TOWN OF HUNTERSVILLE
TOWN BOARD MEETING
MINUTES

March 15, 2021
6:00 p.m. – Huntersville Recreation Center

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 Recreation Center, 11836 Verhoeff Drive, at 6:00 p.m. on March 15, 2021.

GOVERNING BODY MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor John Aneralla; Commissioners Melinda Bales, Dan Boone, Brian Hines, Lance Munger, Stacy Phillips and Nick Walsh.

Mayor Aneralla stated we are live today and it's good to be in person for our first meeting in a year. This meeting is being held in person at the Huntersville Recreation Center. The public has been invited to attend and comment during public comments or during any public hearing (1) in person at the Recreation Center or (2) by telephonic communication in accordance with instructions sent to persons who registered with the Town Clerk no later than 3 p.m. today.

Mayor Aneralla introduced Tyler Parsons, a 5th grader at J. V. Washam Elementary School, who is Mayor for the day.

Mayor Aneralla called for a Moment of Silence.

Tyler Parsons led the Pledge of Allegiance.

MAYOR AND COMMISSIONER REPORTS – STAFF QUESTIONS

Mayor Aneralla

- Next Mayor's Luncheon is tomorrow.
- Hope House is building three cottages simultaneously and as soon as those are done, they will start building on the two lots donated by the Town.
- Latest national Walmart commercial features Metrolina Greenhouse of Huntersville.

Commissioner Bales

- Lake Norman Economic Development Corporation currently has 27 active projects, 18 of which are in Huntersville. Provided update on industrial and commercial projects.

Commissioner Boone

- Provided update from the Lake Norman Chamber of Commerce.
- Huntersville Fire Department named Deputy Chief A. C. Auten as Fire Officer of the Year.
- Huntersville Police Department continues to recruit certified officers. Officer Mike Collins will retire from the Huntersville Police Department on Friday.
- FEMA has approved the Mecklenburg County Multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Commissioner Hines

- Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization has a tentative meeting this Wednesday. NCDOT had delayed projects because they went below their cash floor during COVID. The Town has received authorization to restart the Main Street project. The Gilead Road/Statesville Road project should start by the end of spring. I'm trying to get verification on whether the money is there to restart engineering on the NC 73 project.

Commissioner Munger

- Attended the Huntersville Ordinances Advisory Board on March 4. Tim Taylor was elected as Vice Chair.
- Visited the Colonial Pipeline spill last week. Significant progress has been made – 80,000 of the 1.2 million gallons released has been recaptured.
- Consider supporting local non-profits.

Commissioner Phillips

- Last week Representative Bradford filed House Bill 246 entitled Huntersville Ocular Melanoma Study. The bill is now waiting to go to committee. House Bill 251 was filed on March 10, which would work towards bringing more magistrates to Mecklenburg County, with a focus on Huntersville. A companion bill in the Senate, Senate Bill 250, was filed by Senator Joyce Waddell. During Mecklenburg County's budget meeting, Chair George Dunlap, asked Chief Hoyle about why a magistrate was important for Huntersville and the North Mecklenburg area. Chief gave a professional yet heartfelt answer that demonstrated compassion, empathy, and the best of policing.

Commissioner Walsh

- Next Greenway, Trail and Bikeway Commission is tomorrow night.
- Next meeting of the Parks & Recreation Commission is Wednesday night.
- Provided update from the Huntersville Regional Chamber.

PUBLIC COMMENTS, REQUESTS, OR PRESENTATIONS

Mayor Aneralla presented the Key to the Town to Owen Fehr and Walker Sell for doing the right thing in reporting the Colonial Pipeline leak when they came upon it while riding ATV's.

Mecklenburg County At-large Commissioner Leigh Altman announced the county will receive $215 million from the federal government that will help with COVID recovery.

AGENDA CHANGES

Commissioner Bales made a motion to adopt the agenda.

Commissioner Boone seconded motion.

Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Conveyance of Property. Mayor Aneralla called to order public hearing on conveyance of property known as the Robert B. Blythe Building, pursuant to N.C.G.S. 158-7(d).

Emily Sloop, Town Attorney, explained this is the second of two public hearings on this matter. The first was to declare that the property (all or portions of three separate parcels – PIN 01712210, PIN 01712211 and PIN 01712245) be held for resale and this public hearing is to convey the property.

There being no comments, Mayor Aneralla closed the public hearing.

