

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

October 2, 2023

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Williamston met in regular called meeting on Monday, October 2nd, 2023, at 5:30 p.m. at the Town Hall Assembly Room at 102 East Main Street, Williamston, NC.

PRESENT Mayor: Joyce Whichard-Brown
Commissioners: Alton Moore, Jerry Knox, Dean McCall, Ruth Coffield,
and Darnell Scales
Town Administrator: Eric Pearson
Town Clerk: Jackie Escobar
Police Chief: Travis Cowan
Police Captain: Beth Coltrain
Public Works Director: Stacy Stalls
Parks and Recreation Director: Allen Overby
Fire Chief: Michael Peaks
Finance Officer: Mandy Bullock
Internal Auditor: Linda Harrison
Town Attorney: Watsi Sutton
Tax Collector: Tiffany White

ABSENT Planning and Zoning Administrator: Cameron Braddy

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

The Mayor called the meeting to order. First, Police Chief Cowan led the pledge of allegiance, and Fire Chief Peaks offered the invocation. The Mayor extended a special welcome to Martin County Commissioner Dempsey Bonds and Robersonville Mayor Tina Brown.

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 to move Item 2 of Consent Agenda to New Business. He requested the addition of Item 3 to New Business to appoint an interim Planning Administrator and Item 4 V1 Fiber to New Business. *It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously amended the regular agenda.*

CONSENT AGENDA

It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner McCall, and unanimously approved the consent agenda as amended.

Items approved in the Consent Agenda are as follows:

- 1) Approval of the Regular Board Meeting Minutes of September 11th, 2023
- 2) ~~Special Called Meeting Minutes of September 21st, 2023~~, Moved to New Business
- 3) Ordinance 2023-12 Close Main Street – Christmas Parade
- 4) Close Town Hall at Noon Oct 3 – 6 for data entry needs.
- 5) Taxi Cab License application – Phomas Ewell
- 6) Taxi Cab License application – Marvin. L.

PUBLIC HEARING –

The Mayor opened the floor at 5:36 p.m. The Town Administrator reported that the Public Hearing was to announce the intent to apply for a CDBG Grant. With no further comments, the Mayor closed the floor at 5:37 p.m.

OLD BUSINESS

CCTV BID FOR SKEWARKEE OUTFALL PROJECT

Blaine Humphrey of Rivers and Associates reported regarding the CCTV (Closed Circuit Television) bids for the Skewarkee Outfall Project. The engineering firm solicited bids from specialty contractors to clean and CCTV sewer lines. This will indicate necessary cleaning or repair. Bid openings occurred on Thursday, September 7th, 2023, with only one bid. KRG Utility submitted a high bid, but Rives & Associates were able to reduce the scope to be below the \$42,000 budget. Blaine Humphrey requested the Board to approve KRG Utility as the contractor for the Skewarkee Outfall Project. *It was moved by Commissioner Knox and seconded by Commissioner Scales and unanimously approved to award KRG Utility CCTV bid for the Skewarkee Outfall Project.*

COMPLIANCE WITH NCDEQ TRAINING STANDARDS

The Town Administrator reported that no action was needed; however, he felt it necessary to point out the DEQ requirement of training of the Board and Staff. This training was vital for the Virtual Utility Reserve. The Town of Williamston complies with the NCDEQ Training Standards.

NEW BUSINESS

CSX AGREEMENT – RR TRACK REMOVAL

The Public Works Director reported that his department had been working with CSX about removing rails on South Pearl St and South Martin Luther King Drive. CSX will remove as long as the Town will repave the area. The rails will be removed on South Elm St, but NC DOT will pave it as a state road. Commissioner Moore questioned if traffic would be detoured. The Public Works Director noted they would keep one lane open or create a detour. The Mayor inquired if closures would occur during business hours. The Public Works Director indicated that no closures would occur before 8:30 a.m. but was unsure of CSX's time frame. *It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner McCall, and unanimously appointed the CSX Agreement – RR Track Removal.*

STREET PAVING BIDS

The Public Works Director reported that at the July 10, 2023, regular Town Board meeting, the Board approved a budget amendment to move \$200,000 from Restricted Fund Balance Powell Bill Reserve to the current year budget. This enabled Town staff to increase the size of the paving project budgeted for the current fiscal year to \$350,000. With that Board approval, Staff advertised the project for bid (bid specifications attached) with a bid opening date of August 22, 2023. On the date of that original bid opening, only one (1) bid had been received so by policy Town staff could not open the bid. The project was then put back out to bid with a bid opening date of September 14, 2023. On that bid due date, by policy, Town staff could open the bids whether we had received any additional bids or not. Staff received an additional bid. Upon opening the bids, (bids attached) Public Utilities Supply bid \$393,831.32 and Tripp Brothers bid \$336,141.00. Public Works Director Stacy has reviewed the bids and finds that the low bid from Tripp Brothers meets bid requirement and that bid acceptable. *It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Scales, and unanimously approved the low bid from Tripp Brothers in the amount of \$336,141.00 for the 2023 street paving project.*

APPOINT INTERIM PLANNING ADMINISTRATOR

The Town Administrator reported that Cameron Braddy resigned as the Town Planning Administrator. Town staff have started advertising for the position. The position has many requirements. It will be challenging to fill the position as there are nine openings in the state. Commissioner Moore questioned if it was legal to appoint the Town Administrator as interim Planning Administrator. The Mayor tabled the discussion until after the closed session.

