

**TOWN OF HUNTERSVILLE
TOWN BOARD MEETING
MINUTES**

**December 4, 2023
6:00 p.m. – Huntersville Town Hall
101 Huntersville-Concord Road**

PRE-MEETING

None

**REGULAR MEETING
TOWN OF HUNTERSVILLE
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

The Regular Meeting of the Huntersville Board of Commissioners was held at the Huntersville Town Hall, 101 Huntersville-Concord Road, at 6:00 p.m. on December 4, 2023.

GOVERNING BODY MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Melinda Bales; Commissioners Dan Boone, Rob Kidwell, Amber Kovacs, Lance Munger, Derek Partee and Stacy Phillips.

Mayor Bales called the meeting to order.

Mayor Bales called for a moment of silence.

Mayor Bales led the Pledge of Allegiance.

STAFF QUESTIONS

None

PUBLIC COMMENTS, REQUESTS, OR PRESENTATIONS

Mayor Bales said I am thoroughly honored to be able to do this presentation this evening. Among the honors and awards the Governor of North Carolina bestows, none is more valued than The Order of the Long Leaf Pine. Since its creation in 1963, it is presented to honor persons with a proven record of service to the state of North Carolina or some other remarkable achievement and to others as a gesture of friendship and goodwill.

Upon being named to The Order of the Long Leaf Pine, the honoree receives a certificate by which the Governor confers upon the recipient the rank of Ambassador Extraordinary privileged to enjoy fully all rights granted to members of this exalted order among which is the unique privilege to propose the following North Carolina Toast in select company anywhere in the free world: Here's to the land of The Long Leaf Pine, the summer land where the sun doth shine, where the weak grow strong and the strong grow great, here's to down home, the Old North State.

Among the honorees, esteemed individuals include our former Town Attorney Bob Blythe and former mayor and commissioner Sarah McAulay, who is here with us today, alongside other notable figures from North Carolina including Maya Angelou, Billy Graham, Andy Griffith, Junior Johnson, Michael Jordan, Dean Smith and Bob Timberlake. Additionally, distinguished friends of the State of North Carolina are recognized such as Gerald R. Ford, John Glenn, Colin Powell and William H. Rehnquist.

Tonight, we would like to introduce Benson C. Hoyle for the presentation of The Order of the Long Leaf Pine award due to his exceptional service to the state of North Carolina. Mr. Hoyle has dedicated over 33 years of his life to serving the people of this great state and has made significant contributions to the criminal justice field.

Mr. Hoyle is a highly respected leader and has served in various leadership roles throughout his career. He has demonstrated exceptional professionalism and a deep commitment to the betterment of the communities that he has been associated with. His outstanding leadership skills have been instrumental in advancing various organizations and departments across North Carolina.

Mr. Hoyle started his career in 1984 and served in several cities across North Carolina including Waynesville, Lincoln County, Huntersville, King, Mt. Holly, Cornelius and Huntersville once again. In each of these communities he has been a dedicated public servant working tirelessly to improve the lives of those he served.

Mr. Hoyle's years of service in North Carolina have been marked by outstanding achievements and garnered recognition and awards from various organizations. In addition to his exceptional professional achievements, he has served on several boards and committees including the North Carolina Association of Chiefs of Police and is a long-time member of the International Chiefs of Police.

Mr. Hoyle is a graduate of Western Carolina University with a Master's Degree in Criminal Justice, and Methodist University with a Master's Degree in Justice Administration. Mr. Hoyle has also graduated from the Southern Institute of Policing at the University of Louisville.

Mr. Hoyle's character is exemplary, and his colleagues and the community highly regard him. He has consistently demonstrated high integrity, compassion and dedication in all his endeavors. His commitment to service and leadership has inspired many and he is a true asset to the state of North Carolina.

In conclusion, we proudly present Benson C. Hoyle with the North Carolina Order of the Long Leaf Pine award. His dedication, professionalism and leadership have been exemplary and he is highly deserving of this honor.

Benson C. Hoyle said I couldn't pass up the opportunity for them to have to listen to me one more time. If I don't look like I'm blushing right now, I'm going to tell you I never will because I am so humbled.

A lot of you in this room may not know, but I started here in Huntersville in the mid 80's, a lot going on, had an officer shot. I actually replaced him after he got shot. There was a lot going on, a lot of turmoil. The lady sitting in this room, Sarah McAulay, Mayor McAulay to me, she called me to her office one day after the chief got fired, who I was his second in command, and I thought I was next. She said I want you to be the police chief and I thought she had lost her mind. I was 26 years old. She said I'll make sure

you get the training you need. That lady was amazing to me, and she made sure I went to the Southern Police Institute, I got the training I needed. She put me in touch with the right people.

Huntersville has always been a special place for me. I left, went around the state and did some different things, wound up back in Huntersville to get an opportunity to retire here after all that. I just can't tell you how much this town means to me personally and to see all these people, especially my board up here again. I've been before them arguing stuff for so long and it's good to just come up here and say thank you for a change. I really appreciate it and I'm very honored.

Kerry Edelstein, 8810 Camberly Road, said when I filled out the form it said what concerns do you have and I wrote none, I am just here to express gratitude. I've gotten to work with all of you and I don't know if the people in this room know this, but as we were working through the redevelopment proposal for Birkdale, every single person here took time to talk to me one on one. Whether or not I agreed with you, you all took the time and I deeply appreciate that. I wanted to thank you for your service. I know this is a lot of work for very little compensation and sometimes a lot cyberbullying and I want to really thank you for taking the time and putting a commitment in to serving our community. And to the new people, you're amazing. I've already gotten to meet some of you and look at the crowd you already drew. I'm so excited to work with all of you as well. Thank you for serving.

Ashley Wiley, 12435 Treasure Cove, said to simply express gratitude to you all seems insufficient in this moment, but transitions often leave us at a loss for words as we have considered all that has transpired. You guys have taught every member of this community wonderfully. You've improved Huntersville. You've made a difference in the life of everybody around you and that is a hard but worthy achievement. You guys have truly made an impact from the smallest to largest, youngest and oldest among us and I can never tell you thank you enough. While some of you are going on to run for different office and some of you aren't, please take everything that you have learned and make North Carolina better. Make whatever you do better and know that we all love you and we all support you and we're all so thankful for everything you've done, every one of you.

Jeff Sny, 13945 Old Vermillion, said as a citizen I would like to thank each one of you for your time and your dedication that you gave to this town. It certainly takes a thick skin to sit up there on the dais and do what each and every one of you have done for your term and/or terms as it were. Occasionally I found some of your decisions and actions overtime be super soft and I've certainly let you know. A couple of times, though, you took a very hands-off sort of not my pig, not my farm approach. That's a phrase my grandpa used to say a lot. Overall, though, I believe it's clear that you had Huntersville's best interest at heart. That's what I always expect of my electeds, and that's what I appreciate about you. As the chair of the Planning Board and on behalf of my Vice Chair Frank Gammon who is in the back there and the rest of my board members, it was an honor to partner with every one of you. To the incoming board members, sincere congratulations on doing what you have done. I will tell you we are dying to have a Planning Board meeting as they have been canceled this entire quarter due to the election, so please start calling for some public hearings ASAP. I'd also like to finish by sharing something with the incoming board that was shared with me when I started serving in an advisory capacity for the citizens almost 9 years ago. I was told to take my personal emotions and my agendas that I may have, put them in a box, set that box aside, and get to work for the citizens. So pitter patter.

BeeJay Caldwell, 14521 New Haven Drive (Juanita Rann, 11521 Lottingly Drive, deferred her time to Ms. Caldwell). *Refer to written comments attached hereto as Exhibit No. 1.*

Amy Hallman, 100 Cambridge Road (Gatewood Campbell, 104 Interlaken Place deferred her time to Ms. Hallman), said I am so grateful to this board. Anyone who says it's been pro-development is unknowledgeable. To say two years is not a very long time, but you guys got a lot done. Thank you for removing the TOD in downtown unanimously. It was the right thing to do.