OTHER BUSINESS

Resolution – Conveyance of the Robert B. Blythe Building. Commissioner Bales made a motion to adopt Resolution to convey the Robert B. Blythe Building property pursuant with N.C.G.S. 158-7.1(d).

Commissioner Walsh seconded motion.

Motion carried unanimously.

Resolution attached hereto as Exhibit No. 1.

Resolution – Oppose Proposed Transit Tax. Mayor Aneralla said the Town of Huntersville supported 23 years ago a ½ cent sales tax for mass transit and the promise then was that the Red Line, which is on Norfolk Southern's O line, would be the second line built. That passed and then about 10 years later the discussion came around to which line would be next and there were some people that were trying to get the ½ cent sales tax recalled and the promise then was the Red Line would be the next line that would be built and here we are 23 years later and Norfolk Southern, who I talked to a high level executive two weeks ago, are not interested in allowing commuter rail or light rail or any type of passenger rail adjacent to or on their track. I think the future of that line may change, but it's not going to be any time in decades potentially. Charlotte and the MTC are now considering asking Mecklenburg County commissioners to have the ability to tax our citizens an additional 1 percent on sales tax. That doesn't sound like a lot, but we are already paying about $50 a person for that and that would go up to about $150, so a family of four would be paying $600 a year in additional taxes in Huntersville. Obviously, people don't spend all their money here, but we have other people that come here and spend money and so forth. If you look at an additional $6 million tax burden on our community, that's about a 15 percent tax increase to our community. The compromise that Charlotte is looking to do for the municipalities that aren't going to get mass transit would be some type of carve out which the legislature would have to agree to, however in this environment where we are really not sure, I mean we feel like in Huntersville we're recovering, but a lot of businesses still aren't doing well and a lot of individuals, the poorest of our society, would be impacted the greatest by an additional 1 percent sales tax, so the timing is really bad. In addition, to carve out only a small portion of what's generated in the community seems a little disingenuous. If we wanted to tax our citizens, to me it would make more sense to go straight to Raleigh and ask for a ½ cent or ¼ cent sales tax and keep 100 percent of what's taxed here in our community. In addition, the track record hasn't been that good for improvements around town. Anybody who has been to one of our Town Board meetings, I've asked for bus stop

enhancements for years and finally got a carve out of $550,000 for bus stop enhancements throughout the county. We have applied for three bus stop enhancements and I believe we talked about it in October and as far as I have seen, we have not received those enhancements. There are some technical issues that have to be worked through, but we even offered to build those bus stops and improve them. I really feel not very confident that if we did get some type of carve out that we would be able to access all those funds and direct them exactly how we would want.

Commissioner Hines made a motion to adopt Resolution opposing the proposed 1 percent sales tax.

Commissioner Bales seconded motion.

Commissioner Munger said I am a huge proponent of mass transit. I think it's a very good thing to implement to help move people around and deal with traffic issues, but to the Mayor's point if Norfolk Southern tells us straight up you're not going to be able to use this, the Red Line is not coming and I don't like the idea that the county is trying to make us pay for a portion of something that we all know is never going to happen, so I will be supporting this even though I do support mass transit.

Commissioner Boone questioned if Norfolk Southern was under new management.

Mayor Aneralla said the CEO has been there for six or seven years and most of his team has been there longer than that.

Commissioner Bales said I'm in complete support of this. We have watched the Red Line not move forward for decades. Have we had conversations with our neighbors to the north in order to make sure that they are also on board with this.

Mayor Aneralla said I have talked to every mayor in Mecklenburg County and I would say they are against it, but two mayors.

Commissioner Phillips said I just want to point out to people the whole 23 years of paying into this. I was in middle school since we've been paying into this. The Backstreet Boys were the biggest band in the world. Everyone was using AOL, if they even had internet, and Tamagotchi were a thing. Look at how much society has progressed, yet our transit system hasn't. That is completely unacceptable, so I really appreciate you doing this resolution for our community.

Commissioner Walsh said I also will be supporting the resolution. I have lived here since 1993 and other than a toll road on I-77, we haven't got much help up here. It doesn't make sense to continue to fund transit or mass transit that we are not going to benefit from.

Mayor Aneralla called for the vote to adopt Resolution opposing the proposed 1 percent sales tax.

Motion carried unanimously.

Resolution attached hereto as Exhibit No. 2.

Appointment to the Greenway, Trail and Bikeway Commission. The Greenway, Trail and Bikeway Commission has one position that needs to be filled due to the resignation of Lori Russell. This term will end on December 31, 2022. We are recommending the Board appoint one new member to carry out

the term. We have reached out to the previous applicants from December 2020 and five have responded back with interest to serve on this advisory board.

