

NORTH WILKESBORO BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Work Session

Thursday, May 27, 2021

5:30 p.m.

At the Stone Family Center for the Performing Arts

Members present: Mayor Robert Johnson, Commissioner Angela Day, Commissioner Debbie Ferguson, Commissioner Michael Parsons, Commissioner Bert Hall. Mayor Pro-tem Andrew Palmer was in attendance via ZOOM.

Staff present: Town Manager Wilson Hooper, Clerk Debra Pearson, Town Attorney Daniel Johnson, Town Planner Meredith Detsch, Payroll and Human Services Officer Trish Wagoner, and NW Interim Police Chief Charles Thornburg.

- Call to Order- Mayor Robert Johnson
- Invocation- Mayor Robert Johnson- Mayor Johnson gave the invocation
- Pledge of Allegiance- NW Interim Police Chief Charles Thornburg led the group in the Pledge

IV. Additions/Deletions There were no additions or deletions to the agenda.

V. Approval of the Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Ferguson and seconded by Commissioner Day. Motion unanimously carries.

VI. Action Items

- A.) Accept American Rescue Plan Funds – Connie Bauguess
- B.) Audit Contract – Connie Bauguess
- C.) Review Changes to Town Code Chapter 5 (Buildings) and Zoning Ordinance: Floodplain Section and Call for Public Hearings - Meredith Detsch

Motion to approve Items A. Accept American Rescue Plan Funds, and B. Audit Contract was made by Commissioner Ferguson with Commissioner Day seconding that motion. Motion unanimously carries. See Resolution No. 2021-08 for Receiving Federal Funds Under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and Gibson & Company. PA Contract Letter attachments.

Item C- Review Changes to Town Code Chapter 5 and Zoning Ordinance Floodplain Section was discussed with Planning Director Detsch informing the Board that the previously adopted Zoning Ordinance will need to be pulled and the new state model instated. Base flood elevation requirements were discussed. Currently the elevation is one

(1) foot. The Planning Board agrees with a state requirement of increasing to four (4) feet for new builds. Consensus of the Board of Commissioners is against the new requirement. Commissioner Parsons stated the four (4) foot requirement is excessive and would prove to be a burden. Planner Detsch explained this is a case-by-case situation with existing buildings. The elevation can vary and the four (4) foot elevation increase is not mandatory.

A call for a Public Hearing for Chapter 5-Buildings and Floodplains on June 24, 2021 was made by a motion from Commissioner Parsons and seconded by Commissioner Ferguson. Motion unanimously carries.

VII. Work Items

D.) Appointments to Planning Related Boards – Meredith Detsch

North Wilkesboro Commissioners endorse increasing the number of North Wilkesboro Planning Board and Board of Adjustment members to eight on each board. The Planning Board, due to new 160D requirements need one extra ETJ member. This applicant will be recommended by the Board and the Mayor and appointed by the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners. The Board of Adjustment consist of eight members, six regular members and two alternates. Four members (three regular members and one alternate member) shall be residents of the Town of North Wilkesboro and be appointed by the North Wilkesboro Board of Commissioners. Four members (three regular members and one alternate member) shall be residents of the town's ETJ and be appointed by the Board of Commissioners of Wilkes County. An additional Board of Adjustment ETJ member is now needed to keep in line with 160D Guidelines and one of the alternates will need to resign since both members are currently in town members and only one in town and one ETJ member is needed. Recommendations are also requested by these boards to serve on the Wilkes County Joint Planning Board. Applications and recruiting is set to begin to find citizens wishing to serve. Wilkes County government wishes to continue with the Wilkes County Joint Planning Board, a 12- member board with two designated seats for North Wilkesboro residents. Wilkes County would like to know if the town can make referrals or recommendations to their board. Ms. Terry Stackhouse and Mr. Charles Sink currently serve as North Wilkesboro's representatives. Mr. Sink's term is set to expire the end of June, but he has expressed a desire to continue serving. North Wilkesboro can recommend Mr. Sink or any new applicant wishing to serve. The Wilkes County Planning Board does not regulate North Wilkesboro or ETJ matters. Commissioners will be asked to affirm the Planning Board and Board of Adjustments recommendations at a later date. Meantime, Commissioners will be asked to appoint the Wilkes County Joint Planning Board representative at the June 24, 2021 meeting.

