

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

June 15, 2020

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Williamston met in regular session on Monday, June 15, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. in the NC Telecenter located at 415 East Boulevard, Williamston, NC.

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
Town Planner and Zoning Administrator: Cameron Braddy
Planning and Downtown Marketing Coordinator: Zach Dickerson

ABSENT None

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

The Mayor called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Commissioner Coffield led the pledge of allegiance, followed by a moment of silence for everything going on around us. Commissioner Knox offered the invocation.

WELCOME

The Mayor welcomed 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 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. Commissioner Rodgers requested clarification on the budget amendment for the E-21 pump engine repair. He reported the money came from the insurance company due to electrical damage to the equipment itself or damage from the building and if the equipment was parked in the building. The Finance Officer stated it was the equipment itself and it was parked inside the building. The Finance Officer reported \$11,244 was received last year as it was damaged in last year. The \$59,000 was received this year and the truck was fixed this year. Some of the funds were put in Fund balance as it was not fixed in the year the first payment was received. Commissioner Rodgers reported the part that confused him was if any of these items in the consent agenda are meant to amend the budget. The Finance Officer reported it was not in the budget for the repair totaling \$70,000. There was most likely a deductible that had to be met last year. Commissioner Rodgers questioned if the rest are also to amend the budget. The Finance Officer reported it is a financial violation to allow any one department to overspend. There are items that are unexpected such as the Worker's Comp claim and repairs. Funds are moved from departments that came under budgeted expenses to a department that is in danger of being over the budgeted amount. The funds are not necessarily used but shifted prior to the end of the year. Commissioner Moore questioned why the director did not anticipate the permit and application when the purchase of the burner was approved in the upcoming budget year. The Town Administrator reported the funds were moved allow the Public Works Director to begin the paperwork per Board Direction. Commissioner Chesson reported suggesting this a previous meeting and it was the consensus of the Board to move forward with the permit and application, as the air curtain burner was approved in the upcoming budget, so the Town can take advantage of the savings as soon as possible if the funds were available. The Finance Officer reported there will be funds available at the end of the year for Public Works to begin the process. *It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously passed to approve the consent agenda as amended.*

Items approved in the Consent Agenda are as follows:

- (1) Approval of Budget Amendment - General Fund – E-21 Pierce Pumper Engine
General Fund
Repair Equipment (Fire Department) \$71,105

The purpose of this amendment is to budget funds to repair the E-21 Pierce Pumper Engine in the Fire Department that had fire damage due to electrical issues and was out of service. We have received insurance funds in the amount of \$11,244 March 25, 2019, in the 2019 budget year. That is why Fund balance is used as a revenue source. We also received \$59,858.15 December 18, 2019, in the current budget year.

(2) Approval of Budget Amendment - Worker’s Comp and Unemployment Expenditures

<u>General Fund</u>	
Cemetery	\$3,890.00

The purpose of this amendment is to appropriate funds to cover unexpected Worker’s Comp and Unemployment Expenditures in the Cemetery Department.

(3) Approval of Budget Amendment - Air Curtain Burner

<u>General Fund</u>	
Transfer to Capital Outlay Equipment	\$8,000.00

The purpose of this amendment is to appropriate funds to cover any permitting and application fee for the curtain burner. The curtain burner was approved in the 2020 / 2021 budget and would be purchased in that fiscal year. We may start the permitting in this year to help speed up the process for cleaning up many areas and saving costs at the landfill as discussed at the June 2, 2020 Board meeting.

(4) Approval of Budget Amendment - General Fund – Police

<u>General Fund</u>	
Regular Salaries	\$20,000.00
Insurance	\$ 2,800.00
Transfer to Capital Outlay Equipment	\$12,200.00

The purpose of this amendment is to appropriate funds to cover salary costs and increases to capital outlay equipment.

(7) Approval of Budget Amendment - General Fund – Rescue Department

<u>General Fund</u>	
Insurance	\$ 9,902.63

The purpose of this amendment is to appropriate funds to cover unexpected Worker’s Comp for the Rescue Department.

