

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

March 2, 2020

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Williamston met in regular session on Monday, March 2, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. in the Assembly Room at Town Hall.

PRESENT Mayor Joyce Whichard-Brown
Commissioners: Mayor Pro Tem Ronell Rodgers, Al Chesson, Alton Moore, Jerry Knox 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
Human Resources Administrator: Martha-Brown Lilley

ABSENT None

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

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

WELCOME

The Mayor welcomed Rene Purvis with the Board of Education and Robersonville Councilwoman Debra Armstrong and everyone present.

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 to the Regular Agenda. The Town Administrator requested removal of Old Business Item #5 Williamston Comprehensive Land Use and Master Plan and addition of a Close Session for Attorney Client Privilege. The Mayor requested the text change from Boys and Girls Club under New Business Item #1 to read as Williamston Boys and Girls Club. *It was moved by Commissioner Chesson, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously passed to approve the regular agenda as amended.*

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 Coffield, and unanimously passed to approve the consent agenda as presented.*

Items approved in the Consent Agenda are as follows:

- (1) Approval of the Minutes of the corrected minutes of January 24, 2020 meeting and minutes of February 3, 2020 meeting.
- (2) Approval of Park Advisory Board Reappointments: Tammy Hall, Doug Baker, Glen Cargile, William Johnson, and Amy Pierce
- (3) Capital Project Ordinance 2020-5: Police Department Facility Project
- (4) Tax Relief Order

Year	Name	Remarks	Total
2014	Picot Steward Prop	Wrong Value imported from County	\$ 152.00
2015	Picot Steward Prop	Wrong Value imported from County	\$ 152.00
2016	Picot Steward Prop	Wrong Value imported from County	\$ 152.00

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Reconfigure Traffic Pattern to 2-Way for Washington, South Elm and South Haughton Streets

The Town Administrator reported the purpose of this hearing is to allow for public comment concerning the consideration of the change from 1-way to 2-way traffic pattern for Washington, South Elm and South Haughton Streets. Kennis Wilkins reported he personally observed today with two vehicles that travelled side-by-side and had no impact on the parking spaces on the street which are located in front of the buildings. He feels the trees along the parking spaces could be removed and people could see to enter the road. There are three black businesses on that street and if you take away the parking areas, it would be detrimental to the businesses. Without the parking spaces, citizens will park across the road my private property. The road is not safe for pedestrians if the street is returned to 2-way traffic pattern. The Mayor questioned why the parking area across the street could not be utilized. Mr. Wilkins reported the parking lot is his personal property which is currently for sale. John Liddick reported the change in traffic pattern is not needed. The road will not be safe as a 2-way street as traffic drives very fast through the area. Lon Moore reported the loss of 250 feet of parking spaces that will be lost in change in traffic pattern is not necessary as there is currently 2-lanes. Changing the traffic pattern should not disturb any of the parking spaces in the area. The trees planted by the parking are not maintained and will scratch your car. Moses Matthews stated he was against the change in traffic pattern as is obtaining signatures to stop the change. Alonzo Brown stated he was against the traffic pattern change as it is a hazard. The trees are an issue as the trees have grown over the parking spaces. With no other citizen wishing to speak, the Mayor closed the Public Hearing.

Amendment to Zoning Ordinance: Micro-Winery and Micro-Distillery Text Amendment

The Town Planner and Zoning Administrator reported the purpose of this public hearing is to allow for citizen input concerning the consideration of a text amendment of the Microbrewery Ordinance to allow include Micro-Winery and Micro-Distillery in the Central Business District. This was passed unanimously at the last Planning Board meeting. Jason Steward, citizen of Williamston, spoke in favor in the past for the addition of the brewpub. He reported the Hookhand business is doing great and is a great business model. As he is the Martin County 911 Director and does not speak for the County but as a private citizen, he has noted no 911 calls related to the Hookhand business. The addition of micro-winery and micro-distillery would serve as a draw for Williamston as it draws people from all over the region. There is a micro-distillery trail map and there are none in northeastern North Carolina. There was a survey mentioned in the Comprehensive Plan at a previous meeting and the overwhelming response was to do something downtown. With no other citizen wishing to speak, the Mayor closed the Public Hearing.

