

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

August 5, 2019

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Williamston met in regular session on Monday, August 5, 2019 at 5:30 p.m. in the Assembly Room at Town Hall.

PRESENT Mayor: Joyce Whichard-Brown
Commissioners: Jerry Knox, Ronell Rodgers, Alton Moore, and William Coffield
Town Administrator: John O’Daniel
Town Clerk: Christina Craft
Finance Officer: Linda Harrison
Police Captain: Beth Coltrain
Recreation Director: Allen Overby
Public Works Director: Kerry Spivey
Town Planner and Zoning Administrator: Cameron Braddy
Town Attorney: Daniel Manning
Fire Chief: Michael Peaks
Human Resources Administrator: Martha-Brown Lilley

ABSENT Mayor Pro Tem Al Chesson

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

The Mayor called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. She requested a brief moment of silence for the victims of the mass shootings in Ohio and Texas. Commissioner Rodgers led the pledge of allegiance. Commissioner Knox offered the invocation.

WELCOME

The Mayor welcomed Martin County Commissioner Dempsy Bond 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 the removal of the Public Hearing for the Community Development Block Grant – Infrastructure as he was informed that the Town does not meet the threshold for grant approval and the related items to include Item 2 CDBG-I Grant Project Resolution and Item 3 Capital Improvement Plan Update – CDBG-I Project in New Business. He also requested the addition of New Business Item 1.2 Tax Order to Collect Fiscal 2019 Property Taxes. *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 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 July 1, 2019 meeting.
- (2) Approval of Budget Amendment - RRT Grant

General Fund

Undesignated Fund Balance \$17,358.19

The purpose of this amendment is to budget funds not spent at June 30, 2019 for the RRT Grant. These funds were rolled into fund balance and we are required by the grant to budget them in the next fiscal year in order that they are used for RRT only.

PUBLIC HEARING

Microbrewery and Brewpub Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment

The Mayor opened a Public Hearing for citizen comment regarding the proposed Microbrewery and Brewpub Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment. The Town Planner and Zoning Administrator reported a zoning ordinance text

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amendment is needed for the Town to allow potential businesses to open a microbrewery and/or brewpub within the Central Business District in the downtown Williamston area. Jason Steward, a Williamston resident, reported these types of businesses invite other businesses which will revitalize the downtown. He encouraged the Board to support this zoning change which will support investment in the town. Chase Conner, Executive Director of the Martin County Chamber of Commerce, reported the Chamber supports this change to allow microbreweries and brewpubs as it will be an economic boost to the downtown area. This zoning action is a great opportunity. A brewery is not a bar and will be a great addition to the town. Other towns such as Greenville have noted an increase in foot traffic due to the opening of a brewery. Greenville has had such success that there are now four breweries in the town.

With no other comments received, the Mayor closed the Public Hearing.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

OLD BUSINESS

Residential Parking Discussion

The Town Administrator reported the Board had discussed the issue of parking in front of the residences on unimproved surfaces. It was the Board's direction to have the Appearance Commission to send letters to make the owners and tenants aware of the citizen complaints and to revisit the situation in July. *It was moved by Commissioner Rodgers to continue the practice of letters sent by the Appearance Commission to homeowners and tenants when complaints are received. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Moore and unanimously passed.*

Flood Plain Update

The Town Planner and Zoning Administrator reported his continued efforts with Rivers and Associates and FEMA to update the flood map as the Skewarkee Canal Project has been completed. The updated flood map should decrease home owner's property insurance premiums in the area as the project should have enhanced the affected area.

Williamston Housing Authority (WHA) Request

Michael Gaddy, WHA Executive Director, reported the Housing Authority has completed a storm drainage project at the Warren Court site. The project replaced a galvanized storm drain with new N-12 dual wall plastic pipe with a section that goes under the Town's roadway. The new pipe runs beside the existing roadway as it carries water from other Town and State-owned streets. The cost to do the section under the roadway is \$11,111 which is the only portion that was not covered by the grant received. The project is complete and Mr. Gaddy requested the Town's assistance with the increased cost. The Mayor requested the request tabled until the September meeting. *It was moved by Commissioner Knox to table the discussion of the contribution request until the September meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chesson and unanimously passed.*

NEW BUSINESS

ACCEPTANCE OF FISCAL 2018 AD VALOREM TAX SETTLEMENT AS OF JUNE 30, 2019 REPORT

Tiffany White reported that the original tax levy was \$2,423,680.45. The uncollected tax as of June 30, 2019 is \$197,280.13. The 2018 tax collection rate and deductions are at 92.468%. Ms. White reported the tax collection rate without lot cleanings and demolitions was 93.291%. Ms. White requested, in accordance with G.S. 105-373(a) that the report be approved and accepted as a settlement of the 2018 Ad Valorem Tax Levy. *It was moved by Commissioner Chesson seconded by Commissioner Coffield and unanimously passed to approve the Fiscal 2018 Ad Valorem Tax Settlement report as presented.*

TAX ORDER TO COLLECT FISCAL 2018 PROPERTY TAXES

Tiffany White requested approval of the Tax Order to Collect Fiscal 2018 Property Taxes in accordance with G.S. 105-373(a). *It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Coffield and unanimously passed to approve the Tax Order to Collect Fiscal 2017 Property Taxes as presented.*

Approval of Request North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT)

