

**TOWN OF NORTH WILKESBORO
COMMISSIONERS MEETING**

Date: August 8th, 2023.

5:30 p.m.

HELD AT THE NORTH WILKESBORO BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS BOARD ROOM

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87914389936?pwd=elh3bDZybmZSVWd2YTJuenpXNmtVUT09>

Meeting ID: 879 1438 9936

Passcode: 141514

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: Daniel Johnson, Town Attorney
 Chief Rob Thornburg, NRPD
 Sarah Davis, Planner I
 Taylor Gann Downtown Coordinator

CALL TO ORDER

I. II. III. Call to Order, Invocation, and Pledge of Allegiance – Mayor Hauser called the meeting to order at 5:31 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 –
There are no additions or deletions tonight.

V. Approval of Agenda - *(action needed)*

Mayor Hauser called for a motion to approve the agenda. **The motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Church and seconded by Commissioner Hall. The motion unanimously carries, 5-0.**

VI. Awards and Recognitions

A.) Fire Chief Swearing In

Mayor Marc Hauser swore in new Fire Chief, Robert Gentle, accompanied by his wife. The Board of Commissioners and staff congratulated Chief Gentle on his new appointment.

B.) Police Officer Roosenberg Swearing In

Mayor Marc Hauser swore in new Police Officer, Cole Roosenberg, accompanied by his mother. The Board of Commissioners and staff congratulated Officer Roosenberg on his new position.

C.) Recognition of Police Officers

Two police officers received letters of commendation from Police Chief Rob Thornburg.

- Mayor Hauser read aloud the letter of commendation for Officer Ryan Blair regarding his high standard of service and dedication to the town. The Board of Commissioners and staff congratulated Officer Blair for his service.
- Mayor Hauser read aloud the letter of commendation for Officer Katie Cleary regarding her high service and dedication to the town. Mayor Hauser recalled swearing in Officer Cleary. The Board of Commissioners and staff congratulated Officer Cleary for her service.

VII. General Public Comment Period –

The mayor will acknowledge no more than five speakers. Speakers have five-minute limits.

There were no public comments at this meeting.

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

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

D.) Budget Amendments- *Connie Bauguess, Finance Director*

The motion to approve the consent agenda was made by Commissioner Parsons and seconded by Commissioner Church. The 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:

- This week is the first week of Tyler Holden, the town's North Carolina Lead Fellow. The fellowship program is a partnership between Americorp and the UNC School of Government. The Board of Commissioners and staff welcomed Tyler to the town. His job duties will include the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and creating a succession plan for the town finance director who is nearing retirement.
- Meeting with County Officials: Attended in person by Mayor Hauser, Commissioner Parsons, and Manager Minton remotely. Presentation by Jennifer Imo on behalf of the Ferguson group. She provided insight into the benefits of utilizing their services. Mayor Hauser commented that this is the second meeting with Jennifer. This investment will benefit Wilkesboro, North Wilkesboro, and Wilkes County. The lobbyist will advocate for federal investment, and Mayor Hauser believes this to be important. The cost will be \$6,000 per month between all three entities. The max bill for North Wilkesboro is \$2,000 per month. The town can sign a contract for a year, but if the town decides we are not getting our money's worth, we can terminate the contract with 30 days' notice. The Return on Investment (ROI) has been as low as four to one and as high as nine to one. The risk will be minimal, and money will be well spent.
Ms. Martha Nichols asked if this money could be used to address the storm drain on main street. Commissioner Parsons replied that probably not, due to the project being done by the Department of Transportation (DOT), and DOT projects are not usually funded at the federal level. The presentation was geared more towards big-ticket items such as the river district. The federal investment typically is not on smaller projects or stepping over the DOT. The lobbyist is not an overnight process. She does have experience in southern small towns and working in North Carolina. Would like to see the town proceed with this firm. Manager Minton addressed the stormwater drains. The DOT originally planned to pave main street, but these plans have been pushed back. Manager Minton contacted other managers across North Carolina, and they have had a positive experience with The Ferguson Group. She requested a head nod as this was in the budget already. The vote was 5-1, with Commissioner Hall voting against.
- The raw water intake project is progressing. The town is still in the process of securing a potential property for the actual raw water intake to be placed on, the required property is half an acre. Three sites have been selected, and we are negotiating with the property owners.
- Last year, the town received a grant from NCDEQ to conduct an MRF study with Withers Ravenel. Megan Powell, of WithersRavenel suggested that we postpone the completion of the MRF Study until Town staff could provide relevant data regarding the two large water projects currently underway. Staff agreed to postpone completion until February. Withers Ravenel and Staff felt this would improve the quality and content of the study.
- The town avoids spending money from April to September outside of operating costs. At the next meeting, there will be quotes for the Comprehensive Improvement Plan. Hopefully, there will be a recommendation for the Smoot Park pool renovation. Currently, the pool has a water leak and a subpar plumbing system. If the pool is not addressed this year, then opening the pool next year will present challenges. Manager Minton has received three quotes on pool renovations for the Board of Commissioners to review.
- Manager Minton reported that we had a downtown day in May and would like to make this a bi-annual event. The spring date would be in April, and the fall date right before the Apple Festival in September.
- Manager Minton then turned the presentation over to Ms. Taylor Gann, Downtown Coordinator, regarding the Main Street Reinvestment statistics in downtown as part of the effort to regain our downtown accreditation. Ms. Gann reported statistics from July 1st 2022, to June 30th 2023. There were 13 projects completed downtown. Three facades were redone and a net gain of 45 jobs for the year. Seventeen businesses were expanded and 50% of the money spent downtown was during the Apple Festival, Small Business Saturday, Light-Up Downtown, and the 11 events held downtown. Mayor Hauser volunteered to visit these businesses to get the survey data and Ms. Gann would like to complete this survey quarterly. Manager Minton stated that this information can also be helpful for grant applications.

Emerging Issues

Commissioner Palmer said that school is starting to start back. What can we do for schools in our district to help them? He believes that the town can help to maintain the outside of the school at North Wilkesboro Elementary. Manager Minton replied that she would contact the new principal to gauge their interest in having town volunteers work for half a day to spruce up the grounds. A community member has contacted her about cleaning the trail behind the school. Commissioner Hall suggested the same at CC Wright Elementary. The other board members agreed with Commissioner Palmer, and he encouraged developing relationships with local school principals at North Wilkesboro.

Town Attorney Daniel Johnson has nothing to report.

X. Consideration of Old Business – N/A

XI. Consideration of New Business-

E.) Introduction of Non-discrimination policy- *Holly Minton, Town Manager*

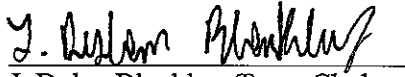
Manager Minton reported on the introduction of a non-discrimination policy. This policy builds off of a similar policy passed last year. The town had received ARPA funding through the state of North Carolina. The language in the policy needs to be adjusted to demonstrate longevity. To comply with reporting standards for ARPA funding, we need higher standards for internal controls. The higher standards will bring the necessity to revise internal control policies. The Town must make these revisions before filing for reimbursements for the raw water project. There will be a myriad of policy changes in the coming months to get into compliance. None of the policy changes are anything beyond an industry standard. We have to revise our grievance policy, which will be introduced at the next meeting. Manager Minton stated that we need to update the language and create greater standards for town staff.

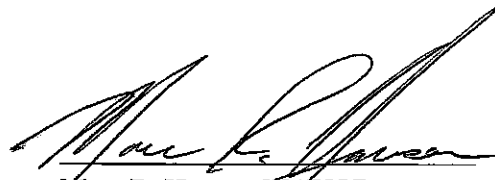
The motion to approve the Non-discrimination policy was made by Commissioner Day and seconded by Commissioner Church. The motion unanimously carries, 5-0.

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 Palmer. The meeting adjourned at 6:11 p.m.


J. Dylan Blankley, Town Clerk


Marc R. Hauser, MAYOR

Approved: September 5th 2023

