

Special Meeting Minutes of the Town of Highlands Board of Commissioners Meeting of March 10, 2022, at the First Presbyterian Church, 471 Main Street, Highlands, North Carolina

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

Also Present: Town Manager Josh Ward, Town Attorney Jay Coward, Finance Director Rebecca Shuler, Public Works Director Lamar Nix, MIS/GIS Director Matt Shuler, Police Chief Andrea Holland, Parks & Recreation Director Lester Norris, Computer Support Specialist Ethan Garrett and Town Clerk Gibby Shaheen

1. Meeting Called to Order

Mayor Taylor called the meeting to order at 9:00am and thanked the First Presbyterian Church for the use of Coleman Hall. Mayor Taylor also gave a sincere thanks to Public Works Director Lamar Nix for being at the Retreat after such a tremendous loss, and asked to have a moment of silence for him and Ukraine.

2. Adjust and Approve the Agenda

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

3. Financial Matters – Mid-Year Update

Town Manager Josh Ward reviewed the following Capital Projects from this year:

The difficulties with the Covid-19 pandemic is the supply change shortages. We have experienced this in nearly every project we have started. We have also dealt with the issue when making repairs to vehicles and equipment.

The following projects are waiting on material to begin or complete:

- Moorewood Road Waterline Replacement Project will hopefully be starting soon. Stillwell Enterprises has worked to gather materials for the job, which should be here within the next week or so.
- The Water Treatment Plant High Service Variable Flow Pump Replacement Devices have been purchased and we are waiting on delivery of the material in order for Langston to begin the work.
- Arnold Road Pump Station Replacement materials have been ordered and waiting on delivery. In the mean, time we have purchased a pump to get us by until the replacement project is complete.
- The Access Walkway to the Clearwell at the Water Plant has been ordered and waiting on delivery in order to begin installation.
- The Little Bear Pen Pump Station Generator has been purchased and waiting for delivery.
- The replacement Street Crew dump truck and ton dump bed truck have been ordered and are scheduled to be delivered in June.
- The Town streetlight replacement project is roughly 50% complete. The electric crew has been receiving 50 lights per shipment and installing those as they come in.

- The bucket truck for the electric department has been ordered but will not be ready until sometime next fiscal year.
- The two replacement police vehicles have been ordered and should be delivered in April or May.

Other projects not effected by supply chain issues:

- Tennis Court Restroom remodel at the rec park is currently underway.
- The three Sidewalk projects will begin this spring, which include North Fourth Street Sidewalk addition (Chandler Inn), Main Street Rehab in front of Presbyterian Church, 3 Tree Planter replacements at Reeves Hardware.
- At the Fire Dept., the exterior is almost complete. Interior work has begun. Chief Gearhart and I met with Bob Rawson and Goosie Kennedy with D.R. Reynolds last week. All but three or four items have been contracted. They are planning on a completion date around the first of September.

Finance Director Rebecca Shuler presented the following highlights of the FY21/22 budget at mid-year.

As of February 2022 property tax collections have decreased \$1,169.32 compared to February 2021. This represents a collection rate of 97.29% as of February 2021.

Sales tax revenue as of February 2022 has increased approximately \$120,087.43 compared to February 2021.

Franchise Tax revenue as of February 2022 has increased \$10,969.43 from February 2021.

The amount of General Fund revenues collected as of February 2022, exclusive of \$4,500.00 in donations for Police and Recreation projects, is \$67,994.57 less compared to General Fund revenues collected as of February 2021.

We anticipate meeting our budgeted revenue for General Fund with General Fund expenditures are 52% spent as of February 2022.

The Town had an original fund balance appropriation in General Fund at July 1, 2021 of \$1,907,434.75. As of February 2022, the appropriation has not been increased this fiscal year.

All utility funds should be at approximately 66.7% of budgeted revenue as of February 2022. The Water is at 61% with water charges. The Sewer is at 56%, Sanitation is at 65% and the Electric is at 77% for electric charges. Funds are slightly higher this year due to the number of people throughout the year. We anticipate meeting our budgeted revenue for all utility funds.

All utility funds should be at or below 66.7% spent as of February 2022. Water is at 48%, Sewer is at 48%, Sanitation is at 57% and Electric is at 39% spent as of February 2022. All utility fund expenditures will be closely monitored so as to stay within budget.

4. Public Works Department – Capital Needs

Public Works Director and Town Engineer Lamar Nix presented the following outline of proposed projects:

