

**TOWN OF NORTH WILKESBORO  
COMMISSIONERS REGULAR MONTHLY  
MEETING February 2, 2021  
5:30 p.m.**

A meeting of the Mayor and Board of Commissioners of the town of North Wilkesboro was held via ZOOM online platform <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82445941367>

THERE WERE PRESENT:            Robert L. Johnson, Mayor  
   Andrew Palmer, Commissioner/Mayor Pro-Tem  
   Angela Day, Commissioner  
   Debbie Ferguson, Commissioner  
   Michael Parsons, Commissioner  
   Bert Hall, Commissioner

ALSO PRESENT:                    Wilson B. Hooper, Town Manager  
   Debra Pearson, Town Clerk  
   Daniel Johnson, Town Attorney  
   Meredith Detsch, Town Planner  
   Interim Chief Charles R. Thornburg

**CALL TO ORDER**

**Mayor Johnson called the meeting to order at 5:45 p.m. and delivered the Invocation. Mayor Johnson asked Interim Chief Rob Thornburg to lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.**

**IV. Additions/Deletions to the Agenda:** Per Town Manager Hooper's request, item F. under IX. Policy (COVID-19 Civil Enforcement Briefing) will be pulled from the agenda at this time.

**V. Approval of the Agenda: Motion to approve the agenda as amended was made by Commissioner Parsons and seconded by Commissioner Palmer. Motion unanimously carries by roll call of each Commissioner.**

**VI. Public Comments:**

Mayor Johnson opened the floor for public comments. Caprice Cheek, Alisa Phillips, Chris Nichols with Best Image Signs, and Carl Spake, owner of Synergy Recovery, and Nicole Scism, a North Wilkesboro apartment complex owner, signed up to speak.

- Mr. Chris Nichols spoke first. He is working with Carl Spake, owner of Synergy Recovery, Peace Street, North Wilkesboro. Mr. Spake wishes to place a monument type sign in the right-of-way along Old 421 at the entrance to Peace Street. Mr. Spake's facility is near the end of this street, and having a noticeable sign would prove beneficial to those trying to locate the facility according to Mr. Nichols. This request was brought to Town Planner Meredith Detsch. Mr. Nichols and Mr. Spake also called upon the Town of Wilkesboro, the County, and DOT for guidance or permission to place the sign. The location is in North Wilkesboro's jurisdiction so it is ultimately up to the Commissioners to approve or reject the placement of the sign. It was decided by the majority of the Board to review the full request and to draw up a Resolution that would provide perfect clarity and contain both Mr. Spake's and the Town of North Wilkesboro's understanding and intent of the monument sign. The Board was agreeable with this request and the Resolution will be presented and voted upon at the next Commissioners' Work Session, February 25, 2021.
- Ms. Nicole Rhodes Scism, joined the meeting via ZOOM and presented her concerns regarding a residential property that adjoins her apartment complex at 42 Boone Trail, North Wilkesboro. The property owner of 42 Boone Trail has had some on-going problems reported and reviewed by the town's Code Enforcement officer, John Ganus. Law enforcement has been called to the residence numerous times due to noise and other complaints. It has been

reported that the grown grandchildren of the homeowner haul large appliances and other refuse onto the property with the intent to repurpose it. Much of what is brought to the residence tends to be left to the town sanitation department to pick up and haul away. The apartment complex owner contends that the massive amount of trash attracts feral animals and poses a health risk to the neighbors and the town sanitation department loading it onto their trucks. A large truck/vehicle that is sometimes driven through the muddy yard comes onto the drive to the complex leaving it muddy and unsightly. Ms. Scism informed the board she had just spent \$4000.00 to resurface the driveway. There was also a fire started in the yard that ultimately caught a privacy fence on fire and did some structure damage to her property. The offenders haven't been prosecuted nor do they heed requests to clean the area up. Ms. Scism states she and her renters are reluctant to call law enforcement for fear of retaliation from the offenders. Staff will continue to monitor the matter and will report back to Town Manager Hooper and the Board.

North Wilkesboro residents Caprice Cheek and Alisa Phillips did not join the meeting nor speak.