Commissioner Walsh nominated Kalyan Chintalapati.
Commissioner Phillips nominated Alexander Capecci.
Commissioner Munger nominated Alexander Capecci.
Commissioner Hines nominated Kalyan Chintalapati.
Commissioner Boone nominated Alexander Capecci.
Commissioner Bales nominated Kalyan Chintalapati.

Commissioner Walsh made a motion to appoint Kalyan Chintalapati to the Greenway, Trail and Bikeway Commission.

Commissioner Hines seconded motion.

Motion was tied – Commissioners Bales, Hines and Walsh in favor; Commissioners Boone, Munger and Phillips opposed.

Mayor Aneralla broke the tie by voting in favor of Kalyan Chintalapati.

Commissioner Boone said I think we should do a better job on the applications. We got an application that came in today at 4 p.m. The lady put an email out to the Board saying how much she liked the Arts Committee, but her application did say Parks & Rec, Greenways and Trails. It just seems that it might have been an oversight, but we've got to do a better job at getting the message out to the citizens of if you want to be on these boards, please fill out the application online and we've got to do a better job of getting all of this information from the citizens to our agenda packets.

Mosaic Bus Stop Bench. On February 10, 2021, the Public Art Commission voted to make the recommendation to the Town Board for the new public art bench to replace the current old wooden bench at the bus stop at Gilead Road and Marguerite Lane across from the Post Office.

Commissioner Walsh made a motion to approve the new public art bench to replace the old wooden bench at the bus stop at Gilead Road and Marguerite Lane.

Commissioner Munger seconded motion.

Commissioner Boone questioned if it would include a small plaque saying who dedicated it.

Tracy Houk, Assistant Parks & Recreation Director, said one is not required with the ElectriCities grant.

Commissioner Boone said when I was watching the meeting where you folks decided which one of these arts that you were going to choose for the park bench, there was a farm scene and a sailboat scene. The commission decided on the sailboat scene because Huntersville was the gateway to Lake Norman. Where does the gateway of Huntersville come into play there.

Ms. Houk said what Scott was referring to, if you are heading north on I-77, Huntersville actually hits the lake first and the sailing clubs and everything that are on the lake.

Commissioner Boone said the other picture of the farming community, I think Mr. Foster put that up for nomination.

Ms. Houk said he didn't put it up for nomination, he just asked to add cows.

Commissioner Boone said in my opinion I think this is what the Board should be voting on is which do we want for the art in our community. Do we want sailboats or do we want farming/agriculture. I am not going to support this.

Commissioner Walsh said in the Public Art Commission Bylaws, Section 2.2, it says "The Commission will identify and select public art projects to be implemented and recommend specific locations for art to be retained in the town. All recommended Art pieces must receive final approval from the Huntersville Town Board." I don't see it as our place to be voting on these, other than final approval, per the bylaws.

Commissioner Boone said that could be interpreted several ways. If you read all of the bylaws of the Art Commission, we set this up to filter what they've brought in……not one object, but what they thought would be a good selection to present to us along with a location. Right now, this is probably the decision of three or four people and I just don't think that's a good cross section of the town.

Mayor Aneralla said the Town Board has a right to approve this or not and I don't think we really want to get into seeing 10 or 20 or 50 of these type of art pieces. In addition, this is probably at least the third bench that the Art Commission has put out there, so as I just stated they've done more for bus stop enhancements than CATS in the last 5 years and it's been privately funded.

Mayor Aneralla called for the vote to approve the new public art bench to replace the old wooden bench at the bus stop at Gilead Road and Marguerite Lane.

Motion carried 5 to 1, with Commissioner Boone opposed.

Civilian Police Positions. Chief Bence Hoyle reviewed his request for civilian positions.

To: Anthony Roberts
Town Manager

From: Bence Hoyle
Chief of Police

RE: Recommended Civilian Positions

Since the Planning Workshop on February 18-19, we have revisited the prioritization of civilian positions. All of the positions we presented we should keep as long-term goals because all are specifically needed as presented, however, the following is a recommendation of a first phased approach that will allow us to re-evaluate and potentially reduce the overall request. There are some trade-offs as will be noted.

(2) Crime Scene Technicians - $112K

I have included one entry level CSI and one "Senior" level CSI technician, so this number has changed (includes benefits). These positions would handle all crime scene processing and will have other duties as assigned. There is no way to reduce this number and have on-call requirements.

