

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

February 3, 2020

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Williamston met in regular session on Monday, February 3, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. in the Police Training Room at Town Hall.

PRESENT Commissioners: Mayor Pro Tem Ronell Rodgers, Al Chesson, 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 Mayor Joyce Whichard-Brown and Commissioner Jerry Knox

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

The Mayor Pro Tem called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. He requested everyone stand for a moment of silence as Commissioner Knox’s wife passed this past Saturday night. Commissioner Coffield led the pledge of allegiance. Commissioner Moore offered the invocation.

WELCOME

The Mayor Pro Tem welcomed everyone present.

AGENDA APPROVED

The Mayor Pro Tem 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 #1 Williamston Comprehensive Land Use and Master Plan and the addition of Consideration of Park Job Classification Update. Commissioner Chesson requested the addition of a brief Closed Session to discuss a personnel issue. *It was moved by Commissioner Chesson, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously passed to approve the regular agenda as amended.*

The Mayor Pro Tem 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 Coffield, seconded by Commissioner Moore, 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 January 6 and 24, 2020 meetings.
- (2) Tax Relief Order

Year	Name	Remarks	Total
2019	William Gray	Sold	\$ 10.95

PUBLIC COMMENT

Johnny Beacham reported he has been the unpaid caretaker of the Skewarkee Church since 1990 and is still maintaining the cemetery. Most of the property has been sold. He cleaned the property after bad storms last year. He was told that the property is now commercial property. As the Town does not pick up yard waste from commercial property, it requires Board approval for the yard waste to collect. He requested the Board to consider picking up leaf and limb debris from the property.

Amanda Phelps reported traffic speeds on East Franklin Street. A car wrecked into her parked car while speeding through the neighborhood and totaled her parked car. She requested a speed bump on the street. She reported she has reported to the police department and was told the department would increase patrols on the street. This doesn't help as they only slow down when police are present.

Ruth Coffield reported she is Commissioner Coffield's wife and she didn't know the budget retreat was open to the public but has since been told that it is open to the public. She also expressed concern there is no air conditioning in the Gaylord Park gym. She reported her great nephew informed her the Mayor had promised the air conditioning would be installed in the gym last year. The old Town graveyard has filled up and noticed the Town is marking the new site in front of her house in preparation to sell plots. She stated she was aware the land in front of her home was a cemetery when they purchased the home. It has taken over 20 years for the first site to fill up and would like for the Town to begin selling on the other side of the lot and not sell plots in front of her home until the other side of the site fills up. She also noted there is fencing around the graveyard but would like greenery planted in front of the fence as a visual barrier.

Tonette Speller reported she lives behind Green Memorial Church. When the walking trail was installed, she was promised the water would be diverted down the hill and go on the backside of the trail. That is not what is happening and would like someone to look into that. Her backyard floods.

Milton Bell questioned when the pavement of the Telecenter parking lot would be addressed as vehicles can be damaged due to the large number of potholes. He also questioned the status of the revitalization of the Moratoc Park project.

OLD BUSINESS

GAYLORD PERRY GYM AIR CONDITIONER

The Town Administrator reported the Gaylord Perry Park gym air conditioner was discussed at the January 2020 Retreat and summarized the discussion. Dominion Power has communicated they would install the extra power needed to operate the air conditioning at no cost as they will recoup the expenses in the monthly usage fees. Mike Taylor Electric company quoted \$26,500 to perform the upgrading wiring that will be needed prior to installing the air conditioning. Bowen Heating, Air and Refrigeration, Inc. quoted \$49,250 for the air conditioner and installation and the needed ductwork installation. The Parks and Recreation Director reached out to Brabble Insulation for a quote on ceiling insulation for building. It was reported the installation of the R-38 ceiling, as it is currently R-19, would be costly as the material thickness would not fit the ceiling and the energy savings would not warrant the investment. Commissioner Moore questioned if the ceiling was totally R-19 or were there sections that were R-11. The Parks and Recreation Director reported it was reported there is R-11 also in the ceiling which was found after the initial report. He has searched for grants to cover at least a part of the cost. While he did find one, time restraints did not allow for the preliminary quotes to apply. He recommends applying for the grant when it opens again in the spring. Commissioner Moore reported citizens from the entire town utilize the gym and this is the second year this has been discussed. Reciprocity is a term that works well for the Board to get things done. I work for more than just one district but for the entire town. Children need somewhere to go in the summertime to keep them off of the street. The Town doesn't know if we will get the grant and how long it will take to obtain. \$80,000 for an air conditioner is not going to break the Town and recommends the Board work together to get the air conditioner in the gym. Commissioner Chesson reported, while he understands his comments and reciprocity, he recommends adding the air conditioner to the long-range plan to allow the Town time to apply for grants to cover some of the cost. Commissioner Moore motioned to have the air conditioner installed in the Gaylord Perry Park. Mayor Pro Tem requested a motion to install the air conditioner in the Gaylord Perry Park gym. The Town Attorney questioned if the funds are budgeted to install the air conditioner as it must be budgeted in order to make an expenditure. The budget would have to be amended. Commissioner Moore motioned to have the budget amended to have the air conditioner installed in the Gaylord Perry Park gym. Mayor Pro Tem requested a second on the motion. Commissioner Coffield seconded the motion. The Town Administrator requested clarification that it is the Board's direction to have a budget amendment for the current year to have installed by June 2020. Commissioner Moore reported he wanted the air conditioner added in the 2020/2021 budget year. The Town Attorney reported if the amendment was done in the current year, the entire budget would have to be amended to remove another