Lance, I appreciate our positive strides. There's a lot wrapped up in that statement and I know you know. Thank you.

Derek, I have good memories also, back to the time we did that commercial together for a different candidate. Thank you for recommending me to HOAB. I wish you well. Keep rocking those gym photos.

Rob, you and Kristen know how much I value your leadership. For you to commit with Amber to go to Pottstown once a month to listen to residents and bring them solutions is a first. To get \$200,000 in the budget for sidewalks for Pottstown for the residents that asked for them is commendable beyond words. Those meetings were never talking points for y'all. Your selfless representation at CRTPO. I am honored to call you my friend.

Dan, you are our family and Christy Clark understood that I felt that way before she filed to run, and I appreciate her very much for that. Your heart for this town is unparalleled. Your fingerprints are all over the traditions in this town – the genesis of the 150th celebration, LaLaCaboosa, Latin Night, the list goes on. Who will compare to your philosophy of “wake up every day and do something for someone I don't know?” You embody the qualities we need in a leader in this town, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

As dedicated as I am to this town no matter who is on this board, thank you Aneralla and previous board, I am particularly grateful to have righted the wrong on the sliver. The new town hall on this property is a forward thinking, fiscally responsible investment in our town. The town hall is not expense - line it up on the correct side of the ledger. It will connect the greenway and Veterans Park, it will house the entire staff, it will eventually provide downtown public parking, and it will be available for growth for at least 50 years, you know since we are the hottest zip code in the area. Now, we are going to have to keep the roof repaired and maintain the pressure washing, but we should be good. Our children and maybe even our grandchildren will not have to think of building another one. In my lifetime I can remember four, and that Kathy Jones might tell me the number is actually five, town halls in Huntersville in my lifetime and I'm not as old as I look. Thank you Rob, Amber, Stacy and Dan for being part of that. Even Commissioners Munger and Partee acknowledged this option was ideal, even if they didn't vote for it.

To the incoming board, you are a pack of strong, individually minded but certainly teamworking folks. To the never-been-electeds keep that belief about you. Do not be strong armed nor insulted nor bullied nor sweet talked into any decisions and I am here for you. I look forward to the county and state party people getting out of our politics so we can get to real work. You guys can do it without them. Also, I am proud that Save Downtown Huntersville hasn't engaged in the mud-slinging and vitriol and tried to call it facts or opinion. And if I've learned anything this year it's that if we consider that acceptable, I've been leaving a lot on the table. If we don't, I challenge an incoming board member to call down his friends, even the anonymous one. Let's clean up our dialogues and conversations. I still have hope.

To Amber and Stacy, there is never enough time to remind people what wonderful things you have done for this town and its people, but in the coming months it will become evident even to those who won't acknowledge it. Every time you drive under that light at 21 and Northdowns, know you did that. You

didn't wait for NCDOT. Every time you drive down 115 by Plum Creek, know that you helped those residents resist the sometimes impractical connectivity. You understand that one size does not and should not always fit all. Stacy, the animals you helped are innumerable and when we get that magistrate here, that's you. Every life saved in town with Narcan, you. Amber, you deserve to still be seated at this dais later tonight. But I admit I'm a little giddy that I get my founder partner back to work with me.

Finally, ladies, I will say this. Don't let anyone ever steal your shine. They cannot have it. When someone calls you some kind of squirrel squad again, remember you own that. Be the women that you are and turn negativity into a positive. I know you can do it because I've been by your sides this entire time. I have heard your excited utterances in real time. You two have handled yourselves with grace and mostly poise. You've done it all alone up there. Don't you ever let someone snatch your crown. It is yours, you wear it. Jealously ain't worth your time. Don't you go and hide. Shine, women, shine. Keep fighting for the best for Huntersville, because you are a big part of what's right with it.

AGENDA CHANGES (CURRENT BOARD)

Commissioner Phillips made a motion to adopt the agenda.

Commissioner Munger seconded motion.

Motion carried unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA (CURRENT BOARD)

Approval of Minutes. Commissioner Phillips made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 6, 2023 Regular Town Board Meeting. Commissioner Kovacs seconded motion. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARINGS (CURRENT BOARD)

None

OTHER BUSINESS (CURRENT BOARD)

None

RECOGNITION OF OUTGOING ELECTED OFFICIALS

Mayor Bales recognized Dan Boone. You have served our community for 8 years and I have been honored to serve alongside you. I have to tell you that Commissioner Boone loves this community and every single time there would be an item on our agenda, we would walk properties together and I don't know how many times we did that, because we always understood that boots on the ground, because topography matters and where development happens matters and how it is situated matters. He's done it quietly, he's done it consistently, and he has been a strong voice not only for who Huntersville can be, but who Huntersville was in regards to our history. I greatly appreciate you and it has been an honor to serve with you.

Mayor Bales recognized Rob Kidwell. Commissioner Kidwell and I have had the honor of serving this community for six years total together. And it's not always been easy. We've been opposite sides of decisions at times. But you are my friend and I greatly appreciate you and the work that you have done on behalf of this community. The work that you have done has always been in the best interest of the whole and I greatly appreciate you. To the residents of Huntersville, each and every person that's coming up tonight, I've watched them do the work. I've been on the phone with Commissioner Kidwell at 9:30, 10:00 at night talking about an issue that's upcoming.

Mayor Bales recognized Commissioner Kovacs. Commissioner Kovacs is the newest to serving in Huntersville and I have to say I have thoroughly enjoyed working with her. She's sincere, she loves our community, and I've just enjoyed some of the shenanigans....that is always fun. She really does embody, and I continue to say this about each and every one, a love of Huntersville and you are probably the newest of all of us to Huntersville, but it gets in your blood, and I think we bleed green, and I just want to say thank you.

Mayor Bales recognized Commissioner Munger. Commissioner Munger and I have served together four years now and I have thoroughly enjoyed working with you. We've been on different sides of issues. We've bantered back and forth. But at the end of the day, I can call you friend and I greatly appreciate it and I want to say on behalf of the citizens of Huntersville, thank you for service.

Mayor Bales recognized Commissioner Partee. You joined us this last term and the expertise you brought to the table in regards to policing and being a first responder truly did add value to the conversation as we walked through these last two years. I have to say personally, and on behalf of our community, thank you for your service. It truly is appreciated.

Mayor Bales recognized Commissioner Phillips. We have known each other for 14 years, a long time. We were friends first and having the opportunity to serve with Mayor Pro Tem Phillips over the last four years has truly been an honor. She loves this community. It's the community that she was raised in and so many times she has given back and so many people don't know about it. She's a quiet strength and I greatly appreciate you. She has been an anchor. Mayor pro tems need to be that, and she has worked diligently to meet the needs of our community. We haven't always agreed and I think that's what makes everything work, makes what we do here work. It's a mutual respect for one another. And now we get to swap.

Commissioner Phillips recognized Mayor Bales. I have known her for 14 years. For 12 of those she has served with a Phillips. God bless this woman, we are not easy people. It has been an honor getting to be your mayor pro tem and I think that it's really beautiful I get to go out this way. Having two strong female leaders who don't agree, but still respect each other, has set a tone for this town that I am really excited for the next board to follow. I'm not going to say much more because I'm going to start crying, but I truly appreciate you and your service.

MAYOR AND COMMISSIONER REPORTS/CLOSING COMMENTS (CURRENT BOARD)

Commissioner Partee said I just want to say thank you to my friends and family and to the community here in Huntersville. It has been a fantastic 2 years and I hope I served this community with diligence and with the experience that I come forth with. I also want to thank the Town management – Anthony, Jeanette and Bobby, you guys are the goats. The greatest of all time. And the employees. I want to thank them also because without them we wouldn't have the quality of life that we appreciate.

