

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

January 6, 2020

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Williamston met in regular session on Monday, January 6, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. in the Police Training Room at Town Hall.

PRESENT Mayor: Joyce Whichard-Brown
Commissioners: Mayor Pro Tem Al Chesson, Jerry Knox, Ronell Rodgers, Alton Moore, 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 Knox led the pledge of allegiance. Commissioner Moore offered the invocation.

WELCOME

The Mayor welcomed Representative Shelly Willingham, Martin County Commissioner Ronnie Smith, Martin County Commissioner Dempsey Bond, Robersonville Mayor Tina Brown, Winfall Mayor Frederick Yates, Jamesville Mayor Bradley Davis, Mayor Dennis Anton, Parmele Mayor Jerry McCrary and all present to the meeting.

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 the Public Hearing for interim financing for the Police and Fire Department Projects and removal of New Business Items 4 and 5 regarding consideration of interim financing for the Fire and Police Department projects. *It was moved by Commissioner Coffield, seconded by Commissioner Chesson, 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. The Town Administrator requested the addition of a recommendation for reappointment of Deborah Horton to the Martin Memorial Library Board. *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 December 2 and 19, 2019 meetings.
- (2) Tax Relief Order

Year	Name	Remarks	Total
2019	Benjamin Shelton	BP no longer located within city limits	\$ 551.29
2019	Murray Elliott	Boat listed in Currituck County	\$ 42.38
2018	Alliance & Associates	Business moved to Tarboro	\$ 139.79
2019	Alliance & Associates	Business moved to Tarboro	\$ 103.10

- (3) Deborah Horton – Reappointment to the Martin Memorial Library Board

PUBLIC HEARING

The Mayor opened the public hearing to receive input from citizens on the Fiscal year 2020/2021 Budget. With no comments made, the Mayor closed the public hearing.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Commissioner Dennis Anton thanked the Board and delivered a letter from the Town of Jamesville in appreciation of the receipt of three Christmas pole decorations.

OLD BUSINESS

ELECTION OF AND SWEARING IN OF MAYOR PRO TEMPORE

The Mayor announced the election of Mayor Pro Tempore will utilize the nomination and ballot method. She requested the Commissioners to nominate a Mayor Pro Tempore and then the Board to vote on the nominations. The candidate who receives the majority of the votes will be selected as the Mayor Pro Tempore. To keep the process as transparent as possible, a raise of the Commissioner's hand will signify the vote in place of a paper ballot. She requested a motion to approve the nomination and ballot method. A motion was made by Commissioner Rodgers, seconded by Commissioner Moore and unanimously passed. Commissioner Knox reported his vote is not against anyone on the Board as the Board has good people. He nominated Commissioner Chesson as Chesson has been a Board member for many years. He operates a business that is most likely larger than the town of Williamston and it is important to be business-orientated when making business decisions. Commissioner Coffield reported while all of that is true, but in any job, others need to be trained. If something happens to Chesson, it is time for someone else to be trained in that position. Commissioner Rodgers reported it is refreshing to hear Commissioner Knox's comment as to not vote against anyone as it is a sign of maturity and growth for this board. However, if Commissioner Chesson does not retain the position as Mayor Pro Tem, he is hopeful that Commissioner Chesson will continue to provide his insight as an engineer regardless who is elected to the position. The Mayor opened the floor for nominations. Commissioner Knox nominated Commissioner Chesson. Commissioner Coffield nominated Commissioner Rodgers. The Mayor asked both nominees if they were willing to serve and both agreed. The Mayor asked for votes. Commissioners Knox and Chesson voted for Commissioner Chesson. Commissioners Rodgers, Moore and Coffield voted for Commissioner Rodgers.

The Town Clerk then administered the oath of office of Mayor Pro Tempore to Ronell Rodgers, his first term in this capacity.

