

**TOWN OF NORTH WILKESBORO  
COMMISSIONERS MEETING**

**March 23, 2023**

**5:30 p.m.**

**HELD AT THE NORTH WILKESBORO BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS BOARD ROOM**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87286695958?pwd=dTJjZk1JOG01VGhET2VVSXZoNmt2QT09>

Meeting ID: 872 8669 5958

Passcode: 618851

**And YouTube:**

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7NdWfFjwMjbLuarfqHDEmg>

THERE WERE PRESENT:        Marc R. Hauser, Mayor  
   Angela Day, Commissioner  
   Andrew Palmer, Commissioner  
   Michael Parsons, Commissioner  
   Bert Hall, Commissioner  
   Otis W. Church, Mayor Pro-tem  
   Holly R. Minton, Town Manager

ALSO PRESENT:                Chief Rob Thornburg, NRPD  
   Debra W. Pearson, Town Clerk

ATTENDING VIA ZOOM:       Daniel Johnson, Town Attorney  
   Meredith Detsch, Planning Director  
   Connie Bauguess, Finance Officer

**CALL TO ORDER**

**I. II. III. Call to Order, Invocation, and Pledge of Allegiance** - Mayor Hauser called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and delivered the Invocation. Mayor Hauser then asked North Wilkesboro Police Chief Rob Thornburg to lead in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**IV. Additions/Deletions to the Agenda -**

There are two changes to the agenda tonight. The first is to add PARTF Grant application to Consideration of Old Business and call for a motion to cancel a Public Hearing on this for April 4, 2023. The second item is to delete the presentation of the town's Draft Audit. Craig Hopkins, with Gibson & Company, P.A., does not have the town audit ready for the presentation tonight. There have been several delays again with Gibson and Company, P.A., leaving the town in need of looking at other options for auditors.

**V. Approval of Agenda -**

Mayor Hauser called for a motion to approve the agenda as amended. **The motion to approve the agenda as amended was made by Commissioner Church and seconded by Commissioner Hall. Motion unanimously carries.**

**VI. Awards and Recognitions – there were none tonight.**

**VII. General Public Comment Period -**

*Mayor will acknowledge no more than 5 speakers. Speakers have five-minute limits.*

There was no one in attendance wishing to speak.

**VIII. Routine Business/Consent - (action)**

*All consent items may be approved in one motion. Items requiring further discussion may be pulled and voted upon separately.*

- A.) Approval of Minutes- Debbie Pearson, Town Clerk
- B.) Approve a Resolution Authorizing the Execution of Opioid Settlements and Approving the Supplemental Agreement for Additional Funds- Holly Minton, Town Manager
- C.) Ordinance Declaring a Road Closure for Town-Sponsored Events- All-Star Event- and...  
Ordinance Declaring a Road Closure for Town-Sponsored Events- Concerts on the Deck Summer Series- Taylor Gann, Community Development Director.
- D.) Budget Amendment #14 To amend the Water Capital Reserve Fund 72, Capital Project Ordinance #2 Waterline Extension, to Wilkes Commercial Bus. Ctr. and Resolution Closing Cap Project 40 Transferring Balance to Water Fund Cap Reserve

**The motion to approve the Routine Business/Consent items was made by Commissioner Palmer and was seconded by Commissioner Church. Motion unanimously carries.**

**IX. Manager's/Town Attorney's Report/Emerging Issues -**

*Town Manager Holly R. Minton & Town Attorney Daniel Johnson*

Town Manager Minton's report included the following:

- Town Manager Minton has attended 37 meetings this month in 17 working days. Ms. Minton has been working with Finance Officer Bauguess on the budget and states she feels the board will be pleased with the presentation on March 31. Town Manager Minton asked the board to please clear their calendars for March 31, 2023, beginning at 8:30 until completion. Mayor Hauser asked the board if this date is a good time for everyone. Mayor Hauser asked the board if this date is a good time for everyone. Commissioner Parsons stated Friday is not a good day, but to go ahead with this date. Ms. At this time, March 31, 2023 has been agreed upon for the budget retreat.
- The Community Info Session attendance at the Yadkin Valley Market Place was great. All board members were there with the exception of Commissioner Day, who had a prior commitment. Town beautification and parking issues were the main topics of the residents in attendance. Manager Minton asked the board if they would be interested in creating a "Quasi" beautification committee. Commissioners Palmer and Day are both very in favor of this idea.
- The lease to Wilkes Towers for the parking lot behind the Towers has ended. This property could be used for paid parking. Allocating parking spaces to downtown residents and business owners with numbered spaces is an option. A monthly fee would be incorporated for this. There are twenty-five spaces in this lot. Currently, some of the spaces are used by Wilkes Towers residents and town employees. Some vehicles parked in the lot have not moved for periods of time. This would help alleviate parking problems for shoppers due to property owners and downtown residents parking on the streets for extended periods of time. Town Manager Minton would like feedback from the board on this. Commissioner Palmer asked what the lease per month with Wilkes Towers was previously. That lease was forty dollars per month and was not strictly enforced. If the lease with Wilkes Towers was renewed, it would be drastically increased. Ms. Minton will come back to the board with more concrete numbers on this item. North Wilkesboro Police Chief Thornburg stated the majority of residents living downtown favor having a numbered or assigned parking spot in town. Another idea of "No Overnight Parking" signs may