Congratulations to the incoming board. Congratulations to Mayor Christy, soon to be Mayor Christy. I'm looking forward to their administration and this town will be better for it.

Commissioner Kovacs said what a wild ride. Meeting and representing the residents of Huntersville has been an honor and something that has become part of my identity. I thank you for your trust in me for those 2 years in letting me work for you for this beautiful town. I will still continue to advocate for your needs and for the town that we love. Our staff really is bar none and I'm thankful for each and every one of them who beared with a new commissioner and all her questions and crazy ideas, and sometimes they ran with them. Anthony, you get a break from my calls for now, but I'll come up with some reason to call you. Jackie, if I have number questions, I know where your office is and I will be there. Catherine, I'll still find ways to annoy you to stop by to pretend to check the mail or something. And Janet, keep being the best treasure this town has.

Representing the town on the Lake Norman Chamber of Commerce allowed for some of the most fun that I've had while working and I'm thankful for being a part of that board. And I owe you, Bill Russell, a special thank you for never letting me be the commissioner to say no report, even when I was the only one.

Getting to work with some of these board members that have become family has been an incredible gift and I will miss seeing them as often as I'm used to. You weren't just co-workers to me, but brothers or sisters, teammates, a cheering squad, teachers, reality checkers, numbers spewers, Lance, and much, much more. You helped me work out my thoughts, calm me down, hyped me up and overall made me a better commissioner. Our job may be done but our friendships aren't.

To my friends on the incoming board, enjoy the ride and the amazing people you will meet along the way. I know you are going to do a great job, but don't forget to breathe. Congrats.

Commissioner Munger said I asked the Mayor if there was any time limit on how long I could speak tonight. She said no, and you all thought you were getting out of here by 8 p.m.....suckers.

Let's have some fun. Way back when, when I was a teenager, I used to watch a TV show called "Night Court" and one of the characters on that show, played by Selma Diamond, used to have a catch phrase "I laughed, I cried, it became a part of me." At that time, we used to think it was a pretty clever thing to say to people as an amusing anecdote. Later in life, after experiencing more challenges and hopefully gaining some wisdom in the process, it became something you could use to reflect on the things in life that truly mattered or that helped make you into the person that you are, for better or for worse. I can tell you that having spent 4 years on this dais, working through issues, sometimes collaborating and sometimes arguing with the people on this board and my first board, listening to residents, working with applicants and staff, there is not a single doubt in my mind that when I reflect back on all of it, I know "I laughed, I cried, it became a part of me."..

I have a lot of people that I would like to acknowledge here tonight, so I hope y'all can bear with me, but first I want to start with two pieces of equipment in this room.

The first one that I would like to acknowledge is that clock. It is never right. It's sometimes off by minutes, sometimes hours. How are you always wrong? And sometimes you're not even there, where do you go? I will not miss you clock.

The second piece of equipment that I would like to acknowledge here is the one that gave my voice volume and helped me to deliver my thoughts, my sarcasm, my diatribes, and my occasional 58 questions.....microphone I am going to miss you and lest I forget your little button that has helped make sure no one ever heard me say fornicate, defecate, shazam, or why the face, and you know I wanted to. I'm going to miss you too button.

Now on to the more important acknowledgements. The first group of people that I would like to express my gratitude to are the members of our town staff. Without you, this town would flounder. You all have overachieved in every sense of the word. I wish I could have done more to help you get the recognition that you truly deserve, and I wish I had gotten to know more of you better, but for now I would like to recognize a few of those who I have managed to get to know the best.

Catherine Cook – In many ways, you are the gateway to our town. Whether it be for people walking into this building or the people calling in. You are often the first interaction that residents have with town hall, and I couldn't think of a better person for them to interact with. Thank you for your sunny disposition and your charming wit.

Tracy Houk – Whether it be helping to guide our Public Arts Commission to become an effective and efficient board, helping to organize our hugely successful Wine on the Vine, or giving everything you have to help pull off Hello Huntersville. I appreciate everything you do for our town.

Michael Jaycocks – I don't know why, but it never occurred to me to go out and find money from corporate sponsors for things like benches, art installations, parks, greenway trails and the many other things that you have managed to pull off with amazing skill. You truly are the definition of "thinking outside of the box." Thank you for helping to make Huntersville more beautiful.

Larry Davis – The fact that you were pretty much able to fly under the radar during my two terms speaks volumes to your abilities. I will miss our occasional commiserations on the life of being an IT manager.

Stephen Trott – I feel like we always managed to have a good banter in our various meetings, whether it was for the Town Board or the Ordinance Advisory Board meetings. Thank you for always being prepared for my random questions and your guidance on subjects I never thought I would need to know about.

Brian Richards – Mr. Richards, you have some very big shoes to fill. It has been wonderful getting to know you. I appreciate your extensive knowledge and your candor. When you're in politics, it's always nice to have someone cut to the point and give it to you straight. Just make sure you don't blow off any of your fingers in the first week of July, you might need them.

Kevin Fox – Of all the people who I thought I might end up being friends with, I was just like there is no way that this guy wants anything to do with me. I'm not sure when it occurred, but on more than one occasion you gave me the encouragement that let me know I was on the right track, at the exact moment I needed it. It helped push me forward on some of my arguments. Thanks for just being a really good guy.

Jack Simoneau – If you are here or listening to this online, stop! Go on vacation man! I still remember one of the first times I interacted with you, and you spoke passionately about Impact Fees. I knew right away that you had a good head on your shoulders, and we would get along exceptionally well. Thank you for your many years of wonderful service to our community.

Bobby Williams – You do an amazing job of keeping us informed on a wide range of activities occurring in our town. I especially appreciate all the work you have done relating to the Colonial Pipeline spill. You are always an absolute pleasure to speak with. I will definitely miss that.

Major Brian Vaughan - Your smile and glowing personality are absolutely contagious, never change.

Chief Barry Graham – You have proven yourself to be an outstanding leader of our largest department. Your ability to articulate public safety needs in terms that we could all get behind quickly were greatly appreciated. I know that the safety of our community will always be in good hands with you at the helm. I just hope that going forward, you will get all of the resources that your department desperately needs. Thank you for your service.

Jackie Huffman – Number Crunchin’ Legend! I have always thought of myself as being a bit of a savant when it comes to numbers, but you absolutely put me to shame. I can’t remember exactly when it happened during my first term, but I quickly figured out that when Jackie says that’s the number, you better believe that is the number. At some point I still want to grab a beer with you, because I gotta believe that Jackie unfiltered has got to be a hoot!

Janet Pierson – You are the glue that holds this town together. You were also my best guide as to whether or not I was doing the right thing. If you gave me side eye, I knew I messed up and if you smiled and nodded at me, I knew I was on the right path. If and when you decide to retire from the Town of Huntersville, I absolutely want to be there to celebrate your many years of wonderful service to our community.

Emily Sloop – You really are in one of the most important and impossible positions up here. It’s an incredible balancing act of guiding a group of novices through a legal mine field, while making sure not to impart any personal bias on matters before us. Thank you for keeping us out of the courts and the headlines.

Anthony Roberts – When we sit up here on this dais, I believe that we all think of ourselves as leaders in one way or another at certain points. My friend, you are the true leader amongst us. You never seem to be caught off guard. Your easy-going demeanor in what I can only describe as utter chaos, just blows me away. You are always available, always knowledgeable, always aware, always moving forward with a vision for what could be and what should be. You are an inspiration to myself, others up here and many of the people watching tonight. Thank you for being the guide and showing us the way forward.

