

**Special Meeting Minutes of the Town of Highlands Board of Commissioners
Meeting of May 6, 2021, at the Highlands Community Building, 71 Poplar
Street, Highlands, North Carolina**

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

Also Present: Town Manager Josh Ward, Finance Director Rebecca Shuler, Human Resources Director Emilie Nickerson, Public Works Director and Town Engineer Lamar Nix, Fire Chief Ryan Gearhart, Parks & Recreation Director Lester Norris, Police Chief Andrea Holland, Town Attorney Jay Coward participating via telephone and Town Clerk Gibby Shaheen

1. Meeting Called to Order

Mayor Taylor called the meeting to order at 3:04pm.

2. Adjust and Approve the Agenda

Town Manager Josh Ward asked to add number 3 to be a Budget Amendment for the Police Department for funds from the 2019 Crime Grant and number 4 to be a Budget Amendment for Town Hall HVAC system.

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

3. Budget Amendment: 2019 Crime Grant

TOWN OF HIGHLANDS BUDGET AMENDMENT
AMENDMENT # _____

May 6, 2021

FROM: General Fund



DEPARTMENT: Police Dept.
EXPLANATION: To cover grant expenditures from 2019

Account	Description	Increase/Decrease	Debit	Credit
1. 10-3100-0910	Fund Balance Appropriated ~ GF	Increase		\$37,000.00
10-5100-5760	Governor's Crime Commission	Increase	\$37,000.00	
		Subtotal	\$37,000.00	\$37,000.00
		Totals	\$37,000.00	\$37,000.00

Approved by Town Manager

Action by Town Board

Approved and Entered on Minutes Dated

Finance Director

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

4. Budget Amendment: HVAC system for Town Hall

TOWN OF HIGHLANDS BUDGET AMENDMENT
 AMENDMENT # _____

May 6, 2021

FROM: General Fund



DEPARTMENT: Admin Dept.
 EXPLANATION: To cover HVAC replacement

Account	Description	Increase/Decrease	Debit	Credit
1. 10-3100-0910	Fund Balance Appropriated ~ GF	Increase		\$10,000.00
10-4100-7300	Capital Outlay/Other Improvements	Increase	\$10,000.00	
		Subtotal	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
		Totals	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00

Approved by Town Manager

Action by Town Board

Approved and Entered on Minutes Dated

Finance Director

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

5. Approval of Scholarship Awards

Mayor Taylor thanked the Scholarship Committee and Town Attorney Jay Coward and staff. Town Attorney Jay Coward said the committee had met with the recommendations and made decisions how to allocate the money, which was about the same as last year.

COWARD, HICKS & SILER, P.A.

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+Certified Superior Court Mediator

JAMES KENT COWARD 1929-1989
RALPH L. HICKS 1924-2011
ORVILLE D. COWARD 1925-2016

ROBERT F. SILER (OF COUNSEL)

OFFICES IN:
SYLVA, NORTH CAROLINA
FRANKLIN, NORTH CAROLINA
CASHIERS, NORTH CAROLINA

May 3, 2021

Honorable Patrick Taylor, Mayor
Town of Highlands
mavor@highlandsnc.org

Re: Town of Highlands Scholarship Committee

Dear Mr. Taylor:

The Town of Highlands Scholarship Committee has had the opportunity to consider all of the applications, and it is my privilege to inform you of the Scholarship Committee's recommendations. We are again pleased with the large number of applicants this year.

The Scholarship Committee is recommending the amount of \$45,000 be awarded as scholarships in 2021, as follows:

Graduating High School Seniors	Amount
Carrier, Jordan (Valedictorian)	\$3,000.00
Drummonds, Madelyn (Salutatorian)	\$2,500.00
Moore, Anne Marie	\$1,750.00
Houston, Brooklyn	\$1,750.00
Templeton, Hadley	\$1,750.00
Nichols, Abigail	\$1,750.00
Tate, Ethan	\$1,750.00
Petrone, Logan	\$1,250.00
Rehmeier, Megan	\$1,250.00
Jimenez-Reyes, Joana	\$1,250.00
Dayton, Alyson	\$1,000.00
Chalker, Garrison	\$1,000.00
Chastain, William	\$1,000.00
Kennedy, Elijah	\$1,000.00
Wisniewski, Tessa	\$1,000.00
Tingen, Lane	\$1,000.00
Shaheen, Savannah	\$750.00
Ramey, Kadence	\$750.00
Subtotal	\$25,500.00

College Applicants / Renewals	Amount
Woods, Patrick	\$1,500.00
Rehmeier, Brooke	\$1,500.00
Olvera, Morgan	\$1,500.00
Ingate, Reid	\$1,500.00
Whatley, Darren	

6. Review Preliminary FY 2021-2022 Revenues, Expenditures & Capital Projects

Town Manager Josh Ward reviewed the following Budget Highlights and Capital Projects:

Town of Highlands FY2021-22 Budget Highlights

Ad Valorem Property Tax Revenue:

Town Tax Rate (unchanged): .1565 per each \$100.00 of Assessed Value

- .015 Earmarked for Street Paving Projects

Macon County Taxable Property Assessment \$1,767,053,784

(.1565 - 98% Collection Rate) = **\$2,710,130**

Jackson County Taxable Real Property Assessment \$78,070,637

(.1565 - 98% Collection Rate) = **\$119,736**

Total .1415 (98% Collection Rate) = **\$2,558,634**

Total .015 (98% Collection Rate) = **\$271,233**

Grand Total: \$2,829,867

Fire Tax Revenue:

Highlands Fire Tax (unchanged): .03 per each \$100.00 of Assessed Value

Macon County Taxable Property Assessment (Highlands Fire District) \$3,574,897,082

