

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

June 2, 2020

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Williamston met in regular session on Tuesday, June 2, 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 Attorney: Daniel Manning  
Recreation Director: Allen Overby

**ABSENT** None

**CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION**

The Mayor called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Commissioner Rodgers led the pledge of allegiance followed by a moment of silence. Commissioner Coffield offered the invocation.

**WELCOME**

The Mayor welcomed everyone.

**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 Moore, seconded by Commissioner Chesson, 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. The Town Administrator requested the May 2, 2020 minutes be removed from the Consent agenda and be added to New Business to allow the Board more time to review and voted on when the Board reconvenes on May 4, 2020. He requested the addition of Jason Steward’s appointment to the Planning Board/Board of Adjustments to the Consent Agenda. He also requested the addition to the Consent Agenda for Williamston Downtown, Inc. to use the Town’s easement to install the mural in the Barnes Plaza. He reported Item #7 under Old Business (RRT Contract Extension and Renewal Update) is an update to the Board but will not require action by the Board. The Mayor questioned if Old Business Item #6 (Annexation Area “A” Street Light Update requires action. The Town Administrator reported it is an update but would like a vote or consensus to provide Board Direction to staff. Commissioner Rodgers questioned the PreStorm Debris Contract draft letter as it includes a date on it and states the Board voted unanimously. The Town Administrator reported the letter is a draft and would only be sent if the Board approves it tonight. Commissioner Rodgers expressed concerned that it has a date on it and would like to know if this is the normal standard. The Town Administrator reported the letter was drafted prior to allow the Board to review a draft of what would be sent if approved. *It was moved by Commissioner Coffield, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously passed to approve the consent agenda as amended.*

Items approved in the Consent Agenda are as follows:

- (1) Minutes of the March 2, 28 and 31, 2020 meetings

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**(1) ORDINANCE 2020-11 RELATING TO NON-RESIDENTIAL BUILDING OR STRUCTURE CODE**

The Mayor opened the public hearing. Town Administrator reported the purpose of the Public Hearing is to address the proposed Ordinance 2020-11 Relating to Non-Residential Building or Structure Code. In the past, the code enforcement ordinance only addresses residential structures that are delapidated or need code enforcement. This ordinance extends the code enforcement to non-residential buildings. Commissioner Coffield questioned if this ordinance addresses buildings in the downtown area. The Mayor questioned if there were any public comments from citizens who are virtually attending the meeting. The Town Clerk reported difficulties unmuting the public.

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Commissioner Chesson reported this ordinance is needed to address buildings such as the Mitchell Photography building which has partially collapsed. The Town Administrator reported anyone online that are not able to be heard due to technical difficulties should email their comments to the Town Clerk or provide comments in writing prior to the reconvening of this meeting on June 4, 2020. These comments will be distributed to the Board prior to any decision. Chief Peaks reported he is able to unmute on his side and recommended other attendees unmute themselves if they would like to speak. Jason Steward reported, as a property owner on Main Street, the Mitchell Building is an eye sore and deters other businesses from relocating to the downtown area. He looks forward to the removal of the building as it will promote more businesses to relocated to our downtown. The Town Clerk read comments received through the GoToMeeting application. Steven Manning commented to voice agreement with the measure and agreement with Commissioner Chesson's remarks. Commissioner Moore questioned if the ordinance will also address the old Holiday Inn as the lot looks like a landfill. The Town Attorney reported the ordinance could also address that issue. Commissioner Rodgers reported he questioned the same issue in prior meetings regarding the hotel and was told the owner could not be contacted. He questioned who pays the water bill and collect money from tenants if he can not be contacted. The Town Administrator reported the person that owns it and the person that manages it may not be the same person. Staff have reported difficulties contacting the owner. Commissioner Rodgers reported if the businesses are to be treated just as citizens in the water issue, the businesses should be held to the same standard with the trash on the property as citizens. Commissioner Chesson reported he agreed with Commissioner Rodgers and hopes this ordinance grants the ability to force the property owner to clean the area. The owner of the property in question, even if reached, refuses to do anything with the property. It is very important to have this ordinance in place to move forward. Collins Crowe and Brad Harrison commented on the GoToMeeting application that they agree with Commissioner Chesson. David Smith commented via the application that he concurred as we must prevent further decline by neglectful ownership. With no further comments, the Mayor closed the Public Hearing.