V1 FIBER LEASE EXTENSION

The Town Administrator reported that V1 Fiber requested to extend their rental of the Skinner Warehouse by six months. There were no issues with V1 Fiber as a tenant. V1 Fiber provided the required insurance information. *It was moved by Commissioner McCall, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously approved to extend the rental agreement by six months for V1 Fiber's use of the Skinner Warehouse.*

SPECIAL CALLED MINUTES

The Town Administrator noted that the presented minutes needed to be corrected regarding those in attendance. He requested the following amendments:

- Commissioner Jerry Knox was absent
- Commissioner William Coffield should be Ruth Coffield
- Commissioner Darnell Scales was present
- The Finance Officer is Mandy Bullock
- The Public Works Director is Stacy Stalls

It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously amended the minutes of the Special Called Meeting of September 21st, 2023.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Public Works

The Public Works Director reported the following:

- The director congratulated his staff for their excellent work at the Stampede. He also thanked all the departments needed for a successful Stampede.
- The department would sell ten pieces of used equipment on GovDeals.
- Daniel Brownfield acquired his grade 4 wastewater operator license.
- Brantley Gardner, the Fleet Supervisor, has been with the Town for 15 years. He acquired his C Well License and C Distribution License. The Public Works Department focuses on cross-training employees.
- Limb and leaf removal almost doubled due to a recent storm.
- The DOT project on Prison Camp Rd caused water interruption on Prison Camp, Henry Mizelle, Allen Williams, and Price Road.

Police

The Police Chief provided the following report:

- Four sergeants attended instructor training, and all four passed the state exam.
- Officers participated in the Homecoming festivities and the Carolina Country Stampede. The Chief thanked the Sheriff's office for assisting.
- The assessment center for a narcotic officer will have a decision made on Monday, October 9th, 2023.
- The department adopted a new weapon platform from 45 to 9mm caliber, rendering a more accurate citing system.
- Officers would participate in the Memorial Baptist Harvest Hoopla on October 25th.
- Staff began planning the Christmas event with carriage rides and Mr & Mrs Claus on December 5th at the Police Department.
- The Police Chief introduced a newly hired police officer, Keith Padgette. The Board welcomed Keith Padgette.

Fire/Rescue

The Fire Chief provided the following report:

- RRT provided training in Nags Head on September 21st.
- The department was conducting a fire prevention planning review for new businesses.
- The Town of Williamston's employee spotlight for the month of September was Brittany "Burt" Brinkley. She is 1 of 3 women employed by the Fire Department. She has been with the department for 15 years.
- The Fire Chief called Brantley Gardner at 10:30 pm on Friday during the hurricane because of a tire issue on an EMS unit. Brantley Gardner went early Saturday morning to fix the issue. The Fire Chief noted that the Town was blessed to have Brantley Gardner.
- The department hosted a 9/11 Memorial Service.
- As in years prior, the department participated in the Annual Carolina Country Stampede. He thanked Parks and Recreation for the food for the staff.
- He was happy to announce that he had hired three new employees and would introduce them at the next board meeting.
- Fire Department staff would wear pink shirts during the month of October for Breast Cancer Awareness.

Parks and Recreation

The Parks and Recreation Director reported:

- The department was busy with Football season, Fall Softball, Volleyball, and the Martin County Youth Soccer Association.
- The department cooked for the Stampede staff.
- The Gaylord renovation was still underway.

Finance

The Finance Director reported:

- She noted that each department did a great job with the Stampede and the Princess Pageant.
- Staff were close to finalizing the software conversion.
- ECU Architecture would visit Town facilities to create a plan for ADA Compliance.

Planning

The Town Administrator reported:

- The Stampede worked like an orchestra. He thanked each department for their excellent work.
- Williamston Downtown recently paid for a photographer for downtown business owners. Staff posted these photos on the Williamston Downtown website.
- Right of Ways for the street lights near the Country Club were in. The Planning Department was working with Dominion for the installation of street lights. The Mayor questioned if there was a date for the street light installation. The Town Administrator noted that Dominion would decide the date.
- The department was looking into painting the CSX railroad trestle. The department would have to handle stripping the lead paint.
- The arborist finished planting the trees downtown.
- The Board made the downtown a priority at the Budget Retreat; as a result, the department has secured a \$750,000 HUD grant for downtown. It is in the Environmental Study phase.
- \$260,000 EV Charger equipment would be installed downtown with a Town investment of \$3,000.
- Staff met with the MidEast Commission to discuss managing the \$730,000 grant for the Riverwalk and the \$ 1 million Rail Trail grant.
- Legal steps are in place to remove dilapidated or abandoned signs.
- The Martin Memorial Library pavilion was undergoing construction. The Town paid no money for this project.

Closed Session – Personnel Issue N.C. 143-318.11(6) and Attorney-Client Privilege - Hospital N.C. 143-318.11(3)

Commissioner Moore moved, with a second by Commissioner Knox, to go out of regular session into closed session for Personnel Issue N.C. 143-318.11(6) and Attorney-Client Privilege - Hospital N.C. 143-318.11(3) at 6:52 pm. The motion passed unanimously.

It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Scales, to go out of closed session into a regular session at 8:09 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

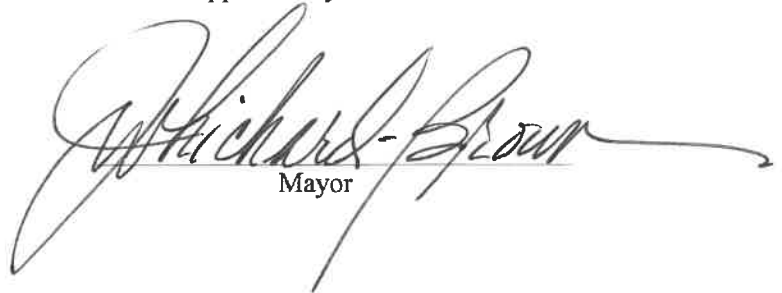
It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Scales, and unanimously appointed the Town Administrator as interim Planning Administrator.

There being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Submitted By:


Town Clerk

Approved By:


Mayor