budgeted item. Commissioner Chesson reported since the project is to be budgeted for the 2020/2021 fiscal year, it would be prudent to put the project in the budget for the upcoming year and move forward with attaining a grant to cover all or a portion of the cost. Mayor Pro Tem reported he would like to see the Town move forward with the air conditioner. He understands the concept of reciprocity and the length of time this has been in discussion, there are many other items that have moved forward by amendment for whatever the Town wants to do. There seems to always be a kickback when it comes to the Gaylord Perry Park. There was a project once for the tennis court for \$18,000 versus a \$15,000 project for Gaylord Perry and the kickback was for Gaylord Perry as we had to be fiscally conservative. I don't understand why we have to be fiscally conservative with the park and not with the tennis court. The Finance Officer reported the school system offered to pay for a large portion of the tennis court repair which is why the Town moved forward so quickly on that project. Budget amendments can be done to the current budget but struggles with making a budget amendment for almost \$100,000 that the Town could possibly get grant funds to cover. The grant would also help others in the community along with saving funds that could be spent on the many other needs of the Town. It can be done and is a Board decision. It was her recommendation to add to the upcoming budget as the grant could help with the air conditioner cost plus the grant will help others in the community. Mayor Pro Tem questioned when the next budget year begins. She reported the next fiscal year begins July 1, 2020 and the project could be in the next budget with a grant as the source of revenue. Commissioner Moore reported his motion is to add the project to the 2020/2021 budget year. The Finance Director reported she was fine with his motion but understood that Commissioner Rodgers wanted the project completed in the current year. Commissioner Chesson requested clarification on the motion on the floor. Commissioner Moore motioned the air conditioner for the Gaylord Perry Park gym to be added to the 2020/2021 budget to be installed if the Town is certain the grant will not be received. Commissioner Coffield seconded the motion. Commissioners Moore, Rodgers and Coffield voted in favor of the motion. Commissioner Chesson voted against. Motion passed.

Consideration to Exercise Option to Purchase R.S. Stalls Property

The Town Administrator reported the Town had entered into an option to buy contract with Randy Stalls to purchase the R. S. Stalls building. This reserved the right of the Town to move forward with the purchase of the property for the Police Relocation Project. He reported LGC feedback should be received tomorrow and will need to move forward with the interim financing when LGC approval is obtained. The Town Attorney requested the motion to allow the Town Administrator the right to exercise the option to buy the property once the funds are available and the LGC approval has been obtained so the Board will not have to call a special meeting. *Commissioner Chesson made a motion to allow the Town Administrator the right to exercise the option to buy the R. S. Stalls property once the funds are available and LGC approval has been obtained, seconded by Commissioner Moore and unanimously passed to allow the Town Administrator the right to exercise the option to buy the R. S. Stalls property once the funds are available and LGC approval has been obtained.*

Approval of "Fun Fest" Amusement Request

Town Planner and Zoning Administrator reported the receipt of an Amusement Request from Martin County Sheriff Department's Lt. Joseph Snider to allow them to have amusement rides as part of an event called the FunFest which is sponsored by the Martin County Special Olympics. The event will be held March 5-8, 2020 in the Roses Parking lot at 809 East Boulevard, Williamston. General Liability Insurance for the event will be obtained upon permit approval. *It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Coffield and unanimously passed to approve the Amusement Permit as presented.*