Amendment to Zoning Ordinance: Outdoor Dining and Gathering

The Town Planner and Zoning Administrator reported the purpose of this public hearing is to allow for citizen input concerning the consideration of a text amendment to allow outdoor gathering with outdoor seating in commercial properties. Jason Steward spoke in support of this change for the same reasons he supports the change to allow micro-winery and micro-distillery text amendment.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jillian Powell spoke on behalf of the Williamston Boys and Girls club. She reported she is a member and the club has given her many great opportunities. The club has taught her to lead with integrity. Alonzo Brown reported the Woodlawn Cemetery is a mess and needs to be monitored. There are dirt holes and pot holes in the cemetery and it needs to be cleaned up. The condemned building across the street is a concern. It is private property but the Board needs to demolish it.

OLD BUSINESS

CONSIDERATION OF TRAFFIC CHANGE FOR WASHINGTON, ELM AND HAUGHTON STREETS

The Town Administrator reported originally the roads were switched to one-lane during the Highway 125 project. As the project has been completed, the Board directed staff to reach out to NCDOT to verify the feasibility of returning the roads back to the two-directional traffic pattern. Jason Davidson, with the NCDOT, is available for any questions. There are two options which are to leave the traffic patterns as is or change to 2-way traffic which will eliminate multiple parking spaces due to NCDOT requirements. Commissioner Rodgers questioned if the NCDOT has given any consideration as to what the businesses will receive with the loss of the parking places. Mr. Davidson the Town originated this request and no mechanism in place for reimbursements. Commissioner Rodgers questioned what advantage is in place for the Town to move forward. Mr. Davidson reported NCDOT was requested by the Town to see, if this was passed by the Board, how this could be done as safely as possible as the Highway 125 connector is now in place and as a result, there is not as much traffic in Town. Commissioner Rodgers reported that a lot times things are not brought forth initially when it comes to items such as this and wanted to know if there

were any 5 to 10-year plans to develop that area. Mr. Davidson reported there are none other than resurfacing that he is aware of. Commissioner Rodgers wanted to be certain that it is in the noted that in this meeting it was stated there is no future 5 or 10-year plans to develop this area. Commissioner Chesson reported the Town didn't request to do the change but was checking to see if it was feasible. This was not meant to be adversarial but only fact finding. He does not support the change if it means any business inconveniences. Commissioner Coffield questioned if the trees on the streets were taken in consideration. Mr. Davidson reported the 250 feet parking restriction is federally mandated. Elm Street has a bad angle for a left-hand turn and the parking restriction would be a requirement if the Town chooses to move forward with this request. The Mayor reported she was in favor of the change until she heard the public speak and is now against the a change in the traffic pattern. *It was moved by Commissioner Rodgers, seconded by Commissioner Chesson, and unanimously passed to leave the traffic pattern as one-way for Washington, South Elm and Houghton Streets.*

Consideration of Board Travel Policy

The Town Administrator presented a travel policy for the Board's consideration. The policy was originally discussed at the January Budget Retreat and was tabled to the February meeting. The Mayor was unable to attend the February meeting and requested the policy to be brought back to the Board in March. Commissioner Moore reported the policy looks more professional but it is not there yet. He was concerned with the requirement of a doctor's note as 24-hour viruses do not require a trip to the doctor. Commissioner Rodgers expressed concern that the policy was only for the Board members. The Town Administrator reported the staff currently have a policy in place. Commissioner Moore reported since there has never been a policy in place, he didn't understand the urgency of a policy. The Town Administrator requested the Board to at least approve the form which directs the Town Clerk to register the Board for conferences and she will have the paperwork to support the purchases. The Town Administrator reported the doctor's note portion can be removed and the policy can be brought to the Board at the next meeting. The Mayor requested a motion to accept the Board Travel Policy as the reporting back to the Board and the doctor's note stipulation have been removed. *Commissioner Chesson made a motion to adopt the draft version with the stipulation that the doctor's note obligation be removed. Commissioner Knox seconded the motion. Commissioners Chesson and Knox voted to adopt the draft version with the removal of the doctor's note requirement. Commissioners Coffield, Rodgers and Moore voted against adoption of the policy. The Town Administrator reported he will provide an updated policy at the next meeting.*

