

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

November 4, 2024

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Williamston met in a regular called meeting on Monday, November 4, 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: Travis Cowan
Town Clerk: Jackie Escobar
Police Chief: Beth Coltrain
Public Works Director: Stacy Stalls
Planning and Zoning Administrator Andrew Brownfield
Planning and Downtown Marketing Coordinator: LaShonda Cartwright
Fire Chief: Michael Peaks
Parks and Recreation Director: Allen Overby
Finance Officer: Mandy Bullock
Town Attorney: Watsi Sutton

ABSENT

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

Mayor Dean McCall called the meeting to order. First, Commissioner Gianpoalo led the pledge of allegiance, and then Fire Chief Peaks offered the invocation.

AGENDA APPROVED

Commissioner Richmond moved, Commissioner Coffield seconded, and the regular agenda was unanimously approved.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

Items approved in the Consent Agenda are as follows:

- (1) Regular Board Meeting Minutes of October 7, 2024
- (2) Budget Amendment – Police Small Equipment Cameras
 - Small Equipment (\$32,500.00)
 - Capital Outlay Equipment \$32,500.00
- (3) Budget Amendment – RRT
 - Undesignated Fund Balance (\$10,580.47)
 - RRT \$10,580.47

INTRODUCE – PAULA HOPPER – BHM REGIONAL DIRECTOR

Paula Hopper, the BHM Regional Library Director, visited the Martin Memorial Library in Williamston. She noted that the library had a lovely pavilion. Her report included that 216 people had visited the library for one-on-one assistance, 417 people attended library programs, and 633 people visited the library in October. She thanked the Board for their support.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Commissioner Moore moved it, seconded it by Commissioner Richmond, and unanimously opened the Public Comment segment of the meeting.

Princess Foster, 112 Henderson Street, addressed concerns regarding the Williamston Community Garden, explaining that Parks and Recreation Director Allen Overby reached out to her following the October board meeting to discuss the garden's status and location. In response to complaints, Foster cleaned the garden and noted that the property remains gated to prevent vandalism. She included that uprooting the garden would undo the work of the last four years. She emphasized the garden's importance as a community resource, expressing that its removal would negatively impact the Town and its residents.

Shane Scalpi, 152 W Main St, reported concerns about the use and lease of public property at 105 S. Edgewood Ave. in Williamston, currently occupied by the Williamston Community Garden, a nonprofit under the sole ownership of Princess Foster. Scalpi, a donor to the organization, highlighted questionable financial practices, including alleged commingling of funds, unfulfilled use of donated funds, and refusal by Ms. Foster to provide financial statements or a list of board members as required by law. He noted a vague lease agreement lacking fees, insurance, or annual documentation requirements. Scalpi also pointed out inconsistencies in lease agreements for other properties, raising questions about management accountability. He urged the Town to address the nonprofit's noncompliance with state registration laws, zoning violations, and the deteriorated state of the property, which he argued fails to meet its stated mission for public use.

Robin Scalpi waived her time to Shane Scalpi.

Commissioner Fox moved it, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously closed the Public Comment segment of the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Ordinance 2024-15 Speed Limit on Main Street

Police Chief Beth Coltrain presented Ordinances 2024-15, 2024-16, and 2024-17, proposing amendments to speed limits on Main Street to remove verbiage referencing Highway 125. *Commissioner Fox moved, seconded by Commissioner Moore, to adopt Ordinance 2024-15 Speed Limit on Main Street. The motion passed unanimously.*

Ordinance 2024-16 Speed Limit on Main Street

Commissioner Gianpaolo moved, seconded by Commissioner Richmond, to adopt Ordinance 2024-16 Speed Limit on Main Street. The motion passed unanimously.

Ordinance 2024-17 Speed Limit on Main Street

Commissioner Richmond moved, seconded by Commissioner Moore, to adopt Ordinance 2024-17 Speed Limit on Main Street. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Moore raised concerns that there needs to be more speed limit signage along Main Street. The Police Chief will contact the Department of Transportation to request additional signage. Commissioner Gianpaolo stated that the DOT would need to remove any signage labeling Main Street as Highway 125.