(3) Expediters - $126K

This reduced number will provide front-desk and officer support on calls for service from 8 AM until Midnight (but will not keep the police department open 24/7). These positions will primarily provide call support to police officers and will take reports over

the phone and through our online portal. They will also function as records technicians. One of these positions will service as the officer manager, a former position here, to supervise the activities of all civilian staffing in related assignments.

(1) Animal Control Officer - $47K

This will provide extended hours of animal control services to help cover calls currently covered by police officers.

(1) Administrative Assistant for the Administrative Bureau - $40K

The one Bureau that has the most administrative tasks has no administrative assistants. This position would assist with all phases of the administrative functions included training records, quartermaster, etc.

Commissioner Hines made a motion to approve the seven civilian positions for the Police Department.

Commissioner Phillips seconded motion.

Motion carried unanimously.

Rules for Public Hearings and Public Comments. Emily Sloop, Town Attorney, provided the Board with examples of Public Hearing and Public Comment Rules from other jurisdictions. *Refer to Exhibit No. 3.*

The Board debated issues such as imposing time limit on petitioners, time limit for speakers, use of technology by speakers, speakers yielding time, etc.

There was a consensus of the Board to allow 15 minutes for the petitioner, 3 minutes for public speakers, no video or PowerPoint from the public and keep some flexibility in terms for Mayoral discretion as far as a closing comment period for the petitioner. There was not a clear consensus on allowing public speakers to yield their time to another speaker. The current policy does not allow speakers to yield their time. Some commissioners would like to see a limited number of speakers be allowed to yield their time to a spokesperson.

The Town Attorney will prepare a draft and bring back to the Board for consideration.

Mayoral Authority in Emergency Declaration. Emily Sloop, Town Attorney, provided the Board with examples of what other jurisdictions are doing. *Refer to Attachment No. 4.*

The Board discussed what language should be included. The consensus was to have the Town Attorney draft language similar to Statesville where the Mayor is authorized to declare states of emergency; Town Board to be notified within 24 hours of declaration of state of emergency; and the Mayor authorized to end when circumstances warrant or at the direction of the Council. It was the consensus of the Board to also add language that the Mayor Pro Tem can make an emergency declaration in the Mayor's absence.

The Town Attorney will prepare a draft and bring back to the Board for consideration.

Fund Balance Policy. The Board discussed lowering the Fund Balance policy. Currently the Fund Balance Policy is 45 percent.

Jackie Huffman, Assistant Town Manager, explained that the Town's financial advisor recommended that if you are going to drop it, to drop it in gradual increments so it doesn't appear that you intend to spend it too quickly. All the debt on our books today is fixed rate debt, so it will not impact existing debt that's outstanding. It would affect what interest rate you might issue debt in the future.

Following further discussion, there was consensus to lower the Fund Balance Policy to 40 percent and revisit it next year.

Staff will prepare a revised Fund Balance Policy and bring back to the Board for consideration.

Current Fund Balance Policy attached hereto as Exhibit No. 5.

CONSENT AGENDA

Road Closures – Spring/Summer 2021. Commissioner Hines made a motion to adopt ordinance approving road closures for Spring/Summer 2021 Town events. Commissioner Bales seconded motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Ordinance attached hereto as Exhibit No. 6.

Budget Amendment – Insurance Proceeds. Commissioner Hines made a motion to approve budget amendment appropriating Insurance Proceeds Police in the amount of $15,419.48 to the Capital Outlay account to purchase a replacement motorcycle totaled by insurance carrier.

Commissioner Bales seconded motion.

Motion carried unanimously.

Property Tax Refund. Commissioner Hines made a motion to approve Property Tax Refund Reports from Mecklenburg County.

Commissioner Bales seconded motion.

Motion carried unanimously.

Property Tax Refund Reports attached hereto as Exhibit No. 7.

Performance Guarantee – Huntersville-Concord/Asbury Chapel. Commissioner Hines made a motion to approve performance guarantee for offsite road improvements at the intersection of Huntersville-Concord Road and Asbury Chapel Road.

Commissioner Bales seconded motion.

Motion carried unanimously.

Performance Guarantee attached hereto as Exhibit No. 8.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Commissioner Boone expressed concern that the 3-on-3 meetings may not be receiving the same information. Commissioner Boone also expressed concern that the Parks & Recreation Commission approved changing the name of A Huntersville Christmas and it did not come to the Town Board.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Approved this the 3rd day of May 2021.