

**TOWN OF NORTH WILKESBORO
COMMISSIONERS MEETING**

February 7, 2023

5:30 p.m.

HELD AT THE NORTH WILKESBORO BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS BOARD ROOM

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83587290314?pwd=eVYzQTJRMERQejBOVo96SkZ3ek81QTo9>

Meeting ID: 835 8729 0314
Passcode: 636992

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
 Meredith Detsch, Planning Director
 Sarah Davis, Planner I
 Kini Hamby, Interim Fire Chief
 Debra W. Pearson, Town Clerk
 Mitch Brigulio, Davenport & Company
 Thomas Salley, President, Wilkesboro Tourism Development Authority

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 no additions or deletions to the agenda tonight.

V. Approval of Agenda -

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

VI. Awards and Recognitions - *none at this time*

VII. General Public Comment Period -

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

There were none in attendance to speak tonight.

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.) Correction to Budget Amendment #9- Finance Officer Connie Bauguess
- B.) Fire Truck Surplus Resolution
- C.) Approve North Wilkesboro ABC Board Appointment of Mrs. May Martin
- D.) Approve North Wilkesboro Housing Authority Appointment of Mr. Rodney Graham

Motion to approve the Routine Business/Consent items was made by Commissioner Hall, the motion 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 reports:

- The Town has a new Public Utility Director, Mr. David Poore. He began work this Monday, January 30, and we want to welcome him tonight. Manager Minton introduced David at that time.
- Work on the river cleanup that began in Wilkesboro is now coming into North Wilkesboro. We are working on permits for the removal of items from the river.
- Community Development is working on NASCAR Fanfest diligently. This event was not budgeted for due to the fact that it was not in development at that time, so we are working on sponsorship. We want to provide people with an opportunity to sponsor. We expect a large draw.
- Personnel-Crystal Keener is working on an internet policy
- Updating job descriptions for Department Heads is being done.
- Encouraging Department Heads to develop a system for salary incentives.

Town Manager Minton asked for any emerging issues from the board.

- Commissioner Palmer inquired about updates or plans to repair the pool at Smoot Park. Manager Minton and Planner Detsch say yes. There are updates on costs, and funding opportunities, but is anything solidified at this time, the answer is no. We will likely run through next season with the pool like it is. Ms. Detsch reports we will apply to the State PARTF. It is a 50/50 match. With costs for repair around \$500,000., whatever we ask for will require a 50/50 match, unless we can find alternative funding. We may discuss this at our budget meeting. Commissioner Palmer asks if the county might donate to the pool since it is the only pool in the county. Manager Minton states she will explore that option. Commissioner Palmer also inquired about grant money to take water and sewer to the top lot at the Industrial Park. Manager Minton states Utilities Director David Poore has provided some cost estimates for reaching a potential building for the industrial park. One estimate would run the creek up to the Industrial Park. We are also exploring options for developing a buildable area map. We could change the area to mixed use for both housing and industrial use. This takes funding and we are exploring grant opportunities.

Town Attorney Daniel Johnson has nothing to report.

X. Consideration of Old Business- *Nothing at this time.*

XI. Consideration of New Business –

Items E.) and F.) have been reversed for time efficiency tonight.

F.) Request for Closure of Rainbow Street Alleyway

Planning Director Meredith Detsch presented a Resolution of Intent to Close a Street or Alleyway. State statutes allow a municipality to close an alleyway or any unopened right of way within our town limits as well as our ETJ. Mr. Gray Elledge is in attendance for this meeting. Planner Detsch reports the property is in our ETJ. It is in our best interest to facilitate this with Mr. Elledge. We have also included DOT correspondence with the property owners. It is not a county-maintained road nor is it a town road. Advertising and notification of the adjoining property owners are being done. Mayor Hauser asked if anyone had any questions. He then asked for a motion to approve the resolution. **Motion to approve the resolution which includes notification of a Public Hearing was made by Commissioner Hall and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Church. Motion unanimously carries. Public Hearing to be held March 7, 2023**

