

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

October 2, 2017

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Williamston met in regular session on Monday, October 2, 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
Town Attorney: Daniel Manning
Police Chief: Travis Cowan
Fire Chief: James Peele
Human Resources Administrator: Martha-Brown Lilley

ABSENT None

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

The Mayor called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Commissioner Coffield led the pledge of allegiance. A moment of silence was held for the Hurricane and Commissioner Knox offered the invocation.

WELCOME

The Mayor welcomed Martin County Commissioner Dempsy Bonds who was in attendance at 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 the Regular Agenda. *It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Horton 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 addition of a Tax Relief Order to the Consent Agenda. *It was moved by Commissioner Coffield, seconded by Commissioner Knox and unanimously passed to approve the consent agenda as amended.*

Items approved in the Consent Agenda are as follows:

- (1) Approval of the Minutes of the September 11, 2017 meeting.
- (2) Approval of Tax Relief Order as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Acct#</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Remarks</u>	<u>Total</u>
2017	2904	The Modlin Agency	Double listed @ County	\$ 4.19
2017	1830	Kevin McKeel	County sent to town in error	\$26.89

PUBLIC COMMENT

The Mayor asked for public comment. Timothy Bowen, Williamston First Pentecostal Holiness Church pastor, reported that he opposed the proposed change in ordinance which will allow the sale of alcohol before the noon on Sundays. He requested the Board to look into their heart and soul as they make decisions that affect his children and his children's children. Denise Edmondson, a nurse of 33 years, reported that she has professionally witnessed the destruction caused by alcoholism. Professionally and as a Christian, she strongly opposes the proposed change to allow the sale of alcohol before noon on Sundays. Dean Harrell, Williamston Memorial Baptist Church pastor, thanked the Town Commissioners for Stampede as it is a wonderful for the town and a great family event. The ordinance allowing the sale of alcohol before noon on Sundays is not family friendly and will not improve the quality of life in Williamston, which is the Board's responsibility. While two-hours may not seem like a

big thing, but those two hours are disrespectful to the religious community. He urged the Board to not pass the ordinance. Doug Knox, pastor of the Liberty Baptist Church in Williamston, spoke in opposition of the proposed change in the proposed ordinance allowing the sale of alcohol before noon on Sundays. He urged the Board to remember the Sabbath and keep it holy by voting against the ordinance. Linda Edmondson urged the Board to vote in opposition of the change.

OLD BUSINESS

Proposed Ordinance 2017-111 Amend Title XI: Business Regulations, Chapter 112 of the Code of Ordinances to Allow the Sale of Malt Beverages, Unfortified Wine, Fortified Wine, and Mixed Beverages on Sundays Beginning at 10 am.

The Town Administrator reported the NC General Statute §160A-205.3 authorizes cities to adopt an ordinance allowing for the sale of malt beverages, unfortified wine, fortified wine, and mixed beverages beginning at 10 am on Sunday pursuant to the licensed premises' permit issued under NC General Statute §18B-1001. He reported that this is the first reading of the ordinance and it requires a 2/3 affirmative majority to pass with the first reading of an ordinance. Commissioner Knox requested that the ordinance to be dropped now as he was not in favor of the change. Commissioner Rodgers spoke against the change in ordinance as he counsels people who have an addiction or lives with someone with alcohol addiction. The malls do not begin to sell items before noon on Sunday. Commissioner Chesson supports the right for people to make their own choices. *It was moved by Commissioner Horton, seconded by Commissioner Chesson to pass Ordinance as requested. Commissioners Coffield, Chesson and Horton voted in favor. Commissioners Knox and Rodgers voted against. Since the ordinance did not receive an affirmative super majority vote which consists of four in favor, the ordinance must be presented for a second reading at the next regular meeting. A simple affirmation majority vote of three will suffice at the second reading.*