**(2) Budget Presentation**

The Town Administrator presented a proposed balanced budget. He and the Finance Officer had to cut over \$1 million in expenses with the input from the department heads. The budget has combined funds for all funds totaling \$11,272,008. The General Fund is budgeted for \$6,311,142. Water and Sewer Fund is budgeted for \$4,419,616. The Power Bill Fund is budgeted for \$486,250. Storm Water Fund is budgeted at \$55,000.

The budget includes a 15% increase in the health insurance premiums as well as a 1.2% increase in the retirement system contribution on behalf of the employees. The retirement increase raises the contribution from approximately 6% to 8 or 9% so the 1.2% increase is larger expense than the percentage reflects. He is working towards obtaining a grant to cover the Gaylord Perry gym air conditioner to hopefully reduce the amount of Fund Balance budgeted for this project. The budget includes funding for all debt services. The Police Department is receiving 3 vehicles per the rotation schedule. There were two items that were previously included in the draft budget, a computer for the Planning Department (\$1,000) and additional contributions for the Fire and Police construction projects (\$22,957). We plan to transfer \$100,000 in the 2020 budget year to continue funding Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB). We continue to pay OPEB for current retirees (approximately \$115,000) out of our annual operating budget.

The town is not using fund balance to cover operating costs, but has budgeted fund balance to pay for the Gaylord Perry Park air conditioner and Powell Bill (Fund Balance) for the cost of a street sweeper. This is worthy of note as so many rural entities have used and continue to use fund balance to balance their budget. Our goal is to increase our fund balance by \$50k in 2020/2021 budget. The Local government Commission (LGC) expects municipalities to carry a fund balance to cover 6 months of expenditures in case of unexpected emergencies and Williamston has met the LGC requirements. As of the end of the 2019 Fiscal year, the fund balance in the General Fund was 68.2% of our annual expenditures which is equivalent to 8.2 months. This combined with our plans to use Fund Balance (General Fund) in future budgets to help pay for the new Police Department, Fire Department addition and park improvements highlights the need to protect and build the Fund Balance every year.

The budget includes a 10-cent property tax increase and a 25-cent increase in water fees per 1,000 gallons. The water rate increase is to cover the MCRWASA fees due to the loss of Parkdale Mills. Major emergencies (line repairs) may warrant budget amendments. There is also a 2% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA). He reviewed the five-year capital improvement plan.

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The Town Administrator reported that any citizen who wished to make comments that are unable to do so during this public hearing to email or drop off a hard copy to the Town Clerk at Town Hall prior to June 4th and all comments will be forwarded to the Board. Commissioner Chesson requested the Town Administrator's budget message to be added to the website. The Mayor questioned if any online participants would like to make a comment. There was one request from an unknown participant to place the budget message on the Town website. With no other comments, the Mayor closed the Public Hearing.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

As the meeting was held virtually for the public, the Mayor asked each of the online participants if they would like to speak. No public comments were received.

**OLD BUSINESS****Approval of Distillery and Outdoor Seating Ordinance 2020-10**

The Town Administrator reported Ordinance 2020-10 Distillery and Outdoor Seating was presented by Zoning Administrator Braddy and a public hearing was held to discuss. There was concern expressed by Board members about alcohol being served outside the establishment and the Zoning Administrator submitted renderings to highlight a resemblance of how this would be accomplished. The Mayor reported the pictures show a "no alcohol beyond this point" signs on the outside of the fencing. The Town Administrator reported the alcohol would not be allowed outside of the fencing area. Commissioner Knox reported the Board does not want people drinking in public. Commissioner Rodgers questioned if other municipalities allow this. The Town Administrator reported it is common in other towns and the outdoor dining will also encourage people with leashed animals to be able to dine outside. Commissioner Moore questioned if the business owner would be the one responsible to ensure no alcohol leaves the area. Commissioner Chesson reported the Town would need to be as business friendly within the confines of the law. Many small towns allow this and seem to prosper. The Town Attorney reported the business is required to work within the confines of their state permit and the ALE offices will monitor. Commissioner Rodgers questioned if the police department could work with the businesses to make certain citizens are not overserved. Commissioner Chesson reported the police would step in if anyone is seen trying to drive away under those circumstances. *It was moved by Commissioner Chesson, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously passed to approve Ordinance 2020-10 to allow Distillery and Outdoor Seating. This ordinance is hereby attached with the minutes of this meeting and incorporated in the Town's Ordinance Book for future reference.*