Consideration of Travel Budget

The Town Administrator presented a travel budget for the Board's consideration. The budget includes \$891 travel allowance for the Mayor and \$816 travel allowance for each of the Commissioners. Commissioner Moore reported the amounts may sound like a lot of money but in comparison, other towns get a lot more. The Board is not spending a lot of money. He questioned why the same amount was proposed per commissioner when some do nothing. The cost for hotel and registration are out of the Board's control. The Town Administrator reported the samples he received from other towns are not of the same size nor on the same economic level. The policies were obtained for text only. Commissioner Chesson reported the amounts are based on historical and perceived costs. We are supposed to bring something of benefit back to the Town when we go to conferences. If I go, that's what I plan to do. Commissioner Moore reported he doesn't have a problem bringing back knowledge but some commissioners do not attend any out of town conferences. The Commissioners have no control over the cost of the hotel or conference. Commissioner Rodgers reported the Black Summit is not just for black elected officials and any of the Board can go so why should I report anything. The Town Administrator reported the purpose of sharing knowledge gained would save money and educate others. He and Commissioner Moore attended the NCLM conference last year and both agreed after the conference was not worth the cost. It is the Board's discretion what is attended. Commissioner Rodgers reported each that attends will bring back something different. The Town Administrator reported the amounts were divided without specific conferences listed so the Commissioner can choose what to attend with respect to the individual budget. *Commissioner Chesson made a motion to adopt the board travel policy as presented. Commissioner Knox seconded the motion. Commissioners Chesson and Knox voted to adopt the board travel budget. Commissioners Coffield, Rodgers and Moore voted against adoption of the board travel budget. The Town Administrator requested direction from the Board as to what they want done. Commissioner Moore reported the budget will not be approved until June so there is time to discuss. The Finance Officer reported there is usually a balance budget ready to be presented by the April meeting and the budget is approved the first Monday in June. It is better to have finances in order by April as further direction will be needed as what funds will need to be cut to*

accommodate additional expenditures. Commissioner Knox reported the budget is of great concern and all of these meetings have a cost. The Board needs to be careful in spending as the next budget projects an increase in taxes and an increase in water bills. Commissioner Rodgers reported he understands what Commissioner Knox is saying but this concern never comes up until it comes to certain items with certain demographics and when it comes to certain demographics, then all of the sudden the budget becomes a concern. One example is the West End Tennis courts, it was \$18,000. When we discussed the air conditioning at the Gaylord Perry Park, it was \$15,000 and it was a budget concern. Commissioner Knox reported he does not know what he is talking about but he intends to save money the best he can with taxes and water rates rising and is looking at this from a business standpoint. The Mayor questioned if the Board would like to have a special-called meeting. Commissioner Moore reported the Board could come to a consensus prior to the April meeting. Commissioner Chesson suggested the Board members meet individually with staff with concerns and present at the next meeting. The Mayor requested the Town Administrator set a time for a called meeting.

