

**TOWN OF NORTH WILKESBORO
COMMISSIONERS MEETING**

April 4, 2023

5:30 p.m.

HELD AT THE NORTH WILKESBORO BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS BOARD ROOM

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86055937203?pwd=QThnVFY2OEhSTGJldVEySURBTUZydz09>

Meeting ID: 860 5593 7203

Passcode: 202625

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
 Daniel Johnson, Town Attorney
 Connie Bauguess, Finance Officer
 Meredith H. Detsch, Planning Director
 Taylor Gann, Community Development Director
 Curt Hayes, Building Inspector
 Gary Barrows, North Wilkesboro Fire Department

ATTENDING VIA ZOOM: Craig Hopkins, Gibson & Company, P.A.

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 is one addition to the agenda tonight. Brook Horne with the Wilkes Art Gallery requests a temporary closure of C Street between 9th Street to 10th Street for a special event being held May 19th from 3:30 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. There will be a Ward Nichols art exhibit at that time. This will be added as Item J. under XI. Consideration of New Business.

V. Approval of Agenda -

Mayor Hauser called for a motion to approve the agenda as amended. **The motion to approve the agenda as amended adding Item J. Wilkes Art Gallery Road Closure under New Business was made by Commissioner Church and seconded by Commissioner Hall. Motion unanimously carries, 5-0.**

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.) Budget Amendments- Connie Bauguess, Finance Officer.
- B.) Proclamation for Resilient & Thriving Communities- Town Manager Holly Minton.
- C.) T-Mobile Grant Acceptance- Taylor Gann, Community Development Director.
- D.) Easement for Mic Zulpo- Attorney Daniel Johnson.

The motion to approve the Routine Business/Consent items was made by Commissioner Hall and was seconded by Commissioner Church. Motion unanimously carries, 5-0.

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 began by thanking the board for their attendance at the Budget Work Shop meeting held earlier today.
- We had planned on having Ms. May Martin attend our meeting tonight in order to present the plaque honoring her late husband and former North Wilkesboro Fire Chief Jimmy Martin. The fire truck is having some detailing done and is not available tonight. We will ask Mrs. Martin to join us at the next meeting if that is convenient for her.
- Town Manager Minton reports paperwork for the AFP and WRMC grants for the Smoot Park pool she had planned to present resolutions for tonight has not come back yet.
- Carolina West Wireless approached the town informing us that 3% of our bill can be allocated for our local schools. We would like to split that 3% between North Wilkesboro Elementary and CC Wright Schools. Ms. Minton remarked she thinks this is a great program and asked for a "head nod" from the board.
- The board previously passed a resolution to sell the town's fire truck. This is an older model Aerial 2105 truck. We placed this truck on GovDeals twice but did not receive an offer. We will look at other options to sell it. This will be brought before the board again at a future date.
- We've received 3 offers relating to the raw water intake project. That information will be forthcoming

This concluded Town Manager Minton's report. She asked if anyone had any questions or emerging issues at this time.

Emerging Issues:

Commissioner Palmer asked about the parking issue. He asked if measurements had ever been done to consider angled parking. Commissioner Palmer stated research shows there could be an increase of 40% more parking if parallel that could narrow the lane of passage and also help with speeding. This will be explored.

Town Attorney Daniel Johnson has nothing to report.

IX. Consideration of Old Business-

There is no Old Business to discuss at this time.

X. Consideration of New Business –

J.) Wilkes Art Gallery Road Closure or Special Event request- Taylor Gann, Community Development Director.

Mayor Hauser skipped to this item to save Ms. Horne with Wilkes Art Gallery from having to stay for the duration of this meeting and moved it to the top of New Business. Manager Minton stated we have a request for a temporary road closure on May 19th from 3:30 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. for a Ward Nichols art event. The town will post this on the website. Commissioner Palmer stated we are lucky to have Mr. Nichols' artwork on exhibit again in our town and anyone liking artwork should come out to see his work. **Mayor Hauser asked for a motion to approve the street closure of C Street from 9th Street to 10th Street, Friday, May 19, 2023, from 3:30 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. Commissioner Day made the motion to approve this item, with Commissioner Church seconding this motion. Motion unanimously carries, 5-0.**

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

Mr. Craig Hopkins attended the meeting via ZOOM, giving the board a brief overview of the town's audit. Reporting on the June 30, 2022 materials, there were no issues with the numbers provided. He stated, "In our unqualified opinion, the best way to say it is, all I's were dotted and t's were crossed." This was a very clean report. He said, "I would like to point out that the date of this report is awfully late due to issues in the office, and major impacts in our office." He gave his apologies for the late audit.

Financial statements were briefly reviewed with the Commissioners by Mr. Hopkins. Mr. Hopkins asked if anyone had questions regarding this audit report. Hearing none, Mayor Hauser thanked Ms. Hopkins for his presentation. Commissioner Parsons asked if this would be presented again for final approval. Finance Officer Bauguess replied that now the audit will go to the League of Government for approval. Commissioner Parsons then asked Ms. Bauguess if she saw anything in the audit that would cause concern. She said one thing she did see was the difference in the lease payment. She said they showed \$13 million still owed from the lease, and that lets her know the town has \$2 million available in unrestricted funds as of June 30, 2023.

Town Manager Minton stated Ms. Bauguess does a really strong job getting us a clean audit each year. Commissioner Parsons says this is duly noted by every town manager we have had over the last 10+ years. Commissioner Parsons stated Finance Officer Bauguess is a real asset to the town.

