter, and Restrooms with Doug Chesson Contractors. The contracts included in the Agenda Packet were not reviewed by the Town Attorney. The Town Attorney suggested minor changes, to which Doug Chesson agreed. The Town Administrator noted that Doug Chesson agreed to hold the price until the June Board Meeting. Commissioner Coffield questioned if Town staff renegotiated the price must the Board approve again. The Town Administrator explained that the negotiations could be made through change orders. Commissioner Moore inquired what changes could lower the costs. The Parks and Recreation Director reported that \$17,600 could be saved by changing fixture choices and design options. *It was moved by Commissioner Rodgers, seconded by Commissioner McCall, and unanimously approved the Gaylord Perry Park Contract for Site Work, Picnic Shelter, and Restrooms with Attorney changes.*

Set a date for Gaylord Perry Park Groundbreaking Ceremony

The Parks and Recreation Director requested Board guidance to set a date for a groundbreaking ceremony for the Gaylord Perry Park Project. The Town Administrator suggested the week of June 20th. The Board agreed to hold the groundbreaking ceremony on June 20th at 10 am.

Discuss Picnic Table Sponsorship at Gaylord Perry Park

The Parks and Recreation Director reported that he would like to request \$500 sponsorships for picnic tables. The sponsorship would guarantee a small plaque in memory of someone or in promotion of a business. Commissioner Coffield questioned how many tables would be purchased. The Parks and Recreation Director expected to buy 8 or 12 tables. The Board allowed the search for sponsorships.

Commissioner McCall left the meeting at 6:15 pm.

Resolution 2022-04 for Adoption of a Joint Cooperation Agreement for the Establishment of the Choanoke Area Housing Consortium

The Town Administrator reported that Frank Halsey appeared before the Board to discuss the development of a Joint Cooperation Agreement among five counties, Bertie, Hertford, Martin, Northampton, Halifax, and the municipalities within those counties to develop a consortium to address housing needs. This consortium, which Halifax County would lead, would be eligible to receive \$750,000 each year for use on identified needs within those counties. The consortium would consist of a Board that would decide where the funding should be allocated for that year. The allocation of funds could be to one single entity or county or divided among one or more counties/municipalities. Therefore, the consortium has excellent potential to assist the counties and municipalities in this area. In the first year, the consortium would not receive \$750,000; it would instead receive \$733,000. The consortium members would need to make up the remaining \$27,000 divided among the five counties.

Within the agreement, all parties must sign a specific signature page. Each entity must also sign a pre-audit statement. Martin County will cover the entire amount of the Martin County share of the \$27,000. Resolution 2022-04 is a required step in creating the consortium. The resolution is the same for every entity with just a separate signature page. The resolution authorizes each entity to enter into the consortium. *It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously adopted Resolution for Adoption of a Joint Cooperation Agreement for the Establishment of the Choanoke Area Housing Consortium.*

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Ordinance 2022-35 Demolition of 207 Center Street, Williamston NC

The Planning and Zoning Administrator reported that the Ordinance would allow the Town to demolish the dilapidated property. The Town will add the cost of demolition to the property taxes. Upon Board approval, the demolition will occur by July 2022. *It was moved by Commissioner Rodgers, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously approved Ordinance 2022-35 Demolition of 207 Center Street, Williamston, NC.*

Ordinance 2022-36 Demolition of 311 Roberson St. Williamston NC

The Planning and Zoning Administrator reported that the Ordinance would allow the Town to demolish the dilapidated property. The Town will add the cost of demolition to the property taxes. Upon Board approval, the demolition will occur by July 2022. Commissioner Rodgers questioned if the property at a dilapidated stage could be purchased and handled by a citizen. The Planning and Zoning Administrator expressed that he was unaware of property purchased during the lengthy demolition process. The Town Attorney added that the demolition ordinance would be a discouraging factor for a potential buyer. *It was moved by Commissioner Rodgers, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously approved Ordinance 2022-36 Demolition of 311 Roberson St. Williamston, NC.*