Next, I would like to acknowledge the people who I have had the pleasure of getting to know over the past 2+ years up here on the dais. And while I want to give a nod to commissioners Hines and Walsh who I enjoyed getting to know last term, my comments here will be exclusive to the crazy train we all enjoyed this term.

Commissioner Derek Partee – I appreciate the focus on Public Safety that you brought to the dais, your impeccable sense of style and a number of surprising instances where you listened to me and chose to support me when I was quite certain that I would be on an island by myself. I want to thank you for helping me to rally on certain topics that I was passionate about.

Commissioner Rob Kidwell – I hope this doesn’t cause people to shun you or look at you differently, but I’m going to let our audience in on a little secret. We’re actually friends in real life, we like each other.

We have been to each other's house, I know his kids, our wives have hung out together, we do all kinds of things that friends do. We don't always agree when it comes to policy and the direction forward for Huntersville, but I hope you know I do respect your opinion and when we disagree, I know I need to make better arguments and when we both make better arguments, that results in better decisions for the people of Huntersville and I thank you for that.

Commissioner Amber Kovacs – What should I say. No, that's not the right word.....shall, not should, what shall I say about you? You've been like the sister I never had. We argue, we commiserate, and we laugh. I appreciate the passion you have for life and the many challenges you have managed to overcome to get here. It is my desire that at some point in the near future we will live in a society that helps raise up strong, confident women like yourself. We're not quite there yet, but I hope you never stop fighting and never let them silence you.

Commissioner Dan Boone – In many ways you have been a mentor to me. Whether it be by inviting me out to various locations that were under consideration for rezoning, involving me in the process of making motions, listening to my arguments or being open minded about a wide variety of topics. I sincerely appreciate that you were open to working with me. I still remember seeing you on election night in 2017, the numbers were in, you had been re-elected and I had lost on that night. You gave me a hug, and, in that instant, I knew that although on that day fortune wasn't smiling upon me, this was something that I could do if I tried harder. Thank you for imparting some of your wisdom to me.

Someone once asked me if I have ever regretted any of the votes I have made as a commissioner. I thought for a moment and then said we do the research, we listen to the people, we work with staff, we visit the locations and then we make the best possible decision that aligns with our beliefs and principles, so no I do not regret any vote that I have made from this dais. Well, I'm going to tell you tonight that I lied when I said that. I do have one blemish on my voting record that I do regret. You see almost exactly two years ago tonight I made a foolish vote based on anger. I was unhappy with the outcome of the election and I chose to lash out, and to her credit Mayor Bales asked me a second time to try to give me an opportunity to right a wrong, but I chose to double down and confirm my no vote. Mayor Pro Tem Stacy Phillips, if I was given 1,000 more chances to vote for you as mayor pro tem, I would vote yes a 1,000 times. To your credit, you never held it against me, but if you do have any lingering anger, I do hope you can find it in your heart to forgive me. You have been nothing short of spectacular as mayor pro tem, you have been one of my best allies, the person who has kept me sane up here, the heart and passion of Huntersville. I was an absolute idiot on that vote, and I never should have thought I knew better than the people of Huntersville who clearly spoke out to say that you were their choice. Thank you for being my friend.

Mayor Melinda Bales – What a long, strange trip it's been. You are probably the person I have gotten to know the best up here and I am quite certain that we have a lifetime of friendship ahead of us. It never ceases to shock me how much alike we are in the political realm, which just goes to show how little party matters at the local level. I look forward to watching your star rise, fortune favors the bold. Thank you for being the guide the Town of Huntersville needed during this somewhat tumultuous term.

To our new mayor and board members, I have thoroughly enjoyed getting to know each and every one of you, some over the course of years and some for just the past few months. I couldn't be more proud of you all if I tried. Clearly today was the right day for me to walk away. You are going to do a great job. You all have my phone number, use it whenever you need it, for my part, I'll do my best not to bother you, my time is done, this is your time. I will, however, leave you with one last "Lance-ism." Never be afraid to be the one. I'd be willing to bet that every single one of us up here can

remember at least one vote that went 5-1, where we were the one. It means that no matter how hard everyone around pushed or cajoled you, you stood your ground, held to your principles, and refused to give in. Wear that badge with pride.

The last person I want to recognize is the single most important person in this room, bar none, my wife. What you saw when you looked on the scratch and dent rack and found a smoker with bad hair and a bad sense of style who drove a sweet yellow Mustang, I will never understand, but I thank my lucky stars every day that you did. You lift me up when I need it and put my ego in check when it needs to be, which let's face it, happens fairly often. I love you to the moon and back. I never could have done any of this without you. Thank you.

In the end it is my sincere, albeit selfish, desire that someone out there listening, whether it be one of you here or someone watching online, hopefully at least one person, some years down the road, looks back on this night and the things I have said and thinks to themselves just one very simple thing "I Laughed, I cried, it became a part of me." Good night, Huntersville.

Commissioner Boone said my heart is filled with mixed emotions of only a perspective of bidding farewell invokes. It is a bittersweet sentiment that I address you as my journey of the last 8 years as a town commissioner comes to an end. These years have been nothing short of a remarkable chapter in the book of my life. Serving as a commissioner has been challenging, yet immensely rewarding, but also times of difficulty and tough decisions to be made. Working as a town commissioner was more than just a duty. It was a labor of love. The community became an extension of my family with the responsibility shouldered or akin to those of a dedicated parent. We faced hardships together. We celebrated successes together and navigated the complex landscape of civil service with the shared commitment and passion for our town's well-being. In the end it's always been about the community. Our principles of fairness, justice and the potential of a bright future. The challenges were tough and the decisions were often weighty. But every action was taken into a sincere belief that it was for the greater good. As I step away from this role, I will carry with me the memories of the comradery we shared, the obstacles overcome, the progress we collectively achieved. I will not miss knowing the next chapter of the town's history and how it will unfold – not the projects, but what I will miss is the individuals that I've worked with. How will Evan's senior year turn out. What happens to Drew and Lucas after their education is finished. How did Chloe's birthday trip go on a Disney Cruise, and the next chapter of the catfish man, where does that start now. That's what I'm going to miss. To my fellow commissioners, to the dedicated Town staff and to the citizens that have been a part of this journey, I extend my deepest gratitude. It has been my honor and privilege to serve alongside you and I am confident that the Town will continue to flourish under the capable hands of the new mayor and the new commissioners. This farewell marks the end of my official role as a commissioner. My heart forever is intertwined with the heartbeat of Huntersville.

Commissioner Kidwell said to the incoming mayor and board of commissioners, I truly wish you great success as elected officials. As legislators for the Town of Huntersville you will need to hit the ground running and be prepared to make a decision that benefits 65,000 individuals who call the Town of Huntersville their home. Remember the needs of the many will always outweigh the needs of the few and be careful of making decisions that bring unintended consequences. As from experience, that can happen. To my colleagues on the dais tonight, we close a short chapter in our lives and that means we get to start another chapter and that's very exciting. This experience has taught me that when one door closes, begin looking for the next opening. As our dreams and aspirations will not chase us, we must chase after them and never stop moving forward. If you can't find a door, find a window or just knock a hole in the wall and go for it. This also applies to all of you that ran this past election and came up short.

Commissioner Partee – Thank you for the service to our town and I wish you the very best in your next chapter. I have no doubt that you are not done serving the community and I wish you the best in that.

Commissioner Dan Boone – It has been a pleasure to serve with you, sir, and thank you for all your conversations and level headedness that you brought to this board and to the town over the years. Your leadership will surely be missed by many and we are still lucky to have you as a member of the St. Mark Catholic Church and the Olde Huntersville Historic Society. I look forward to raising a glass to you later.

Commissioner Amber Kovacs – Over the past two years I’ve watched you grow as a legislator and as a person making a positive impact on and in our community. As a parent with two young children myself I know the sacrifices you made to serve this community. It did not go unnoticed by me or others. Please continue to stay involved and be an active participant in our community. I know you have a lot more to give to the people of Huntersville and we all look forward to seeing you accomplish that. Stay whiskey bent and hell bound and always know the difference between should and shall.

