

**TOWN OF HUNTERSVILLE
TOWN BOARD MEETING
MINUTES**

June 3, 2024

**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 June 3, 2024.

GOVERNING BODY MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Pro Tem Jennifer Hunt; Commissioners Alisia Bergsman, Amanda Dumas, Edwin Quarles, and Nick Walsh. Mayor Christy Clark and Commissioner LaToya Rivers were not present.

Mayor Pro Tem Hunt called for a moment of silence.

Mayor Pro Tem Hunt led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Family Health and Fitness Day Workout at HFFA on June 8.

Police Department Updates

- Safety Town and Summer Youth Camp are full.
- Child Seat Safety Seminars held the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of every month.

Ways to connect with us – website, social media pages, Town of Huntersville app.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

National Gun Violence Awareness Day Proclamation. Mayor Pro Tem Hunt proclaimed June 7, 2024, as National Gun Violence Awareness Day.

A PROCLAMATION FOR NATIONAL GUN VIOLENCE AWARENESS DAY

WHEREAS, every day, more than 120 Americans are killed by gun violence and more than 200 are shot and wounded; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina, in an average year, has 1,636 gun deaths, with a rate of 15.3 deaths per 100,000 people, a crisis

that costs the state \$19.5 billion each year, of which \$471 million is paid by taxpayers. North Carolina has the 23rd highest rate of gun deaths in the United States (*everystat.org*); and

WHEREAS, cities across the nation, including Huntersville, are working to end the senseless violence with evidence-based solutions; and

WHEREAS, mayors and law enforcement officers, in partnership with local violence intervention activists and resources, who know their communities best, are the most familiar with local criminal activity and how to address it, and are best positioned to understand how to keep their citizens safe; and

WHEREAS, gun violence prevention is more important than ever as we see an increase in firearm homicides, and nonfatal shootings across the country, increased calls to domestic violence hotlines, and an increase in city gun violence; and

WHEREAS, on January 29, 2013, 15-year-old Hadiya Pendleton was tragically shot and killed; and so, on her birthday, June 2, people across the US recognize National Gun Violence Awareness Day; and

WHEREAS, anyone can join this campaign by pledging to wear orange on June 7, to help raise awareness about gun violence and to pay tribute to Hadiya and all victims and survivors of gun violence and the loved ones of those victims; and

WHEREAS, we renew our commitment to reduce gun violence and pledge to do all we can to keep firearms out of the hands of people who should not have access to them, and encourage responsible gun ownership to help keep our families and communities safe.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Jennifer Hunt, Mayor Pro Tem of Huntersville, do hereby proclaim June 7, 2024 as “**NATIONAL GUN VIOLENCE AWARENESS DAY**” in Huntersville, North Carolina.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I do hereby set my hand and cause the Seal of the Town to be affixed, this the 3rd day of June, 2024.

Global Wellness Awareness Day Proclamation. Mayor Pro Tem Hunt proclaimed June 8, 2024, as Global Wellness Awareness Day.

A PROCLAMATION FOR GLOBAL WELLNESS AWARENESS DAY

WHEREAS, wellness is an active process of becoming aware of and making choices towards a healthy and fulfilling life. It is more than being free from illness, it is a dynamic process of change and growth; and

WHEREAS, embarking on a wellness journey is a process of searching for the appropriate tools to make you a healthier and happier human being, plus discovering your own effective methods to use these tools for continued growth and development; and

WHEREAS, since 2012 the second Saturday of June is celebrated as Global Wellness Awareness Day, an international day dedicated to living well, both physically and spiritually; and

WHEREAS, this day provides an excellent opportunity for the Town of Huntersville to demonstrate its support for this better living movement through our parks, fitness centers and greenways; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of setting aside this one day a year is to raise awareness of the importance of wellness by directing the thoughts of both individuals and society towards the possibility of living a better life every day. The main aims of the day are:

1. To recognize the value of our lives
2. To pause and think, even if for just one day of the year
3. To be free from the stress of everyday city life and bad habits
4. To make peace with ourselves
5. To raise awareness about living well and increase motivation, not just for today, but for the remaining 364 days of the year.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Jennifer Hunt, Mayor Pro Tem of Huntersville, do hereby proclaim June 8, 2024 as “**GLOBAL WELLNESS AWARENESS DAY**” in Huntersville, North Carolina.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I do hereby set my hand and cause the Seal of the Town to be affixed, this the 3rd day of June, 2024.

