

**TOWN OF NORTH WILKESBORO
COMMISSIONERS MEETING**

Date: July 27th, 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: 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
 Taylor Gann, Downtown Coordinator
 Meredith H. Detsch, Planning Director/ Interim Town Clerk
 David Webb, Public Works Director

CALL TO ORDER

I. II. III. Call to Order, Invocation, and Pledge of Allegiance –

Mayor Pro-tem Church called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Mayor Pro-tem Church then asked Commissioner Palmer to deliver the Invocation. Mayor Pro-tem Church then asked Police Chief Thornburg to lead in the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. Additions/Deletions to the Agenda –

 Mayor pro tem Church called for a motion to postpone the swearing-in of the fire chief. **The motion to approve the postponement was made by Commissioner Parsons and seconded by Commissioner Hall.**

V. Approval of Agenda -

 Mayor Pro-tem Church called for a motion to approve the agenda as amended. **The motion to approve the agenda as amended was made by Commissioner Parsons and seconded by Commissioner Hall. The motion unanimously carries, 4-0.**

VI. Awards and Recognitions –

 A.) The agenda was amended to postpone the swearing-in of the new fire chief via a motion by Commissioner Parsons and seconded by Commissioner Hall.

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)

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

 B.) Resolution accepting funding for the Kulynych Foundation Grant for Smoot Park Pool- *Holly Minton, Town Manager*

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

Commissioner Parsons motioned to approve the Routine Business/Consent items, which Commissioner Hall seconded. Motion unanimously carries, 4-0.

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:

- Memorandum of understanding was signed today with the Outdoor Economy Project. The project was recently approved in the budget of \$5,000. The Department of Environmental Quality approved the town to temporarily store materials/ debris from the recent river

cleanup at the industrial park.

- Manager Minton has also submitted two projects for review to the North Carolina Department of Transportation as a part of the NC STIP plan from 2025-2036. The creation of a Parks Master Plan with the High-Country Council of Government was signed this week. The raw water intake project has entered the engineering phase. 90% of the land easements have been completed, but the land for the actual intake is still in progress. American Rescue Plan Act funding documentation has been completed, but the reporting for this funding will be labor-intensive.
- Tyler Holden is a North Carolina LEAD Fellow who will begin work with the town on August 7th after completing his training with the UNC School of Government. He has already had a site visit and has received a tour with town staff. Staff evaluations are ongoing and due by the end of July.
- Manager Minton recently attended the board meeting with the Greenway Council regarding installing panic stations at the request of Commissioner Parsons and Commissioner Palmer. These stations would improve the safety of the greenway. The Greenway Council supports the boxes and wants to begin pricing this project.
- Over the last month and a half, Manager Minton has been seeking quotes for the park improvement project but has experienced difficulties. The quotes will be submitted to the board as soon as possible. Last year, the board moved money into a River District project ordinance as part of a grant application; this grant application was unsuccessful. Manager Minton is looking to move the money to the Parks Improvement Project to better serve the town. These items will be brought as a project ordinance in a future board meeting. The clerk search is progressing well, with multiple interviews scheduled beginning tomorrow, July 28th.

Emerging Issues

Commissioner Parsons would like to see community sponsorships on the panic boxes. He would like to see pricing put together for the panic boxes and for local businesses to sponsor the boxes. He also noted that after four years on the Board of Commissioners, the board does not currently have a streamlined method to provide an evaluation for the town manager as part of the manager's agreement. Commissioner Parsons requested to hear the board member's thoughts on evaluating while growing the relationship between the board and the manager's position.

Commissioner Palmer recently visited Smoot Park and commended the strong appearance of the park. He requested that staff explore the installation of more cameras around the play areas. Manager Minton responded that the town had implemented cost-effective cameras at Highland Park and that the staff would look into implementing similar cameras at Smoot Park at roughly \$20.00 per month. Commissioner Palmer also noted that the panic boxes would be a great opportunity for the public or businesses to donate. Manager Minton replied that the town would explore multiple options, including a safety and security grant similar to university campuses after gathering project costs. The cost should be reasonable and there are many options with powering the boxes. Commissioner Palmer then asked about the sponsorship policy. Manager Minton noted it had been approved and used already this year.

Town Attorney Daniel Johnson has nothing to report.

X. Consideration of Old Business-

D.) Events Policy draft review and discussion- *Taylor Gann, Community Development Director*
Taylor Gann's presentation on the special event policy for downtown road closers included the following:

- The policy provides the process for approving special events and gives the town a standard for businesses and organizations to follow. The policy also defined a special event, a town-endorsed event, and a town-sponsored event with examples of each.
- A primary difference in this policy from the North Carolina Department of Transportation's policy is the approval of the event by the Board of Commissioners and event sponsors must notify local businesses of the closure several days in advance.
- The policy contains information on police support, North Carolina Department of Transportation requirements, social district, and Certificate of Insurance.

Mayor Pro-tem Church questioned how many days' notice was required to notify property owners. Ms. Gann stated it is 90 days for the North Carolina Department of Transportation and the Town is 45 days. Event organizers need to notify 20 days in advance.

Commissioner Palmer noted that Ms. Gann did well on this policy and made it fair to all who want to host an event. He also commented that Ms. Gann nailed the application and preparation of the policy.

Commissioner Parsons said he would be comfortable adopting the policy tonight, July 27th.

Commissioner Palmer requested that she listen to feedback from the community and adjust the policy as needed.