Consideration of Water Bill Late Fee

The Town Administrator presented a \$5 delinquency fee on water accounts for the Board's reconsideration. This was previously discussed and approved at the Budget Retreat Meeting. The Mayor reported she has yet to receive a reason for this increase as the people who pay after the 19th have to pay a late fee. The Town Administrator reported this fee is to encourage citizens to pay on time instead of rushing in to pay on the 19th each month as this gives a false due date. The actual due date is the 10th of each month. Commissioner Rodgers reported the fee would be too much for many of the citizens. Commissioner Chesson reported the fee would encourage people to pay on time. The Town Administrator reported other towns have a much more stringent fee. The Mayor reported the Town has a \$35 fee to turn the water back on. The Town Administrator reported the Town does not have a fee to turn the water back on. The Mayor reported the 10 days past the due date is a grace period. Commissioner Rodgers reported many have to eat dog food as they can't afford anything else and the \$5 fee is too much. *It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Coffield to not move forward with the \$5 delinquency fee to the water bills. The Mayor asked for discussion. Commissioner Chesson reported the Town runs a utility just like the power company. We run a business and our accounts receivable is in excess of \$150,000. We all have our heartstrings but this is a business decision and is something we are supposed to do for those of us who pay our bills on-time. Commissioner Moore reported he is a doer and wants to act on it. Commissioner Chesson reported that is a personal decision, not a business decision. Commissioner Coffield reported this is a second late fee. The Town Administrator reported this is a delinquency fee. The Mayor reported she sees the 10 days as a grace period. Commissioners Moore, Rodgers and Coffield voted in favor of not adding the \$5 delinquency fee. Commissioners Knox and Chesson voted against the motion.*

NEW BUSINESS

Consideration of Cultural Allocation Requests

The Town Administrator reported a letter was sent to organizations that have received allocations in the past per Board direction. Representatives from several organizations are in attendance tonight to address the Board concerning their needs. He requests no funding decisions to be made tonight as this information will be used throughout the budget process.

Martin County Arts Council

Kathy Daly spoke on behalf of the Martin County Arts Council. She reported their funding comes from Grass Roots, Martin County and the Town of Williamston. The Grass Roots allocation has been cut. Last year, they hired an executive director who has done a phenomenal job but the workload is too much for one person. They hope to add an administrative assistant. The MCAC has exhibits every month. Presently, the African American Art Exhibit is on display. In April, there is a fine art show which shows the local talent. There are people who rent space. There is an annual photography show in June. There are many workshops to teach how to make jewelry and felting. We held the first Color Fun Run. There is an annual banquet for the council members. We did a Christmas Choral concert with close to 70 singers. The singers came to Williamston every week to practice for over a month.

Martin County Chamber of Commerce

Chase Conner reported the Chamber has recently moved into a building downtown Williamston. The Chamber of Commerce update the budget and noted the Town of Williamston has allocated funds in 2014/2015 to hold seminars

and would like to begin hosting events such as starting a business and historical credits. The Chamber plans to take over the Main Street Market which is a free community festival held in the Barnes Plaza. It was previously funded by a grant and would like the Town to help fund so the Chamber can expand on that program. There are five events that are currently being planned and four of the five are new events.

Martin Memorial Library

Patrick Fitzgerald, BHM Library director, reported the library is requesting the equivalent of the previous year's allocation. He reported the funding is used towards adult and children's programming. This library is one of the busiest in the system. The key is to keep children engaged. The funding also helps with salaries, upkeep of the grounds, computer use and circulate materials.

Williamston Boys and Girls Club

Kimberly Boyd reported the Williamston Boys and Girls Club is housed in the E. J. Hayes building. 100 children have been served in the last year with over 60 served every day. There are another 60 children on the wait-list. The reason we haven't added more children is due to staffing. We have hired another staff member and will expand very soon. Our goal and mission is to target children with the greatest need. We want the children to have every opportunity that is available to them. We stand shoulder to shoulder with the school system to identify challenges. They have partnered with a group in Raleigh to ensure children are reading effectively by the end of the third grade. Tutors are pushed into the school system to tutor children one on one in school and after school to elevate the reading level. The fourth and fifth grade is the next level which they hope to expand to provide tutoring for math. This is why the Club is requesting an increase to \$20,000 allocation.

