

TOWN BOARD MEETING – REGULAR MEETING

August 8, 2023

Present: Mayor George Holleman
Councilman Ronnie Robinette
Councilman Jack Simms
Councilwoman Kim Brown

Absent:
Mayor Pro Tem Kenny Poole – due to illness

The regular meeting was opened for business by Mayor Holleman at 5:30 p.m. The invocation was given by Mayor Holleman.

A motion was made by Councilman Simms and seconded by Councilwoman Brown to add the following items to the agenda.

Item 11a. – Budget amendment- purchase new street sweeper & receipt in insurance proceeds from the damages to the previous one.

Item 13a. – Prior fiscal year budget transfer within funds for year-end balancing purposes.

The motion was passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilman Simms and seconded by Councilwoman Brown to approve the minutes as presented from June 27, 2023 regular meeting. The motion was passed unanimously.

Open Forum:

Gina K. representative of the Taylorsville Apple Festival came before the Town Board requesting the Town's direction whether she could petition NCDOT to close off a block of Main Street in order to expand the Taylorsville Apple Festival. The festival has no more room to expand and she feels that Main Street would be the best option to help with the heavy crowds. She states that she would encourage local businesses that would be impacted by the festival to have a booth in front of their stores to attract the crowd inside their businesses. Councilman Simms stated that he knew several businesses that would be impacted by using Main Street. Councilwoman Brown does not want to see any permanent markings for the booths to be used on Main Street. She stated that "We are trying to clean up the appearance of Main Street and those painted markings along the street would not help appearances". Councilman Robinette asked how she would cover the traffic control along Main Street when it can hardly be controlled now along the established route? Mayor Holleman stated that the Town Board would look into all the questions being raised and an answer would be made by next week and Aaron Wike, Town Manager would let her know. No further discussion was held on that topic. Chief Douglas Bowman introduced new SRO to the Alexander Central Student Success Center Jennifer Patrick. She is a recent hire and lives in Lenoir and will be the SRO for the student success center when school resumes in a few weeks. She has been in training here since early July of this year. There were no other comments in open forum.

A motion was made by Councilman Simms and seconded by Councilman Robinette to open the public hearing for the purpose of hearing a petition from James Belcher Jr. for his property on 80 Sunset Lane. He is petitioning to have the property rezoned from Highway Commercial (H-C) to General Business (R-2). The property is in the ETJ and consists of approximately .67 acres. The Alexander County Planning and Zoning Board unanimously approved the rezoning request and staff agrees.

A motion was made by Councilman Brown and seconded by Councilman Robinette to approve the rezoning request for 80 Sunset Lane from Highway Commercial (H-C) to General Residential (R-2). The motion was passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilman Simms and seconded by Councilwoman Brown to approve adopting the Resolution accepting the offer to purchase 36 & 46 North Center Street property for the sum of \$38,500.00 from Dane Murry-Lerm and wife Merideth Murry-Lerm. They were the high bidders for the property once the up-set bid process ended. The motion was passed unanimously. See attachment A, which is hereby incorporated and made a part of these minutes herein.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Brown and seconded by Councilman Robinette to approve the adoption of a Resolution approving the ARPA grant (MRF-D-ARP-0008) funding through NCDEQ totaling \$90,000.00 to perform an asset inventory and assessment of the water system of the town. The motion was passed unanimously. See attachment B, which is hereby incorporated and made a part of these minutes herein.