Budget Amendment – Transfer Funds into Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB)

The Town Administrator reported that the budget amendment was to continue to fund Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB). OPEB are the benefits, other than pension distributions, that employees may begin to receive from the Town once they retire. Currently, the Town pays for all OPEB out of the current year budget. Each year money is moved into a separate account to build the OPEB reserve. *It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Knox, and unanimously approved Budget Amendment Transfer funds into Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB).*

Retained Earnings Water/Sewer	\$40,000.00	Undesignated Fund Balance	\$60,000
Retiree Group Insurance	\$40,000.00	Retirees Fringe Benefits	\$60,000
	\$40,000.00		\$60,000

Budget Amendment – Transfer Funds for Automotive Supplies

The Town Administrator reported that the budget amendment was to move money as to not overspend the current budget. The budget amendment would ensure the Town complies with the Local Government Commission guidelines and the audit. *It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Knox, and unanimously approved Budget Amendment Transfer Funds for Automotive Supplies.*

Undesignated Fund Balance	\$40,000.00
Automotive Supplies	\$40,000.00
	\$40,000.00

Budget Amendment – Transfer Funds for Sanitation Regular Salaries

The Town Administrator reported that the budget amendment was to move money, to not overspend the current budget. The budget amendment would ensure the Town complies with the Local Government Commission guidelines and the audit. *It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Knox, and unanimously approved Budget Amendment Transfer Funds for Sanitation Regular Salaries.*

Undesignated Fund Balance	\$40,000.00
Sanitation Regular Salaries	\$40,000.00
	\$40,000.00

Budget Amendment – Transfer Funds for Recreation Regular Salaries

The Town Administrator reported that the budget amendment was to move money to not overspend the current budget. The budget amendment would ensure the Town complies with the Local Government Commission guidelines and the audit. *It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Knox, and unanimously approved Budget Amendment Transfer Funds for Recreation Regular Salaries.*

Undesignated Fund Balance	\$28,000.00
Recreation Regular Salaries	\$28,000.00
	\$28,000.00

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Public Works

The Public Works Director reported the following:

- Public Works has a new employee. Fortunately, the department expected to hire a second mechanic to assist the one mechanic in the mechanic shop.
- After ten months of burning debris in the Air Curtain Burner, the department paid an estimated \$1,000 for fuel and landfill fees. If not burned, the amount of debris would have been \$15,000 in landfill fees.
- The Town's fountain, in front of the Arts Council, was significantly damaged by an unknown driver. A contractor quickly repaired it at a fair price
- Water flushing would begin on June 20th, 2022. The flushing is part of an annual process for disinfection. The flushing would occur at night to not inconvenience residents.

Planning

The Town Planning and Zoning Administrator reported:

- The Code Enforcement Officer gave 51 violations in the past month as mowing picked up. Some were taken care of by the Town and some by the property owner. The Mayor questioned who owned Martin Street property where the grass was overgrown. The Planning and Zoning Administrator noted that a Rehab center in Greenville owned the property. The Code Enforcement Officer was aware of the situation and contacted the property owner. Commissioner Rodgers voiced that a neighbor of the Martin Street property informed him of snakes in the overgrown grass. The Mayor and Commissioner Rodgers expressed concern as there is a playground nearby.
- The Planning and Zoning Administrator reported he booked headliners for the Stampede. The town clerk worked on vendors/sponsors. He would have a road closure ordinance at the July meeting.
- The Planning and Marketing Coordinator position was filled. The new employee would be introduced at the July meeting.
- Williamston Downtown had banners placed on Main Street promoting the Williamston Downtown and the Roanoke River.

Finance

The Finance Officer reported:

- The Finance department was in the process of Southern Software conversion.
- The Tax Collector sent out notices informing residents with overdue taxes of the contracting with Zacchaeus Law Firm. As a result, several residents set up payment plans, and some accounts were turned over to Zacchaeus Law Firm.
- The department is fully staffed.