**Approval of Prestorm Debris Management Contract Renewal**

The Town Administrator reported the Town is under a tight deadline from the debris management contract renewal as if not approved by June 15, the Town will have to put the contract out for bid. A prestorm debris management contract ensures there will be a company that will assist after a hurricane if the damage is beyond what staff can manage. There is no cost until cleanup is required. The contract was originally signed with Phillips and Jordan Inc in June of 2018 and allows for one additional year term and the negotiated CPI increase of 2.65%. Commissioner Moore reported while he understood the town is under a tight deadline, is this good practice to wait this late to bring to the Board this late or should this have been done months ago? The Town Administrator reported this should have been brought before the Board prior to this meeting. The contract is one that is handled by the Fire Department. Commissioner Moore questioned if this will be handled the same way next year. He also questioned the draft letter that was pre-written and hoped it will not happen in the future. The Town Administrator reported the contract will be brought before the Board in a timelier matter moving forward. The letter is not to be sent until after the Board approves and was only in the agenda to demonstrate to the Board what will be sent if the Board approves but agreed to not present draft letters in the future. Commissioner Coffield questioned the price of 100-ton crane which has an 8-hour minimum for \$1200 per hour. Commissioner Chesson reported if the Town ever needed a 100-ton crane, the Town will have suffered enormous damage that it has never been seen in the past. The fees will most likely be reimbursed by FEMA. He believes the last time this contract was activated was Hurricane Fran and the cost was reimbursed by FEMA. The Town Administrator reported, if the Town doesn't have the contract in place, the price will be much higher and availability of the contractors uncertain. Commissioner Rodgers questioned if other companies have tried to get this contract. The Town Administrator reported the Town can legally stay with the company until the end of the current contract. At that time, the Town will move forward with the bidding process. Commissioner Rodgers questioned if the Town should move forward with the high rates quoted. The Town Administrator reported the proposed rates have a 2.65% increase from the rates received when the contract was signed in 2018. The Mayor questioned the 100-ton crane cost with an 8-hour minimum. The Town Administrator

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reported the normal machine usage would be trucks and a knuckle-boom. The Finance Officer reported there were monitors during cleanup to ensure the costs were recorded properly and the only equipment used were the trucks. The pricing was reviewed in comparison to other companies prior to signing the contract in 2018. The Public Works Director reported by the time the Town needs a 100-ton crane, the cost will be the least of the Town's problems. He believes the crane used for the Skewarkee Gut project was a much smaller size. The firm is a very capable firm. The likelihood of ever needing the full capabilities is very low. The Finance Officer reported the cost will be much greater without a contract. *It was moved by Commissioner Chesson, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously passed to approve a one-year extension of the Prestorm Debris Management Contract renewal with Phillips and Jordan, Inc as submitted.*

