

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

December 7, 2020

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Williamston met in regular session on Monday, December 7, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. in the NC Telecenter located at 415 East Blvd #130, Williamston, NC.

**PRESENT** Mayor Joyce Whichard-Brown  
Commissioners: Mayor Pro Tem Ronell Rodgers, Jerry Knox, Alton, Moore Al Chesson, and William Coffield  
Town Administrator: John O’Daniel  
Town Clerk: Christina Craft  
Finance Officer: Linda Harrison  
Police Chief: Travis Cowan  
Recreation Director: Allen Overby  
Town Planner and Zoning Administrator: Cameron Braddy  
Town Attorney: Daniel Manning  
Fire Chief: Michael Peaks  
Public Works Director: Kerry Spivey

**ABSENT**

**CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION**

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

**AGENDA APPROVED**

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

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. The Mayor reported the minutes for November 17, 2020 time is incorrect and needs to change to reflect the meeting time of 9 pm. *It was moved by Commissioner Rodgers, seconded by Commissioner Knox, and unanimously passed to approve the consent agenda as amended with the noted correction of the meeting time on November 17, 2020.*

Items approved in the Consent Agenda are as follows:

- (1) Minutes of the November 9 and 17, 2020 meetings
- (2) Ratification of Street Project Added Expenditures
- (3) Approval of Budget Amendment - Street Project Added Expenditures  
Powell Bill Fund  
Powell Bill Street \$25,799.18  
The purpose of this amendment is to budget additional funds to allow additional rock bed under Martin Luther King Drive. The additional funding was approved by the Board in emergency session on November 17, 2020.
- (4) Approval of Budget Amendment - Holiday Pay  
General Fund  
Regular Salaries \$3,600.00  
The purpose of this amendment is to appropriate funds to cover salary costs for additional 4 hours given to all employees on November 25th, the Wednesday before Thanksgiving. The Mayor called all Commissioners and had their approval along with her approval for Town Hall to close at 1 pm on Wednesday. Additional pay is given to Fire Department and Police Department for employees working shifts.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**Proposed Mobile Food Truck Ordinance Change**

The Mayor opened the public hearing to receive input from citizens on the proposed Mobile Food Truck Ordinance change which will allow a limited number of “one-day” permits. Kismet Matthews, with Martin Community College, reported organizing food trucks for the students at the college and wanted to be certain their practices align with the

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Town Ordinances. Commissioner Knox reported the urgency of making certain this change is thoroughly discussed and handled with care. His concern is local restaurant owners employ our citizens and pay taxes in Williamston. Commissioner Rodgers reported agreeing with Commissioner Knox but was concerned about compliance with the economic system regarding competition with private systems and free state of control. The Town Attorney requested clarification if Commissioner Rodgers' question regards the Town having the authority to pass the Ordinance. Commissioner Rodgers questioned if the Board has the authority over private businesses if the business is in-compliance. The Town Attorney reported the business must be in-compliance with state and local ordinances and the Town has the authority to move forward with the Mobile Food Truck Ordinance if the Board approves the change. With no further comments, the Mayor closed the Public Hearing.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**COVID-19 OPERATIONS UPDATE**

Wes Grey, MTW Health Department Supervisor, updated the Board on the COVID-19 statewide and local statistics. There are 110 active cases in Martin County. There are 11 active cases in Tyrell County. There are 34 active cases in Washington County. Martin County showed a steep increase after Thanksgiving and expects more related to the holiday. He is hopeful for a vaccine in the near future.

The Recreation Director reported the need to wear a mask at all times when playing basketball. With the increase in COVID cases, it was his recommendation to not have a basketball season this year. *Commissioner Knox motioned, seconded by Commissioner Chesson, and unanimously passed to not have a basketball season due to COVID.*

**OLD BUSINESS****Discussion of Fire Department Expansion/Police Relocation**

The Town Administrator reported the Fire Department is currently under budget but has had several change orders requiring the use of the contingency funds. There was a sewer line that had to be installed. An IT room was needed to house the equipment and will be climate controlled. While attempting to make the building more efficient, it was noticed the windows were drafty and needed to be replaced. It is hopeful the Fire Department Project will remain under budget and the estimated completion time is April 7, 2021.