Resolution 2024-14 Naming Tiffany White as Backup for the Finance Officer

Finance Officer Mandy Bullock presented a resolution to authorize Accounting Supervisor Tiffany White to sign checks for the Town of Williamston's bank account. Per General Statute 25-3-402, the Finance Director must be a signatory on all checks unless the Town Board designates an alternative. Historically, the Accounting Supervisor has served as the secondary designee for this responsibility alongside the Finance Director. Following the retirement of former Accounting Supervisor Jeneane Everett, who also fulfilled this role, Mrs. White has been promoted to the position and is recommended for the same duty. Having two authorized signatories ensures operational continuity and supports a cross-functional team approach. *It was moved by Commissioner Gianpoalo, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously approved Resolution 2024-14, Naming Tiffany White as Backup for the Finance Officer.*

Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan Contract

Parks and Recreation Director Allen Overby presented a contract. Parks and Recreation Director Allen Overby announced plans to contract with Rivers and Associates to develop a long-range parks and recreation plan for Williamston. The project, expected to take approximately eight months, will cost \$40,000, an expense already included in the Town's operating budget. Overby noted that ECU completed the last plan in 2011. The new plan will focus on two main objectives: gathering citizen input through public engagement and surveys to establish realistic 10-15-year goals and leveraging the plan to secure grant funding for future projects. *Commissioner Fox moved, and Commissioner Gianpoalo seconded and unanimously approved the Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan Contract.*

Martin County Water and Sewer Study (Alternatives)

Public Works Director Stacy Stalls reported on an assessment conducted by Hazen, an outside firm engaged by MCRWASA, to evaluate regionalization asset plans for water and sewer entities within Martin County. Entities met to review recommendations on October 22, 2024. Stalls highlighted the need for the Board to vote and approve the top three choices to submit to Hazen **by December 1, 2024.**

The recommended options, in priority order, are:

1. **County-Wide Alternative Plan 1: Status Quo** – This option maintains the Town of Williamston's current water and sewer enterprise, which is strongly recommended as losing the enterprise fund would be detrimental to the Town.
2. **County-Wide Alternative Plan 11: Williamston and Martin County Districts Partnership** – This plan involves a partnership with Martin County, continuing water purchases from MCRWASA. At the same time, Williamston assumes responsibility for billing and maintenance, contingent on debt forgiveness and further feasibility studies.
3. **County-Wide Alternative Plan 10: Williamston and Everetts Partnership** – This option considers a partnership with Everetts, with similar operational arrangements and infrastructure connections supported by grants and feasibility assessments.

Commissioner Richmond questioned whether any alternatives would lower water bill rates. The Public Works Director noted that some alternatives could be. However, the Town would give up a significant portion of its enterprise fund. Commissioner Moore expressed that many alternatives were not favorable for the Town.

The Town Administrator reported that the Board would pick three options, and the study would explore them further to allow the Board to make an informed decision. If the Town lost the enterprise fund, many Town services would be reduced. The most recommended option is County-Wide Alternative Plan 1: Status Quo.

The Public Works Director recommended board approval of these choices in the outlined order to proceed with the regionalization planning process. *It was moved by Commissioner Richmond, seconded by Commissioner Fox, and unanimously approved the recommended choices: 1. County-Wide Alternative Plan 1: Status Quo, 2. County-Wide Alternative Plan 11: Williamston and Martin County Districts Partnership, and 3. County-Wide Alternative Plan 10: Williamston and Everetts Partnership.*

Project Ordinance 2024-19 CDBG Smiling Faces Sewer Project

Finance Officer Mandy Bullock introduced Project Ordinance 2024-19 for the CDBG Smiling Faces Sewer Project. Commissioner Moore questioned the timeline for the project. The Finance Officer reported that she was unsure as there were still advertising, procurement, and voluntary annexation processes to complete. *Commissioner Moore moved it, seconded by Commissioner Richmond, and unanimously approved Project Ordinance 2024-19 CDBG Smiling Faces Sewer Project.*

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Finance

The Finance Officer reported:

- The Point and Pay Integration will be live in November.
- Thanks to Commissioner Coffield's inquiry, Medicaid Flex cards will be accepted for water bills beginning in December.
- Town Hall will be closed on November 11 for Veterans Day, November 14 for training, two hours on November 18 for the annual longevity luncheon, and November 28th and 29th for Thanksgiving.
- New staff attended Debt Setoff Training and completed the Public Notary class.
- The Town's Accounting Supervisor, Jeneane Everett, is retiring in November.