Parks and Recreation

The Parks and Recreation Director provided the following report:

- Softball season was close to ending.
- The softball district tournament will be on July 7th at Godwin Coppage Park.
- The department's summer events included sports camps, art classes, and a back-to-school event.
- The United States Tennis Association (USTA) awarded the Parks and Recreation Department a grant to provide free tennis clinics. Chase Connor would lead the tennis clinics.
- There would be a basketball tournament Sunday, June 12th, 2022, at Gaylord Perry Park.

Fire/Rescue

The Fire Chief provided the following report:

- The department dealt with 219 responses in the month of May.
- Hazmat – Regional Response Team missions included a fuel spill and an unknown product in Williamston.
- In addition, there was an outreach event in Bertie County.
- The Fire Prevention Bureau installed smoke alarms per usual. Smoke alarms and installation are free to the public.
- The Fire/Rescue Department hosted several events at the Fire Station.
 - The department welcomed two bike riding groups, Team Raleigh LEU and National EMS Memorial Bike Ride. Both groups were welcomed by staff and members while they enjoyed a meal and rest in preparation for the next day's journey.

Board of Commissioner's Meeting

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- Congressman GK Butterfield hosted a dinner for the Town of Williamston at the Williamston Fire Department.
- The Fire Department passed the Medicaid Audit, which reviewed the billing process.
- The Fire Chief negotiated with the EMS billing company. As a result, it lowered the charge percentage from 11% to 7%, thus saving the department about \$9,000.
- The Fire Department renewed the Debris Management Contract. The Town requires a site to place storm debris temporarily

Commissioner McCall returned to the Board meeting at 6:58 pm.

Police

The Police Captain provided the following report:

- Police officers participated in the Special Olympics at Godwin Coppage Park, a field day at Jamesville Elementary, and the Color Run hosted by the Arts Council.
- The Police Department had a Bike Helmet Event at EJ Hayes informing students of Bike Safety.
- The Narcotic Detective Austin Spruill was voted onto the NC Narcotic Detective Board.
- The Police Department detectives had one returning from paternity leave and two out for paternity leave.
- Commissioner Rodgers questioned the possibility of a full-time officer at Town Hall. The Police Captain noted that the Town hall had efficient safety protocols. The Police Chief included that having a police officer stationed in one spot was not a good use of resources. The Police Chief noted that organizations and businesses could request a security survey from the Police Department.

VIII Closed Session – Attorney Client Privilege N.C. 43-318.11(3)

It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner McCall to go out of regular session into closed session for Attorney-Client Privilege N.C. 43-318.11(3) at 7:11 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Coffield to go out of closed session into regular session at 8:58 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously approved the Short- and Long-Term Plan, included by reference, to Address Pay Concerns Affecting Town of Williamston Employees.

There being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Submitted By:

Approved By:

Town Clerk

Mayor

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

June 27, 2022

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Williamston met in special session on Monday, June 27, 2022 at 3:00 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, Jerry Knox, William Coffield, and Alton Moore
Dean McCall attended online.
Town Administrator: Eric Pearson
Town Clerk: Jackie Escobar
Finance Officer: Christina Craft

ABSENT Planning and Zoning Administrator: Cameron Braddy
Fire Chief: Michael Peaks
Police Chief: Travis Cowan
Police Captain: Beth Coltrain
Public Works Director: Kerry Spivey
Public Works and Utilities Supervisor: Stacy Stalls
Parks and Recreation Director: Allen Overby

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

The Mayor called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Commissioner Rodgers led the pledge of allegiance. Next, Commissioner Knox offered the invocation after a moment of silence for the nation.