- prove beneficial. Ms. Minton wants to table this conversation for now.
- Social District signage has been sent to the printers. Community Development Director Taylor Gann is developing an informative webpage for folks interested in learning about the social district. Commissioner Parsons asked for clarification on the cups used in the social district. He asks if the cups can be purchased by an individual business. Ms. Gann says the cups can be purchased by the individual business as long as it is clear plastic, 16 ounces, and carries the social district required logo.
- At the April 4<sup>th</sup> meeting we will have resolutions to accept three grants, one being the T-Mobile for \$50,300 for the Marketplace Beautification Program, the AFP (Accessibility for Parks) program for \$500,000 for Smoot Park, and yesterday we were approved for a \$150,000 grant from the Wilkes Medical Center Foundation. This comes to a total of \$650,000, for Smoot Park.
- Deadline for the RFQ for the raw water intake project is April 30, 2023. We have three interested parties submitting quotes for this project.
- The deadline for accepting applications for Fire Chief ends tomorrow, March 24, 2023. Interviews will begin in April.
- Manager Minton and Community Development Director Gann attended the Main Street Conference recently. Two sessions Ms. Minton especially took an interest in were the creation of a municipal service district and “Rails to Trails” which involves turning unused rail systems into active trail systems. She met the representative of this national organization and will be in contact with her.
- Multiple staff hours have been dedicated to Fan Fest. The landing page for the event developed in partnership with Thomas Salley, Director of Wilkesboro Tourism, Community Development Director Taylor Gann, and Francisco Martinez of the EDC, is now live. It is full of race week information from North Wilkesboro, Wilkesboro, and the County. It serves as information for all things race week.
- Information including pricing on fleet service options using Enterprise should be back tomorrow. They have submitted quotes for the police department and are now working on a quote for our town fleet, meaning our smaller vehicles such as trucks and autos.

*Emerging Issues:*

Commissioner Parsons had questions about The Health Foundation’s Cyclovia event. He said the first he had heard of it was at the Community Info Event last Thursday and would like to know more about it. He asked if there was a plan to not cut every business off that day. Ms. Gann said this was a Health Foundation event and they were the organizers of the event. Commissioner Parsons asked if he had missed a meeting or if The Health Foundation had approached the board in regard to this event. Manager Minton responded by saying this was organized before either Taylor’s or her tenure. Commissioner Parsons replied he is all for downtown events, but there need to be contingencies due to Saturdays being a good day for his business. He said he will be disappointed if customers can’t get to businesses. Kirsten Roberts with The Health Foundation and North Wilkesboro Police Captain Brad Mathis are working on the street closure details. Commissioner Parsons asked what is planned for this event. Ms. Gann began by saying this is a car-free event to promote healthy and active lifestyles. The event is kicked off with a bike parade sponsored by the Art Gallery. Town Manager Minton read from a copy of the schedule detailing events. During the course of the event, there will be five different exercise classes held at Brushy Mtn. Ruritan Park. Events include bike demos, a toddler zone inclusive play, Zumba, and a pickleball court to name a few. The Health Foundation anticipates a busy town turnout. This event was advertised on social media, and in the newspaper, and Taylor is placing banners and yard signs today, advertising this event. Manager Minton said that while this event is taking place downtown, it is a Health Foundation event. Community Development Director Gann addressed Commissioner Parsons saying that she welcomes his concerns as a commissioner and business owner, and goes on to say since she became involved in this event, she has been looking at how requests for street closures are handled and feels a better system is needed. Commissioner Day states she will look at this event as a positive, and the door to her business will be

open. This is not a town event, but officials need to be aware of road closures. There is a question on whether or not a road closure ordinance was approved during Ms. Keener's tenure. Commissioner Palmer asks in the future to make sure the board is aware of street closures and for what reasons.