Mayor Melinda Bales – I have served along your side the longest and we have had many, many spirited discussions and on occasion a spirited drink. Thank you for all that you have done for our community and will continue to do for our community and the state of North Carolina. I have been proud to call you my commissioner, my mayor, but proudest to call you my friend.

Commissioner Stacy Phillips – My sister from another mister. I don’t think you’ll ever know how proud I am to have served on your side and by your side. You have brought great distinction to the role of commissioner, an advocate for this community. You called it like it was and it didn’t matter who you directed it at, even if it was me. You are already doing great things outside of this position and it is just the beginning. What you may not know is the positive example as a role model you have been for my daughter, your niece and that is immeasurable in my opinion. If I must walk out this door tonight and leave this seat behind, I’m proud I get to walk out that door with you. I’m proud to be called your brother. I love you.

Commissioner Lance the blemish Munger – To paraphrase Dorothy from the Wizard of Oz, I think I will miss you most of all Scarecrow. We have had our lively discussions over the years but there’s not been another person on this dais in my years that has challenged me like you. You may not have known this, but those discussions allowed me to grow as a commissioner and as a human. I am grateful for that. God speed to you as you move on and please stay in touch.

To the spouses, significant others, friends and families of my colleagues sitting next to me tonight and those about to be brought up here, thank you for sacrificing time spent with them so they can help guide and direct the Town of Huntersville. You are so often required to sit at the sidelines, stay quiet and watch as the ones you love take the good, bad and ugly to serve their community. I know it’s not easy. Because of that sacrifice, you deserve your own separate recognition not only from us but from the entire community of Huntersville.

To my wife Kristin and my two children at home, thank you again for allowing me this opportunity to serve our community. I know it’s been difficult at times not having your husband there to help put the kids to bed at night or daddy missing parent/teacher conferences and school events due to board meetings and other commitments that this job has required. I want you to know that of all the titles I could ever hold, husband and father are by far the two most important and greatest.

I would also like to thank the staff members of Huntersville for your dedication to the town. The new board is lucky to have your experience and help as they begin. I could name each department and person, but that's been done multiple times tonight, but thank you all.

To the community of Huntersville, thank you for allowing me to serve in some capacity for nearly a decade. Six of those as your Huntersville Town Commissioner. Good night Huntersville. God bless and have a very merry Christmas.

Commissioner Phillips said every time I have sat on this dais for the last four years the first thing I do is when we are in our moment of silence, I've prayed that God be the one who has me doing his will and not my will. I'm grateful that even when I have voted ways that people have not supported it, I know that I've done what I felt was morally right even if I went to bed feeling kind of bad about it because I got cussed out or fussed at or asked why and that's a feeling not many people have unless they have sat up here. Sometimes it is the best thing in the world and sometimes it has not been the best thing in the world, but it's been an honor having the support system up here who you can go to because even if you get into it up here and you want to wring each other's necks, that's somebody who is you're bonded for life because you've shared this opportunity.

I didn't write or prepare anything because I knew that I couldn't read off paper with my eyes getting blurry and ended up sobbing and crying, I don't like to share much. They've said it all and I'm taking off of here personal relationships where I feel like the last two years, four years or 12 years I have told you along the way how much you mean to me and that I appreciate you because this has been an rewarding experience. I got involved with the town business when I was 18 years old and I'm in my 30's now, so this is something that's been part of my whole core my whole life and getting to share my love of Huntersville with other people who actually have the same love, that's been an honor.

To the people in this town, thank you for caring. It is awesome when people are kind. When they are not kind, I hope that the next board can power through and support each other like we have because you are starting your own new class and I'm excited for you to have this experience because you guys worked very hard.

There are two former elected officials in the room I want to thank. Charles Guignard, Sarah McAulay – thank you for always being there for me, for guiding me, for listening to me or even telling me I've done something maybe not in the best light because I know that you two have had the best heart for this town and you've done that because you continue to do the best for the town. That's why you two are sitting in this room. To my friends that came in this room with me when I first got sworn and my friends that are walking out of here with me, thank you. The town has given me so many blessings and honors and some of you guys sitting in this room right now are those. And then my family, my gosh thank them. They have been through the wringer. It's not been easy and I'm getting ready to turn this mic off because I was super-duper excited that the only title that I carry going forward is Aunt Stacy. Thank you guys so much for supporting me over the years.

Mayor Bales said as I have reflected over the last 12 years of service, there's a few things that I have noticed. We rarely take the time to look back at the work we've accomplished. The work is never done and my goodness I love this community. We've completed wonderful things in our community that have added to the quality of life of all of Huntersville and I want to share just a few of them with you this evening since we don't always look back.

We've completed the 2040 Community Plan where we pulled our community together to say how do you want our community to look.

We completed the Downtown Master Plan. We have completed other various small area plans like the NC 73 and Poplar Tent Small Area Plan or the Eastfield Road Small Area Plan or the Clark Creek Small Area Plan because you have to plan if you want an excellent community.

We welcomed new industry into our community. Countless new businesses like Oerlikon, Pester USA, Big Beverage, Daumar, Burkert, Nutec, KURZ, Subaru, Atom Power, and Southwire just to name a few. We've also had companies expand their footprint like Novant Huntersville, Forbo, Saertex and Metrolina Greenhouse. The truth is I can't list them all, but I'm proud of the work that we collectively have done to bring good paying jobs to our community that add value to our quality of life.

Over the last 12 years we've added new park space, like Veterans Park and the Rosedale Nature Park. We've expanded our parks by adding new ballfields, new tennis courts and pickleball courts and fields and synthetic turf to our soccer and baseball fields. We've added new greenways, along with a tunnel under I-77 and the future tunnel under Highway 21. Twelve years ago all these things were dreams and plans. We also added new playground equipment to our parks, and we cannot forget the Huntersville Recreation Center that's been built for indoor basketball, volleyball and pickleball, along with camps for our children in the summer months and afterschool care. We've added new events throughout the year to bring our community together. Just this year we had the opportunity to celebrate Huntersville's sesquicentennial, 150 years of rich history as a community.

As I look back over the last 150 years as we've kind of taken this year and gone down memory lane, what I recognized was that our community has always strived for excellence and education has always been a huge part of who Huntersville is. So we as a community have supported our area schools in a variety of ways from coat and food drives to our staff participating in speed networking events providing students with a look at what a career could be like in local government to where they could work right in their hometown. We've seen several schools, I know I have, built. Grand Oak Elementary, North Academy of World Languages, the replacement school for J. M. Alexander, Lake Norman Charter Elementary, Aspire Trade High School, Bonnie Cone Classical and Leadership Academy, and there will be more in the future with the replacement of Huntersville Elementary School, North Meck High School and a brand new middle school on Stumptown Road. We've also partnered with several schools to create additional gym and field space. Good work for our community for each and every resident.

We've planned for and have made infrastructure improvements. We've worked with NCDOT and invested Huntersville tax dollars to add additional lights and turn lanes and bike lanes and multi-use paths and again the tunnel under I-77 to be able to go east to west on the greenway Vine, the projects like Patterson Road Extension and planned project widenings of Gilead Road West and Stumptown Road Extension. I remember my very first planning workshop. I remember it vividly as we discussed the two-way pair project that many of you in this room know as the Main Street Project, or the Gilead/21 widening. Both of those projects have started finally and will be completed soon.....12 years.

One thing I've learned is when you talk infrastructure, you're typically talking millions of dollars and years of planning and implementation of the plans. And as someone who isn't always good at being patient, I've had to learn that when planning a road project it's going to take time, lots of time and lots of money.