A motion was made by Councilman Robinette and seconded by Councilman Simms to approve the renewal of the contract with Western Piedmont Transit Authority for services within the town for the yearly amount of \$13,000.00. The motion was passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilman Simms and seconded by Councilman Robinette to approve a request for an outside sewer connection for Old Time Metal of Hiddenite. They are expanding their business and their existing septic system will not be adequate. There is not a gravity fed line and it will have to be a tie onto the force main sewer line. The same stipulations will be required as for Tabernacle Baptist Church and the cost will be extensive. The owner is looking for alternatives but in case no other options are available, he has asked for approval to connect onto the town's sewer. An agreement will be signed with all stipulations listed if he does have to hook onto the town's sewer-line. Town Attorney, Monroe Panel suggested the agreement be recorded on the land deed in case ownership changes in the future. The motion was passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Brown and seconded by Councilman Robinette to approve the purchase of a street sweeper to replace the previous one damaged by fire. The 2020 Isuzu NQR street sweeper will cost \$74,950.00 plus a delivery fee from Pennsylvania. The motion was passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Brown and seconded by Councilman Simms to approve a budget amendment receipting in the insurance proceeds of \$57,000.00 for the damages to the previous street sweeper and to allocate an additional amount from powell bill fund balance of \$21,000.00 to cover the additional expense of purchasing a replacement street sweeper. The motion was passed unanimously. See attachment C, which is hereby incorporated and made a part of these minutes herein.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Brown and seconded by Councilman Robinette to approve a Resolution of Intent to purchase a new sewer vacuum truck in order to perform sewer maintenance needed here in the town instead of having to contract this service out. The cost of the new Vactor IMPACT positive displacement (PD) Combination Sewer Cleaner is \$320,000.00 and will be purchased from Joe Johnson Equipment of Monroe, NC. The town public works department has been searching since January of this year for a vac truck. These trucks are in high demand and we were lucky to get this one as 4 other municipalities were willing to purchase it if we did not. This is a single axle truck and does not require CDL's to operate. Manager Wike stated that even though this is a very expensive purchase, the truck will pay for itself over time because we will save anywhere from fifty to sixty thousand dollars each year by not having to contract out this service. The town will "piggyback" as allowed per N.C.G.S. 143-129(g) off of the NC Sheriffs' Association bidding results of May 18, 2023 contract 24-08-0421 – item #824. The motion was passed unanimously. See attachment D, which is hereby incorporated and made a part of these minutes herein.

A motion was made by Councilman Simms and seconded by Councilwoman Brown to approve declaring the service weapon of Chief Douglas Bowman, Glock 19 9mm S#BYUT265 as surplus. Chief Bowman is retiring September 1, 2023 after 30 years of service with the Taylorsville Police Department. The weapon will be presented to him at his retirement party on August 22, 2023. The motion was passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Brown and seconded by Councilman Simms to approve the following changes to the Town's personnel policy.

Item#1 – Amend Article VII. Holidays and Leaves of Absence

Add additional day for Christmas (3 days total) to coincide with NC State government holidays

Item#2 – Amend Section 7. vacation leave: accrual rate

Each full-time employee of the Town shall earn vacation at the following schedule, prorated by the average number of hours in the workweek:

Years of Service	Days Accrued Per Year
0 - 2	11.75
2 - 5	13.75
5 - 10	16.75
10 - 15	19.75
15 - 20	22.75
20 - 25	26.25
25 - 30	29.25
30 + years	32.24

Vacation should be accrued in each payroll based on the formula outlined in Section 16 of this Article.

Item #3 – Article III -The Pay Plan - Section 12 – Call Back pay

Amend as follows:

If more than one callback occurs within a given day the total callback pay cannot exceed 3 hours unless time worked exceeds the 3 hours and then it is calculated at time & ½ if work week already exceeded 40 hours worked. If the call doesn't require physical presence at the location, then only 1 hour of callback pay is received with a maximum of 3 hours for the given day.

Item#4 – Article VI – Employee Benefits:

Section 7 Retiree Insurance Supplement – Full Time Employees hired after July 1, 2010

Amend as follows:

Any full-time employee who has completed 30 or more years of continual service is eligible for retiree insurance supplement once they reach the age of 55 as follows. Employees are not eligible to remain on the Town's medical plan but are allowed to remain on the dental and vision plan. Employees are reimbursed at 100% of annual premiums for benefits paid by the Town of Taylorsville until the retiree becomes eligible for Medicare Part-B or any other future federal health program, after which the Town will pay \$1,500.00 per year to the employee for a supplemental insurance policy of their choice that they will obtain.