Commissioner Palmer has one last emerging issue, and that is the area in the pavement at the chicken que pit at Memorial Park. Manager Minton reports the storm drain gets clogged with leaves and this is more of a maintenance issue than a repair issue. This drain is tied into another drain at that location, and neither one has collapsed. Commissioner Palmer wonders if a bigger pipe or grate is needed. Manager Minton is clear with the street department that any improvements be made correctly the first time whether by upsizing the drain, cutting out concrete to create a larger footprint, or whatever we need to do as those ball fields are utilized regularly. Commissioner Palmer also mentioned a DOT service where citizens can report a pothole. He asked if there was a chance the town could get a service like that. Manager Minton states she has been looking at the DOT's reporting system to find a model that we might use that is similar. Town Manager Minton says she is very open to this idea and will investigate this further.

A brief discussion on the speedbumps resulted in an agreement that they need grinding again due to the abrupt rise in two of the bumps. Mayor Hauser mentioned a concern a citizen has in reference to a repair needed at 610 6<sup>th</sup> Street. Frontier Gas has left an area in need of repair and a large section of sidewalk missing. Hopefully, Frontier Gas will address this next week.

Mayor Hauser wanted to point out that the agenda packets aren't as thick as they used to be, but he wants to make sure it's clear that there is much going on in Town Hall. Many items are making it to the consent agenda but some items that before may have made it to the agenda are being taken care of without possibly being added to the agenda repeatedly. An example of this is, Town Manager Minton reports a building downtown has been inspected today. The Planning Board came to Manager Minton with two choices. The Planning Board could go to the commissioners with an order to close the building at their next meeting, or town Code Enforcement Officer John Ganus could send an order to close to the property owner directly. The difference is the timing of delivery of the order. This order would not be heard until the next board meeting, as opposed to the order to close being received by the property owner and then informing the board of the progress at the next board meeting. Ms. Minton states this is merely management style and her intent is to keep the board informed. She will begin a mid-month bulleted email, and feels the board doesn't need to be bothered with administrative "minutia". She would hope the board could then focus on vision, and moving forward with community issues. Ms. Minton added her message to the staff is to approach empty buildings in our downtown as aggressively as possible staying within the parameters of the law.

Commissioner Church commented that he speaks with town employees regularly and the attitude has changed 180 degrees. They appear "incentivized and happy on the job". He said it seems morale is up. Town Manager Minton said there were some structural changes that would be discussed at the board retreat involving the Streets and Parks and Recreation departments, and hopefully, these changes will keep things running smoothly. Commissioner Parsons commented he likes the shiny new garbage truck.

*Town Attorney Daniel Johnson has nothing to report.*

#### **IX. Consideration of Old Business-**

This item was added to the agenda tonight. PARTF will not be pursued this year. It will be pursued next year. We have learned in the last two months the pool will not be eligible due to PARTF funding in 2006. We are currently in Phase II of the revitalization of Smoot Park. Phase II involves the pool and pool house. At this time, we need a Master Plan for all of our town parks. We will also pursue other grant opportunities. Commissioner Church asks what it would take to put a Master Plan together. Town Manager Minton replied that allocation of budget money and contracting with a company such as Withers Ravenel or Destination by Design to design a Master Parks Plan. Town Manager Minton asked for a motion from the board to cancel a Public Hearing on April 4, 2023 on this item. **A motion to cancel the public hearing for PARTF funding was made by Commissioner Parsons and seconded by Commissioner Church. Motion unanimously carries.**

XI. Consideration of New Business –

E.) Draft Audit- Craig Hopkins, Gibson & Company, P.A.-

This item has been approved for deletion from this agenda. Craig Hopkins, with Gibson & Company, P.A., does not have the town audit ready for the presentation tonight. There have been several delays again with Gibson and Company, P.A., leaving the town in need of looking at other options for auditors. **Deletion of this item from the agenda was approved by the motion of Commissioner Church, and seconded by Commissioner Hall under V. Approval of the Agenda. The motion unanimously carries.**

XII. Closed Session- *No closed session tonight.*

XIII. Adjourn-

With no other comments or concerns, Mayor Hauser called for a motion to adjourn. The motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Commissioner Church and seconded by Commissioner Hall. The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

\*Minutes prepared by Debra Pearson, previous Town Clerk.

Submitted respectively,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Marc R. Hauser, Mayor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Meredith Detsch, Interim Town Clerk

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_