

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

January 17, 2017

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Williamston met in regular session on Monday, January 9, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. in the Assembly Room at Town Hall.

PRESENT Mayor: Joyce Whichard-Brown
Commissioners: Mayor Pro Tem Al Chesson, Ronell Rodgers, Jerry Knox, William Coffield and Junious J. Horton
Interim Town Administrator: Brent Kanipe
Town Clerk: Christina Craft
Finance Officer: Linda Harrison
Public Works Director: Kerry Spivey
Recreation Director: Allen Overby
Director of Planning and Development: Brent Kanipe
Police Chief: Travis Cowan
Fire Chief: James B. Peele, III
Town Attorney: Daniel A. Manning
Human Resources Administrator: Martha-Brown Lilley

ABSENT None

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

The Mayor called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Commissioner Rodgers led the pledge of allegiance. Commissioner Knox offered the invocation.

AGENDA APPROVED AS AMENDED

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 or the Consent Agenda. *It was moved by Commissioner Horton, seconded by Commissioner Coffield and unanimously passed to approve the agenda as presented.*

Items approved in the Consent Agenda are as follows:

- (1) Approval of the Minutes of the December 5 and December 15, 2016 meeting.
- (2) Budget Amendment – Strategic Economic Development

| | |
|---|-------|
| County of Martin Strategic Economic Development | \$400 |
| Carolina Small Business | \$200 |

The purpose of this amendment is to budget funds for contributions to the Town for the Strategic Economic Development Project to sponsor the Entrepreneur Expo at the Senator Bob Martin Center on February 4, 2017.

- (3) Tax Amendment – to correct posting error in the amount of \$4.46.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Downtown Urban Redevelopment Grant

Kevin Richards, Mid East Commission Planning, Economic Development & Community Services Director, reported that this is the second required public hearing for the CDBG Downtown Redevelopment grant. The first public hearing was very basic stating what the CDG is about. The second public hearing is project specific. The purpose of the public hearing is to explain the CDBG-Downtown Redevelopment grant, which will provide funding for up-fit and renovation of properties located at 110 Washington Street, 420 S. Houghton Street, and 111 W. Main Street. The grant is for \$334,000 grant which covers 84% of the project cost. The businesses, Town of Williamston, Williamston Downtown Inc, and the Committee of 100 have committed to invest the remainder of \$63,500 into the project as committed to in the application. The first building, constructed in 1910 and vacant for the past two years, will house Patriot House Coffee Shop. The second building, constructed in 1947 and vacant for the past four years, will house the administrative offices of Northeast construction Services. The third building, built in 1901 and vacant for the past year due to damage from an electrical fire, will house Mitchell's Photography, its previous occupant. Funds will be used to replace and repair roofing, electrical, plumbing and HVAC systems, and build handicapped-accessible bathrooms and other items deemed necessary for the buildings. The Mayor asked for public comments and there were none.

Citizen Input for Fiscal Year 2017-2018 Budget

Board of Commissioner's Meeting

January 17, 2017

Page 2

The Interim Town Administrator reported that the public hearing for Citizen Input for fiscal Year 2017-2018 Budget is not a statutory requirement but an opportunity to receive input from citizens in planning of the Fiscal Year 2017/2018 Budget for the Town of Williamston. The Mayor asked for public comments and there were none.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The Mayor opened the meeting to public comment. Clay Wagner of Williamston reported to the board on his frustrations of the Annexation Area "A." While the town staff and Mayor have been courteous, he reported that his neighborhood looks terrible. He questioned why the Town would force annexation without offering any time of help for the average land owner for this one-time connection from the property to the meter. He is also asking for consideration from the Town in finding a contractor that can handle the one-time connection at a reasonable rate.

Carr, Riggs & Ingram (CRI) Presents Audit for FY 2015/2016

Martin Amerson with CRI presented the draft Financial Statement for FY 2015/2016. The Financial Statement was submitted to the Local Government Commission (LGC) and is expecting LGC approval at any time.

