

Regular Meeting Minutes of the Town of Highlands Board of Commissioners Meeting of August 18, 2022, at the Highlands Community Building, 71 Poplar Street, Highlands, North Carolina

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

Town Board Absent: Mayor Pro Tempore John Dotson

Also Present: Town Manager Josh Ward, Finance Director Rebecca Shuler, MIS/GIS Director Matt Shuler via Zoom, Police Chief Andrea Holland, Fire Chief Ryan Gearhart, Parks & Recreation Director Lester Norris, Planning & Development Director Assistant Michael Mathis and Town Clerk Gibby Shaheen

1. Meeting Called to Order

Mayor Taylor called the meeting to order at 7:02pm.

2. Moment of Silence & Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Taylor held a moment of silence then led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Public Comment Period

There were no comments.

4. Review and Approve the Agenda

COMMISSIONER HEHN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED, WHICH WAS SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER STIEHLER AND THE VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.

5. Approval of the July 21st, 2022, Regular Meeting Minutes

COMMISSIONER STIEHLER MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE JULY 21ST, 2022, REGULAR MEETING MINUTES AS PRESENTED, WHICH WAS SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER PATTERSON AND THE VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.

6. Reports

A. Mayor

Mayor Taylor thanked Mayor Pro Tempore John Dotson for filling in when he was out of town. Mayor Taylor announced the Fire Department was near completion and would like the Board of Commissioner and media, with the Fire Chief and Town Manager to give them an initial tour of the new fire department.

Mayor Taylor asked the Recreation Committee to meet and discuss two issues, one is the money donated to upgrade the playground equipment and the second is the Houston House replacement for after school care and summer camp. Mayor Taylor reported that he and Commissioner Hehn had met with Mirror Lake Improvement Association and they are working to move forward raising money to begin the first phase; working For a joint meeting with Chamber and Board next month for common concerns; WHLC's Lease for radio mount on town tower and potential interference and that study has been done so it will be reviewed and submitted; and the Land Use/Public Safety Committee need to meet to address ordinances regarding overnight sleeping on Town property and what can be done about noise and allowing weekend construction, and a sidewalk on Chestnut Street

B. Commissioners and Committee Reports

Commissioner Hehn thanked the Board for the repairs made at the Presbyterian Church sidewalk and thanked the Planning Board for their work.

C. Town Manager

Town Manager Ward announced exciting news that the Town had received a grant for the waterline and tank replacement on Dog Mountain and replacement of the Clarifier

Tank; and the ADA transition study coming to an end and would have a presentation in October or November.

7. Consent Agenda

- Public Works Department
- Police Department
- Parks & Recreation Department
- Planning & Development Department
- Treasurer’s Report

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

8. Budget Amendment: FD Grand Recognition

Fire Chief Ryan Gearhart stated that one of the Grant’s applied for had been awarded and it needed to be recognized with a portion going to Uniforms for a boot allowance for the firemen with the remainder to Maintenance and Repair Building for weight equipment for the new building.

TOWN OF HIGHLANDS BUDGET AMENDMENT
AMENDMENT # _____

July 18, 2022



THE TOWN OF
HIGHLANDS

FROM: Fire Fund

DEPARTMENT: Highlands Fire & Rescue

EXPLANATION: Recognize Revenue and Allocate Funds to appropriate expense lines per grant request from the March 17, 2022 Board of Commissioners Meeting.

- 2) \$10,000 “COVID-19 Grant” for NC fire departments who canceled fundraising events in 2020 because of COVID-19. Highlands Fire & Rescue canceled our 2020 annual fundraising “Open House” held annually in August each year. The funds will serve a dual-purpose:
 - A) Provide a boot allowance of \$200 for firefighters (\$5,800). Volunteers often wear their personal clothes and boots for wildland fires and search/rescue calls. With the severity of these calls, wear and tear is exacerbated. This allowance aligns with other local departments use of COVID-19 funds to support volunteers and offer appreciation with the higher call volume.
 - B) Provide funding for exercise equipment (\$4,200) in the new weight room. This will provide a savings in the budgeted allowance for the completed fire department new equipment allowance. If any funds remain, a contribution will be made to the Highlands Fire & Rescue Benevolent Fund.

	Account	Description	Increase/Decrease	Debit	Credit
1.	20-3300-0920	Covid-19 Grant Proceeds	Increase		\$10,000.00
	20-5300-1500	Maint. & Repair ~ Bldg	Increase	\$4,200.00	
	20-5300-1500	Uniforms	Increase	\$5,800.00	
			Totals	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00

Approved by Town Manager

Action by Town Board

Approved and Entered on Minutes Dated

Finance Director

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

9. Revaluation Proposed Schedule of Valuations

Mayor Taylor stated he was at the last County Board meeting and the Tax Director posted the 2023 Reappraisals. Mayor Taylor gave a short review of Highland’s re-evaluations on the proposed schedule. Mayor Taylor stated there will be a public hearing on September 13, 2022, and it would go to the County Board of Commissioners on October 11, 2022, for approval.

10. Short Term Rental Public Hearing Procedures

Mayor Taylor reviewed the procedures for the Public Hearing. Commissioner Patterson asked the list to address the issue of outbursts, like talking and clapping. Mayor Taylor reminded the public and Board that the Public Hearing was on August 30, 2022, at 6:00pm.

11. March 3rd Letter from Derek Allen

Town Manager Josh Ward, stated there was a letter we didn’t receive and then when we did receive the letter, Commissioner Hehn, Assistant Planning & Development Director Michael Mathis and myself went through their proposal and we couldn’t tell what their attorney had done. Ward continued that we had our Attorneys ask their Attorney to color code their revisions, and the letter is now dated March 4th, but all of the changes made by the Save Highlands group are in blue.

12. Closed Session: Pursuant to NCGS §318.11(a)(3) Attorney Client Privilege: Review Letter from Institute of Justice Pertaining to Short Term Rentals & Approve Closed Session Minutes

COMMISSIONER PIERSON MADE A MOTION TO GO INTO CLOSED SESSION PURSUANT TO NCGS §318.11(A)(3) FOR ATTORNEY CLIENT PRIVILEGE: REVIEW LETTER FROM INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE PERTAINING TO SHORT TERM RENTALS & APPROVE CLOSED SESSION MINUTES AT 7:46PM, WHICH WAS SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER STIEHLER AND THE VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.

ONCE DISCUSSION WAS HELD, COMMISSIONER STIEHLER MADE A MOTION TO GO BACK INTO OPEN SESSION AT 8:21PM, WHICH WAS SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER PATTERSON AND THE VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.

13. Adjournment

AS THERE WERE NO FURTHER MATTERS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, COMMISSIONER STIEHLER MOVED TO ADJOURN WHICH WAS SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER PIERSON AND UPON A UNANIMOUS VOTE, THE TOWN BOARD ADJOURNED AT 8:21PM.

Patrick Taylor
Mayor

Gilberta B. Shaheen
Town Clerk