Consideration of Cemetery Timeline

The Town Administrator presented a proposal for consideration of the Board. The proposal will require the plots to be sold on the wooded side of the cemetery which is on the opposite side away from the homes on Gurganus Street. The Public Works Director reported the cemetery has been sectioned and dirt from the front portion of the property will be used to build up the lower wet section of the cemetery. Areas E and F are available but discouraged as the area is low and will need to be developed. There is an underground powerline in that area which is also a concern. Staff has never dictated prior to this as to where a citizen can purchase a plot so this is a new situation for us. The first sections proposed to sell plots will be closest A, C and D. Commissioner Coffield questioned what section closest to the Martin Luther King Drive was he referring to as the places that are marked are right in front of his house. The Town Administrator reported Section A is the front section on Martin Luther King Drive, closest to W. Pine Street. Commissioner Chesson reported the first consideration was Ms. Coffield's request to begin selling plots on the farthest side of the cemetery and the second consideration is what staff is able to do. Commissioner Coffield requested staff to work areas C and D and do not allow A and B to be developed until C and D are developed. The Public Works Director reported the biggest leap for him is to dictate where residents can buy plots and can see both sides. He reported it would create a challenge if plots in area E and F were sold prior to areas A and B as the dirt will have to be dealt with. Commissioner Coffield questioned if there are plans to put shrubbery outside the fence. The Public Works Director reported anything is possible. Fencing has been put into place already and he works at the Board's pleasure. If shrubbery is requested, shrubbery will be planted. The budget and manpower for the department is very thin. It is a challenge to survive on the current budget as the sale of plots does not cover the department's current expenses. He will research to see what is easy to maintain. Commissioner Rodgers questioned if this process of preparing the cemetery will affect property values. The Town Administrator reported the property has been listed as a cemetery for a long time. *Commissioner Chesson motioned to begin selling plots in C and D until it reaches 75% occupancy prior to selling plots in E and F and investigate the cost of phasing shrubbery that is easy to maintain and provides a hedge and a long-range capital plan to phase it over time, seconded by Commissioner Coffield and unanimously passed to approve the cemetery plan as presented.*

Approval of Audit Contract

The Town Administrator presented an audit contract for the year ending June 30, 2020 with Carr Riggs & Ingram. *Commissioner Knox made a motion to approve the audit contract with Carr, Riggs & Ingram, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously passed to approve the regular agenda as amended.*

Consideration of Offer to Purchase 118 Pearl Street

The Town Administrator reported a bid was received for the 118 Pearl Street. This property was foreclosed on with a delapidated building on it. The Town was hopeful to have the Fire Department burn the building on the property but the building was too close to an adjacent home. An advertisement has been run in the paper to allow for upset bids. If another deposit is received, an advertisement will have to be run again to allow for other upset bids. *Commissioner Chesson made a motion to accept the offer subject to the raised bidding procedures as required by the General Statutes and be brought back before the board to accept, seconded by Commissioner Knox, and unanimously passed.*

Approval of Demolition Ordinances

Town Planner and Zoning Administrator reported Code Enforcement demolition has begun for the 4 properties. All General Statute requirements were met regarding notifying property owners, holding public hearings, and the last requirement is to pass the ordinances which will give the authority to demolish the buildings. A separate vote for each ordinance is required. Commissioner Moore questioned as the Board was told the building on the 203 Morris Street was to be demolished by the end of the year. The Town Planner and Zoning Administrator reported the delay was in an effort to streamline the demolitions and hopefully have a cost-savings. Once the demolitions begin, it will take a couple of days and will hopefully be completed by the end of March.

Commissioner Chesson made a motion to pass Ordinance 2020-6 to demolish the building on 203 Morris Street, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously passed.

Commissioner Moore made a motion to pass Ordinance 2020-7 to demolish the building on 405 Blount Street, seconded by Commissioner Rodgers, and unanimously passed.