The Town Administrator reported the need to submit a letter to the NCDOT to encourage a feasibility study to reconfigure Elm, Washington and Haughton Streets to two-way streets. Prior to the NC 125 Project, the three streets were designated as one-way streets in order to alleviate traffic concerns associated with NC 125 traffic traveling to and through our downtown district. The request is to have the NCDOT reconfigure the streets to the two-way pattern as the Police Department is to be relocated on the corner of Main and Haughton Streets and the two-way traffic pattern will increase the ability to provide swift service to the citizens. *It was moved by Commissioner Rodgers to approve letter to the NCDOT requested the change to a two-way street pattern for Elm, Washington and Haughton Streets as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chesson and unanimously passed.*

Approval of Microbrewery and Brewpub Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment

The Town Planner and Zoning Administrator reported a zoning ordinance text amendment to include permitted use of brewpubs and microbreweries in the Central Business District. According to the Brewer's Association, craft brewing contributed \$2.19 billion to the NC economy in 2017 with 291 craft breweries in North Carolina. Market research indicates that primary cohort for craft beer consumption is 25-34 which is a cohort that seems to be shrinking in Williamston. Microbreweries and Brewpubs tend to attract this age group. When drafting this ordinance, Staff reviewed other jurisdictions' regulations regarding microbreweries and brewpubs. While definitions varied, the majority included the annual production cap of 15,000 barrels for a microbrewery and 1,000 barrels for a brew pub as well as the ability to sell to on or off-site customers. Staff ultimately decided on the definitions to allow operational flexibility while still limiting the overall scale to ensure compatibility with surrounding areas. In considering the level of regulation for microbreweries and brewpubs, Staff again referred to other jurisdictions' standards. Most jurisdictions staff spoke with allowed them by right with some of them requiring adherence to additional requirements and regulations. Some jurisdictions required a Special Use Permit. It was decided by staff to allow microbreweries and brewpubs as a permitted use subject to the additional requirements as to facilitate potential brewers locating in town in a quick and easy manner while also ensuring that the special requirements and regulations are met. Due to the general nature of microbreweries and brewpubs and their potential to catalyze economic development, staff felt it best to focus their locations to the Central Business District while not including property and/or use standards. Nightclubs and bars are already allowed in the CBD area. It is the Staff's recommendations to approve this text amendment as presented. *It was moved by Commissioner Chesson, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously passed to approve Microbrewery and Brewpub Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment. Microbrewery and Brewpub Zoning Ordinance text amendment 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:

- Demolition process has begun for five dilapidated buildings. Depending on the cost per building, it is unclear at this time how many of the five will be processed in this budget year but moving forward with the process.
- The new nuisance order is helping to move quicker with vegetation issues.
- NCDOT has been contacted about the signs at the new Hwy 125 bypass. Direction signs should be in place in the next month.
- The CDBG project continues. The owners are meeting with contractors.
- He and Zach Dickerson will attend the NC Main Street meeting.
- A local artist wants to paint the Town-owned trashcans at no cost to the town. The designs will be approved by the department prior to painting the trashcans.
- The Comprehensive Plan is almost complete and will be presented soon.
- The Stampede Committee has been working on the Carolina Country Stampede.
- Commissioner Chesson requested NCDOT to be contacted to mow the grass in the Hwy 64 median.

Parks & Recreation

The Parks & Recreation director reported the following:

- Soccer Camp is ending as school starts soon.

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- The Back to School event at the Godwin Coppage Park was a success. He was thankful for all the support from the Fire and Police Departments, and the Head Hunters Motorcycle organization.
- Football practice was last week. There was not enough response for flag football. There are five tournaments booked this fall.

Police

The Police Captain reported:

- She, along with the Human Resources Administrator, and Chief Cowan attended a NCLM sponsored training classes for Best Practices in Hiring/Firing.
- The department participated in two active shooter drills and one is upcoming this weekend.
- The department is participating with the Martin County Sheriff's Office and Robersonville Police to have an active shooter drill that will involve school systems.
- There have been 3 arrest made in the Andrews Apartment shooting.

Public Works

The Public Works Director reported:

- There were 10 water leaks in July.
- The annual flushing was completed last night.
- Sludge hauling has been completed.
- He is still evaluating the aeration system as this appears to be an economical and sustainable option.
- There was one grease trap that was out of compliance in July.
- There was a sewage spill in the month. There was a mechanical issue with a float at the pump station which caused it to cease pumping. There are no long lasting effects.
- Commissioner Rodgers questioned if there was anything that could be done for the Willow Drive residents as there is standing water in their back yards. He reported the elevation of the properties is very close to river level. Runoff depends on the level of the river.
- A quote has been received for the paving project. The quote includes more areas than the budget will allow. This was intentional as to use as much of the \$75,000 that has been allocated.

Fire/Rescue

The Fire Chief provided the following report:

- There were 233 responses in July.
- The Hazmat team training
- On Standby for Trump/Pence
- Emergency Vehicle driver's training
- The Annual Grillin' on the Green event will be held in October. This event was originally created to restore the Town's first fire truck, a 1928 LeFrance.
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- 10 members attended the PALS training has been completed. This is not state mandated but needed.
- The Carolina Brotherhood Bicycle Group stopped in Williamston as their first stop on the 610-mile bicycle run.
- Construction of the Training facility at the Martin Community College has begun.
- Car seat inspections are free to the public at the department.
- He attended "Blessing of the Badge" hosted by a Clergyman Group from Pitt and Beaufort County.
- He met with the architects to review blue prints for the building renovations.

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 an Attorney Client Privilege N.C.G.S. 143-318.11 (a) (3) and Property Acquisition N.C.G.S. 143-318.11 (a) (5).

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 declared the meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

Submitted By:

Approved By:

Town Clerk

Mayor