Mr. Amerson reported that the Town's net position increased by \$909,195 for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2016. The largest portion (63.37%) reflects the Town's net investment in the capital assets such as land, buildings, machinery and equipment. The Town uses these capital assets to provide services to citizens and is not available for future spending. Although the Town of Williamston's net investment in capital assets is reported net of the outstanding related debt, the resources needed to repay that debt must be provided by other sources, since the capital assets cannot be used to liquidate these liabilities. Governmental activities increased the Town's net position by \$205,850 which accounts for 22.64% of the total growth in the net position of the Town of Williamston. Capital grants and contributions in the amount of \$414,665 positively affected the Town's net position.

An additional portion of the Town's net position (3.15%) represents resources that are subject to external restrictions on how they may be used. The remaining balance of \$8,872,661 is unrestricted. The Town allocated its proportionate share of the Local Government Employee' Retirement System's net pension liability, deferred outflows of resources and pension expense. Several aspects of the Town's financial operations positively influenced the total unrestricted governmental net position such as continued diligence in collection of property taxes by increasing aggressive collection procedures through the debt setoff program, garnishments and bank account attachment. Sales tax receipts have shown significant improvement in recent years as a combined result of local commercial development and an increase in tourist activity. The continued low cost of debt due to the Town's sound financial position has also had a positive influence on the net position.

There are two trust funds, the OPEB Trust Fund and the Martin Memorial Library Trust Fund. The monies in the library trust fund originated from the citizens and can only be used for repairs to the library. Of the \$310,247 in the OPEB Trust Fund, \$129,234 was contributed by the Town in the 2015/2016 fiscal year. Funds held in the employee retirement system are restricted.

Total budgeted expenditures for the Water and Sewer fund for the upcoming year are \$4,741,400. This is a slight increase from the previous year due to the requirement to purchase all water from the Martin County Water and Sewer Authority (MCRWASA) and to service debts related to the recently installed SCADA system and sewer system Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) repairs. Both projects are financed by zero interest rate loans from the State. A slight decrease to water rates for residential customers was provided which allowed for a storm water drainage fee to be applied to the bill with no increase in the total bill.

The unassigned fund balance represents 49.4% of total General Fund expenditures, compared to similar size municipalities of 54.66%. This equates to approximately 5.4 months of expenses. During the fiscal year, the Town revised the budget on several occasions. Generally, budget amendments are made to adjust the estimates that are used to prepare the original budget ordinance once exact information is available, to recognize new funding amounts from external sources, such as grants, or to increase appropriations that become necessary to maintain services.

The Town of Williamston's proprietary funds provide the same type of information found in the governments-wide statements but in more detail. Unrestricted net position of the Water and Sewer Fund at the end of the fiscal year amounted to \$7,386,593. The total increase in net position for the fund was \$703,345.

The Town's investment in capital assets for its governmental and business-type activities as of June 30, 2016, totals \$21,573,586, net of accumulated depreciation. These assets include buildings, infrastructure, land, machinery and equipment, park facilities, and vehicles.

He pointed out that the property tax collection rate for the 2015/2016 budget year was 94.55%, a slight increase from last year and there was an increase in the vehicle tax collection rate of 100% as the taxes must be paid when the tags are renewed. The increase in vehicle tax collection resulted from the State's collection of vehicle property tax when tags are renewed. This has resulted in an increase in vehicle tax collection percentages for cities and counties across the state.

Overall, Mr. Amerson noted that this was a very good audit. He did make constructive internal information technology control recommendations. He noted that staff had been very cooperative during the audit process. The Board and the Town Administrator complimented the Finance Department and the Department Heads for their hard work in watching their budgets during the budget year. *It was moved by Commissioner Horton, seconded by Commissioner Rodgers and unanimously passed to accept the FY 2015/2016 audit.*

OLD BUSINESS

Approval of Resolution 2017-142 for CDBG – Downtown Redevelopment Funding for the Williamston Downtown Redevelopment Project