#### **VII. Consent Items:**

- A.) January 5, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes  
January 5, 2021 Close and Seal Closed Session Minutes
- B.) FEMA Grant Application Approval
- C.) Budget Amendments
- D.) Update Meeting Calendar

**Motion to approve A. B. and C. consent items was made by Commissioner Parsons with Commissioner Ferguson seconding the motion. Motion unanimously carries by roll call of each Commissioner.** Item D. was left open for final approval. Approval of Item D.) Update the Meeting Calendar to include a Regular Monthly Meeting date (March 2, 2021) as well as the March 5, 2021 Commissioner's Board Retreat. This had been previously decided upon by the Board. **Motion to approve two meeting dates for the week ending March 7 (Calendar II), March 2, and March 5, 2021, was made by Commissioner Parsons and seconded by Commissioner Hall. Motion unanimously approved by roll call of each Commissioner. See Calendar.**

#### **VIII. Town Manager/Attorney's Reports**

- Town Manager Hooper wanted to mention some outstanding town Projects. First is the Outdoor Economy Group and the comprehensive online website for recreation. This will give an abundance of information on outdoor events and things to do in our area. RFP for long term strategy for parks, capital investments and how we can better align our parks with visitors and our citizens. This will require a financial commitment. Preview the site link to come.
- The Water Tower is moving along with a "go ahead" from Golden Leaf. Kimley-Horn and the NC Department of Commerce. The LGC needs to approve this by March 2, 2021 and at that time the town will sign the contract with construction company Phoenix to break ground. Waiting on grant money info, if there is none, the town will use contingency funds.
- Intake/Water Plant Upgrade is moving along as well Kimley-Horn is still in the design phase and is requesting a July 1, 2021 extension from NCDEQ regulators to get report finalized. The schedule is to prepare specs in 2021, send out for bids 2022, with a completion date of 2023. The project will approve the efficiency of the water treatment plant by using a mechanical pre-treatment machine, called Actiflo, to remove solids such as sand and mud from the raw water before it even reaches the primary treatment process in the plant. It also uses recycled water to clean filters, rather than treated water, so the efficiency of the process improves. The Town Manager will keep the Commissioners apprized as this project develops further.

Commissioner Ferguson thanked Town Manager Hooper for his reporting on matters so that the Commissioners are informed and can share with citizens, and for his dedication during this COVID situation in keeping the Board up to date on issues.

## **IX. Policy:**

- E.) High Country Council of Governments Charter Update- The High-Country Council of Governments, or HHCOG has asked for consideration by their members to amend their Charter document to memorialize changes they have practiced for years.

### **Summary Highlights:**

**Name update:** legally, we exist as “Region D Council of Governments” but are, and have been, known as “High Country Council of Governments” for many years.

**Membership:** suggests clarifying language, no substantive change to operation.

**Governing Structure:** Removed reference to the now-defunct “Executive Committee” as the full 27-member board meets monthly and is the decision-making body. Quorum is updated to reflect the change that occurred many years ago, based on historical documentation and board member accounts, as well as the bylaws. These changes all likely occurred as a result of the 1977 Charter amendment to include all municipalities in its membership.

**Financial Matters:** clarifies the process as it currently and historically has functioned and references current law (NC Budget and Fiscal Control Act).

**Meetings:** removes reference to now-defunct Executive Committee as the full 27-member board (known today as the Executive Board) is the decision-making body.

**Officers:** Incorporates the 1985 Charter amendment requiring the Chairperson to rotate between county and municipal representatives.

The HCCOG presented the following items with changes for consideration with a Resolution request from the town of North Wilkesboro.

- 1.) Resolution
- 2.) Proposed Charter amendments summary
- 3.) Red-lined version of Charter changes
- 4.) Original 1974 charter

**Motion to approve a resolution,” Resolution 2021-001 Town of North Wilkesboro Approval of the High-Country Council of Government Amended Charter” was made by Commissioner Ferguson and seconded by Commissioner Palmer. Motion unanimously carries by roll call of each Commissioner. See Resolution 2021-001 attachment.**

F.) COVID-19 Civil Enforcement Briefing – *This Item has been tabled for this time.*

G.) NCGS 160D Update Status – Meredith Detsch offered the Board a schedule to go over the updates and changes to NCGS 160D. After review and consideration, the town will hold a Public Hearing due to the fact these changes will change the Town Code. The Board will vote to accept or reject the changes. These reviews will involve at least two (2) work sessions for discussion and decision making. All updates have to be adopted by July 1, 2021. Phil Trew and Kelly Coffey from HCCOG attended the meeting via ZOOM to answer any questions the Board may have had.

