

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

July 1, 2024

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Williamston met in a regular called meeting on Monday, July 1st, 2024, at 5:30 p.m. at the Town Hall Assembly Room at 102 East Main Street, Williamston, NC.

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

ABSENT Fire Chief: Michael Peaks
Parks and Recreation Director: Allen Overby

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

Mayor Dean McCall called the meeting to order. First, Commissioner Coffield led the pledge of allegiance. Commissioner Richmond offered the invocation. The Mayor extended a special welcome to Martin County Commissioner Dempsey Bond and Planning Board Member Robin Manning-Brown.

AGENDA APPROVED

The Town Administrator requested that Item 3: Williamston Housing Authority Board Appointments be added to the Consent Agenda. *Commissioner Moore moved, Commissioner Coffield seconded, and the regular agenda was unanimously amended.*

CONSENT AGENDA

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

Items approved in the Consent Agenda are as follows:

- (1) Regular Board Meeting Minutes of June 6, 2024
- (2) Property Tax Releases
- (3) Williamston Housing Authority Board Appointments – Paul Roberson and Sherry Basemore

OLD BUSINESS

Discontinue Broadcasting Town Board Meetings

The Finance Officer reported that she gathered quotes to update the assembly room's broadcasting technology per the Board's request. However, the costs could be up to **\$70,000**. The Finance Officer requested Board guidance, asking for a desired budget or timeline. Commissioner Richmond questioned how much money was available for technology upgrades. The Finance Officer noted that any purchases above \$1,000 would require a budget amendment.

Commissioner Fox indicated that broadcasting was no longer required and that the Town had other priorities. Commissioner Gianpoalo commented that residents had voiced concerns as many view the meetings from home. Commissioner Fox suggested making minor upgrades over time. *It was moved by Commissioner Richmond, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously agreed to table the discussion until the August 2024 Regular Board of Commissioners meeting.*

NEW BUSINESS**Non-Profit Funding Application**

The Town Administrator reported that the Nonprofit Funding Application restricted funding to only 501(c)(3) entities. Staff has removed this specific language to allow funding for other 501(c) entities. It's important to note that this change does not imply funding illegal entities. The application currently reflects a date for the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Budget Year, but staff will update it to Fiscal Year 2025-2026 before sending it. The Town Attorney noted that any allocated funds must be for public use. She did not report any concern or objection to the presented Non-Profit Funding Application. *It was moved by Commissioner Fox, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously approved the Non-Profit Funding Application.*

Draft Ordinance Amending the Mobile Food Vendor Ordinance

The Town Administrator provided an update on the ongoing discussions concerning a Mobile Food Vendor Ordinance, indicating that the Board had directed the staff to refine specific definitions. Staff presented an amended draft of the proposed revision to the ordinance. Town staff is fully committed to creating an ordinance that not only satisfies the Board but is also both enforceable and easy to understand.

The Town Administrator suggested that the Town impose fees on Mobile Food Vendors. Commissioner Gianpoalo concurred with the Town Administrator, proposing the establishment of an in-town fee and a higher out-of-town fee.

The Town Administrator noted that it was a priority that mobile food vendors have health department approval. Commissioner Moore questioned what type of health regulations were required for a pushcart. The Town Administrator explained that some pushcarts may not require Health Department inspection. However, the Mobile Food Vendor Ordinance would require proof of Health Department permission.

The Town Attorney raised a crucial point about the need for clear and precise definitions in the ordinance. The Attorney also suggested adding penalties for a mobile food vendor who does not follow the ordinance. While the Town may not impose a criminal penalty, it could enforce it civilly or provide a simple suspension or revocation of the permit. *It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously postponed the discussion until the August 2024 Regular Board of Commissioners meeting.*

Phase II Agreement with Downtown by Design

The Town Administrator reported that Eric Woolridge of Destination by Design (DbD) has presented his findings and concept design drawings for Phase II of the project. The funding for this phase can come from the HUD grant designated for Downtown Revitalization. Attorney Sutton reviewed the agreement for Phase II and found no legal concerns. The Town Administrator recommended that the Board approve the Mayor's signing of the agreement for Phase II with Destination by Design. *It was moved by Commissioner Richmond, seconded by Commissioner Fox, and unanimously authorized the Mayor to sign the Phase II Agreement with Downtown by Design.*

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Finance

The Finance Director reported:

- The Finance Department wrapped up the Fiscal Year and began the new Fiscal Year.
- She had met with Witt O'Brien to discuss potential grants.
- The department worked on audit reports.
- She would soon complete the CDBG Close-Out Evaluation.
- The Finance Officer passed her last two certification tests.