F.) Annexation of Parcel ID#1400854 11.070 Acres on Hwy. 18N- Town Manager Holly Minton

The next item on the agenda was the annexation request for Parcel ID 1400854 and Ms. Detsch presented it to the Board. Ms. Detsch explained the annexation process that staff conducted before sending the request before the board and also the legal advertisement requirements. There are two resolutions for the Board to adopt – Town Clerk is to investigate the annexation and research it. The Board will need to have both resolutions adopted. The certificate of sufficiency is produced from the

Clerk and also will need to be adopted by the Board. Finally, the Board must call for a Public Hearing which directs staff to advertise the annexation in the paper. The zoning for the property is Highway Business and Corridor Overlay as well as the Watershed II Balanced area. A special density allocation will have to be sought from the Planning Board. Commissioner Hall asked who the applicant was and Ms. Detsch introduced both the applicant Bill Scantland and Barry Bush. Commissioner Parsons asked about the water and sewer capacity and staff has researched it and it will be sufficient for that property. Martha Nichols asked about the total cap of annexations and Ms. Detsch explained that was only for satellite annexations and the cap was recently released from the state thanks to our Representative Jeffrey Elmore. This annexation before the board is a contiguous annexation and does not count towards the cap (if we still had one). **Commissioner Parsons made a motion to approve the two resolutions and call for a public hearing on May 2nd. Commissioner Church seconded the motion and it passed unanimously 5-0.**

G.) RFP for Auditors- Recommendations- Town Manager Holly Minton and Connie Bauguess, Finance Officer.

Town Manager Holly Minton presented to the board the auditor selection. Ms. Bauguess interviewed Cindy Randolph, CPA who has 31 years' experience as a CPA. Before then she worked at a large audit firm 25 years before forming her own auditing firm. She has never submitted an audit late and has gone through the state's auditing process numerous times. Staff has attached her resume as well as other notable information for the board to consider. The fee is \$15,500 for the audit fee and includes submittal and is lower than our current firm's price. Mayor asked if there were any additional questions and hearing none he asked for a motion. **Commissioner Day made a motion to accept Cindy Randolph, C. Randolph CPA, PLLC, to be the next Auditor for the Town of North Wilkesboro and this complies with the Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act as the auditor is being selected and directly reports to the governing board. Commissioner Church seconded the motion and it passed unanimously 5-0.**

H.) Outdoor Economy Plan- Memorandum of Understanding- Meredith H. Detsch, Planning Director

The next item on the agenda was presented by Meredith Detsch and she introduced this item. The Memorandum of Understanding before them was similar to last year's and allowed staff to continue working on this item. Last year the amount for the contribution was \$10,000 and now the request is \$5,000 for the next five years. This money would go into a pot with the other jurisdictions to create funding to implement the adopted Outdoor Economy Plan. Commissioner Day thinks it is great we have this partnership and that we're in it for the long haul with one another. **Commissioner Parsons made a motion to adopt the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the Outdoor Economy Plan and contribute \$5,000 from their line item to the plan for the next five years as stated in the MOU. Commissioner Day seconded the motion and it passed unanimously 5-0.**

I.) 115 Widening-Lighting- Meredith Detsch, Planning Director continued to present to the board but shifting gears to the upcoming Highway 115 widening project. Duke Energy contacted staff last summer and asked how we would like to light the highway along the new widening. Staff started conversations with Duke and NCDOT and staff members to determine where and how to light the roadways. Ms. Detsch found that the Town had adopted a Lighting Policy back in October 2008 and wanted to note that the Town was supportive and in favor of lighting their roadways. We maintain the lights and Curt Hayes; Building Inspector periodically checks them all to ensure they are working properly. There are several betterments the staff will be bringing back to the board including sidewalks, lighting, and other infrastructure. Ms. Detsch explained the layout of Highway 115 and where our jurisdiction runs and also the major interchanges that are proposed based on NCDOT's plan. Detsch explained there are twenty-six street lights total and the fee would be around \$500 a month with the submitted proposal. Each light would be \$19.52 a light for the pole rental fee, the power, and other fees. Commissioner Palmer asked if this was how other streets were lit and

Detsch noted we have the policy but it is dated and way off the best practices standard. Detsch noted they are losing their current fee that was locked in for the last few years and will be subject to the new fee schedule Duke has adopted. Commissioner Parsons noted that this is a major corridor into the Town and is directly off Highway 421. Detsch noted the Board doesn't need to take action tonight but wanted to get this information in front of the Board. Detsch also noted they were asked to consider covering the cost to relocate private poles and she doesn't recommend the Town take that on as it is a private property matter. Town Manager Minton noted we are going to have considerable costs with this upgrade of the roadway and wanted to bring all the upgrades to the Board for consideration one at a time. At a later time, staff will bring the full betterment costs and figures for them to consider. Those items include landscaping, mowing, lighting, sidewalks, water and sewer line upgrades and the maintenance associated with all these betterments. Town Manager Minton has an upcoming meeting with NCDOT and will ask about some of these timelines and logistics. No action was needed on this item, just an information session only.

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 6:20 p.m.

*Minutes prepared by Debra Pearson, previous Town Clerk.

Submitted respectively,

Meredith Detsch, Interim Town Clerk

Marc R. Hauser, Mayor

Approved: _____