(.03 - 99.19% Collection Rate) = **\$1,063,353**

Jackson County Fire Tax Contribution = **\$84,000** (5-year term began FY2020-21)

Grand Total: \$1,147,353

Local Options Sales Tax: \$1,200,000

Utilities (Water & Sewer): Unchanged

Utilities (Electric): Unchanged

Sanitation Fee: Unchanged

No Employee COLA Increase

Health Insurance:

- 5.77% Decrease with BlueCross BlueShield NC proposal: \$37,982 Savings over current MedCost plan with similar plan design

Proposed FY 2021-22 BCBSNC Premiums \$750,092

FY 2020-21 MedCost Premiums \$790,716

\$40,624 Decrease in Total Premium

Proposed FY 2021-22 BCBSNC Employer Portion	\$620,716
FY 2020-21 MedCost Employer Portion	<u>\$658,698</u>

\$37,982 Decrease in Employer Portion

Employee Retirement Contributions – Employer Portion:

State Mandated 1.2% (11.35%) increase = \$12,176.86

LEO Separation Allowance 1.2% (12.04%) increase = \$5,428.13

Capital Items Total: \$3,556,500

Current General Fund Balance: \$3.8 Million

Current General Fund Reserve: \$4.9 Million

Current Electric Reserve: \$5.3 Million

FY 2021-22 Capital Items List

Red = Capital Items Added

Street Department

Street Paving

Spring Street	\$180,000.00
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Sherwood Forest Road	\$120,000.00
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Currently Unpaved

Upper Lake Road	\$85,000.00
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Lower Lake Road	\$135,000.00
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Sub Total	\$520,000.00
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Repairs / Maintenance

Sidewalks

US 64 -- Chandler Inn	\$111,000.00
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Main Street – Presbyterian Church	\$70,000.00
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(3) Tree Planter Replacements at Reeves	\$17,000.00
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Sub Total	\$198,000.00
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Equipment

Replace 2008 Dump Truck	\$125,000.00
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Replace Ton Dump Truck	\$80,000.00
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Sub Total	\$205,000.00
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<u>Total</u>	<u>\$923,000.00</u>
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Electric Department

Equipment

Replace 2009 International/Altec Bucket Truck	\$251,000.00
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Street Light Upgrade to LED	\$117,000.00
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<u>Total</u>	<u>\$368,000.00</u>
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Water / Sewer Department

Moorewood Road Waterline Improvements	\$670,000.00
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Little Bear Pen Pump Station Generator	\$75,000.00
Subtotal	\$745,000.00

Water Treatment Plant

High Service Replacement Pump Variable Flow Devices	\$600,000.00
Walkway/Access Walks to Clearwell	\$189,000.00
Lab Upgrades	\$48,000.00
Tank Cleaning	\$20,000.00
Pump Rebuilds	\$20,000.00
Replacement Equipment (DR 3900, CL17)	\$8,000.00
Subtotal	\$885,000.00

Wastewater Treatment Plant

Tank Cleaning	\$61,000.00
Roof Repair	\$32,000.00
Belt Press Parts	\$19,000.00
Diffuser Winch Replacement	\$18,000.00
Flygt Pump Replacement	\$15,000.00
UV Light Repair/Replacement	\$12,000.00
Subtotal	\$157,000.00
<u>Total</u>	<u>\$1,787,000.00</u>

Police Department

(2) Replacement Patrol Vehicles	\$94,000.00
(2) Sets of Equipment	\$34,000.00
<u>Total</u>	<u>\$128,000.00</u>

Parks & Recreation Department

Projects

Playground/Tennis Court Restroom Remodel	\$75,000.00
Houston House Replacement Plans	\$36,000.00
Ballfield Light Replacement	\$137,500.00
<u>Total</u>	<u>\$248,500.00</u>

MIS/GIS Department

Replacement of Police Dept. Tablets	\$68,000.00
Replacement of DesignJet Printer & Scanner	\$22,000.00
(3) Sewer Pump Station SCADA Up Fits	\$12,000.00
<u>Total</u>	<u>\$102,000.00</u>

	Proposed FY 2021-22	FY 2020-21	FY 2019-20
General Fund Departments	\$1,401,500.00	\$877,000.00	\$1,019,400.00
Water/Sewer Fund	\$1,787,000.00	\$394,500.00	\$1,744,500.00
Electric Fund	\$368,000.00	\$166,000.00	\$318,000.00
Sanitation Fund	\$0	\$202,000.00	\$153,000.00
<u>Grand Total</u>	<u>\$3,556,500.00</u>	<u>\$1,639,500.00</u>	<u>\$3,234,900.00</u>

The Board asked Town Manager Josh Ward about the COLA for the employees. Ward stated he didn't put anything in because a raise was just received in January. Commissioners asked what the consumer price index increase was and Ward answered 3%.

COMMISSIONER STIEHLER MADE A MOTION FOR 3% COLA WHICH WAS SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER HEHN AND THE VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.

7. Downtown Outdoor Mask Requirement Discussion

Discussion was held whether to follow what the Governor had announced for the State regarding face mask or maintain the requirement.

COMMISSIONER DOTSON MADE A MOTION TO FOLLOW STATE GUIDELINES TO MASK WEARING INSIDE AND OUTSIDE, WHICH WAS SECONDED BY MAYOR PRO TEMPORE PATTERSON AND THE VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.

8. Adjournment

AS THERE WERE NO FURTHER MATTERS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, COMMISSIONER CALLOWAY MOVED TO ADJOURN WHICH WAS SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER DOTSON AND UPON A UNANIMOUS VOTE, THE TOWN BOARD ADJOURNED AT 4:26PM.

Patrick Taylor
Mayor

Gilberta B. Shaheen
Town Clerk