Kevin Richards, Mid East Commission Planning, Economic Development & Community Services Director, reported that the Resolution 2017-142 authorizes the submission of the formal application to the North Carolina Department of Commerce for approval of the CDBG for Downtown Redevelopment. *It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Horton and unanimously passed to accept the Resolution 2017-142 for CDBG Redevelopment Grant Application. Resolution 2017-142 is hereby attached with the minutes of this meeting and incorporated in the Town's Resolution Book for future reference.*

Approval of Resolution 2017-143 Adoption of the Program Manual for the Town of Williamston Community Development Program

Kevin Richards, Mid East Commission Planning, Economic Development & Community Services Director, presented Resolution 2017-143 adopting the program manual for the Town of Williamston's Community Development Program. The manual consists of several plans and guidelines that are required under this program. In addition, the resolution authorized the Mayor to execute any and all grant related documents. *It was moved by Commissioner Rodgers, seconded by Commissioner Coffield and unanimously passed to accept the Resolution 2017-143 for CDBG Redevelopment Grant Application. Resolution 2017-143 is hereby attached with the minutes of this meeting and incorporated in the Town's Resolution Book for future reference.*

State Health Plan Update

The Human Resources Administrator reported that renewal of the Town Health Plan is due for renewal with the current carrier, First Carolina Care, this month. The premium should not increase above 9% per First Carolina. If the Town decides to switch to the State Health Plan, the projected cost will increase from the \$635,580 with First Carolina Care to \$666,996. This total is based on an average premium cost for retirees with 11 actual retirees. The total maximum of retirees can rise to 30, but the probable amount is 15 employees. Long-term the state health plan will be a more stable way to keep premiums level. The retirees will be a more expensive piece of this plan as they cannot be added to the state health plan.

Approval of Capital Project Ordinance 2017-102

The Finance Officer presented the Capital Project Ordinance 2017-142. The project authorized is mapping locations of valves and hydrants of the Williamston water system along with assessment of all water system infrastructure assets, a plan prioritizing capital improvements for the water system, and preparation of a water system asset management plan. It will be financed by the NC Department of Environmental Quality-Division of Water Infrastructure Grant in the amount of \$150,000 and a transfer from the Water Enterprise Fund of \$7,500. *It was moved by Commissioner Coffield, seconded by Commissioner Knox and unanimously passed to accept the Capital Project Ordinance 2017-102 Water System Asset Inventory Assessment Project. Ordinance 2017-102 is hereby attached with the minutes of this meeting and incorporated in the Town's Ordinance Book for future reference.*

Administrator Search Update

The Interim Town Administrator reported that the revised advertisement for the Town Administrator position has been forwarded to several publications. Due to the inclement weather, the League of Municipalities did not include in the League Letter. They did, however, post the position the website. There have been several inquiries. An advertisement will also be posted in the local newspaper. The one change from the previous advertisement is that the position is listed as "open until filled."

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Planning

The Planning Director reported:

- Entrepreneur Expo is to be held Saturday, February 4, 2017. This is a free event.
- The Planning Board Retreat will be held next Friday and Saturday at Town Hall.

Public Works

The Public Works Director reported:

- The crews have been busy removing Christmas decorations in the town.
- There was 9 tons of recycled asphalt.
- Sanitation was up for the month to 275 tons.

Police

The Police Chief reported:

- The final step in the body camera project is to have Watch Guard install the database to put the cameras in use and train the staff and is expected to be completed in the next 30-45 days.
- The PD has acquired a "Medicine Drop" paid for by the SBI to destroy leftover drugs. This will be coordinated with a local pharmacy and will be done at no cost to the town.
- Two of the PD attended the Crisis Intervention Team Training.

Fire/Rescue

The Fire Chief provided the following report:

- There were 2,679 emergency responses for the calendar year which is an increase of 100 over the prior year.
- There were two hazmat responses in the month.

Parks & Recreation

The Parks & Recreation director reported the following:

- Basketball season has begun and the Perry Park is busy.
- He will post scores and schedules on the town website.
- The first of two public input meeting for the Perry Park Master Plan will be held at Town Hall from 6:30 pm to 8 pm. This is a drop-in meeting and the public is welcome.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 6:51 pm.

Submitted By:

Approved By:

Town Clerk

Mayor