E.) Davenport Financial Report

Town Manager Minton introduced Mr. Mitch Brigulio with Davenport and Company. Davenport has served as the town's financial advisor for a number of years. Mr. Brigulio had Ms. Pearson pass out reports for the commissioners. He states Davenport is here to advise the town and put the town's interest first. Mr. Brigulio would like to discuss the hospital lease investments for opportunities and considerations for further investments moving forward. He states this leads to Capital Planning from hospital lease proceeds to help "jumpstart" some capital projects. Mr. Brigulio asked the board to keep in mind when investing funds or spending funds, as of June 30, 2022, three point five million dollars has been realized of the 15M dollar lease to date. The town could spend \$3.5 million without a negative impact on the town audit. The town has invested in what is called a "laddered" portfolio of securities which are US Treasury and US Agency investments going out 10 years with \$1 million dollars maturing every year for the first nine to 10 years and a large sum maturing in the last two years because those dollars were not expected to be needed until the very end of the process. \$10 million dollars was invested in securities and \$5 million was invested in what is called liquidities or cash balance. Liquidities can be accessed if needed. Interest rates at the time of investment were ranging 2 to 2.8 %. This gave the town investment earnings of a little over \$200,000 every year. In November 2023, the first \$1 million dollar security will mature and the town will have \$1 million dollars to be spent or reinvested. The \$5 million dollars invested in liquidities now stands at \$6.2 million dollars. Mr. Brigulio offered to look at future investments now with the town or wait until a time closer to budget time. A mini-retreat on February 24, 2023, may be a good time to discuss this and make informed decisions. Commissioner Parsons is pleased with the report and guidance of Davenport.

As of July 22, 2022, the Ton has paid off its existing debt service, so currently, the Town has no outstanding debt. The Commissioners thanked Mr. Brigulio for his presentation of the Town of North Wilkesboro's investment plan.

PRESENTATION MATERIALS CAN BE VIEWED ONLINE BY CLICKING ON THE FEB. 7, 2023 AGENDA.

G). Discussion on Town Occupancy Tax-

The background formation of this item reads as follows: The Town of Wilkesboro has been collecting an occupancy tax of 3% since February 2005 and has successfully grown its tourism industry. Wilkes County is considering an occupancy tax countywide of 6% and creating its own Tourism Development Authority Board. In order for the Town to hold a seat on the proposed County's Tourism Development Authority Board, we must also have adopted an occupancy tax. While the Town does not have any official hotels, we can collect occupancy tax on short-term rentals.

Town Manager Minton began by saying this Occupancy Tax item is on the agenda to make it public and for board discussion. The Town of Wilkesboro has been collecting an occupancy tax of 3% since February 2002 and has successfully grown its tourism industry and created its own Tourism Development Authority Board. Wilkes County is considering an occupancy tax countywide of 6%. Wilkes County Commissioners were slated to vote on this item tonight. Ms. Minton recognized Mr. Thomas Salley, President of the Wilkesboro Tourism Development Authority had joined our meeting and asked if he could inform us of what was decided by County Commissioners in their meeting tonight. Mr. Salley reports this item was heard and the county did indeed approve having NC Representative Jeffrey Elmore draft a local bill to take to the state for approval. A County Board was appointed tonight.

Commissioner Palmer states he thinks it's huge they did this. He says "money was being left on the table that that was leaving us at a competitive disadvantage with other counties. Money that markets our area will bring customers to our area who pay money to our local businesses, hotels, retailers, and restaurants. Commissioner Palmer says he is glad to see this. Town Manager Minton presented this item to see if the board is in favor of the occupancy tax. The majority of the board is in favor with the exception of Commissioner Hall.

XII. Closed Session- *Nothing at this time.*

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 8:50 p.m.

Marc R. Hauser, MAYOR

Debra W. Pearson, Town Clerk

Approved: _____