(see personnel policy for full description of entire benefit)

Item#4a – Article VI – Employee Benefits:

Section 7 Retiree Insurance Supplement – Grandfathered Plan - Full Time Employees hired before July 1, 2010

Amend as follows:

Any full-time employee hired prior to July 1, 2010 who retires is eligible for retiree insurance supplement based on the following tiers as listed below. Employees are not eligible to remain on the Town's medical plan but are allowed to remain on the dental and vision plan. The premium for benefits is an annual defined insurance premium as set by the Town of Taylorsville and its insurance carrier. Employees are reimbursed at 100% of annual premiums for benefits paid by the Town of Taylorsville based on the following tiers for their years of service. (see personnel policy for full description of entire benefit)

Item#5 – Article VIII – Separation and Reinstatement

Amend as follows:

Add Section 10. Return of Town Property

When an employee leaves employment for any reason or is terminated a prompt return of town issued property must occur on the last working day. Final paycheck or severance pay will not be issued until the property is returned. Such items could include but are not limited to the following: any security or identification cards, laptop computers, cell phones, tools, equipment, credit or gas cards, keys, uniforms, vehicles or other Town property.

Item 5a - Article VIII – Separation and Reinstatement

Section 9. Rehiring

Amend as follows:

When an employee resigns from full-time service but remains as part-time, the employee will be required to work a minimum of set hours per month and year. A minimum of 12 hours per month totaling 144 hours per year. Annual bonuses are based on the employment status and hours work under that employment status at the time of the bonus.

A motion was made by Councilman Simms and seconded by Councilman Robinette to table discussion until the September 5, 2023 meeting regarding contracting with the WPCOG for employment hiring assistance. The motion was passed unanimously.

Staff Reports: Police Chief, Doug Bowman

Chief Bowman noted that the Speed Wrecks Lives Campaign of the Governor's Highway Safety Program resulted in 39 charges (36 citations and 3 warnings) here in Taylorsville. The SRO officers were in SRO training in July in Charlotte. All officers participated in an active shooting training simulation recently at the old Wittenburg school. Some officers have also been in radar training recently. He noted again his official retirement date of September 1, 2023 after 30 years of continuous service with the Taylorsville Police Department. He is the longest serving officer in the department's history being sworn in on August 25th, 1993, having served his entire career here with the Taylorsville Police Department. He noted that there are 2 qualified officers here on staff who could fill the position of Chief. Councilman Simms personally thanked Chief Bowman for his years of dedicated service to the Town. It was noted that a retirement reception will be held in the Town Council chambers on August 22 from 11am to 1 pm.

Town Manager/Public Utilities Manager: Aaron Wike

Aaron Wike gave an update on the Christmas lights project. He noted that funding has been set aside in the budget to upgrade but the infrastructure is very old. We plan to install photoelectric boxes, pending an agreement with Duke Energy to use the new poles they've placed inside town recently. Some poles are owned by other service providers so the spacing may be different for the lights but we are working to make the Christmas light display be as even as possible and cover as much as possible with the funds we have. We will have exact location of the light placement later as we get more details completed.

Town Attorney – Monroe Panel

Mr. Panel states that the Saunders Road issue has been resolved. He prepared a statement regarding the NC State Auditor's investigation of the Town's finances and or policies. "In January of this year the office of the North Carolina State Auditor commenced an investigation into the Town finances and/or its policies. The Town Staff has cooperated with the Auditor's office by providing access to Town records. The Town has recently been contacted by staff at the State Auditor's office and has been informed the investigation will continue for probably another two months. At the conclusion of the investigation a reporting phase will commence and a draft report will be provided to the Town by the State Auditor. The Town will have an opportunity to respond to the draft report. A final report by the State Auditor will be subsequently issued. At this time to make a statement as to the particular department or departments the Auditor is investigating would be unfair to the Town and to parties that might unnecessarily be implicated by the mere conduct of the investigation."

The next regular scheduled meeting will be Monday September 5th, 2023 at 5:30 pm in the Council Chambers.

A motion was made by Councilman Robinette and seconded by Councilwoman Brown to adjourn the meeting at 7:05 pm.

Mayor

Councilman

Councilman

Councilman

Councilman

Attest: _____
Yolanda T. Prince, Town Clerk