E.) Hiring Bonuses and Part-Time Wage Increase – Wilson Hooper

Town Manager Hooper presented a proposal to update the Personnel Policy to give department heads more flexibility when it comes to compensation of their part-time employees. This means increasing hourly pay and offering hiring bonuses. This decision comes from challenges to find and retain part-time and seasonal workers. Factors contributing to workforce shortages vary from unemployment benefits, stimulus payments, unavailable child care, and fears of returning to work due to the pandemic. A Hiring Bonus and Hourly Rate Increase for Part-time briefing sheet was submitting to the Board for review and will be up for

consideration at the June 24, 2021 Board meeting. A required comment period from employees will be reviewed before that consideration is made.

F.) Town Contribution to Wilkes Commercial Business Center – Lee Ann Nixon

EDC President Lee Ann Nixon is asking for \$150,000 from the town as a contribution for infrastructure to the Wilkes Commercial Business Center. This multi-tenant commercial building will be built on the site known as the Renfro property adjacent to the Knotville Fire Department on Highway 268 East. This property is close to our Industrial Park and is annexed in to the town of North Wilkesboro. In April a proposal was submitted by Wilkes EDC and Wilkes County was awarded \$1.5M from Golden LEAF Foundation. Tenants of this building will have subsidized rent for their first few years and have access to business services from the EDC, EDPNC and other business development agencies. A most likely contribution from the town would be to extend the water lines to the property permitting the facility to have the type of fire protection system most commercial and light industrial tenants seek. Sewer lines already exist in this area. As a side benefit, this would run water lines past the property that sought annexation last year for possible housing development. Commissioner Ferguson and Mayor Johnson are very much on board with the request, and the consensus of the board agrees this is a positive move. If Commissioners wish to proceed, staff will present a resolution recording the commitment and appropriate budget ordinances at a future meeting.

G.) Board Procedures Second Discussion – Wilson Hooper

At the First Discussion Town Manager Hooper went over some of the feedback received by the Board of Commissioners regarding proposed operating practices. He presented a Board of Commissioners briefing sheet. Some of the proposals are doing away with the “Work Session” making it possible to take action and vote on items at both the first Tuesday after the first Monday of the month Regular Board Meeting and the fourth Thursday of the month Work Session Meeting This would also allow for Public Comment segments of both meetings rather than just at the Regular Board Meeting. Another suggestion is to create procedures that govern how Commissioners may have an item added to the agenda. No formal action was required at this meeting for this item. Once the Board agrees on proposed changes to operating procedures, a public hearing will be required to update the Town Code. Commissioners Parsons and Ferguson were in favor of these changes. Motion to call for a Public Hearing on June 8, 2021 was made by Commissioner Parsons and seconded by Commissioner Ferguson. Motion unanimously carried. Concerning the Second Discussion, these items were considered. Town Manager Hooper presented a Commissioners’ Proposed Operating Practices and Policy Choices Draft that includes:

1. Two Public Comments per month, meaning each meeting will have a Public Speaking segment. There will be a limit of ten (10) speakers per meeting with a time limit of five (5) minutes per each speaker. A discussion on responding to a speaker finds the majority of the Board in agreement not to respond at that time during the meeting. Commissioner Palmer stated that respectfully he could not agree with that at this time. He said that it depended on the case and the topic as to whether he felt he would need to respond to a speaker. Instructors from the UNC School of Government notes that it is best not to respond but to inform the speaker they have been heard and will receive an answer to their topic or concern. The Mayor will reserve the

right to maintain order and decorum meaning the Mayor may ask a speaker to remove him/her self if order and decorum is not maintained.

2. Direction or requests to staff by the Commissioners will be limited to Town Manager, Clerk or Department Heads. Any concern or request taking longer than four hours of staff time is asked by Manager Hooper to be brought directly to him and he will assign the work to the appropriate staff.

3. Transparency of Meetings- this item choice details the time frame and required postings of all meeting and states that agendas and all supporting materials shall be published and posted to a publicly accessible website no later than 48 hours before a meeting. Board meetings publicly broadcasted using Zoom, YouTube, Facebook, or other platforms will have a link to the meeting's virtual location and shall be published with all meeting notices and advertisements, and on the cover of the agenda document.