Fire/Rescue

The Fire Chief provided the following report:

- The Fire Chief recognized the Town's Town's mechanics, Brantley Gardner and Jorge DeLeon, for their work behind the scenes. He specifically thanked Brantley for working on a Saturday searching for a hose to repair a truck.
- The Fire Prevention officer visited local schools because of Fire Prevention Week.
- The department was 300 calls ahead of the previous year, thus the busiest year on record.
- The department had three new Fire/EMS hires.
- The department will host CPR classes on **November 9 at 9:00 am and November 14th at 7:00 pm.**
- A 12-person RRT Team traveled to western North Carolina to help during the devastating aftermath of Hurricane Helene. The team covered 13 miles and handled hazard mitigation. Megan Dire lost her seven-year-old son Micah, Dad Michael, and Mom Nora. The RRT

team recovered Michael and Nora providing closure to Megan. In a year, the team will travel to take Megan and her sister to dinner. The Chief aims to share Micah's story to ensure that he is remembered.

Planning

The Planning and Zoning Administrator reported:

- The Planning and Zoning Administrator shared updates on advisory board meetings during October, including attending the Southern Albemarle Association meeting on 10/17/2024 to discuss rural health initiatives with other counties and ECU Health, and the Piedmont and Coastal NC Clean Communities Advisory Committee meeting, where the committee's goals to develop sustainable energy infrastructure and promote alternative fuels were solidified.
- Williamston Downtown Inc. activities included a WDI site visit on 10/22/2024, which confirmed the organization's compliance with State expectations.
- The State Main Street America meeting is set to take place in January.
- Mid-East Commission meetings in November include a meeting on 11/5/2024 to discuss the details and timeline of the Riverwalk Project and a meeting with the Rural Planning Organization (RPO) on 11/7/2024 to discuss local infrastructure projects.
- The demolition project at 219 MLK Jr. Drive progressed to the next phase as of October 1, and a new demolition ordinance is anticipated by December 1.
- The RDED project submission deadline has been extended to January 9, 2024, with plans to submit paperwork over the next few months and confirmed the finalization of downtown planning efforts in collaboration with Destination by Design.

Police

The Police Chief provided the following report:

- Officers participated in No-Shave November. They grew their beards to spark conversations with the public regarding men's health in honor of Lieutenant Tony Bowen and Sergeant Paul Moore. In addition, each officer raised money to donate to the Hope Lodge in Greenville.
- Community involvement included Martin County Special Olympics, Parmele Day, Harvest Hoopla at Memorial Baptist, Williamston Community Garden costume contest, and Active Shooter drill at the local schools.
- There were 694 calls for services, 127 incident reports, and 59 arrests.
- Auxiliary and full-time officers stepped up to assist due to staff shortage.

Parks and Recreation

The Parks and Recreation Director reported:

- The Christmas Parade is **on November 23 at 11:00 am.**
- The department received an additional \$120,000 from the Land Water Conservation Fund grant for Gaylord Perry Park.
- The department fixed the rubber mat near the picnic shelter at Godwin-Coppage Park.
- Soccer season ended. Their All-Star Tournament will take place **on November 19.**
- Basketball registration is open.

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Public Works

The Public Works Director reported the following:

- The department worked 38 tons of asphalt and finished the asphalt project on West End.
- The arborist replaced damaged trees on Main Street.

There being no further business, *it was moved by Commissioner Richmond, seconded by Commissioner Fox, and unanimously declared the meeting adjourned at 7:17 pm.*

Submitted By:


Town Clerk

Approved By:


Mayor