2022-2023 Proposed Budget Items

1. Street Dept.

- A. Sidewalk Repair \$50,000
- B. Salt \$30,000

- C. Paint Striping \$30,000
- D. Paving
 - a. Cullasaja Dr. Ext \$52,000
 - b. Talley \$50,000
 - c. Bruner \$23,000
 - d. Oak (1st to 3rd) \$134,000
 - e. Old Walhalla \$50,000
 - f. Cook (900') \$31,000
 - g. Lucerne (top) \$12,000
 - h. 1st \$20,000
- E. Sidewalk Projects
 - a. Oak and 1st \$154,000
 - b. US 64 (OEI to Pinecrest/Cullasaja) \$71,000
 - c. 3rd Street Wall \$61,000
- F. Equipment
 - a. Replace motor grader \$265,000
 - b. Snow Plow/Spreader \$25,000
- 2. Sanitation Dept.**
 - A. Replace Dumpsters \$30,000
 - B. Compact Rear Loader \$135,000
- 3. Water/Sewer Dept.**
 - 1. Sewer Line Replacement Carolina Way \$222,000
 - 2. Water Booster Pump Generators
 - a. Moorewood \$136,000
 - b. Ravenel \$80,000
 - c. Satulah \$136,000
 - d. Holt Knob \$47,000
 - e. Brushy Face \$35,000
 - 3. Sewer Pump Station Generator Replacement
 - a. Mill Creek \$41,000
 - 4. Meter Replacement
 - a. Equipment and Installation \$380,100
 - 5. Gibson Street Water/Sewer/Electric \$608,000
- 4. Water Treatment Plant**
 - 1. Misc. tools \$4000
 - 2. Clean Decant Tanks \$50,000
 - 3. Pump Rebuilds \$50,000
 - 4. Rock Trap repair/services \$2600
 - 5. Chemical mixers \$8000
 - 6. Service contracts \$25,000
 - 7. Expect chemical increases up to 25%
- 5. Waste Water Treatment Plant**
 - A. Belt Press Replacement/Process Improvements \$900,000
 - B. Tank Cleaning \$65,000
 - C. Pump Station Parts \$60,000
- 6. Electric Dept.**
 - A. Truck from 2021-2022 Budget \$251,000
 - B. Gibson Street Electric Project \$59,000

5. Break

6. Stormwater Master Plan

Public Works Director Lamar Nix reviewed the 2007 Stormwater Master Plan and listed the completed projects. Nix mentioned this study was pretty old and we might consider updating the plan in the future.

7. Sidewalk Master Plan

Public Works Director Lamar Nix reviewed the Sidewalk Master Plan. Nix also talked about US64 and NC106 being part of the Macon County Transportation Comprehensive Plan and adopt something down to Mirror Lake and Highlands Country Club possibly NC28 to Shelby Place.

Mayor Taylor asked to add a Closed Session under GS 1143-318.11(a)(3) Attorney Client Privilege to consult with attorney at the end of the meeting, everyone agreed.

8. Lunch

Mayor Taylor recessed the meeting for lunch at 12:05pm.

The meeting was reconvened at 1:00pm

9. IT/GIS Department – Capital Needs

MIS/GIS Director Matt Shuler gave an update on Hotwire timing

MIS/GIS Director Matt Shuler requested the following for the IT/GIS department:

- (a) Big Bear Pen and Little Bear Pen Upgrades to SCADA at a cost of \$48,000;
- (b) Gateways and Collectors Meters - \$350,000; and
- (c) Server – \$17,000.

10. Fiber Network Discussion

Discussion was held.

11. Parks & Recreation Department – Capital Needs

Parks & Recreation Director Lester Norris said after Bunnell Lammons Engineering did the test drilling, the price for the lights came back \$200,000 over. County Commissioner Jimmy Tate asked that the \$125,000 allocated to help the Town with this project stay in Highlands, so Norris requested the money in this year's budget for Ballfield lights be spent on Pickleball Court lights - \$190,000.

Parks & Recreation Director Lester Norris requested \$32,000 for new concrete pads at the pavilion and \$15,000 for painting at Founder's Park for FY22-23.

COMMISSIONER HEHN MADE A MOTION TO REALLOCATE THE MONEY FOR THE BALLFIELD LIGHTS TO PICKLEBALL COURT LIGHTS, WHICH WAS SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER STIEHLER AND THE VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.

12. Break

13. Police Department – Capital Needs

Police Chief Andrea Holland requests \$179,060 for two Ford Interceptor with extended warranty and equipment for the SUV, body cameras and a pole barn.

- (a) Ford Interceptor SUVx2 - \$99,000; and
- (b) Emergency equipment, rifle and gun mount, graphics and tint x2- \$26,000; and
- (c) 17 Panasonic body worn cameras with accessories to replace older models - \$29,060; and
- (d) 26 x 30 Pole Barn for UTV and Box Truck – \$25,000.

14. Code Enforcement Discussion

Discussion was held.

15. Session Wrap Up: Mayor and Council Comments

Mayor Taylor commended the staff for outstanding work and their presentations.

16. Closed Session: Pursuant to NCGS §318.11(a)(3) Attorney Client Privilege

COMMISSIONER PIERSON MADE A MOTION TO GO INTO CLOSED SESSION PURSUANT TO NCGS §318.11(A)(3) ATTORNEY CLIENT PRIVILEGE AT 4:00PM, WHICH WAS SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER PATTERSON AND THE VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.

ONCE DISCUSSION WAS HELD, MAYOR PRO TEMPORE DOTSON MADE A MOTION TO GO BACK INTO OPEN SESSION AT 4:23PM, WHICH WAS SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER STIEHLER AND THE VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.

17. Adjournment

AS THERE WERE NO FURTHER MATTERS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, MAYOR PRO TEMPORE DOTSON MOVED TO ADJOURN WHICH WAS SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER PATTERSON AND UPON A UNANIMOUS VOTE, THE TOWN BOARD ADJOURNED AT 4:23PM.

Patrick Taylor
Mayor

Gilberta B. Shaheen
Town Clerk