NEW BUSINESS

Tar Heel Apartment Building Concerns

David Whitley, Martin County Chamber of Commerce director, reported that the roof of the Tar Heel Apartment building needs to be replaced. He understands that the building is not owned by the Town, but requested the Town's approval for him to proceed in contacting the Choanoke Area Development Association (CADA) to see if they will provide assistance. He reported that he is Vice President of the CADA Board of Directors. He has tried multiple times to contact the owners and understands that the owners have dissolved ownership in bankruptcy. Brent Kanipe reported that the Town has spent \$15,000 to patch the roof in prior years. He inspected the building approximately 18-20 months ago and reported that a replacement roof was needed as future patching is not beneficial. The building has a lot of mold and mildew. Before any work can be done on the building at this point, it would most likely require an inspection by an engineer. A new roof was priced at approximately \$59,000 but the building has had additional damage since and the repairs will most likely be substantially more. The Town has offered assistance to developers that have inquired about the property. A group of developers had the deed of trust on the building and defaulted on the loan. The loan has since been sold to a collection agency which has attempted to sell at auction but the property has never been foreclosed on. The collection agency is willing to release the property. No taxes are received for the property as it is listed as "non-profit" by the County and is therefore exempt. Commissioner Chesson reported that the Board would support Mr. Whitley to approach the CADA as the building is an iconic historic landmark. The Town is limited on what it can do. There are historical tax credits of 40% (20% state and 20% federal).

Approval of Ordinance 112 Demolition of Dwelling at 925 W. Main Street

Brent Kanipe, Director of Planning and Development, reported that there was a hearing held on August 17, 2017 which concluded that the dwelling was in fact dilapidated within the meaning of chapter 14 of the Code of the Town of Williamston and orders that the owner demolishes and removes same within 30 days of the hearing. The time for appeal has passed and no appeal has been made and the dwelling has not been removed. Mr. Kanipe requests the approval of this ordinance which will authorize and direct to cause the dwelling to be vacated, removed and demolished as it is unfit for human habitation. *It was moved by Commissioner Chesson, seconded by Commissioner Coffield and unanimously passed to approve the Ordinance 2017-112 Ordering the Zoning Administrator to Cause the Demolition and Removal of that Certain Dwelling Unit Known as 925 W. Main Street, Williamston, NC and Owned by Dorothy C. Baggett as presented. Ordinance 2017-112 is hereby attached with the minutes of this meeting and incorporated in the Town's Ordinance Book for future reference.*

Maintenance and Improvements of Library

Kerry Spivey, Public Works Director, reported that concerns had been reported regarding the outward appearance of the library as the Town has ownership of the building and property. The cleanliness of the structure, the landscaping of the property and the signage were noted as needing improvements. The signage needs to be addressed by a specialist as the stuccos are applied to the masonry and if removed, it will possibly destroy the masonry. The Town Attorney was requested to review the requirements of the escrow. A patch is most likely the best option. The Public Works department has addressed the cleanliness of the outside of the building. The library has found half of the \$3,500 funds to cover the cost of a private landscaper that will address the immediate needs and then come in weekly to maintain the landscaping for \$200 a month. If the landscaper plants something, they guarantee the plant and replace at their cost. The Town Administrator has found some outside agencies that have donated some funds toward the project. Mr. Spivey is requesting the Town to match the funds provided by the library and to assist with the landscaping maintenance fee. The one-time matching funds of \$1,750 will address the immediate landscaping needs and an additional \$1,250 for the monthly maintenance fees of the landscaping. The money will most likely be taken from the Cultural Funds. The \$200 maintenance fee does not include mowing and edging in the immediate area around the library which will bring the total to \$293 each month. Parks and Recreation will continue to mow the big lot next door. Commissioner Chesson reported that this can be revisited in the next budget year as there is little to be done in the winter months. Mr. Spivey reported that, for budgeting reasons and for continual upkeep, he preferred to have the contract spread out over a 12 month period. While the monthly maintenance amount may seem high for a dormant month, it is low for a heavy month. Town Administrator Jaynes reported that he and the finance officer would add this in a separate line item in future budgets if the Board approves in future budgets. The Finance Director stated that a budget amendment will most likely be required if the funds are used from the Cultural Funds. The Town portion of the match would be \$1,350 as a local fraternity donated \$200 and possibly \$150 donation from the Rotary Club, and the additional \$93 monthly mowing/edging fee for a grand total of \$3,696 for this fiscal year with no obligation there will be a continuation of the funding in the next fiscal year.

It was moved by Commissioner Rodgers, seconded by Commissioner Chesson and unanimously passed to approve the one-time landscaping appropriation of \$1,350 and \$293 per month for mowing and edging of the immediate area around the library for this fiscal year with the understanding that there will be no obligation to continue the funding into the next fiscal year.