Thank you to those who came out to support the Transportation and Parks & Rec bond packages that were on the ballot because without your support, those projects would stop.

We've also started the process to address workforce housing needs and I'm confident that this future board and the future of Huntersville will step up and meet the needs of our growing community.

That's just the tip of the iceberg of the things that as I look back over 12 years we've accomplished. And as a community we need to take a moment and reflect. We've added quality of life opportunities to our community.

There are so many people that I want to thank and a lot of them have already been thanked by the Board and I'm not going to get you all. I have to say from the bottom of my heart from the former staff members to the existing staff members, you are each exceptional people. It has been a true honor to work with each and every one of you from Planning to Police and everyone in between. You work day in and day out to put this community first and believe it or not we don't always agree, just like this board, and that's okay, because each one has Huntersville's best interest at heart. And I have learned from each and every one of you staff members and I greatly appreciate you all.

Janet is not here tonight. Janet is the rock. So future Board, she's the rock, the glue, she keeps us on task and I certainly could not have served all of these years without her.

Bobby Williams – Thank you. He is such an amazing individual and I just wanted to say thank you for the work that you did on the Affordable Housing and on grants and on everything that just kind of lands in your place from the ARPA funding to just everything. Thank you.

Emily Sloop – Thank you for keeping us out of trouble, for waving the flag, for being an excellent sounding board. Thank you for serving and representing our community.

Jack Huffman – It has been said she is the wizard of numbers. Take her numbers to the bank all day everyday. She's spot on. I just greatly appreciate you and the friendship that we have built.

Anthony Roberts – I'm probably going through withdrawals because we talk three or four times a day everyday. I guess I'll just have to call and say hey let's go to lunch and get caught up. Thank you for being the fearless leader of this wonderful community to being to where the buck stops and for helping us look at an issue and say how do we get over it, under it, around it, through it and we'll make it happen and that is who you are.

I would be remiss if I didn't take a moment to say to the board members that are currently sitting here and those that I have served with, former board members and mayors, Sarah McAulay, Charles Guignard, Danny Phillips, Charles Jeter, Ron Julian, Jeff Neely, Rob Kidwell, Mark Gibbons, Dan Boone, Brian Hines, Nick Walsh, Stacy Phillips, Lance Munger, Amber Kovacs, Derek Partee and Jill Swain and John Aneralla. To each of you I say thank you. We never serve alone and it wasn't always easy with so many differing opinions, but I am grateful to have been able to work alongside each of you as we faced the challenges of moving Huntersville forward together. You each taught me a lot and I'm grateful.

From the beginning I strove to serve and lead with honor, integrity, honesty and humility. When I was first elected in 2011 the population of our community was 42,000 and I deeply felt the weight and responsibility to represent all 42,000. I would remind myself and others over the years that we represent those who voted for us, those who didn't vote for us and those who didn't vote. And as I sit

here today I feel the same responsibility and the only thing that has changed is the number of residents who reside in our community.

To my family, my husband, my children, thank you for letting me serve. I wouldn't have been able to do it without you. And lastly to the residents of Huntersville, thank you for allowing me to serve and represent you for the last 12 years. Thank you for trusting me to represent you as a commissioner, as mayor pro tem and as mayor. It has truly been an honor and a privilege and it's one that I have never taken for granted.

To the new board, to the new mayor and board, I say lead with honor, integrity, honesty and humility. Do not serve for self but serve for the rest of us. Listen to our incredible staff. They are here to work on our behalf and to be your ally and gird you up. Always put this community first, strive for excellence and add to the quality of life in our community. Thank you all for taking the time to listen.

And one last time I would very much like to say good night, Huntersville.

Mayor Bales called for a 15-minute recess.

INSTALLATION OF ELECTED OFFICIALS

Judge Reggie E. McKnight administered the Oath of Office for Mayor to Christy Clark.

Judge Reggie E. McKnight administered the Oath of Office for Commissioner to Alisia Bergsman, Amanda Dumas, Jennifer Hunt, Edwin Quarles, LaToya Rivers and Nick Walsh.

Mayor Clark said we have a little bit of business tonight, but before I begin I want to just take a moment of personal privilege to thank the Town staff for all their support and onboarding us as we start our new roles and to thank our friends and family for supporting us as we take on this big challenge together. And, of course, to thank our outgoing board for their dedication and service to the Town of Huntersville. They have been invaluable and they had big dreams and we hope to carry forward their big dreams as well. As a new board we are excited to continue to work together to support our town. Over the past few months we have become a family and our family now includes all of you, too. Huntersville is our home and without reservation we want to make it the best town it can be and make decisions in the best interest of our town and with your help we can build a robust and beautiful town of which we can all be proud. Our door is open, and we welcome you and your involvement and your ideas. Thank you and thank you all for being here and supporting us tonight.

One of the first things we did as a Town Board was decided to go digital with our agendas, which is something new to save paper.

AGENDA CHANGES (NEW BOARD)

Commissioner Walsh made a motion to add as Item 16.F – Consider approving budget amendments in the amount of \$1,112,130 to fund a municipal fire chief, 18 full-time municipal firefighter positions, and related line items from January to June in Fiscal Year 2024.

Commissioner Quarles seconded motion.

Commissioner Dumas said I've been in favor of this. I'm really excited about the opportunity to add that to the agenda.

Mayor Clark called for the vote.

Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Walsh made a motion to adopt the agenda, as amended.

Commissioner Bergsman seconded motion.

Motion carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS (NEW BOARD)

Election of Mayor Pro Tem. Commissioner Dumas made a motion nominate Commissioner Jennifer Hunt as Mayor Pro Tem. She was the top vote-getter during the past election and it is a tradition in Huntersville and she is exceedingly qualified to do so.

Commissioner Bergsman seconded motion.

Mayor Clark called for the vote.

Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting Schedule. Commissioner Quarles made a motion to adopt the 2024 Town Board Regular Meeting Schedule.

Commissioner Rivers seconded motion.

Mayor Clark called for the vote.

Motion carried unanimously.

2024 Town Board Regular Meeting Schedule attached hereto as Exhibit No. 2.

Appointments to Various Boards and Committees. Commissioner Hunt made a motion to approve the various board and committee assignments as presented.

Commissioner Bergsman seconded motion.

Mayor Clark called for the vote.

Motion carried unanimously.

Appointments attached hereto as Exhibit No. 3.

Presentation of FY23 Financial Statements. Pattie McGinnis, Finance Director, introduced Cameron Lackey from Martin Starnes & Associates to give an overview of our FY23 audited financials. These

financials will be on our website at the end of the week, and I can email you an email version of the financials. We don't have the paper copy right now. We will get those hopefully next week. If you want a paper copy, I'm more than welcome to put that in your book. But if you will just send a quick email yes I want a copy, that way I can put them in there for you. The financial statements are a great resource of the Town's overall financial position, however if you do have any specific questions at any time you're more than welcome to email myself or Jackie Huffman with questions.

Cameron Lackey, Martin Starnes & Associates, presented PowerPoint of the Town of Huntersville 2023 Audited Financial Statements. *PowerPoint attached hereto as Exhibit No. 4.*

Let's start out with our audit process. Every year this is kind of an on-going thing. As soon as we finish with one audit, we roll right into the next year's audit. Our process starts off with the planning and risk assessment. That begins as soon as we finish the audit for the prior year. We'll go through our interim processes which we normally split it up into two parts. Through our interim process we get an idea of your internal controls which are the things the town would do to ensure that all their compliance is being met and all of their rules are being met. We'll go through those and kind of double-check to make sure that Huntersville is doing the things that they are supposed to be doing to make sure that everyone stays in compliance.

