

MINUTES OF THE WHITSETT TOWN COUNCIL
February 8, 2022
Whitsett Town Hall Building

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

The regular meeting of the Whitsett Town Council was held on Tuesday, February 8, 2022 at the Whitsett Town Hall. The following members of the Town Council were present: Mayor Richard Fennell, Mayor Pro Tem Jerry Rice and Council Members Cindy Wheeler, Lee Greeson, and Craig York.

Also present were guest speaker Becky Loy of Cobb Ezekiel Loy & Company, P.A., Town Administrator Gary Deal, Planning Board Chairman Tyler Harris, *The Alamance News* reporter Tomas Murawski, and three residents.

Mayor Fennell called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., noted that a quorum was present; and asked Mayor Pro Tem Jerry Rice to offer the invocation.

SPEAKERS FROM THE FLOOR

Mayor Fennell asked for any speakers from the floor, and invited Becky Loy from the Town's accounting firm to the floor to give a presentation to Council Members on the annual financial audit for the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2021. Ms. Loy distributed copies of the bound audit to Council Members so they could follow her references to the findings therein. Formal adoption of the annual audit, as required by the NC Treasurer's Local Government Commission (LGC), will be scheduled for the March meeting to give Council Members the opportunity to peruse and digest the audit's results in depth.

[A copy of the 40-page financial audit is part of the official file for this meeting.]

OLD BUSINESS

1. Adoption of the Minutes

Mayor Fennell asked for any changes to the minutes from the January 11, 2022 regular monthly meeting; and hearing none, asked for a motion to adopt the minutes. Council Member Craig York made a motion to adopt the minutes as written; motion seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Jerry Rice. The motion to adopt the January minutes carried by unanimous vote.

2. Any Other Old Business

Mayor Fennell asked if there were any other old business; and there was none.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Planning Board

Planning Board Chairman Tyler Harris reported that, once again, there was not enough member attendance to hold an official Board meeting last week. Harris alluded to the first agenda item under new business by stating that he would like to recruit at least two alternates to the Board, so that conducting business at monthly Board meetings could take place.

In addition, Board Chairman Harris introduced the Board's newest member prospect, Charles Sedoris, who resides at 806 NC Highway 61, and expressed his desire to serve the community. His formal appointment to the Board is scheduled for next month's Council meeting.

2. Enforcement Officer

Enforcement Officer Gary Deal reported that since last Council meeting, no enforcement activity had taken place and no DCCs had been issued.

3. Town Administrator

Town Administrator Gary Deal reported that the Town has a deadline of February 17 to submit its application and supplemental documentation to the NC Department of Commerce for \$50,000 in legislative grant funds. The Town had been informed by NC Representative Jon Hardister of its eligibility; and has no time to spare to respond to the tight deadline.

In addition, the Town will need to register as a vendor in the eProcurement system before NC Commerce can issue payment. This process has been a struggle; but Town Hall continues to interact with the state's help desk to fulfill registration.

The eligible projects for funding include replacement of the Town's generator, which also serves the Fire Department; installation of a picnic shelter on Town grounds among recreational facilities; replacement of an HVAC system for Council chambers; and finally procurement of engineering services for the extension of water lines primarily for Fire Department and Town Hall access.

For planning purposes, the total amount of the application is expected to exceed the allotted \$50,000. Expenses above that amount shall be a capital outlay from the Town's approved budget. Means for tracking dollars and project progress is also required by NC Commerce.

Town Administrator Deal then stated that Guilford County has established a system by which trade permits could be applied for and issued online. The county permits chief asked if Whitsett, being the only municipality requiring DCCs, would be amenable to discontinuing its use of DCCs for trade permits. The requirement for DCCs for construction projects would remain.

Deal responded to the county affirmatively, and followed up with a notification to confirm. He also informed Planning Board Chairman Tyler Harris to remove this requirement from the Board's continuing work on a revised fee schedule for various development requests.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Recruitment for Alternates for Planning Board

Council Members offered to produce the names of possible interested parties to serve as alternates on the Planning Board to Board Chairman Harris.

2. Discussion on Pay Range for Town Clerk

After numerous opinions and input from Council Members and the Town Administrator, Council Member Craig York made a motion to establish a pay range of \$15-\$18/hour based on skill level, with after a 3-month probationary period, a performance review would occur to determine possible increased hourly wage; working hours would be determined based on job demands. Motion seconded by Council Member Cindy Wheeler, and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

[At the March Council meeting, the above 3-month probationary period was amended by to a 6-month probation to keep this requirement more in line with past hires. The amendment passed by unanimous vote.]

3. Discussion on Selection Committee for Town Clerk

Mayor Fennell appointed Mayor Pro Tem Jerry Rice, Council Member Craig York, Town Administrator Gary Deal, and Town Clerk Jo Hesson to participate in interviewing candidates for the Town Clerk position. He asked that interviews be scheduled soon, and that Council Member York handle arrangements.

4. Any Items from Council Members

Mayor Fennell asked for any items from Council Members; and Council Member Cindy Wheeler asked about any further information on the abandoned mobile home at the end of Whitsett Park Road. Town Administrator Deal replied that he had attempted several times to contact the owner to no avail; and had, therefore, turned over the matter to Guilford County for investigation and enforcement.

Council Member Lee Greeson then asked about the status of a draft contract for Greater Vision Academy (GVA) to use the Town's ball field, including the hold harmless disclaimer, and a stipulation to pay \$20/hour for the use of ball field lights if needed. With all the other Town activities demanding priority, this document had been detained; but should be available for official approval and signature by the Town at the March Council meeting.

Meanwhile, in preparation for the forthcoming contract, Council Member Lee Greeson made a motion to grant use of the field by GVA as coordinated with Gibsonville; motion seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Jerry Rice. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

2. Announcements

Mayor Fennell asked for any announcements; and there were none.

3. Speakers from the Floor

Mayor Fennell asked for any speakers from the floor, and no one asked to be recognized.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Council, Mayor Fennell invited a motion to adjourn. The motion to adjourn was made by Mayor Pro Tem Jerry Rice; motion seconded by Council Member Lee Greeson. The motion carried; and the February 8, 2022 Town Council meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:03 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the Whitsett Town Council is scheduled for 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, March 8, 2022 at the Whitsett Town Hall.

/s/

Gary Deal, Town Administrator

/s/

Richard Fennell, Mayor

APPROVED: March 8, 2022