

Regular Meeting Minutes of the Town of Highlands Board of Commissioners Meeting of July 21, 2022, at the Highlands Community Building, 71 Poplar Street, Highlands, North Carolina

Town Board Present: Mayor Pro Tempore John Dotson, Commissioner Amy Patterson, Commissioner Eric Pierson, Commissioner Brian Stiehler and Commissioner Marc Hehn

Town Board Absent: Mayor Pat Taylor

Also Present: Town Manager Josh Ward, Town Attorney Jay Coward, Finance Director Rebecca Shuler, Police Officer Leah McCall, Parks & Recreation Director Lester Norris, Planning & Development Director Assistant Michael Mathis and Town Clerk Gibby Shaheen

1. Meeting Called to Order

Mayor Pro Tempore Dotson called the meeting to order at 7:02pm.

2. Moment of Silence & Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Pro Tempore Dotson held a moment of silence then led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Public Comment Period

Butch Stuart from Dog Mountain wanted the Board to honor the decision to not allow short term rentals in R-1 and R-2 Zoning Districts.

4. Review and Approve the Agenda

Commissioner Hehn asked to review the letter received from Derek Allen dated March 3, 2022, and Commissioner Patterson requested to wait to discuss, she wasn't prepared. Commissioner Hehn asked for the receipt of the letter to be acknowledged by Town Attorney Jay Coward and Attorney Coward agreed he would.

Town Manager Josh Ward asked to add Poplar Street Water Improvements Budget Amendment to Item Number 9.

COMMISSIONER STIEHLER MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED, WHICH WAS SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER PATTERSON AND THE VOTE WAS 4 TO 1 WITH COMMISSIONER HEHN OPPOSING.

5. Approval of the May 19th, 2022, Special Meeting Minutes

COMMISSIONER PATTERSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MAY 19TH, 2022, SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES AS PRESENTED, WHICH WAS SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER STIEHLER AND THE VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.

Approval of the June 16th, 2022, Regular Meeting Minutes

COMMISSIONER STIEHLER MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE JUNE 16TH, 2022, REGULAR MEETING MINUTES AS PRESENTED, WHICH WAS SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER PATTERSON AND THE VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.

Approval of the June 27th, 2022, Special Meeting Minutes

COMMISSIONER PIERSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE JUNE 27TH, 2022, SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES AS PRESENTED, WHICH WAS SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER PATTERSON AND THE VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.

Approval of the June 30th, 2022, Special Meeting Minutes

COMMISSIONER PIERSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE JUNE 30TH, 2022, SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES AS PRESENTED, WHICH WAS SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER STIEHLER AND THE VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.

Approval of the July 14th, 2022, Special Meeting Minutes

COMMISSIONER PIERSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE JULY 14TH, 2022, SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES AS PRESENTED, WHICH WAS SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER STIEHLER AND THE VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.

6. Reports

A. Mayor

There was not a Mayor report.

B. Commissioners and Committee Reports

There were no commissioner or committee reports.

C. Town Manager

Town Manager Ward updated the Board that the receiver for the sound system at the Community Building had been struck by lightning and the speakers and a new system was to be installed.

7. Consent Agenda

Public Works Department
Police Department
Parks & Recreation Department
Planning & Development Department
Treasurer's Report
Highlands Motoring Festival Mtn. Motoring Event

July 13, 2022

Highlands Motoring Festival Request for use of Town Facilities

The Highlands Motoring Festival Committee thanks the Town of Highlands for the use of park properties, personnel, and Police Department in past years. This support has helped the festival achieve national recognition while donating over \$300,000 to local charities in recent years.

Back in 2020, due to covid-19, the Highlands Motoring Festival, planned for June, was cancelled. To generate some revenue for our charities, a much smaller festival "Mountain Motoring" was staged in September of that year. The success of that mini-festival showed the public interest for a fall event that occurs between the peak summer season and the October leaf season.

For 2022, three events are planned, two driving tours and an informal car show:

Friday, September 9, 2022, "One Lap of the Mountains" Tour I, departing the Community Building at 9:00am.

Saturday, September 10, 2022, "One Lap of the Mountains" Tour II, departing the Community Building at 8:30am.

Sunday, September 11, 2022, "High Octane" informal car show and social gathering. Kelsey Hutchinson Park 8:30am-11:00am.

The driving tours will be departing from the Community Building to avoid conflict with the Saturday Farmers Market. We are requesting use of Kelsey Hutchinson Park for the informal car show on Sunday morning. To control traffic and improve safety, we propose that the traffic barricades, used on Saturday night, be left in place for the Sunday morning car show. Volunteers will be directing cars in and out of the park during the car show/social gathering.

Thank you for your guidance and consideration.

COMMISSIONER STIEHLER MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE CONSENT AGENDA AS PRESENTED, WHICH WAS SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER PATTERSON AND THE VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.

8. Woolf Rezoning Request – 574 Franklin Road

Assistant Planning & Development Director Michael Mathis stated on June 17, 2022, Jason Woolf submitted a Petition for Rezoning to the Town of Highlands Planning and Development office. The subject property is located at 574 Franklin Road (PIN 7540029884), is zoned R-1 Residential, and is located within the Watershed 3 – Balance of the Watershed. On Mr. Woolf’s petition, he is requesting a change from R-1 to B-4 Commercial. According to the Future Land Use Map (Within the Community Plan), the subject lot and surrounding area are intended to remain low-density residential. If this Board elects to proceed with the petition, the next step is to send the request to the Planning Board for review and recommendation.