The Police Department has also used contingency funds and is overbudget. \$108,978 of contingency funds were budgeted and \$191,533 has been spent. It was estimated 30% of the roof would have to be completely replaced. 100% of the roof has to be replaced. The USDA needs reassurance the Town will be responsible for the overage. He is requesting the Board to approve leniency up to \$100,000 in case of other smaller items that may arise. Commissioner Chesson reported personally seeing the rafters and plywood condition and this was nothing that could be anticipated. Commissioner Moore questioned if the Town is not under binding contract. Commissioner Chesson reported the damage wasn't evident until it was exposed and all of the expenditures could be justified. There is a contingency written in the contract. *Commissioner Chesson motioned, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and was unanimously passed to allocate from the General Fund up to \$100,000 for the additional expenditures in the Police Department Relocation Project.*

**NEW BUSINESS****Taxi Cab Franchise**

The Town Administrator reported the Town of Williamston allows for a total of five taxi franchises at any given time. Only two of the five current franchise holders, Ann's Taxi and Gainer's Taxi, are in-compliance with the taxi ordinance and are licensed by the Town. Letters were sent to the other taxi franchise holders to invite individual quasi-judicial hearings to discuss the possible revocation of the franchise for failure to comply with the Town's taxi ordinance. The deadline has passed and no request for a hearing has been received. He requested the revocation of the taxi franchise for Bland Taxi, Roberson Taxicab, and Little's Cab Service. *A motion was made by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Coffield and unanimously passed to revoke the taxi franchise for Bland Taxi, Roberson Taxicab and Little's Cab Service.*

**Approval of Public Records Policy – Charge for Producing Records**

The Town Administrator reported the Town Attorney expressed a need for the adoption of a policy to charge for producing records related to a public records request. The majority of public records request are handled without any charge as they are very routine. The Town Attorney reported the most recent request regarding the police department use of force study is a very large request. The Town does not have a policy in place and statutes require this to be in

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place to charge per copy. The charge is for the actual paper copy and not staff's time involved in producing records. The "information technology" section in the policy is for unusual cases where outside services are required to comply with a request. The Town Attorney recommends the Board to approve the policy to cover costs in any public records request. *A motion was made by Commissioner Chesson, seconded by Commissioner Knox and unanimously passed to approve the Public Records Policy as presented.*

**Town Administrator Evaluation Form Update**

The Town Administrator reported sample forms were presented at the last Board meeting. Based on Board feedback, the Town Clerk has combined requests received from the Board with the current evaluation form for your review. The Town Clerk reported additional questions were added to the current evaluation form. No changes were added to the ICMA form. However, separate requests were received to use the ICMA form and the current form with added questions. Both are submitted for your review. The Town Clerk also presented a 360 Degree form which will allow for anonymous reviews from the Department Heads prior to the evaluation as some of the evaluation form questions lean towards making decisions based on their input. Once the Department Heads complete the 360 form, the scoring would be combined in a spreadsheet, with all comments under each question. Commissioner Rodgers reported there are questions on the evaluation form that he does not have knowledge of and is not fair to the Town Administrator to respond. The Finance Director reported the 360 form would help fill in those blanks as he works directly with the departments. The Town Clerk reported, if the Board accepts the 360 form, the Board would have the completed spreadsheet a week prior to the evaluation. If there are more questions, the Board still has the opportunity to call department heads individually. Commissioner Chesson reported he prefers the ICMA form as it is not as cumbersome but likes the 360 form as it would give the Board more insight in the management skills. Commissioner Moore reported he understood the Board would continue to use the current form and contributed additional questions for the current form. The Town Administrator reported the need of Board direction regarding which evaluation form to use. *A motion was made by Commissioner Chesson, seconded by Commissioner Moore and unanimously passed to approve the use of current Town Administrator Performance Evaluation form as presented and the 360 Degree Manager Effectiveness Evaluation Form.*

**Approval of Ordinance 2020-15 Amending Chapter 117 of the Code of The Town of Williamston Entitled "Mobile Food Vendors"**

Town Planner and Zoning Administrator reported the need to update the Mobile Food Vendor code to remove outdated language such as the requirement of privilege license. The most significant change would include the addition of a one-time permit to allow a mobile food vendor to attend a local business event for a fee of \$50. Consecutive day events shall require a separate permit for each day. There was no change to the annual mobile vendor limit as it remains at a maximum of five annual license per year. *A motion was made by Commissioner Rodgers, seconded by Commissioner Moore and unanimously passed to approve the Ordinance 2020-15 Amending Chapter 117 of the Code of the Town of Williamston Entitled "Mobile Food Vendors" as presented. Ordinance 2020-15 is hereby attached with the minutes of this meeting and incorporated in the Town's Ordinance Book for future reference.*

**DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS****Planning**

The Town Planner and Zoning Administrator reported:

- The Code Enforcement Officer position has been filled and introduced Penny Swain. She shares an office with Zach Dickerson.
- The Mitchell building demolition has begun and should be completed very soon.
- The Patriot House and R&C building renovations have hit a snag and have requested a six-month extension. They anticipate completion by February or March.
- New businesses have opened:
  - The SS Cycle are now open for business beside the old Tarheel Apartment building.
  - The new Walgreens has opened.
  - A new law office on Wilson Street.
  - The Congleton Funeral Home received a special use permit to open on the corner of Liberty/Haughton Street.
  - The Tangled Mane beauty salon has opened on Baltimore Street.
- Zach Dickerson has completed a website for the Williamston Downtown Inc.
- Martin County have received a grant for a Bike and Pedestrian Plan.

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**Public Works**

The Public Works Director provided the following report:

- The knuckle-boom is currently out of service as the boom shows movement where there should be no movement
- The new sweeper is in use. The old sweeper is also being used to help stay ahead of the leaves but will be sold on the GovDeals website.
- The Street Project has been completed.
- The Air Curtain Burner application has been completed and sent to the State for review.

**Parks & Recreation**

The Parks & Recreation director reported the following:

- The Athletic Program Supervisor position is still open. Due to COVID, it has been decided to wait until the first of the year to begin interviews.
- The Rail Trail erosion was not as bad as previously thought. The drainage pipe is not cracked. Dirt was placed where the muskrats had dug.
- Trillium donated sanitizer stations which were installed Friday.
- The Perry Park renovation is awaiting news from the LCW grant. He anticipates to hear whether the Town is awarded the grant by February.

**Police**

The Police Chief reported:

- Henry Poston raised the most money in No Shave November which will allow him to continue to wear a beard for the next month. Donations will be sent to the American Cancer Society.
- Staff attended the Child Death Virtual Class.
- Required training has been completed regarding the use of radar and sent to the State.
- The staff Christmas party has been cancelled due to COVID.

**Fire/Rescue**

The Fire Chief provided the following report:

- RRT department was busy with many tech advice calls.
- The department has done the first outreach since March with guidance from the DHHS.
- Blue reflectors and painting hydrant tops are currently being done to improve response time.
- A live burn was done November 29th on North Haughton Street.
- The "Fill the Boot" fundraiser was done on Black Friday with a very low response.
- A Jamesville Fire Fighter, C.J. Blount was killed in a traffic accident and the department assisted with the service and with the Critical Incident Stress team support. He did an internship in Williamston while he was in high school.
- The Medicaid Cost report is almost complete.
- The COVID vaccine distribution is transported by dry ice or some type of cryogenic. The State is developing a plan as to how the RRT and rescue teams should respond in case of a motor vehicle accident.

**Administration**

The Town Administrator provided the following report:

- CDBG-NR grant application to renovate houses and the gym HVAC unit have awarded some funds but there are issues with the awarding process and are working with the NC Department of Commerce to address the issues.
- The original dates of for the completion of the Fire Department Renovation have extended by 15 days due to the change orders. The Police Relocation Project completion has been extended by 40 days.

**CLOSED SESSION**

*It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Chesson to go out of regular session into closed session to address Personnel per N.C.G.S. 143-318-11(a)(3). The motion passed unanimously.*

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

**Finance Director Retirement**

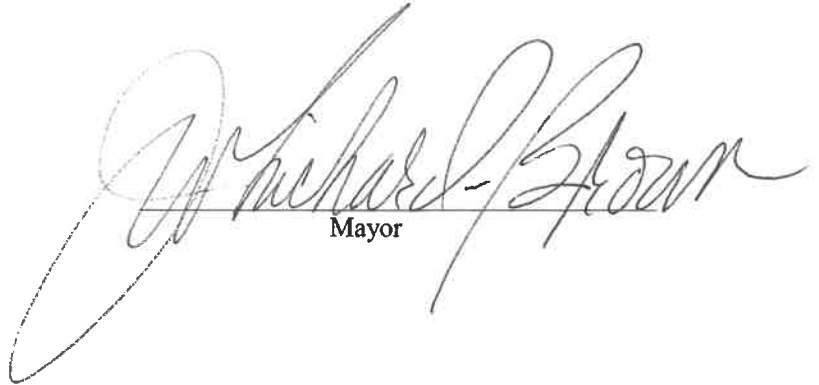
*It was moved by Commissioner Chesson, seconded by Commissioner Moore and unanimously passed to payout the accrued vacation time of 161.7 hours for an additional cost to the budget of \$3,040.*

There being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Submitted By:

Approved By:

  
Town Clerk

  
Mayor