

Emergency Meeting Minutes of the Town of Highlands Board of Commissioners Meeting of March 23, 2020, at the Highlands Police Department, 372 Oak Street, Highlands, North Carolina

Town Board Present: Commissioner John Dotson, Commissioner Amy Patterson, Commissioner Brian Stiehler, Commissioner Marc Hehn and Mayor Pat Taylor

Mayor Pro Tempore Donnie Calloway via phone

Also Present: Town Manager Josh Ward, Police Chief Bill Harrell, Town Attorney Jay Coward via phone and Town Clerk Gibby Shaheen

Media Present: Ryan Hanchett from the Highlander and Kim Lewicki from the Highlands Newspaper

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Mayor Taylor called the meeting to order at 3:03pm. Mayor Taylor began by expressing concerns from Mayor Pro Tempore Calloway and Commissioner Stiehler of the people coming into Highlands to do their quarantines staying at vrbo's and hotels. This will stress our resources of supplies and the healthcare system. Hospital CEO Tom Neal agreed that it poses serious concerns for increase in positive cases.

Town Attorney Jay Coward said Graham County had closed their county lines.

Mayor Taylor stated so to discourage people from coming up here and staying for the health and safety of our residents, rentals should be closed.

Discussion was held to what the definition should be.



WHEREAS, the coronavirus (“COVID-19”) prompted measures to be taken by the President of the United States, the Governor of North Carolina and by Macon County Board of Commissioners all declaring a State of Emergency and implementing direct restrictions and prohibitions; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners of the Town of Highlands proclaimed a State of Emergency on March 17, 2020; and

WHEREAS, in response to updated guidelines from the CDC to avoid discretionary travel and follow The President’s Coronavirus Guidelines for America, the Board of Commissioners of the Town of Highlands has made the decision to close hotels, motels and rentals to public access. Existing, continuously occupied rentals are excluded;

NOW, THEREFORE, pursuant to the authority vested in me by the Board of Commissioners of the Town of Highlands under Article 8 of Chapter 160A-174 and 166A-19.22 of the North Carolina General Statutes, and the Proclamation of a Municipal State of Emergency.

All hotels, motels and rentals are ordered to be closed to the public, and shall become effective immediately and will remain in effect until the proclamation is modified or rescinded. Existing, continuously occupied rentals are excluded.

Proclaimed this the 23rd day of March, 2020 at 3:00pm.

Patrick Taylor, Mayor

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of The Town of Highlands, North Carolina to be affixed this 23rd day of March, 2020.

Gilberta B. Shaheen, Town Clerk

COMMISSIONER HEHN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MUNICIPAL PROCLAMATION AS AMENDED TO ADD “EXISTING, CONTINUOUSLY OCCUPIED RENTALS ARE EXCLUDED,” WHICH WAS SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER STIEHLER AND THE VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.

Town Manager Josh Ward stated he issued spending restrictions to employees. Utilities Commission Order stops late fees and disconnects. Town Attorney Jay Coward stated it is out of our hands because that comes from the Governor.

ADJOURNMENT

AS THERE WERE NO FURTHER MATTERS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, COMMISSIONER PATTERSON MOVED TO ADJOURN WHICH WAS SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER STIEHLER AND UPON A UNANIMOUS VOTE, THE TOWN BOARD ADJOURNED AT 4:20PM.

Patrick Taylor
Mayor

Gilberta B. Shaheen
Town Clerk