Approval of Project Ordinance 2020-2: Fire Department

The Town Administrator presented the Capital Project Ordinance 2020-2. The project authorized is renovations of the Williamston Fire Department facility approved at the January 2019 retreat. The Town is seeking funding through USDA with a 40-year loan. Oakley Collier Architects are the engineering firm. This ordinance supersedes a similarly title ordinance (2019-110) adopted on the 6th day of August, 2019. *It was moved by Commissioner Chesson, seconded by Commissioner Knox and passed with four votes for the approval of the ordinance, with Commissioner Rodgers voting against the Capital Project Ordinance 2020-2 Fire Department Renovation Project as presented. Ordinance 2020-2 is hereby attached with the minutes of this meeting and incorporated in the Town's Ordinance Book for future reference.*

Approval of Project Ordinance 2020-3: Police Department

The Town Administrator presented the Capital Project Ordinance 2020-3. The project authorized is the purchase of Randy Stalls Building and renovations of that building for the Williamston Police Department approved at the January 2019 retreat. The Town is seeking funding through USDA with a 40-year loan. Oakley Collier Architects are the engineering firm. *It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Coffield and unanimously passed for the approval of the Capital Project Ordinance 2020-3 Fire Department Facility Project as presented. Ordinance 2020-3 is hereby attached with the minutes of this meeting and incorporated in the Town's Ordinance Book for future reference.*

Approval of Project Ordinance 2020-1: Gaylord Perry Pak PARTF Grant Project

The Town Administrator presented the Capital Project Ordinance 2020-1. The project authorized is the Gaylord Perry Park Renovation Project as approved at the November 18, 2019 Town Board of Commissioner's meeting. The grant requires a 50% matching of funds by the Town. *It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Coffield and unanimously passed for the approval of the Capital Project Ordinance 2020-3 Fire Department Facility Project as presented.*

NEW BUSINESS

Approval of 2018/2019 Financial Audit

James Overton, supervising senior with Carr, Riggs & Ingram, presented the 2018/2019 Financial Audit. He was very complementary of the promptness and assistance of the staff. He reported a clean opinion of the financial statements. The assets and deferred outflows of resources of the Town exceeded its liabilities and deferred inflows of resources at the close of the fiscal year by \$23,915,720 (net position). The total net position decreased by \$73,441, primarily due to a prior period adjustment of \$283,094 for the purchase of water lines, accumulated depreciation and the related debt payable to Martin County for water lines sold to the Town by the count in a previous fiscal year. The Town's total debt increased by \$469,178 during the current fiscal year. Governmental activity debt decreased \$440,885 while Storm Water debt increased \$940,106 primarily due to the transfer of a USDA loan for the Skewarkee Canal Water Capital Project from the Governmental Activities to the Storm Water fund. The Governmental Activities, without the transfer of capital assets and related debt to the Storm Water Fund, broke even. The Town has a very strong fund balance position of seven months in case of an emergency. Overton reported the Local Government Commission (LGC) will take control of a town when it drops to one month's worth of emergency funds or 8%. The smaller town size would require more of a balance as a flood or hurricane could drastically decrease those funds. While the town is in good shape for a small, rural town, he recommends increasing the fund balance as the town is not at the optimal level.

The general fund revenues over expenditures were \$148,673. The Water and Sewer Fund had a \$220,488. The Storm Water Fund show an income before contributions and transfers of \$6,763. The Other Post-Employee Benefits (OPEB) Fund has \$836,691 set aside to pay for the benefits of employee's hired prior to 2013. The estimated cost overall cost of OPEB is \$4,455,462. The Martin Memorial Library decreased to \$18,401 due to the purchase of new HVAC, landscaping and other expenses.

At June 30, 2019, the Town had a legal debt margin of \$24,459,643. The Town has two loans with the US Department of Agriculture in the amount of \$1,633,550 and \$2,046,200, respectively, for the construction and renovation of the Town's fire and police states that are authorized but un-issued at June 30, 2019. There is a balance of \$383,541 in the Powell Bill funds. These funds can only be used in street-related expenses. The tax collection percentage is 93.20%. While the first-year collection rate is not great, the second-year collection is much higher 99%. In a small rural town, one person that does not pay taxes makes a big difference. Commissioner Chesson reported the finance of the Town in 2009 attracted the attention of the LGC. He commended the Board and staff on their diligence to increase the fund balance. This balance is a minimum as the upcoming OPEB liability, the fire department project, the police department and park renovation project mean that the staff will need to continue to be prudent with funds. Overton reported the town is in a rural area with little growth which means the revenues will not grow quickly and the Town will need to continue to be diligent to stay within those boundaries.

