

Regular Meeting Minutes of the Town of Highlands Board of Commissioners Meeting of November 18, 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, Town Attorney Jay Coward, Public Works Director Lamar Nix, Police Chief Andrea Holland, Planning & Development Director Assistant Michael Mathis and Town Clerk Gibby Shaheen

1. Meeting Called to Order

Mayor Taylor called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

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. Adjust and Approve the Agenda

Commissioner Hehn asked to remove Item #10, Request for Reasonable Accommodation - Printing Documents from the Agenda.

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

5. Approval of the October 21, 2021, Regular Meeting Minutes

Mayor Pro Tempore Patterson asked for the clarification in the Mayor's report that North Carolina DOT was struggling financial; to clarify in Item #9 that Commissioner Hehn made a motion to rescind the order to enforce the R-1 Ordinances on January 3, 2022, instead to rescind the January 3, 2022, order; to clarify in Item #12 that Town Attorney Jay Coward had been directed to review and develop a draft of a new lease because WHLC's contract had expired; and to clarify in Item #15 that the mask requirement was rescinded because of the positivity rate had fallen to 10%.

Commissioner Hehn asked for Item #11 to reflect that the liquidated damages would apply effective 300 days from the date of Contract, instead of effective August 11, 2021.

MAYOR PRO TEMPORE PATTERON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE OCTOBER 21, 2021, REGULAR MEETING MINUTES AS AMENDED, WHICH WAS SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER STIEHLER AND THE VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.

6. Reports

A. Mayor

Mayor Taylor reported he had received a checks for \$54,000 for the Town from the ABC store disbursements, which will go to the Recreation Park, Police Department and General Fund; the Wine & Food Festival was a success, but had a problem to address and Town Manager Josh Ward and staff will meet and come up with a policy to enforce, the issue was the sound technicians did a sound check during worship service – organizer Casey Reid reached out to the churches with apologies; WHLC's lease had expired and staff let that slip by, but Finance Director Rebecca Shuler has a list maintaining terms; and COVID testing and vaccinations are still being offered at the Community Building.

B. Commissioners and Committee Reports

Commissioner Hehn and wife Betsy congratulated Mayor Pat Taylor on his third term and reported there was a vaccination clinic at school Friday.

C. Town Manager

Town Manager Ward reported the metal trusses were being put up at the new Fire Department and it should be dried in by the 1st week of December; Laurel Street Alley was paved, Lower Lake Road paving should be finished today and Upper Lake Road paving will start tomorrow and be completed next week; a meeting with Hotwire staff to look at the head end and they will be taking over December 1st, 2021, and get an office space and will hire our staff member Jonathan McCardle and 5 more other folks; Town Hall will be closed on November 25th and 26th for Thanksgiving Holiday; and Town Manager Josh Ward asked Public Works Director Lamar Nix to review the concerns raised with NCDOT about the curbing being a trip hazard and Nix stated that the DOT said they will discuss the concerns, but they will do one of three things paint the curb, saw it and peel it back or nothing.

7. Consent Agenda

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

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

8. Postponement of the Public Hearing for Ellis Annexation

Assistant Planning & Development Director Michael Mathis said that the applicant Mr. Ellis is requesting that the public hearing be rescheduled for next month's meeting. The applicant is finalizing plans with the Ravenel Homeowner's Association and isn't ready to proceed with the annexation. The recommendation is to hold the public hearing at next month's meeting, December 16, 2021.

MAYOR PRO TEMPORE PATTERSON MADE A MOTION TO POSTPONE THE PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE ELLIS ANNEXATION UNTIL THE DECEMBER 16, 2021, REGULAR SCHEDULED MEETING, WHICH WAS SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER STIEHLER AND THE VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.

9. Stormwater Master Plan Discussion

Commissioner Hehn asked if the 2007 Stormwater Master Plan and properties flooded in October could be reviewed at the Budget Workshop, and the Board agreed.

10. Employee Christmas Bonuses



Agenda Item

Date: November 18, 2021

To: Mayor Pat Taylor and Town Board of Commissioners

Prepared By: Emilie Nickerson, HR Director

Subject: Annual Christmas Bonus

Background:

Last year's Annual Christmas Bonus was as follows, based on longevity:

- Less than one year \$400
- Between one year and ten years \$500
- Between ten and twenty years \$600
- Twenty plus years \$700

The current FY 2021-22 budget includes the same allowance totaling \$37,100.

All part time employees last year received a \$50 gift card. The current FY 2021-22 budget includes the same allowance totaling \$2,250.

COMMISSIONER CALLOWAY MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE EMPLOYEE CHRISTMAS BONUSES AS PRESENTED, WHICH WAS SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER HEHN AND THE VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.

11. Closed Session: Pursuant to NCGS §318.11(a)(3) Attorney Client Privilege: Discuss Closed Session Policies & Discuss Pending Lawsuit; Huff vs. Highlands

COMMISSIONER CALLOWAY MADE A MOTION TO GO INTO CLOSED SESSION PURSUANT TO NCGS §318.11(A)(3) ATTORNEY CLIENT PRIVILEGE TO DISCUSS CLOSED SESSION POLICES & DISCUSS PENDING LAWSUIT; HUFF VS. HIGHLANDS AT 7:24PM, WHICH WAS SECONDED BY MAYOR PRO TEMPORE PATTERSON AND THE VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.

ONCE DISCUSSION WAS HELD, COMMISSIONER CALLOWAY MADE A MOTION TO GO BACK INTO OPEN SESSION AT 8:38PM, WHICH WAS SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER STIEHLER AND THE VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.

No action was taken.

12. Adjournment

AS THERE WERE NO FURTHER MATTERS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, COMMISSIONER/MAYOR PRO TEMPORE STIEHLER MOVED TO ADJOURN WHICH WAS SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER DOTSON AND UPON A UNANIMOUS VOTE, THE TOWN BOARD ADJOURNED AT 8:39PM.

Patrick Taylor
Mayor

Gilberta B. Shaheen
Town Clerk