After our interim procedures we'll have a final field work. That is the majority of where our work happens. It's where all of the heavy lifting is going on. At the end of our final field work we have this exit conference. The exit conference we basically go through any outstanding issues, which there were none this year. Everything was very good this year, so there was not much to talk about there. After that exit conference we will issue our opinion after wrapping up our financial statements and having Pattie and Jackie kind of review and then we'll submit to the LGC, which Huntersville has been submitted to the LGC.

Here's our audit highlights. You guys were issued an unmodified opinion or a clean opinion. That means everything was good. There were no issues that we found. Your performance indicators is something that the LGC started doing a few years ago. There were no performance indicators to say that there's anything wrong. You guys do self-reporting so that was the only one. Then as far as GASB the new changes for this year, there was the GASB 96 for subscriptions.

Here's a look at your expenditures in which we'll go in a little more detail about that a little bit later. The main thing to take away from this is that you're actually under budget by \$29 million and the majority of that \$29 million comes from Public Works. Public Works was \$22 million under budget and most of those expenditures or most of that budget is going to roll over into the next year to cover those expenditures.

Logically after your expenditures is your revenues. As you can see there, your revenues were over budget by \$6.5 million. Most of that is coming from your local sales tax and investment earnings going up this year, which makes sense with COVID happening the last few years there wasn't as much travel and I've been seeing interest rates start to rebound with COVID being I'm not going to say over, but trying to rescind those COVID restrictions.

Here's a summary of your general fund. Here's your revenues and your expenditures which shows a positive net change. What that means is that your Fiscal Year 23 appropriation fund balance did not get touched at all because you had more revenues than you did expenses. You had planned fund balance

appropriation of \$29 million, but like I said that did not get touched at all because your revenues were over your expenditures.

Here's the page that everyone has been waiting for, the fund balance. If you look at the top, there's your total fund balance, minus your non spendables, which you want to take those out, your Powell Bill restricted cash, your stabilization by state statute and then you come to your available fund balance which is what everyone cares about. That's the part that's not restricted by anything else. As you can see, your available fund balance actually did increase over last year. I can't really say whether that's good or bad. That's kind of a decision for the Board to make whether or not they need to spend more or if that's fine. The increase was about an 8.9 or 9 percent increase.

Available fund balance as a percentage of the expenditures and transfers out. As you can see once again your available fund balance went up, which is basically the same thing it said on the last slide, we're just showing it as a percentage.

If anyone does have any questions, I realize that they actually misspelled my email address on there so it's clackey. Pattie also has some business cards if anybody would like to have one we can get those to you.

Huntersville Fire Department Staffing Proposal. Commissioner Walsh said just as a way of background there are three groups of first responders that service Huntersville. There's the Huntersville Police Department, Huntersville Fire Department and MEDIC. MEDIC is actually handled by the county, so we really don't have any control over that. The Huntersville Police is a full-time department that is hired, trained and retained directly by the Town. Our Police Chief, Barry Graham, leads them and he reports directly to our Town Manager, Anthony.

Huntersville Fire Department is a little bit different. Many people may not know but we actually outsource our fire service to a non-profit called the Huntersville Fire Department. Actually, four times a year we cut them a check. And then the Huntersville Fire Department hires part-time.....now these are professionals so don't get confused with volunteer firemen, but these are professionals, off-duty firemen from places like Charlotte, Concord and other areas in which they are looking for part-time work. Huntersville Fire the non-profit then hires them, puts together a schedule and does that. This symbiotic relationship has worked pretty well for a decade or more and we're probably the only municipality in the top 25 that has this particular arrangement and it's a good arrangement for the town because what we do is we get our fire services at a much lower cost because we are not paying for training, we're not paying for benefits, we simply basically pay an hourly rate or the non-profit Huntersville Fire Department pays a flat rate for their time.

However, the party is sort of coming to an end. Chief Dotoli has come to the Board and said that he's no longer able to hire. At one point we had about 100 part-time firefighters that worked for the non-profit Huntersville Fire Department and he's no longer able to get enough applicants to cover shifts and it's especially acute on weekends and holidays, etc. and so he's come to the town and said it's time to start basically a municipal fire service.

When this Board was elected, we had multiple conversations with the Chief, with staff and amongst ourselves and at one point we were going to put off even bringing this up until our first full meeting in December which is in two weeks, but given the urgency of this situation we felt that it was important to add it to the schedule tonight.

I would like to make a motion to approve the appropriation of \$304,952 in General Fund Balance, recognize and accept a \$200,000 state grant, and reduce the fiscal year 2024 fire appropriation to the Huntersville non-profit fire department by \$607,178 in order to fund a municipal fire chief and 18 full-time municipal firefighters for the Huntersville municipal fire department from January to June in fiscal year 2024.

Commissioner Quarles seconded motion.

Commissioner Bergsman said when I spoke with Chief Dotoli a couple of weeks ago he had mentioned that full-time firefighters might have different safety standards. Could you clarify that for me.

Jackie Huffman, Deputy Town Manager, said Chief Dotoli is at the fire department. The fire department has a meeting tonight, so he is there. Lara and I will be able to respond to whatever questions you have. My understanding is there's not different safety protocols based on whether you are full or part-time, it's whether you're employees of the non-profit corporation or a municipal employee. NFPA, National Fire Protection Association, sets a standard that is the goal that they recommend that you adhere to and so many departments try to achieve that goal. That is generally speaking a goal that's more achievable for a municipal funded department that has paid employees as opposed to a very rural volunteer department that would have more difficulty complying with those standards. An example of that would be four firefighters on a truck such that if they report to a fire and two are inside the building that's on fire and two are outside, that's an example of an NFPA standard.

Commissioner Bergsman said I was also wondering and I believe Commissioner Walsh brought it up that there was a slide that shows the top 25 municipalities by population and I don't believe that was a part of the original presentation, so I just wanted to make sure it was shown tonight and if you could maybe explain that a little bit.

Ms. Huffman said I'm happy to walk through this just a little bit. This is a slide with the current population estimates from the state demographer's office of North Carolina. You'll see that we rank 16th in population here. If you look at the Top 25 in population, I think Commissioner Walsh referred to this, there are 24 municipalities on this list that accomplish fire protection services for their municipality with paid municipal employees. We are the one department that does not. As he pointed out we've been able to accomplish this because of our proximity to Charlotte and other departments that have full-time firefighters. Generally speaking, full-time firefighters operate on a 24-hour shift. Since they work more hours in one day, they work fewer days which gives them more days off. Many choose secondary employment. Many have chosen us for secondary employment. Our current situation is such that fewer people are choosing the secondary employment and therefore to make sure that we have enough employees on a truck it's the recommendation of not just the chief, but Town staff, that we begin to pursue our own full-time employees whose schedule we would command that would warrant their showing up for our shifts.

Commissioner Bergsman said with the retirement benefits, what's that going to look like.

Ms. Huffman said all full-time Huntersville employees participate in LGERS. LGERS stands for the Local Government Employees Retirement System. For purposes of not having you memorize too many acronyms at one night, I'll just call that the retirement system. The state of North Carolina administers that retirement system and so I would struggle to think of a municipality who does not participate in the same system and so if you are an employee for six years at Concord and you are recruited to come to work here, you participate in the same retirement system. You don't have to start over for vesting

purposes. Generally speaking, most City of Charlotte full-time employees participate in the same retirement system that Huntersville employees do. Uniquely Charlotte firefighters participate in a different retirement system and so we are hopeful that eligibility to participate in two systems would motivate employees to come to work not just at their full-time employer Charlotte, but perhaps eventually on a part-time basis for us as well. It takes 5 years to vest in that system, so if you have worked 2 months for us, you will not have vested. If you've already vested, if you've worked 4-1/2 years in a different municipality that participates in our retirement system and then six months with us, theoretically you would have vested. That sounds great. The first opportunity to qualify for a benefit is at 20 years of service at age 50 and that would qualify you for reduced benefits and at 30 years of service at any age you qualify. There are other ways to qualify, but those are two of the most common.