Approval to Begin Purchase Process for Fire Engine

Chief Peele requested approval to begin the process of purchasing a new fire engine. The unofficial replacement plan that has been in place for over 20 years requires the replacement in the upcoming fiscal year. The current engine is 27 years old. The process takes approximately 6 months to complete which entails writing specifications, bidding process for the engine, obtain board approval for the bid, move forward with financial bidding process and then hopefully by April or May, the financial bid will be brought before the Board for approval. The fire engine will cost approximately \$450,000 and historically financed for 5 years. The old engine will be sold once the replacement is in place. *It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Horton and unanimously passed to approve to begin the purchasing process of the fire engine.*

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Planning

The Planning and Development reported:

- A letter has been sent concerning the I-87 with the recommended changes per the Board's direction in the September meeting.
- The county-wide transportation plan will hopefully be available to the Board at the November meeting. A public hearing will be required prior to adoption of the plan.
- The bidding process will begin in the next week for the Urban Redevelopment grant to begin the work on the Patriot House and the Bowen Sign building.
- The bidding process has begun on the Skewarkee Canal Drainage project. This project began approximately a decade ago.

- The NC Museum of Sciences has submitted a request to open a regional satellite museum. They would like a letter of intent if the Town wishes to house the museum. Requirements include that the Town provides a 5,000+ square foot building, plus establishing a local funding foundation to support the museum and provide staff. Operational costs are estimated to be \$300,000 annually that would have to be provided by donations. The Museum will provide training and exhibits. This would be a wonderful asset to the community.
- Georgia Dean's restaurant is scheduled to open around the first of November. Boss Hog's restaurant plans to open soon. First South Bank construction should begin in the near future once the proper paperwork has been completed. Dr. Shelton has requested to relocate his veterinary office on US Hwy 64 East beside the NCDOT office which will require a text change in the Zoning Ordinance. With the Board's approval, he would suggest to hold a Public Hearing to discuss this change at the November meeting. It was the consensus of the Board to hold the Public Hearing as recommended.

Fire/Rescue

The Fire Chief provided the following report:

- There were 196 emergency responses in the month of September.
- There were a couple of hazmat calls to include aid to Hertford County to provide sample testing of several drums found on the side of the road and a natural gas leak in US Hwy 17.
- A couple of employees attended a Virginia Hazmat conference. NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) was on site last week for a fire safety summit. One attended the first two weeks of the executive fire officer class in Charlotte.
- The Mayor presented a signed proclamation for the 2017 Fire Prevention Week that begins next week. While the department spends many hours annually, a special emphasis is spent in the month of October on public education regarding fire prevention.
- Nine years ago, they started an event called the "Grillin' on the Green" in an effort to restore the first fire engine that was owned by the Town of Williamston. The restoration project of the 1928 American LeFrance fire engine has been completed and will be on display at this year's "Grillin' on the Green" on October 25-26, 2017.

Police

The Police Chief reported:

- The last three weeks has been extremely busy in the past three weeks with the Carolina Country Stampede, Homecoming Parade and other events.
- They attended several community events such as the Community Unity meeting in Edenton and the Save Our Community Fund Day at the E. J. Hayes Alumni Center.
- The Annual Firearms training is within the next week and domestic violence training in the upcoming weeks.

Public Works

The Public Works Director reported:

- 35 tons of new asphalt was purchased for repairs with 11 large patches.
- Many hours were spent on Stampede preparations and post-clean up.
- Sanitation totaled at 158 tons for the month.
- There were 68 utility line location requests and 4 compliant grease trap inspections.
- The bidding for the street paving project has been advertised a second time as there was only one response from the initial advertisement.

Parks & Recreation

The Parks & Recreation director reported the following:

- The department cooked for the Stampede volunteers and workers.
- Football is halfway through the season. Volleyball will begin tomorrow night.
- Movie in the Park has been rescheduled for October 12th.
- Larry Thomas, a retired Parks & Recreation employee, died last week.

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Administration

The Town Administrator reported that the Town of Williamston did an excellent job on the Carolina Country Stampede. He commended Brent Kanipe, Christina Craft and all of the departments on a job well done. Brent Kanipe reported that Feyer Ford Lincoln has already committed to sponsoring the event in 2018.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Submitted By:

Approved By:

Town Clerk

Mayor