**Yard Debris Storage**

The Public Works Director reported concern of a pile of debris on Town-owned property on the east end of Main Street that is unsightly and needs to be cleaned. However, the property is one of very few opportunities to maneuver the yard waste pickup. There is a location by the waste water treatment utilized for the wood chipping process. Prior to the Corona virus situation, there was a large amount of rain which made the area impossible to use temporarily and then the chipper broke down. As a sustainability community, the department has been utilizing the area to avoid the \$40/ton fee at the landfill. Both areas are currently backlogged. The end result of the virus situation and waiting for the fabrication of the chipper part needed is the department has begun hauling debris to the landfill. Staff and the Board with great scrutiny have gone over each line item of the budget. In the past month, approximately 76 tons have been carried to the landfill at a cost of over \$3,000 that was not budgeted. The plan is to move away from the aging chipper and begin utilizing an air curtain burner at a \$100,000, plus \$7500 to navigate through the permitting process. The chipper part has been received and will soon be installed to catch up with the debris. He asked for Board direction as to whether allow staff time to process the materials or to move the debris to the landfill at an additional cost of approximately \$6,000 per month. Commissioner Rodgers reported while he understands, he wanted to speak like the citizens speak to him. It is right off not on Main Street and the truck's tires are muddy and leaving mud in Henderson Street. Another concern is if it will pose a health risk like increase in mosquitos, snakes and other vermin. It was also noted all the debris is pushed towards Allman Drive as opposed to Biggs Street and don't understand why as they are citizens too. The Public Works Director reported while the citizens take their own positions as to the use of the piece of property, there is no reason for pushing debris on one side or the other of the property except to make best use of the property. The department is very unhappy and understand the discontent of having to stage any debris in the area. As much as he is ready to have the debris removed, everyone is suffering difficult times with COVID-19 and has delayed the process. The level of discomfort for all is raised during this event. The department would not create a situation that would cause a level of danger or health concern to any neighborhood. Unless you are in a highly trafficked area of Williamston, it is not uncommon to see an animal or snake. Snake population is attracted to areas with their food source such as frogs or mice. Commissioner Moore questioned if the air curtain burner is the answer to the question. The Public Works Director reported the wood chipper was the first fix for the situation when the landfill cost went from zero to \$40/ton. The wood chipper was used and bought the Town time to determine a long-term answer. The savings from the reduction of landfill fees paid for the chipper in a matter of a couple of years. The air curtain burner will hopefully be the answer for the next 10 years and will pay for itself in the reduction of landfill fees. He would like to have an environmental planner at a cost of \$7,500 involved to determine if the air curtain burner is a smokeless burner and to assist with the permitting process. The State will view the burner as an incinerator which is a Title V permitting process and would like to get permitted prior to the purchase. There will also be annual fees to maintain the permit. Once the permitting process is completed and fees paid, then the equipment can be purchased. The Public Works Director reported if there was an area on the outskirts of town, it would have been utilized. Commissioner Rodgers reported the staff understands the concerns of the citizens and the Town is working towards clearing the property. He wants to upgrade Williamston and make it as attractive as possible. The Public Works Director reported the property was cleaned off when the Town obtained the property as it was used prior as a dumping ground. The property was cleared and built up. Current events have brought us back to the unsightly mess we have today. Commissioner Chesson reported the Board has previously agreed to purchase the air curtain burner and would like to move forward with the permitting process to expedite the process. The Town Administrator reported the permitting process could begin if funds are available if the Board agrees. If there are any hurdles in the permitting process, this can be brought back to the Board. *It was the consensus of the Board to move forward with the \$7,500 permitting process if the funds are available in the current year to expedite the process.*

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**Mosquito Spraying**

The Public Works Director reported the department sprays when complaints are received as the department must be careful spraying chemicals in our neighborhoods. The Town does not spray communities as a preventative measure. The operation is more of a responsive operation. The chemical must come in contact with the mosquito to kill it and the denser the population, more mosquitos are killed. Environmental issues such as wind must also be taken into consideration. If there is wind, the chemical will blow away and be ineffective. The chemicals are sprayed usually in the early morning hours. There are usually more mosquitos in the evening but more people are outside during those hours and will be exposed to the chemicals. The Mayor questioned how long the chemical stays in the air. The Public Works Director reported the chemical will drift slowly and dissipate. If the temperatures are high, the chemical dissipates faster. The concentrations are generally considered safe. Commissioner Rodgers questioned if special masks are used by staff while spraying chemicals. The Public Works Director reported those types masks are restricted to Fire/Rescue and staff stays inside a truck. The Mayor questioned if the public could be notified when staff plans to spray. The Public Works Director reported this would be very difficult as the environmental issues like wind conditions are very hard to predict.

**Town Utility Operations**

The Town Administrator reported the Governor has extended the Executive Order regarding utility suspension. There are approximately 250 accounts that are delinquent at this time. He plans to bring a plan to the Board next month for review as staff will need to put notice on the bills. He also plans to work with the local newspaper to make citizens aware.

**Annexation Area "A" Street Light Update**

The Town Administrator reported he has discussed the addition of street lights in the area with Dominion Power. Dominion expressed concern putting investment in the area with no return. The project was considered in the past but owners did not sign the easements needed. Gary Sproat with Dominion Power spoke with his Right of Way agent and Dominion will not redraw the needed documents until there is some type of formal vote or survey completed by the Town that shows people are willing to sign right of way agreements. Commissioner Knox reported the owners were resistant to sign easements in years past. The Town Attorney reported he believes that is correct. The franchise is with Dominion and they have say in this matter. It would be different if the Town had their own power company. Commissioner Chesson questioned if the Town doesn't have a legal obligation to do the survey to see if this can be done. If unable to obtain the easements, then the Town no longer has the obligation to move forward. The Mayor reported at that time, the citizens in the affected area were upset over the annexation but feels the citizens will be more favorable at this time. The Town Administrator reported the need to hold a meeting with the Board and citizens in the area to discuss. The surveys that were brought to the Board recently were not precise enough to satisfy Dominion. Commissioner Chesson requested the maps generated by Dominion which shows the placement of the poles to all affected citizens to allow them 60 days to consider. Commissioner Rodgers questioned the number of poles and easements. The Town Administrator reported one pole may require up to three easements. One property owner could halt the pole placement. While there are a few poles that will be on private property towards the back of a field, most of the neighborhood line placement will be underground. The Town Administrator reported he would send a letter to all involved citizens to allow them 30 to 60 days to respond and hold a meeting with the citizens and Board. He was hopeful the State would be in Phase 3 of the Governor's COVID-19 reopening of NC plan and larger gatherings would be allowed. *It was the consensus of the Board to send a letter to the citizens in Annexation Area "A" and arrange a meeting between the Board and citizens to discuss in approximately two months.*