Commissioner Bergsman said I've been paying attention to these meetings since I first announced that I was running. I was at the Planning Retreat back in January. I've been observing and listening to all the meetings where this has been talked about. I believe Chief Dotoli has done an incredible job with the resources that he's had to date, and I also agree with him that the time is now to make a change and to move forward with this. Just thinking about the size, like our population.....former Mayor Bales mentioned earlier how we've grown by 20,000 people since 2011. The geography, the size of Huntersville, the fact that we cover both Lake Norman and are responsible for covering with fire for the nuclear station if there was ever an incident there, I 100 percent fully support this.

Commissioner Hunt said can you please tell us how many residential units have been approved but are not yet built.

Brian Richards, Planning Director, said currently we have approximately 2,400 single-family homes, 400 townhomes and plus or minus 3,500 apartments or multi-family homes, which roughly equates to a population of about 16,000 people which will be absorbed over the next 6 to 10 years depending on market growth.

Commissioner Hunt said so obviously these are folks that will also need that protection from the fire department.

Commissioner Dumas said one of the things that brings me pause is whether or not we have considered because to me it seems like a good idea to work with North Meck and do like Cornelius and Davidson partnership on this. It sounds like we've already done that. Can you explain why that would not be the right move at this time.

Ms. Huffman said Anthony and I have worked in the Lake Norman area since ballpark 2000/2001 and there have been at least two different studies, the most recent in 2019, considering whether there are economies of scale to have theoretically one department for the three North Mecklenburg towns – Davidson, Cornelius and Huntersville. And so think about the different rates of growth in those municipalities. Think of the different rates at which they are approaching personnel at each station and think about the capital needs. The previous board funded the purchase of land to build Fire Station No. 5. Cornelius and Davidson each have two stations, so there are different property tax rates that apply for the ETJ fire tax and they are funded at different levels by each town. It's been difficult to determine a one size fits all solution and so it's not been recommended even by outside consultants that there would be economies of scale from a joint agency.

If you don't mind, I want to point out this slide because I worry that it's not intuitive to everybody. To fund those 18 positions and the Chief position at \$1.1 million, please don't misinterpret this slide that

we are cutting the funding of the fire department by \$607,000, that sounds harsh, why would we do that. If they are not able to fill those positions rather than give them money they can't find personnel to hire, we'll withhold that here and use that as part of the funding to offset the cost of hiring the 18 people, so there's no detriment to them that we would no longer send that money to them. It's money we would use here to hire positions they would have hired if they could.

Mayor Clark call for the vote to approve budget amendment to fund the fire department staff positions.

Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARINGS (NEW BOARD)

None

CONSENT AGENDA (NEW BOARD)

Call for Public Hearing – Petition #R23-11. Commissioner Bergsman made a motion to call a public hearing for Tuesday, January 2, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. at Huntersville Town Hall, 101 Huntersville-Concord Road, Huntersville, NC 28078 on Petition #R23-11, Morningstar Storage, a request by Morningstar Properties to rezone +/- 3.934 acres located at 16230 and 16204 Old Statesville Road from Special Purpose and Highway Commercial to Special Purpose - Conditional District. Commissioner Hunt seconded motion. Motion carried unanimously.

MAYOR AND COMMISSIONER REPORTS/CLOSING COMMENTS (NEW BOARD)

Commissioner Rivers

- I just wanted to give some remarks of gratitude of thanks to each and every one of you and to those that could not be here this evening but are listening. I am humbled by the opportunity to serve the community that I've always called home. My vision is ungirded by the fact that I am a product of this community, consequently my vision is a community that many call home and opportunity abounds. A community where the color of your skin or the side of the tracks where you were born does not determine your destiny. A community where clean air, green space and access to healthy foods is much more than just a catchy slogan. A community that aims to delicately balance economic growth, development and inevitable change by deeply honoring the past, the present and the future. A community that endeavors to house all of God's children especially the least of these. So, this is a community that I am extremely honored and proud to serve because Huntersville is your home, it is my home, it is a community that our ancestors lived for. It is the beloved community that our mighty ancestry died for in the pursuit of a better Huntersville. Again, thank you all so much for the opportunity to stand upon the shoulders of those who preceded us and we this Town Board must carry the great vision of hope, promise and love for our neighbors moving forward.

Commissioner Walsh

- No Report.

Commissioner Dumas

- Just a couple of words. I am truly honored to be one of the people that the voters put in these seats, and I love the fact that we had so much engagement in the community and such an increase in numbers at the polls. Let's double it next time. I really think the engagement meant

a lot to the community and we can do so much more in the future. I really couldn't be more excited to serve with the folks on this board. We all come from different backgrounds and expertise, and I think that we really round each other out and we are going to make some great things happen. I look forward to being more proactive in recruiting the types of business to town and help shift the sources of our tax revenue taking some pressure off of our residents. Again, I thank you all, those who voted for me and those who didn't. I hope that I'll make you proud.

Commissioner Hunt

- I am genuinely grateful for the honor that was bestowed on me by the voters and I want to express my heartfelt appreciation to everyone who helped make this a reality. Your support and trust mean the world to me. As we embark on this journey together, I am excited about collaborating with my fellow elected officials and our dedicated town staff. Huntersville like any thriving community faces its share of growing pains, but it is my sincere belief that in coming together we can find innovative solutions that prioritize the best interest of our town and its residents. I invite everyone to join us as we look forward to overcoming obstacles and celebrating the future accomplishments that will make Huntersville the ultimate place to work, live and play. Thank you again for your trust and I'm excited about the positive changes we can bring about together.

Commissioner Quarles

- I am truly honored. I did not take an oath of office to an individual. But I did take an oath to the town. I will govern with dignity and with honor. I will vote and make decisions according to facts. I will view every proposal with lenses that are not prejudice. There have been noise makers who scream at the board and staff for years and they continue as of today. There are some who have played politics and tricks and they continue as of today. The voters of this great town made their voice loud on November 7, 2023. They said enough of the shenanigans. I, along with my colleagues, will be watched as well as scrutinized. So will those who watch and scrutinize us, you too will be watched. Watched to see if you are wanting to build up or to tear down. Good things are made many times from results of bad things. The current Board of Commissioners has the opportunity to render good results to the Town of Huntersville. Decisions that will build a Huntersville where insiders will want to flaunt and where outsiders will pinpoint on their map to visit. Decisions that will make Huntersville the safest place to live in North Carolina, decisions that will make Huntersville the best place to work. Decisions where businesses will want to set up shop. Decisions where we can partner with neighboring towns and cities really making others realize that Huntersville is above Charlotte. We have work to do and a lot of it. We must not govern only for reelection. Our work must speak for itself. For those within the sound of my voice know that we're not always going to make decisions that you would have made, but trust that the decisions were for the majority. Let's all be respectful adults. Let's make Huntersville the model town that others would want to follow. Let's make decisions that will honor the past and embrace the future.

Commissioner Bergsman

- First, I actually want to thank the outgoing board. They had a lot of words tonight. I just want to piggyback on what they said and appreciate all that they have done for our community. I am really looking forward to working with all of the wonderful folks sitting up here right now, with our fantastic town staff, and with our residents.....the community and the people that make Huntersville the great place that it is to live. I do have one upcoming event I would like to share. There are many fantastic holiday celebrations in Huntersville this time of year and there's one

more that's coming up later this week. There will be a menorah lighting put on by Chabad of Lake Norman at Birkdale Village on the Green this Thursday, December 7 at 5:30 p.m. It's a fun annual family friendly event that I have attended for a few years. It would be wonderful to see more folks in the community come out to support and have a great time at the menorah lighting.

There being no further business, Commissioner Rivers made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Bergsman seconded motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Approved this the 2nd day of January 2024.