PUBLIC HEARING

Community Development Block Grant – Neighborhood Revitalization (CDBG-NR)

As the meeting was held virtually for the public, the Mayor asked each of the online participants if they would like to speak regarding the anticipated CDBG-NR grant application. The grant can be used for a variety of revitalization projects. Some housing rehabilitation options include emergency repairs, rehabilitation of the home, reconstruction and replacement housing. No public comments were received. The Town Administrator reported this was one of several Public Hearings required for this grant. Any citizens that wishes to make comments can email or hand-deliver comments to Town Hall if the lack of comments is due to a technology issue. With no comments received, the Mayor closed the Public Hearing.

OLD BUSINESS

Consideration of Joint Meeting to Discuss Regionalization Study Results

The Town Administrator reported the water regionalization study has been completed by McGill & Associates. The Town and Martin County received a \$50,000 grant last year to have a regionalization study performed. County Manager David Bone has requested a joint meeting with the Martin County, Town of Williamston and MCRWASA Boards for McGill & Associates to present the study results. A joint meeting will ensure all Boards will receive the

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same information at the same time. Commissioner Knox reported concern over consolidation of just the two groups and what would happen to our employees if it did happen. It would only be beneficial if the entire county consolidated. The Town Administrator reported this meeting was only to be informative and no decisions will be made at this joint meeting. He reported the Town Board will meet independently at a later date to discuss the results of the study. The Mayor questioned when the Board will receive a copy of the study. The Town Clerk reported Commissioner's Chesson and Coffield have received a copy via email as they are members of the MCRWASA Board and all Commissioners will receive a copy prior to the meeting. Commissioner Chesson reported the objective of the grant is to take no position but provide facts and determine if the assets are being used efficiently. *It was moved by Commissioner Chesson, seconded by Commissioner Knox, and unanimously passed to attend a joint meeting with the Martin County Commissioners and MCRWASA Board on July 15, 2020 at 5:30 pm at the NC Telecenter.*

Approval of Updated Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

The Town Administrator requested Board approval for the changes in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The CIP plan was approved at the last Board meeting as a part of the Budget presentation. The Land and Water Conservation Fund requires the Gaylord Perry Park Renovation to be listing in the CIP. The renovation was not included in the CIP as it was moved to a Capital Project Ordinance. The change does not have any monetary affect on the budget. *It was moved by Commissioner Coffield, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously passed to approve the adjustment to add the Gaylord Perry Park Renovation to Capital Improvement Plan.*

Approval of Change in July 2020 Meeting Date

The Town Administrator reported the Board scheduled meeting is normally the first Monday of the month. The NC TeleCenter is not available on July 6 and requested the Board to approve the meeting date change to July 7th so the meeting can be held in the large meeting room at the NC Telecenter. *It was moved by Commissioner Coffield, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously passed to approve to change the July 2020 meeting date from July 6 to July 7 at 5:30 pm.*

Approval of Bonus Pay for First Responders

The Town Administrator reported bonus pay was briefly discussed for first responders with the first COVID-19 staffing discussion on how to handle staffing during this unique time. He and the Finance Officer recommend to give Fire and Police staffing a \$300 bonus (after taxes). The total is \$11-12,000 total for all of the first responders. The Mayor questioned the lack of a budget amendment for the Fire Department. It is understood this is a one-time bonus and is not to be anticipated if there is another COVID flare-up. The Finance Officer reported the Fire Department is included but does not require a budget amendment as the department is under budget in their expenses. *It was moved by Commissioner Rodgers, seconded by Commissioner Knox, and unanimously approved the bonus pay of \$300 to each of the first responders. It was moved by Commissioner Chesson, seconded by Commissioner Knox, and unanimously passed to approve the budget amendment to appropriate funds to cover the salary costs for bonus pay for the Police Department.*