It was moved by Commissioner Chesson, seconded by Commissioner Coffield and unanimously passed to approve 2018/2019 Financial Audit as presented.

Approval of Audit Response Letter to LGC

James Overton reported the need of an audit response letter to the State and Local Government Finance Division and the Local Government Commission. All departments were under budget except debt service. In the original budget, the Town budgeted to borrow \$78,112 to purchase police cars. Later in the year, the Town decided to pay off smaller debts prior to borrowing monies for larger debts. Since the money was actually borrowed and not used, it should have been shown as a loan and repayment. This was an oversight. Michael Jordan, Carr Riggs & Ingram, stated that General Statutes requires any monies dispersed must be budgeted. *It was moved by Commissioner Chesson, seconded by Commissioner Knox and unanimously passed to approve and sign the audit response letter as presented.*

Approval of Audit Extension Contract

James Overton reported the need of an audit extension to the contract. The audit has been sent to the LGC for approval. *It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Moore and unanimously passed to the audit contract extension as presented.*

Approval of the Town of Williamston Comprehensive Plan

Bob Clark, N-Focus representative, presented the Town of Williamston Comprehensive Plan. The last update to the plan was done in 2009-2010. The Town Plan 2040 Comprehensive Land Use and Master Plan purpose is to provide information and perspective used to pinpoint and prioritize actions to support a resilient, self-sustaining community. An up-to-date plan balancing the changing trends, environmental mandates, and the Town's vision is essential to the success of Williamston and its inhabitants. The plan was reviewed and recommended for approval by the Williamston Planning Board. *It was moved by Commissioner Chesson, seconded by Commissioner Knox and unanimously passed to accept the Comprehensive Plan as presented.*

Approval of Cultural Budget Funding Request Letter

The Town Administrator reported, with Board direction, a letter will be sent to cultural groups that have received prior funding to require funding requests to be sent to the Town for consideration when developing the budget. *It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Chesson and unanimously passed to distribute the letter as presented.*

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Public Works

The Public Works Director provided the following report:

- The department had a normal month.
- There was a leak on Christmas Eve which was handled fairly quickly by staff.
- 5 tons of asphalt were used in street repair.
- There were 9 sewer calls related to grease in lines.

Police

The Police Chief reported:

- There were no issues during the holiday.
- He was very impressed with the quick turnaround related to the water leak on Christmas Eve.
- Training continues to include participation in pretrial release training
- The department participated in a training drill lockdown and had to do an actual lockdown of the Riverside Middle School. Both events went very smoothly.
- Foot patrol was increased during the holiday season.

Fire/Rescue

The Fire Chief provided the following report:

- December was an average month
- The Hazmat team assisted Oak City Fire Department with what was thought to be a downed aircraft. This was not a downed aircraft but the transponder did fall off of a plane and was located.
- All fire hydrants have been inspected and every fifth hydrant was flow-tested. Color coding is currently being considered which will better the insurance rating.
- The staff Christmas party collected toys which were later delivered to the local Social Services department.

Planning

The Town Planner and Zoning Administrator reported:

- The Christmas Parade was held in December.
- A committee will meet next week to discuss a Strategic Downtown Marketing Plan.
- Code Enforcement is continuing with one demolition to be completed next week.
- Letters have been sent to the three business owners in the CDBG project. The owner of the Mitchell Building reported he has a contractor. The next step in the process is to set a hearing date at which it will be decided how many days before the Mitchell building demolition is to begin if renovations have not been completed.
- The Flood Insurance Study Report and Flood Insurance Rate Map has been revised due to the completion of the Skewarkee Gut Canal Project.
- A brewery has opened on Railroad Street.

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Parks & Recreation

The Parks & Recreation director reported the following:

- The Christmas Parade went very well.
- Basketball registration has completed and practices have begun.
- There is an advertised opening in the department

CLOSED SESSION

It was moved by Commissioner Chesson, seconded by Commissioner Coffield and passed to go out of regular session into closed session to address Personnel matters per N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(6).

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

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 7:49 p.m.

Submitted By:

Approved By:

Town Clerk

Mayor