Commissioner Rodgers made a motion to pass Ordinance 2020-8 to demolish the building on 416 Blount Street, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously passed.

Commissioner Chesson made a motion to pass Ordinance 2020-9 to demolish the building on 416 New Avenue, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously passed.

These ordinances are hereby attached with the minutes of this meeting and incorporated in the Town's Ordinance Book for future reference.

Approval of Letter of Support for Future I-87 RISE Project

The Town Administrator received a request from the NC Division of Transportation as they are applying for grant funds for the Future I-87 Resiliency, Innovation, Safety, Economy Project. *Commissioner Chesson made a motion to approve the Letter of Support for Future I-87 RISE project, seconded by Commissioner Knox, and unanimously passed.*

Consideration of Micro-brewery, Micro-winery, Micro-distillery and Brewpub Ordinance Text Amendment

The Town Planner and Zoning Administrator reported the changes to the text in the Zoning Ordinance will add verbiage adding the micro-winery and micro-distillery to the current ordinance. The Town Attorney reported a paper ordinance will have to be developed and brought to the Board for consideration. *Commissioner Chesson made a motion to request staff to bring an ordinance to the Board for approval, seconded by Commissioner Knox, unanimously passed.*

Consideration of Outdoor Dining and Gathering Areas Ordinance Text Amendment

The Town Planner and Zoning Administrator reported the changes to the text in the Zoning Ordinance will outdoor dining and gathering areas to the current ordinance. This is a marketing tool for current and future businesses. There will not be alcohol sales on a sidewalk as that is against the Town's current ordinance but will allow alcohol sales in behind or beside the business with proper permits. Commissioner Moore questioned if this is something that will help sale building downtown or is this something that could be revisited at a later time. The Town Planner and Zoning Administrator reported this will be a marketing tool to encourage future businesses. Commissioner Rodgers reported the Town needs to revisit this due to the alcohol and consumption. The Town Attorney reported a paper ordinance will have to be developed and brought to the Board for consideration at the next regular meeting. Commissioner Chesson requested staff to approach current businesses and potential businesses to see how it will affect the big picture.

Godwin Coppage Concession Stand Operations

The Parks and Recreation Director reported the softball park opened in 2007. The Town reviewed options regarding leasing the concession stand operations to a group. The Williamston Softball Fastpitch Association was created by local coaches and their two primary responsibilities was to help with softball tournaments and to run the concession

stand. That operation has worked well over the years. Ten percent of the funds was given to the Town and the rest went to the Association. The Association has agreed to donate some of those funds to assist the Town put concrete under the bleachers. Volunteer participation in the Association has dwindled over the years and the Association is not as active. With the increase in tournaments, the Association has not been able to maintain the concession operations due to lack of volunteers and have had to sublease to other nonprofits like school clubs. He reported he is considering the option of the Town taking over the concession stand operations. He wanted the Board to be aware of the future possibility of changes that may be needed. Commissioner Chesson reported the Town needs to consider another lease as Town employees should not assume that responsibility. Commissioner Moore questioned if the Town would receive the profit from the concession stand. The Recreation Director reported the Town would receive the profit but would increase the Town's expenses with staffing and supplies. Commissioner Moore questioned the Town's liability if it was leased. The Town Attorney did not foresee any issues with a lease as the Town would have a contract. Commissioner Chesson questioned if the Town would require a modest stipend in addition to liability insurance. The Recreation director reported the current lease requires a payment of ten percent of the proceeds plus insurance. If the Town required a set fee, this could cause a hardship to the contracted group as the number of tournaments is not consistent.