Police

The Police Captain provided the following report:

- **Community Involvement:**
 - Bomb threat drill at Martin Enterprise
 - Martin County Farmers Market Law Enforcement Officer Appreciation event.
 - FUN in the SUN event will take place July 20 at Godwin Coppage Park.
- The department answered 693 calls for service, consisting of 100 incident reports and 32 arrests.
- The department attended firearms training.
- Two officers attended intoxicology training.
- One officer attended non-lethal alternative training.
- Lieutenant Henry Poston passed his Physical Fitness Instructor class.
- Officer Nick Wibbler became a Firearm Instructor.
- The department had an assessment center in which the department promoted Sergeant Kevin Banks to Patrol Lieutenant.

Fire/Rescue

The Town Administrator read the following report from the Fire Chief:

June 2024

Fire-Rescue-EMS Board Update

- Hosted several EMT Students as well as Advanced EMT Students while they completed their required field time (48 Hours)
- Hosted "Carolina Brotherhood" Bicycle Group. This group is riding in honor of North Carolina and South Carolina Fallen Firefighters and Law Enforcement Officers.
- NC RRT State Contract extension was completed. As a reminder, the board had agreed to the extension during the initial contract which was completed in 2020.
- We continue utilizing Part-Time EMS staff to assist with staffing the second EMS unit. Hopefully, with the new allocated funding in the coming months, we will have two EMS units staffed 24/7 with full-time staffing.

Planning

The Planning and Zoning Administrator reported:

- Number of code enforcement citations for the month: 71
 - Handled by Owner = 39
 - Handled by Town = 23
 - Pending = 9
- The department made progress on executing the boardwalk renovation grant. He is waiting on some documents from Rivers and Associates, such as the CAMA Permit—Coastal Management Permit. They have completed the pre-bid meeting for the project.
- Demolition hearings have occurred, and we are currently in the required 60-day waiting period before we can begin pursuing demolition.
 - 219 MLK Jr. Dr. - overgrown grass, dilapidated porch, multiple code violations, the appearance of vacancy.
 - 107 Ormond Dr. -overgrown with kudzu, dilapidated facade, and boarded windows.
- Stampede planning is underway.
 - Modified vendor sign-up to last until August 15.
 - Dropped prices of vendors (except for commercial food trucks) by 40%
- The department will be attending two training sessions in the next month.
 - Main Street America on July 15th in Washington, NC
 - Downtown Business Training - July 29 in Edenton, NC. Main Street business owners are welcome to attend the July 29th meeting. The Planning and Zoning Administrator noted business owners must contact Ms. Cartwright for more details.

Parks and Recreation

The Town Administrator read the following report from the Parks and Recreation Director

Parks and Recreation Report

July 1, 2024

Programs

Art Class in June had 20 participants

Softball Camp in June had 25 participants

Finished Regular Softball season

Upcoming in July

Tennis Clinic

Football Camp

Football league registration

Hosting District softball tournament tonight and Tuesday

Other

Contacted River's and Associates about starting Parks and Rec Comp Plan

Having the soccer fields top-dressed in July

Found problem with street lights at Godwin Coppinge. Having that repair made and a portion of the light fixtures changed from Metal Halide to LED.

Public Works

The Public Works Director reported the following:

- There was a 10-inch Water Main Break.
- The department completed the annual flushing program.
- Staff completed the Waste Water Systems Annual Performance Report and the Annual Drinking Water Quality Report.
- CSX Transportation removed railroads on Elm, Pearl, and Martin Luther King Jr. Street.
- The arborist would remove four dead trees from the Downtown area. The warranty would cover the replacement of trees.

Closed Session – Personnel Issue NC 143-318.11(6)

Commissioner Richmond moved, with a second by Commissioner Coffield, to go out of regular session into closed session for Personnel Issue NC 143-318.11(6) at 6:47 pm. The motion passed unanimously.

It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Gianpoalo, to go out of closed session into a regular session at 6:59 pm. The motion passed unanimously.

There being no further business, it was moved by Commissioner Gianpoalo, seconded by Commissioner Richmond, and unanimously declared the meeting adjourned at 6:59 pm.

Submitted By:


Town Clerk

Approved By:


Mayor