**RRT Contract Extension and Renewal Update**

The Town Administrator reported the State has chosen to extend the current RRT contract due to COVID. The Board had approved at a previous meeting to authorize Chief Peaks to apply to the State to continue to be the RRT for this region. Due to COVID, the State has decided to extend the current contract.

**Consideration of Ordinance 2020-11 Relating to Nonresidential or Structure Code**

The Mayor reported the Board will not act on this item until the Board reconvenes on June 4, 2020 to allow additional time for citizen input.

**Ordinance 2020-12 FY 2020-21**

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The Mayor reported action will not be taken on this item until the Board reconvenes on June 4, 2020 to allow additional time for citizen input. Commissioner Chesson reported the Budget presented is a balanced departmental budget presented by a united staff. He was thankful for department heads and staff for putting this difficult budget together in a difficult situation. The staff did an outstanding job.

**2021-2025 Capital Improvement Plan**

The Mayor reported the Board will not act on this item until the Board reconvenes on June 4, 2020 to allow additional time for citizen input. The Town Administrator reported the plan high-lights the bigger projects that are planned for the next five years.

**Resolution 2020-104 Setting Water and Sewer Rates for Fiscal Year 2020/2021**

The Mayor reported the Board will not act on this item until the Board reconvenes on June 4, 2020 to allow additional time for citizen input. The Town Administrator reported this resolution reflects the \$.25 increase in water rates per the proposed budget.

**Resolution 2020-103 Setting Stormwater Fees for Fiscal Year 2020/2021**

The Mayor reported the Board will not act on this item until the Board reconvenes on June 4, 2020 to allow additional time for citizen input. The Town Administrator reported no increase in the stormwater fees in the upcoming budget.

**Approval of Scheduled Board Meetings for Fiscal Year 2020/2021**

The Town Administrator requested Board approval for the scheduled board meetings for the upcoming fiscal year. *It was moved by Commissioner Chesson, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously passed to approve the 2020/2021 Board Meeting Schedule as submitted.*

**Approval of GFL Environmental Rate Increase**

The Town Administrator reported the receipt of a letter requesting a CPI increase from GFL Environmental. This increase is allowed per the contract. *It was moved by Commissioner Coffield, seconded by Commissioner Chesson, and unanimously passed to approve the GFL Environmental 3.6% rate increase request as submitted.*

**Administrative Update**

The Recreation Director reported meeting with the Town Administrator, Chief of Police and Fire Chief to discuss the guidelines by the State and NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) in regards to softball season. DHHS recommends limiting sports activities to those in which participants can maintain social distancing or close contact which is limited and brief, such as in golf, baseball and softball. He spoke to the Martin County Sheriff regarding mass gatherings. There have been many zoom meetings across the state to get clarification on the 25 mass gathering limitations as the Governor's order can be interpreted multiple ways in regards to sports. He presented three options for softball season. Option One will only allow for practice. Option Two will allow for practice and the Church League games as the Church League has very few spectators. Option Three will allow for softball tournaments. Sheriff Manning gave guidance to have no more than 25 spectators on each side of the field. Softball registration will have to be initiated and time for the teams to practice. The games would not begin until the week of July 13 and hopefully the State will be in Phase 3 of the COVID-19 restrictions at that time. There are not many spectators or parents at the practices but only one spectator per player would be allowed at the games. Game times would be staggered to reduce the crowds. Spectators would be allowed between the dugout and the outfield with the only exception of restroom usage. The bleachers would be off-limits for spectators. The team at bat would utilize the bleachers to allow for social distancing. The concession stand will be closed. All players will have to bring their own equipment, such as batting helmets. Other smaller towns have foregone the softball season. The Recreation Director feels it will be safe to proceed with softball season with following the guidelines set by the DHHS. Commissioner Chesson reported he supports Option 3 as participation is voluntary and limited due to the late start to the season. *It was the consensus of the Board to move forward with Option 3 to allow softball tournament with the limitations recommended.*

The Town Administrator reported the recreation facilities will be opened when the Governor's guidelines allow.