Commissioner Palmer motioned to approve the policy as presented and was seconded by Commissioner Day. The motion unanimously carries, 4-0.

E.) Finley Avenue Stop sign- approval for change and decommission stop light- *Meredith Detsch, Planning Director*

Manager Minton presented this item.

- The North Carolina Department of Transportation looked at the project and noted that the slip lane is not the safest travel option. They recommended the creation of a four-way stop. Manager Minton stated that the slip lane is not currently causing problems, but in the future, we would like to remove the slip lane and change the layout to accommodate garbage trucks and fire trucks. The cost is prohibitive and we want to be reactive to public comment by adding the stop signs.
- Mayor Pro-tem Church asked Police Chief Thornburg his opinion and noted it needed to be kept for emergency vehicles and school buses.
- Commissioner Palmer asked about the slip lane and town staff explained the traffic flow for that intersection. After further discussion of the intersection, staff will need to research how to better construct the intersection in the future.
- Mayor Pro-tem Church asked why not remove the stoplights and staff noted to turn their red flashing. Manager Minton noted that we are trying a different traffic flow to see what happens. Reed Ayish noted the challenge on the roadway with the yield and how the view was limited. Commissioner Palmer commented that he would reverse the direction of the yield sign. Commissioner Parsons asked about drawings from the North Carolina Department of Transportation and if we could change the radius of the intersection. Public Works Director David Webb said he would check his files from a few years ago.

The motion to decommission the stop lights was made by Commissioner Palmer and was seconded by Commissioner Parsons. The motion unanimously carries.

XI. Consideration of New Business – (action)

F.) Introduction and Call for a Public Hearing on Alley Closing off J Street- *Meredith Detsch, Planning Director*

- The applicant is petitioning to close an alleyway between two properties owned by the applicant. The property has an active sewer line but is not currently serviced. The town would maintain an easement on the property to access the sewer line if it breaks.
- To establish a public hearing, it must be posted for four weeks and surrounding property owners must be notified that the alley is closing. The town would send certified letters informing them that the alley was closing.
- The tax value will only change in the applicant's case due to ownership of both properties. Ms. Detsch may request the applicant to recombine the properties for simplicity and the use of their pet. This was followed by a board discussion of the history of the town layout and how it is different today. The public hearing would be scheduled for September 5th.

The motion to adopt the resolution calling for a public hearing for the alley closure on J-Street was made by Commissioner Parsons and was seconded by Commissioner Hall.

G.) Personnel Policy for shared time for staff -*Holly Minton, Town Manager & Crystal Keener Payroll/Personnel*

Manager Minton reported the updates to the Shared Leave policy. She noted that it allowed employees to share their time in the case of a medical condition or issue. The streamlined approach would remove a second signature and the town manager needs to sign off on it anyway. The changes were minor to the policy. Personnel policy has to have thirty days to review with staff members, and wanted to have the Commissioners comments on the policy.

H.) Job description change for Senior Equipment Operator- *Holly Minton, Town Manager & David Webb, Public Works Director*

Manager Minton reported a change to the job description for Senior Equipment Operator. The town is having difficulty recruiting an equipment operator with a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) as a condition of employment. The policy would change to either possessing their CDLs or obtaining them within six months of employment. Mayor Pro-tem Church asked about a condition of the CDL with remaining with the town for so long. Staff replied that the town does not currently have that provision but will need to look into that going forward. Commissioner Palmer asked about the cost of the CDL and staff noted the requirements, which can range from \$1,500 to \$6,000. We can make agreements for positions, not contracts with getting training. The example was presented by Police Chief Thornburg on police officers.

Manager Minton noted several certification requirements for all of our employees and we need to be cautious to ask for agreements. Commissioner Parsons noted that we should get them on board and will look at options in the future for agreements. Commissioner Palmer noted there isn't a large problem right now but if there was to come back to the board.

The motion to approve the change in the job description of Senior Equipment Operator was made by Commissioner Parsons and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Palmer. The motion unanimously carries, 4-0.

XII. Closed Session-

At 6:20 p.m., Mayor Pro-tem Church asked for a motion to go into closed session.

Commissioner Day motioned to go into closed session reading the General Statutes listed below. Commissioner Palmer seconded this motion. Motion unanimously carries 4-0.

GS 143-318.11(a)(4)

To discuss matters relating to the location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by the public body, including agreement on a tentative list of economic development incentives that may be offered by the public body in negotiations, or to discuss matters relating to military installation closure or realignment. Any action approving the signing of an economic development contract or commitment, or the action authorizing the payment of economic development expenditures, shall be taken in an open session

And,

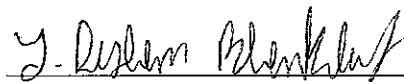
GS 143-318.11(a)(5)

To establish, or to instruct the public body's staff or negotiating agents concerning the position to be taken by or on behalf of the public body in negotiating (i) the price and other material terms of a contract or proposed contract for the acquisition of real property by purchase, option, exchange, or lease; or (ii) the amount of compensation and other material terms of an employment contract or proposed employment contract.

With no other comments or concerns, Mayor Pro-tem Church called for a motion to exit closed session. The motion to exit closed session was made by Commissioner Day.

XIII. Adjourn-

With no other comments or concerns, Mayor Pro-tem Church called for a motion to adjourn. The motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Commissioner Day and was seconded by Commissioner Hall. The meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.


J. Dylan Blankley, Town Clerk


Otis Church, Mayor Pro Tem

Approved: September 5th 2023