Approval of MidEast Commission Board Appointment

The Mayor reported she discussed with each Board member individually to hopefully get a volunteer to serve on the MidEast Commission Board. Without any volunteers, she volunteered herself to serve on the MidEast Commission Board and entertained a motion to approve the appointment. Commissioner Rodgers reported he does not mind serving but the VA is still trying to figure out his hearing aid issues. *It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously passed to approve the appointment of Mayor Whichard-Brown to the MidEast Commission Board.*

Administrative Updates

The Town Administrator reported the one-year extension with the CDBG-Downtown Revitalization grant is to expire soon. The Bowen Signs Building owner is not interested in moving forward with the CDBG grant. The Patriot House owner is interested in continuing. She and the contracting foreman met with staff and requested a six-month extension as they are concerned the project will not be completed in time. Staff met with the owner of the Mitchell Building last week and the owner expressed interest in moving forward but had none of the paperwork and things in place required that is needed to move forward. There are several steps that he doesn't believe he will get even close to completion in the next 6 months. The State wants to see progress. Zack Dickerson spoke with the State Historic Preservation office. Since the grant is a main street grant, the building would have to be brought to the

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historical codes and requirements. The opinion of the State Historic Preservation is the building could not be brought up to those standards and is not eligible for the grant funds. The Town is waiting for an official letter from the Historic Preservation office and will reach out to Mr. Mitchell at that time. Commissioner Chesson requested the Bowen Sign building and the Mitchell building to be torn down at the same time to hopefully save money. Commissioner Rodgers reported he agreed with Commissioner Chesson as citizens don’t understand the legalities involved in this process and are aggravated with what seems to be a lack of progress. *It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously passed to give staff the authority to draft a letter on behalf of the Patriot House for a six-month extension and requesting additional funds to assist Patriot House with the remodel required to meet code requirements.*

The Town Administrator reported the library has another air conditioning unit malfunctioning. There are funds left in the trust to cover the repair or replacement and will report back once quotes are received from the library.

He has received a map from Dominion Power concerning the potential placements of the street lights in the Annexation Area A. He is currently working on letters to send to the property owners as the Board will hold a meeting to discuss. The Town Administrator has requested a more detailed map. Dominion staff is working from home and do not have access to the records but will forward soon.

There are over 35 applicants for the CDBG-Neighborhood Revitalization grant the Town is hopeful to receive. The Committee met today to prioritize the list based on reported needs. Site visits of the homes is the next step. Commissioner Rodgers reported concern of the lack of advertising. Commissioner Chesson reported the grant was in the local newspaper, Town website and the Town’s Facebook page. The Mayor questioned if the Town has applied for the grant yet and this seems like putting the cart before the horse. The Town Administrator reported the grant application requires some sort of breakdown of actual needs and each was informed the grant has not been received and being placed on the list does not guarantee their home will be chosen. The Town Administrator reported an additional Public Hearing is a requirement prior to the application submission.

The Police and Fire Department projects have begun. The construction is contracted for completion within the next 300 day after the start date.

The Town Administrator reported the Recreation director has requested to open the park to add Travel Baseball as 14 teams have signed up. The original plan was to not allow travel baseball until June 26. If the State goes into Phase 3, the Travel Baseball will be able to begin as of June 27th.

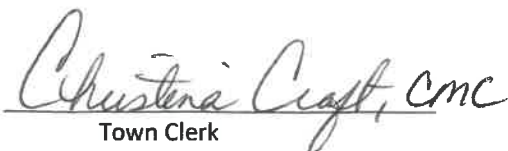
Commissioner Moore requested an update on the old Magnuson Hotel as it is an eyesore. The Planning Administrator reported speaking with the owner earlier today as he wanted a new sign. The Town Administrator reported the Town can only force him to remove the concrete and mow the grass. The Planning Administrator reported he gave the owner one week to mow the grass before code enforcement proceedings will begin. The Mayor requested a letter to be sent immediately. Commissioner Chesson requested a copy to be hand-delivered to the business and Magnuson Hotel to be held to the letter of the law moving forward.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 6:34 p.m.

Submitted By:

Approved By:


Town Clerk


Mayor