### **X: Mayor and Commissioners Topics:**

A few things the Board members touched on were topics like funding for traffic calming, stricter enforcement on speeding and speeding on Main Street. Another idea shared was developing some protocol for welcoming new businesses to town. These topics will be discussed in future Work Sessions.

## **XI: Closed Session:**

At 7:15 p.m. Mayor Johnson called for a motion to go into Closed Session to discuss subject matter in accordance with GS 143-318.11 (a) (3), to consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to maintain the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the public body. **Commissioner Parsons made the motion to go into Closed Session with Commissioner Palmer seconding that motion. Motion unanimously carries by roll call of each Commissioner.**

With no other comments or concerns, Mayor Johnson called for a motion to return from closed session at 7:45 p.m. **Motion to return was made by Commissioner Palmer and seconded by Commissioner Parsons. Motion unanimously carries. Meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m. with a motion made by Commissioner Ferguson and seconded by Commissioner Palmer.**

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Debra W. Pearson, Clerk

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Robert L. Johnson MAYOR

Approved \_\_\_\_\_

*Calendar*

**Board of Commissioner Public Board Meeting Dates  
of the Town of North Wilkesboro 2021**

**January 5 - Regular Session  
January 28 - Work Session**

**February 2 - Regular Session**  
**February 25- Work Session**  
**March 2-Regular Session**  
**March 5 - Board Retreat 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.**  
**March 25 - Work Session**  
**April 6 - Regular Session**

**April \*\* – Budget Work Session 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

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**May 4 - Regular Session**  
**May 27 - Work Session**  
**June 8 - Regular Session**  
**June 24 - Work Session**  
**July 6 - Regular Session**  
**July 22 – Work Session**  
**August 3 Regular Session**  
**August 26 Work Session**  
**September 7 Regular Session**  
**September 23 Work Session**  
**October 5 Regular Session**  
**October 28 Work Session**  
**November 9\* - Regular Session**  
**November 18\* - Work Session**  
**December 7 - Regular Session**  
**December 16\* -Work Session**

**\*November 3<sup>rd</sup> Regular session moved to November 10<sup>th</sup> due to Election Day**

**\*November 25<sup>th</sup> Work Session moved to November 18<sup>th</sup> due to Thanksgiving Holiday**

**\*December 23<sup>rd</sup> Work Session moved to December 16<sup>th</sup> due to Christmas**

*Resolution 2021-001*

Resolution 2021-01  
Town of North Wilkesboro Approval of  
The High- Country Council of Government Amended Charter

WHEREAS, the High Country Council of Governments was originally chartered in 1974, when created by the Counties of Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Mitchell, Watauga, Wilkes, and Yancey, then as “Region D Council of Governments”; and

WHEREAS, since formed, the High Country Council of Governments has adopted bylaws, and from time-to-time amended both its Charter and bylaws; and

WHEREAS, the High Country Council of Governments has grown by adding municipalities, and its governance has evolved to include regular monthly meetings of the full board where all member counties and municipalities have voting representatives; and

WHEREAS, the Executive Board and management of the High Country Council of Governments have undertaken to update and modernize its Charter, with the proposed amended Charter attached hereto; and

WHEREAS, by Charter, two-thirds of the participating governmental units must approve of any Charter amendment; and

WHEREAS this Town’s Council has had opportunity to review the changes contained within the proposed amendments to the Charter attached hereto, and finds that those changes accurately reflect, modernize, and improve the High Country Council of Governments’ ongoing organization and operations and should be approved and adopted;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the North Wilkesboro Town Council that the attached amended Charter for the High Country Council of Governments should be adopted and approved.

Adopted this the \_\_\_\_\_ day of February, 2021.

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Robert L. Johnson Mayor, Town of North Wilkesboro

ATTEST:

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Debra W. Pearson, Town Clerk