H.) Town Manager Evaluation Process- At a previous meeting, the Commissioners were asked to reassess the evaluation process for the Town Manager position. The consensus is that the board approves of a number system and written comments. A three-point system with a comment section is favored by the entire board. Payroll and Human Resource Officer Trish Wagoner has been working with the Commissioner's requests to come up with a form to use for the Town Manager annual re-evaluation. process. Commissioner Palmer stated he had spoken with School of Government instructor Peg Carlson and they recommend the numerical system. A closed session meeting is needed for a collective discussion on the matter. **Note- Town Manager Wilson Hooper stepped out of this and the first meeting in order for the Board to discuss the process freely.* When Town Manager Hooper returned the topic of Commissioner emails was revisited. At this time emails and board meeting agendas go out to the Commissioners personal or other business email addresses. Commissioner Parsons requested again to have Commissioner at North-Wilkesboro email addresses assigned. Town Manager Hooper commented that he and Finance Officer Connie Bauguess has these ready for the Commissioners, and they can obtain their email addresses and passwords at their earliest convenience. Lastly, the internet service in the board room is in need of improvement as Commissioner Parsons and some of the board is eager to return to in person meetings in our Town Hall Board of Commissioners Board Room.

With no other items or concerns to be discussed, Mayor Johnson called for a motion to adjourn. **Motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Hall and seconded by Commissioner Day. The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.**

Debra W. Pearson, CLERK

Robert L. Johnson, Mayor

APPROVED _____

Resolution Attachment

**RESOLUTION
NO. 2021-08
RESOLUTION FOR RECEIVING FEDERAL FUNDS UNDER THE AMERICAN
RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA)**

WHEREAS, the State of North Carolina will be appropriated funding from the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to fund necessary Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds; and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina General Assembly will provide for the distribution of funds to eligible municipal corporations, and townships; and

WHEREAS, before receiving a payment, a municipality is required to adopt a resolution affirming that the municipality will spend funding only on federal guidance related expenses as required under the ARP Act; and

WHEREAS, revenue received under the ARP Act will be kept in a separate fund and will not be commingled with other revenue; and

WHEREAS, the Town of North Wilkesboro will provide to the State of North Carolina and the US Treasury any unspent balance of the funds received; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Commissioners of the Town of North Wilkesboro that we do hereby request ARP Act funding to be distributed by the State of North Carolina and by adopting this resolution affirm that the revenue will only be used for the purposes prescribed in the ARP Act guidance as described in 31 CFR, Part 35, and any applicable regulations, for necessary expenditures incurred due to the public health emergency connected with the COVID-19 pandemic, budget and certify such to the State Director of Office of Budget and Management and the Town of North Wilkesboro Finance Director; and to delegate the authority to the Town Manager to execute any necessary agreements on behalf of the board.

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town of North Wilkesboro will comply with the procedure created by the North Carolina General Assembly and the US Treasury Department to receive funds under the act.

Adopted this 27th day of May 2021.

Robert L. Johnson, Mayor

ATTEST:

Debra Pearson, Town Clerk

Contract Letter to Audit 2021 Attachment



GIBSON & COMPANY, P.A.
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS

March 4, 2021

Ms. Connie Bauguess, Finance Officer
Town of North Wilkesboro
832 Main Street
North Wilkesboro, NC 28659

Dear Ms. Bauguess:

We are very pleased to have worked with the Town of North Wilkesboro last year and look forward to working with the Town on the June 30, 2021 audit. Also, we appreciate the Town's interest in pursuing a continuing audit relationship with Gibson & Company, P.A.

Accordingly, in respect to our relationship with the Town of North Wilkesboro and our desire to continue this relationship, we respectfully propose the following fee for the year ending June 30, 2021 to be \$20,780 and for the following three years (June 30, 2022, 2023 and 2024):

Year ending June 30, 2022	\$ 21,400	(includes a 3% cost of living increase)
Year ending June 30, 2023	\$ 22,040	(includes a 3% cost of living increase)
Year ending June 30, 2024	\$ 22,700	(includes a 3% cost of living increase)

Also, for each year that a "Single Audit" is required, \$4,000 will be added to the above amounts.

Please note that we understand that this three-year relationship must be approved annually by the appropriate Board of Commissioners.

Again, thank you for allowing us to serve as your auditors in the past and we hope that the above arrangement meets the needs of you and the Board. Please advise at your convenience.

Sincerely,
Gibson & Company, P.A.

R. Harold Gibson
Managing Partner/Principal