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The Town Administrator reported the Tax Relief Order submitted and approved by the Board last month has been updated to show a lesser amount. When the property on 118 Pearl Street was sold, the full amount of back taxes owed was less than what the Board had previously approved.

He reported meeting with the engineering firm to discuss the CDBG-Neighborhood Revitalization grant application. He encouraged Board members to reach out to citizens as approximately 5 – 6 houses could possibly be brought up to code at no cost to the owner. There are eligibility requirements such as income, they must own and live in the home, the home must be located within Williamston’s city limits and must agree to continue to live in and own the home for six years after the improvements are made. The Gaylord Perry Park air conditioning for the gym will also be included in the grant as it is a community grant. Commissioner Moore questioned if the Town puts a lien on the home. The Town Administrator reported he was uncertain whether the State or the Town would require the contract. The Town Attorney reported the Town has received similar funds and this is standard for this type of grant to ensure the home is not sold once upgrades are completed. The liability will decrease annual and the stipulation ends at the 6-year mark. A neutral selection committee will review and prioritize the applications received based on needs with applicant names omitted. An application firm has been contacted to administrate the grant. The grant also requires a public hearing to receive input on the grant application and another public hearing which will include a plan. The first public hearing will be scheduled for June 15, 2020 at the next scheduled Board meeting. The Mayor questioned what happens to the air conditioner if eligible housing applicants exceed the maximum amount. The Town Administrator reported the air conditioner will be included and the remainder will be for housing. The application deadline is in July 2020.

The Mayor recessed the meeting at 8 pm and will reconvene the meeting on Thursday, June 4, 2020 at 5:30 pm in the NC Telecenter to entertain motions on the May minutes, and Public Hearing items to include the Budget 2020/2021 and Ordinance 2020-11 Relating to Non-Residential Building or Structure Code. Citizens are encouraged to submit input on all items prior to the continuation of the meeting to the Town Clerk at City Hall.

**MEETING RECONVENED Thursday, June 4, 2020**

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Williamston reconvened the June 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting on Thursday, June 4, 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

**ABSENT** None

**CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION**

The Mayor reconvened the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. The Mayor requested a moment of silence for the state of affairs in the country. Commissioner Knox offered the invocation.

**WELCOME**

The Mayor welcomed everyone.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

The Clerk reported a public comment was received in writing from Fred Harrison, JR to state “the increase in the property tax rate by 10 cents is quite excessive and while well-meaning, the 2% COLA and 1/2% merit increases seem somewhat inappropriate for the difficult economic period we are now living in. While on surface this appears to be a sound budget, town council and staff are going to have to come to grips with the idea that Williamston's small, older and relatively poor citizen make-up can no longer support the level of services now in place and that a trend for reducing and scaling back is going to have to become the town's mantra in the new decade if the town has intention to keep and possibly grow its existing population.

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**Approval of Ordinance 2020-11 Relating to Non-Residential Building or Structure Code**

*It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Chesson, and unanimously passed to approve Ordinance 2020-11 Relating to Non-Residential Building or Structure Code. This ordinance is hereby attached with the minutes of this meeting and incorporated in the Town's Ordinance Book for future reference.*

**Approval of FY 2020/2021 Budget Ordinance 2020-12**

*It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously passed to approve Budget Ordinance 2020-21 for Fiscal Year 2020/2021. This ordinance is hereby attached with the minutes of this meeting and incorporated in the Town's Ordinance Book for future reference.*

**Approval of 2021-2025 Capital Improvement Plan**

*It was moved by Commissioner Chesson, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously passed to approve the 2021-2025 Capital Improvement Plan.*

**Approval of Resolution 2020-104 Setting Water and Sewer Rates for Fiscal Year 2020/2021**

*It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Chesson, and unanimously passed to approve Resolution 2020-104 Setting Water and Sewer Rates for Fiscal Year 2020-2021. This resolution is hereby attached with the minutes of this meeting and incorporated in the Town's Ordinance Book for future reference.*