Approval of the State Hazmat Contract Proposal

The Fire Chief requested the Board approval to submit the technical proposal for the Town to continue the Hazmat Response Team. The Town began the Hazmat Response Team in 1995. The proposal will extend for the next four years and the State will extend for one year. The technical proposal is a request to receive a contract from the state of North Carolina to continue this service. Once the contract is received, it will be forwarded to the Town Attorney for review. He is working with the State Attorney's office to expedite this as it must be completed before July. He requested permission to sign on behalf of the Town of Williamston to ask for a contract. This will require a witness signature, the Town Clerk's signature and use of the Town's corporate seal. The contract will be brought to Board for approval once received. *Commissioner Knox made a motion to grant the Fire Chief permission to sign the technical proposal to continue with the Hazmat Response team on behalf of the Town, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously passed to approve the motion.*

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Fire/Rescue

The Fire Chief provided the following report:

- There were 223 calls in the month of February
- Hazmat Team performed outreach services to Purdue, Bertie County and fielded technical responses.
- There have been 12 requests for fire alarms. As one house may require multiple alarms, it will not take long for the 52 alarms requisitioned to be used.
- The Martin County Fireman Association meeting was held in Oak City to discuss the water haul training the department will host in Williamston which will help with insurance rating.
- The department attended the Community Unity meeting.

Public Works

The Public Works Director provided the following report:

- He responded to the citizen complaint regarding drainage at the east end on the rail trail. The drainage appears to be unchanged. The water as it drains in the eastern direction does cross over by Baker Gas and crosses under the rail trail in two pipes. There was a heavy flow during the time and the water was not overrunning the bank. Commissioner Moore questioned if he had spoken with the homeowner. The Public Works Director reported he didn't know how to contact the citizen. The Town Administrator reported he did contact the citizen. She is one of the last houses in that area where the landscape flattens out and it is likely she may have water pool in the backyard in a hurricane or massive flooding. When the area was reviewed, it was during a 3-day heavy rain. Commissioner Chesson reported he walks the trail regularly and has not seen any issues.
- He responded to the citizen complaint regarding leaf and limb pickup at the Skewarkee Cemetery which is located beside the historic primitive Baptist church building and the Shamrock restaurant. Historically, the Town has picked up from that property per the Administrator at the time instructed to do so as it is in a very busy and visible area of the Town. The church property has been sold and is now listed as commercial

property. The policy of the Town is to not pick up leaf and limb from commercial property. The elderly 90-year-old gentleman voluntarily cleans the property and does a fine job and requested the Town continue to pick up the leaf and limbs. He made a passionate plea to the Board as it is a historical location. The Public Works Director instructed him that the church is now commercial property and will no longer offer the service. If any changes are to be made from the current position due to the policy in place, it will require Board direction. Commissioner Chesson questioned if he needs direction from the Board. The Public Works Director reported he is receptive to any direction and without direction, he will revert to Town Policy. Commissioner Chesson supports the decision to maintain the policy in place.

- The department is reviewing drainage issues on Chesson Drive. This area was the Town's plan for an industrial park and is exploring options for drainage in this area.
- There are concerns over Factory Street as it is a dirt road and the heavy rainfall presents a challenge to maintain the grade. A minimum rock coverage of the majority of the road of three inches will cost approximately \$16,000 that was not specifically budgeted this year.

Parks & Recreation

The Parks & Recreation director reported the following:

- Basketball season ended last weekend.
- All-Star games will begin mid-March and teams have begun practice.
- Softball registration will begin next week.
- There are 14 tournaments scheduled for this year with one this weekend that has 18 teams registered. The tournaments bring lots of revenue for the businesses in the Town of Williamston.
- There are still two full-time positions open.
- He is hopeful to bring a grant before the Board to assist the Town's payment of the PARTF grant for the park. Park renovations can not begin prior to applying for the grant.