NEW BUSINESS

Approval of Tree Removal at 309 West Main Street

The Town Administrator reported the Williamston Downtown has been working with the chiropractor business owner beside the Stalls property to improve the façade of the building. There are three trees that are growing into the awning. He has conferred with the Public Works Director concerning trimming the trees versus removal of the three trees. Commissioner Chesson questioned if the stumps would be removed if the trees were removed. The Town Administrator reported the stumps would also be ground. The Public Works Director reported the building is so close to the road that the trees could be trimmed but due to the size, the tree would be a one-sided tree and not visually appealing. The work can be done by staff and with Town equipment. Mayor Pro Tem requested figures for the cost of the tree removal. The Public Works director reported the cost would be absorbed as the project would

be done with staff and Town equipment. *It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Coffield and unanimously passed to approve the removal of the three trees as presented.*

Consideration of Park Job Classification

The Town Administrator requested the Board change the Recreation Specialist from a grade 14 to a grade 12. This position covers the front desk, mow grass and other duties as assigned. This will not affect the current staff but when this person retires, the future hire will be hired at a lower rate. Mayor Pro Tem questioned if the department has someone in mind already for the position. The Town Administrator reported the position is already filled and the job duties will not change. The changes are due to the amount of turnover in the department. The other change requested is to change the Parks Maintenance Technician to a supervisory role which is a change from a grade 13 to 14. Mayor Pro Tem questioned how this will affect the salary in the department. The Town Administrator reported there will not be any change to salary now. The Town Administrator requested direction from the Board as the Parks Maintenance position is currently open. *Commissioner Chesson motioned to reclassify the current job status Recreation Specialist and Parks Maintenance Technician and the organizational chart as presented, seconded by Commissioner Moore and unanimously passed to approve the changes as presented.*

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Fire/Rescue

The Fire Chief provided the following report:

- January was an average month
- The annual RRT area monitoring system has been received at \$180,000, purchased through the State, to be used in Williamston and 25 counties that we serve.
- Fire Prevention is ordering supplies to move forward with making the hydrants more visible at night.
- 52 smoke detectors have been ordered for the upcoming year.

Parks & Recreation

The Parks & Recreation director reported the following:

- The department currently has 2 positions open. All jobs are advertised through the NCWorks.
- Basketball registration has completed and practices have begun.
- There is an advertised opening in the department

Planning

The Town Planner and Zoning Administrator reported:

- HGTV currently has a competition to revitalize a town. Chase Conner with the Martin County Chamber of Commerce and Zach Dickerson are completing the video application to enter the Town of Williamston in the contest.
- The department is working on demolition ordinances for four properties.
- He has contacted NCDOT regarding signs to acknowledge the Town of Williamston on McCaskey Road/Hwy 125 entrance into town.

Police

The Police Chief reported:

- Mandated training has been completed for 2019 and the department is starting over for the 2020 mandated training.
- There are two new officers who have passed the State exam and all paperwork has been submitted. There is still an open position in the department
- Paul Moore and other staff have reconciled all property records in preparation for the Police Department relocation project.

Public Works

The Public Works Director provided the following report:

- The department had a normal month.

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- Street-related work for the month was mostly cleaning catch-basins. Limited asphalt repair as the asphalt company is closed until March.
- He is still reviewing the options to purchase the aerator and the air-curtain burner. Both of these items will save the Town money.
- Mayor Pro Tem questioned discoloration of the water. The Public Works director reported some of this is seasonal. Currently the Town is using wells as there are issues with the control system at the MCRWASA plant. Flushing the hydrants helps to eliminate the discoloration and keeps the hydrants functional. The department has not received complaints since the increased flushing of hydrants. The water is safe for consumption.

Commissioner Chesson informed the citizens that expressed concerns during Public Comment that the Town will address the comments and concerns. The Board takes it under advisement but staff will follow up. The Telecenter parking lot is owned by Martin County Board of Education and is retrofitting the buildings, to include repaving the parking lot.

CLOSED SESSION

It was moved by Commissioner Chesson, seconded by Commissioner Moore 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 Chesson 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 Pro Tem declared the meeting adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

Submitted By:

Approved By:

Town Clerk

Mayor Pro Tem