**Approval of Resolution 2020-103 Setting Stormwater Fees for Fiscal Year 2020/2021**

*It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Chesson, and unanimously passed to approve Resolution 2020-103 Setting Stormwater Fees for Fiscal Year 2020-2021. This ordinance is hereby attached with the minutes of this meeting and incorporated in the Town's Ordinance Book for future reference.*

**Approval of May 4, 2020 Meeting Minutes**

*It was moved by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Chesson, and unanimously passed to approve the May 4, 2020 Board meeting minutes.*

**Approval of Prestorm Debris Management Contract Renewal**

The Town Administrator requested the Board to revisit the Prestorm Debris Management Contract as the company has notified the town of waiving the CPI increase and maintaining the cost of the original contract signed in 2018. *It was moved by Commissioner Coffield, seconded by Commissioner Chesson, and unanimously passed to approve a one-year extension of the Prestorm Debris Management Contract renewal with Phillips and Jordan, Inc as submitted.*

**Town Utility Operations**

The Town Administrator reported staff have developed a utility payment plan. The plan is based on the Governor's Executive Order. In June, there will no late fees or utility cut offs. A letter will be sent to all business and customers that are behind on utility payments to educate all of the existence of the payment plan option. It is the customer's responsibility to request a payment plan. August will be the first month of normal billing with utility cut-offs and late fees allowed. Cutoffs in August will only be for the current amount due. The repayment plan is based on six-months or possibly less. The payment arrangement must be in place or the entire bill will become due on September 10<sup>th</sup>. Late fee will be added on September 21<sup>st</sup> and cut off for current and payment arrangement accounts on September 22<sup>nd</sup>. He requested Board approval to roll the unpaid accounts that were prior to the Governor's Executive order into the payment arrangement plan. Commissioner Rodgers reported the Governor's Executive Order was not about debt forgiveness and sees the fairness of the payment arrangement plan. The Town Administrator reported the Town cannot legally forgive the debt. Commissioner Moore reported the plan allows for current payment and will also require a partial payment for the amount in arrears. The Town Administrator reported if the Board approves the proposal as is, he will begin mailing the letters to give customers as much notice as possible. Commissioner Chesson questioned the number of delinquent accounts. The Town Administrator reported, as of today, there are 190 delinquent accounts. Commissioner Chesson reported this would be an average of \$80 that would be paid monthly, in addition to the current bill. He stated he was normally all for late fees but is concerned when the person is struggling to make the payment with the addition of late fees. He is not in favor of late fees but needs to be fair across the board for everyone. The Finance Officer reported the software company has stated the arrears accounts could be set up and a separate general ledger account would be setup to track. The Town Administrator reported the plan will be amended and brought before the Board at the July meeting. *It was the*



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*consensus of the board to include the delinquent accounts from March into the payment plan and forego late fee in regards to payment arrangement accounts only.*

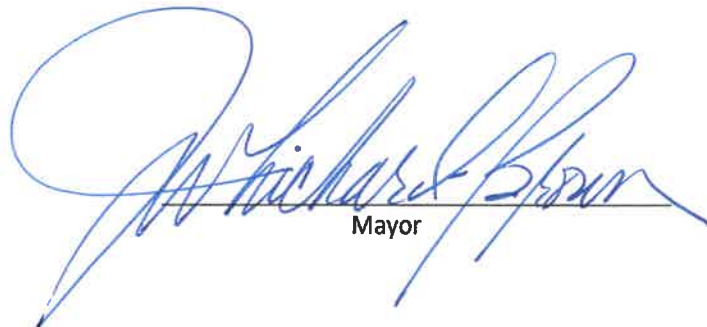
Commissioner Chesson reported several months ago, the Board discussed the church debris pickup at the Skewarkee Church. Since that time, many churches have started putting yard debris in front of church. There have been lots of calls concerning the Town's policy of not picking up yard debris for churches and commercial businesses. He would like for the Board to consider and revisit picking up yard debris for small churches at the next meeting. He requested the Public Works Director to address this issue as there may be issues of which the Board is unaware. Commissioner Rodgers questioned if this would extend to the food pantry at his business. Commissioner Chesson reported these are the types of things he would like to have discussed. If the church hires an outside service for landscaping, the contracted service should be required to continue to dispose of the debris. The Mayor requested the discussion to be included on the July agenda for further discussion.

There being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 6:12 p.m.

Submitted By:

Approved By:

  
Town Clerk

  
Mayor