COMMISSIONER PATTERSON MADE A MOTION TO SEND THE REQUEST TO THE PLANNING BOARD FOR REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATION, WHICH WAS SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER STIEHLER AND THE VOTE WAS 3 TO 2 WITH COMMISSIONER DOTSON AND COMMISSIONER HEHN OPPOSING

9. Budget Amendments:

- **Rec Park Restrooms Rehab Project**

Town Manager Josh ward stated as you may recall, the restrooms at the tennis courts at the recreation park were remodeled in last year’s budget. The project was completed before the end of the fiscal year, but the final payment was held after the Recreation Director discovered standing water in the floor after a rain event. The floor was removed and replaced with the proper slope to the floor drains. The final payment amount is not in the current budget and requires a budget amendment to appropriate the funds.

TOWN OF HIGHLANDS BUDGET AMENDMENT
AMENDMENT # _____

July 18, 2022



THE TOWN OF
HIGHLANDS

FROM: General Fund

DEPARTMENT: Parks & Recreation

EXPLANATION: The Outside Restroom project ran across fiscal years due to the purchase of floor tiling.

	Account	Description	Increase/Decrease	Debit	Credit
1.	10-3100-0910	Fund Balance Appropriated ~ General Fund	Increase		\$15,000.00
	10-6200-7300	Capital Outlay/Other Improvements	Increase	\$15,000.00	
			Totals	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00

Approved by Town Manager _____

Action by Town Board _____

Approved and Entered on Minutes Dated _____

Finance Director _____

COMMISSIONER PATTERSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE BUDGET AMENDMENT AS PRESENTED, WHICH WAS SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER HEHN AND THE VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.

- **Granicus Software**

Town Manager Josh Ward said Granicus is a software company that compiles data for short term rental properties within specific jurisdictions. Several governments around the area are using this software, including Blowing Rock and Boone. Michael Mathis and I were presented a demo of the software, which included short term rental information gathered for the Highlands Town Limits. At the time of the presentation, 270 short term rentals were listed as available. The quote is based on the number of short term rentals identified at the time of their data collection. It was explained that the number will fluctuate throughout the year. The agreement is for 12 months. The data is updated daily. Town Manager Josh Ward felt the software would be very helpful regardless of the path the Board of Commissioners decides to choose pertaining to short term rentals and recommends approval of the software agreement as presented.

TOWN OF HIGHLANDS BUDGET AMENDMENT
AMENDMENT # _____

July 18, 2022



THE TOWN OF
HIGHLANDS

FROM: General Fund

DEPARTMENT: MIS/GIS

EXPLANATION: Software for Short Term Rental Compliance and Monitoring

Account	Description	Increase/Decrease	Debit	Credit
1. 10-3100-0910	Fund Balance Appropriated ~ General Fund	Increase		\$11,000.00
10-4300-1630	Annual Contracts	Increase	\$11,000.00	
Totals			\$11,000.00	\$11,000.00

Approved by Town Manager

Action by Town Board

Approved and Entered on Minutes Dated

Finance Director

COMMISSIONER STIEHLER MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE BUDGET AMENDMENT AS PRESENTED, WHICH WAS SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER PATTERSON AND THE VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.

- **Poplar Street Water Improvements Project**

Town Manager Josh Ward explained this was an item that was in last year's Budget and needs to be put into our current Budget. Ward continued that this money is for an upgrade to a 6-inch water line down Poplar Street, and there are steps to be completed before receiving the \$100,000 given to the town by the State in last year's Budget. Ward said we should receive the money by May.

TOWN OF HIGHLANDS BUDGET AMENDMENT
AMENDMENT # _____

July 20, 2022



THE TOWN OF
HIGHLANDS

FROM: Water Fund

DEPARTMENT: Water Dept.

EXPLANATION: Poplar Street Water Improvement ~ Grant from NCDEQ for \$100,000.00

Account	Description	Increase/Decrease	Debit	Credit
1. 30-3800-0910	Fund Balance Appropriated ~ Water Fund	Increase		\$125,200.00

30-8110-7300	Capital Outlay/Other Improvements	Increase	\$125,200.00	
			Totals	\$125,200.00 \$125,200.00

Approved by Town Manager

Action by Town Board

Approved and Entered on Minutes Dated

Finance Director

COMMISSIONER PATTERSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE BUDGET AMENDMENT AS PRESENTED, WHICH WAS SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER HEHN AND THE VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.

10. Chambers of Commerce Request

- **Snow Fest Approval Request**
- **3 Phase Power at K/H Park for Snow Fest**

Chamber of Commerce Director Kaye McHan requested the use of the Kelsey Hutchinson Park for the Snow Fest the last weekend in January. The request consists of blocking off the park to start blowing snow beginning Wednesday, January 25, 2023, through Sunday, January 29, 2023, at 5:00pm. McHan said they had chosen a different company to blow the snow, which would be more like snow than last year, which brought up the need for the 3 Phase Power at the park.

Discussion was held.

COMMISSIONER HEHN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE REQUEST FOR SNOW FEST AND 3 PHASE POWER AT KELSIE HUTCHINSON PARK AS PRESENTED, WHICH WAS SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER STIEHLER AND THE VOTE WAS 4 TO 1 WITH COMMISSIONER PATTERSON OPPOSING.

11. Adjournment

AS THERE WERE NO FURTHER MATTERS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, COMMISSIONER HEHN MOVED TO ADJOURN WHICH WAS SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER STIEHLER AND UPON A UNANIMOUS VOTE, THE TOWN BOARD ADJOURNED AT 7:35PM.

John Dotson
Mayor Pro Tempore

Gilberta B. Shaheen
Town Clerk