DISCUSSION/ADJUSTMENT TO AGENDA

The Mayor asked if there were any adjustments to the Consent Agenda or if the Board wished any items to be removed or added. Commissioner Rodgers removed Item #5 to be moved for full discussion. *It was moved by Commissioner Coffield, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously passed to approve the agenda as amended.*

CONSENT AGENDA

The Mayor asked if there were any adjustments to the Consent Agenda or if the Board wished any items to be removed or added. Commissioner Rodgers removed Item #5 to be moved for full discussion. *It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Knox, and unanimously passed to approve the consent agenda as amended.*

Items approved in the Consent Agenda are as follows:

(1) Budget Amendment – Radio Purchases	
Transfer to Police and Fire Radio Capital Project	<u>\$25,386.80</u>
Radio Purchases	<u>\$25,386.80</u>
(2) Budget Amendment – Police and Fire Radio Capital Project	
Small Equipment	<u>\$25,386.80</u>
Transfer to Police and Fire Radio Capital Project	<u>\$25,386.80</u>
(3) Budget Amendment – Southern Software Package	
Undesignated Fund Balance	\$43,822.50
Retained Earnings – Water	\$21,911.25
Retained Earnings – Sewer	<u>\$21,911.23</u>
	<u>\$87,645.00</u>
Software Package	\$87,645.00
(4) Budget Amendment – Kamstrup AMI Water System	
Retained Earnings – Water	\$844,190.26
Retained Earnings – Sewer	<u>\$454,563.98</u>
	<u>\$1,298,754.24</u>
Transfer to Capital Projects Fund	<u>\$1,298,754.24</u>

Board of Commissioner's Meeting

June 27, 2022

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~~(5) Budget Amendment – Tennis Clinic Grant~~

(6) Budget Amendment - Video Surveillance System

NCLM/NC Safety Grant	Worker's Comp	\$2,362.50
Undesignated Fund Balance	Insurance Pool	<u>\$2,362.50</u>
		<u>\$4,725.00</u>

Small Equipment	Rec Video System	<u>\$4,725.00</u>
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(7) Budget Amendment – Viable Utility Reserve Grant

NC DEPT OF ENV QUALITY – VUR AIA STUDY	<u>\$150,000.00</u>
Contracted Services	\$150,000.00

(8) Budget Amendment – Automotive Supplies

Undesignated Fund Balance	<u>\$56,000.00</u>
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Automotive Supplies	Police	\$21,000.00
Automotive Supplies	Fire	\$10,000.00
Automotive Supplies	Rescue	\$20,000.00
Automotive Supplies	Recreation	<u>\$ 5,000.00</u>
		\$56,000.00

Item #5 Budget Amendment - Tennis Clinic Grant

Commissioner Rodgers inquired about the USTA organization. The Finance Officer reported that the United States Tennis Association gave the Town of Williamston money for tennis equipment. The only stipulation was that the Town would use the money on tennis-related supplies. The Finance Officer also reported that Chase Connor teaches a tennis class at the tennis courts; Chase Connor reached out to USTA for the grant. Commissioner Rodgers questioned if the grant was a non-matching grant. The Finance Officer explained that the grant was non-matching. Commissioner Rodgers expressed appreciation for the money.

The Finance Officer reported that the Board approved Consent Agenda Item #1 - #4 at a previous meeting. However, the budget amendments had an incorrect code.

It was moved by Commissioner Rodgers, seconded by Commissioner Knox, and unanimously passed to approve the Budget Amendment for the Tennis Clinic Grant.

USTA Tennis Grant	<u>\$2,000</u>
Department Supplies	<u>\$2,000</u>

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Commissioner Coffield asked to discuss the radio purchase. He noted that the radio purchase wasn't required until 2025. The Finance Officer explained that the radio purchase was due to a sale; the Town would be saving half of the cost. The Town Administrator noted that the early purchase would aid in conversion.

Commissioner Coffield questioned Item #7 Budget Amendment for the Viable Utility Reserve Grant. The Town Administrator reported that the budget amendment was for a grant of \$150,000 for a water study. The Board approved Rivers & Associates for the water study. However, the Finance Officer noted it was also a non-matching grant.

The Finance Officer reported that Item #6 Budget Amendment for a Video Surveillance System was given by a North Carolina League of Municipalities Safety Grant.

There being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 3:18 p.m.

Submitted By:

Approved By:

Town Clerk

Mayor