Police

The Police Chief reported:

- The department attended the Community Unity meeting. The Jamesville school will reschedule the Career Day.
- Several officers participated in Read Across America and read Dr. Seuss books to the third and fourth graders.
- The department along with other businesses sponsored books for the first and fourth graders in the Williamston elementary school. The books will distribute by our officers to each of the students.
- In response to the speeding complaint on East Franklin Street, he and the Town Administrator reviewed the report to the motor vehicle collision. Speed was not a factor but the sun blinded the driver. There have been complaints of speed in the area in the past and will give consideration to that area. As it is down a slope, it would be easy to reach higher speeds. The department has new radar detectors and are currently training staff. Proactive enforcement will hopefully be met with voluntary compliance in the area.
- He introduced two new officers, Courtney Adams and Garrett Goddard. They have been employed by the Town for a couple of months and all paperwork has been completed and assigned to training officers.
- Commissioner Coffield questioned if citizens are covered under Stand your Ground. The Police Chief reported NC version called Castle Doctrine. He urges citizens to take a concealed carry course to learn the laws of use of deadly force for protection as the course was designed by the Justice Academy and approved for Criminal Justice and NRA instructions to teach NC law to our citizens about what they can and can not do. There are several great instructors in the area.

Planning

The Town Planner and Zoning Administrator reported:

- Williamston has been reaccredited as a Main Street Community for 2020 and are thankful to the community members that have been supportive of the downtown revitalization efforts and to the committee members that have helped in this process.
- Owner initiated demolition of a residential structure at 112 Roanoke Ave after a structure fire a few months ago. The site has been cleaned up.

- Branding Workshop results have been rescheduled for a later date due to the presenters being ill. The new date will be posted on Facebook and emailed to interested parties.
- Tractor Supply received a Special Use Permit from the Planning Board of Adjustments to allow the installation of an LP Tank for distribution. No word on when the installation will take place.
- Cookout has begun work for their location at the old Sonic property. Contractors have not given us a date of completion as of yet.
- Williamston Downtown, Inc. Board Chair Greg Shepherd, along with other community members, have cleaned, repainted, and decorated the downtown trash cans.
- Town Planner met with the owner of the former Magnuson property and informed them the Town would be start code enforcement efforts to make the site more presentable to the public. A site visit with the property owner is scheduled for next Monday to go over what needs to be done.
- Town Planner spoke with a town citizen regarding comments made at the last public comment period in reference to the Riverfront Redevelopment District. They were informed that the sign out on the property is our ultimate vision however, no work has been done yet due to funding. Funds are currently in the CIP for this project.
- Section 8 and subsidized housing: a property owner has asked the thoughts and opinions from the Board regarding our ordinance for multi-family projects. Currently, the zoning ordinance does not allow units over units – meaning construction on new multi-family projects must be one story or townhome style units. The property owner has requested that the ordinance be changed to allow multi-story, multi-family projects for future section 8 and subsidized housing opportunities. Commissioner Chesson reported he will need more discovery information before he could weigh-in. The Town Planner and Zoning Administrator reported residential over businesses is allowed in the Central Business District but residential over residential is currently not allowed.

CLOSED SESSION

It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Coffield and passed to go out of regular session into closed session to address Attorney-Client Privilege per N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3).

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

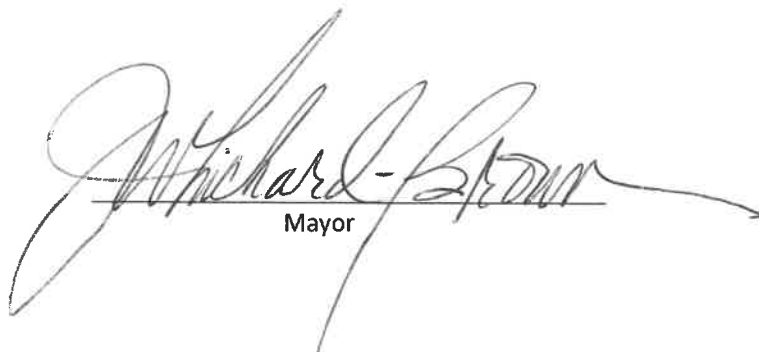
ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Submitted By:

Approved By:


Town Clerk


Mayor