Downtown Plan Update. *Refer to PowerPoint attached hereto as Exhibit No. 1.*

Brian Richards, Planning Director, provided update on goals.

- Under contract and work has begun on updating Town Design Guideline book.
- Staff will begin updating the Downtown Parking Plan.
- Woonerf – finalizing contract for the design and public input for Maxwell Street, south of Huntersville-Concord Road.
- Under contract and work is ongoing on Arborist Tree Assessment Report.
- Town has grant to begin studying regional stormwater solutions for downtown.

Anthony Roberts, Town Manager, reviewed downtown projects. The Gilead Road Mixed Use Project should see the first residential tenants in September/October 2024 and first commercial tenant the second quarter of 2025. The Town Center Project should see the first residential tenants in November/December 2024 and the first commercial tenant in the first quarter of 2025. Maxwell Townhouses should see the first residential tenants in November/December 2024.

Commissioner Bergsman asked about the status of Golden Cow.

Mr. Roberts said the last update I had on that was rates and partnerships. Rates have obviously climbed and a lot of folks are starting to sit tight right now, so that's all I have on that. Not good news, but he's still there.

Joe Sillers said I live in Huntersville. I'm here for a couple of requests. One is the subdivision that I live in, Westminster Park, they are out there actually repaving today Westminster Drive.....patching it, let's not say repaving it. I have asked staff for us to be moved up on the process because undoubtedly, we don't meet the percentage that is required for them to come in and actually pave it. Although, back in 2021 I was told that we were on the list for that year, but because of COVID I guess it didn't get processed. They're patching places now that have already been patched as many as three and four times. It's not a wagon trail, but we're thankful we've got pavement, but it does need to be addressed because of so much cut-through that is happening from Mt. Holly-Huntersville Road over to Beatties Ford. I don't know what the count is today, but at one time the count was high enough that necessitated the speed bumps to be added. The second thing I'm here about is the Overhill project that is starting back up because of the failed contractor that the Vermillion owner had to rehire somebody. He ended up selling the project to D. R. Horton as I understand it, and D. R. Horton has now started back doing the grading and the building and whatever to get that project up and running, and as a result we are seeing dump trucks, tractor trailer trucks, loads of block, come up Westminster Drive. We had a public hearing and in the public hearing we were told they would require the contractor to use Carver Drive to enter and exit this subdivision, that there would not be traffic diverted into Westminster Park on Westminster Drive/Wedgewood/Overhill/Pembroke/Shields and that is beginning to happen. I have called staff and asked them to check on it and the statement I got back from staff was because it was not in the minutes for the motion to not allow the trucks to use Westminster Drive, Pembroke and Shields, they couldn't enforce it, although it's in the public hearing.

Mayor Pro Tem Hunt said Mr. Sillers, I'm sorry your time is up.

Mr. Sillers said in the public hearing it was stated that they would keep them off of those roads. I was going to tell you about the budget, but I run out of time.

BeeJay Caldwell said this is the first time I've seen this new Board in action, so it's a little bit different than when I used to come back in 2022. I have remarks to the Town and it's in reference to the attached pages that you have. *Refer to Exhibit No. 2.* You'll see that there are photographs on the back of it and it's in regards to my home street, New Haven Drive. It's in the ETJ of Huntersville, but I am a county resident and the streets in question are all roads handled by the state. In reference to the attached page, I must admit that I was embarrassed and surprised when my documents to the individuals involved did not warrant a reply. In this day and time I had not expected this type of bias. As of today, no one from the Town has reached out or communicated to me. To be snubbed by them seems unusual. My motive in this is that of a life-long citizen who wants to prevent a potential accident that may save my life or that of another resident as I/we drive that road several times a day. That is why I am sharing a narrative and photographs to assist in portraying a visual of the home in a gully on New Haven Drive, which is my assessment of a danger the new dwelling proposes. I may not have time to read this, but I'll do my best. Holbrooks Road is the main street into Pottstown and New Haven Park, a development due north of Holbrooks Road. New Haven Drive is 18' wide. It connects with Star Court to form a curve with a 45-degree angle. A new home was built in this blind curve on the side of a hill less than 50' from the road that required over 100 loads of dirt to shore up the hillside where the home was built. New Haven Drive continues down a hill where a 100-year-old pond was drained and a home built on in 2022 and it intersects with Berkley Avenue, which forms a "T" intersection at Holbrooks Road.

Lots in New Haven were plotted in 1959-1960. The three streets in the development have no infrastructure or drainage system with some new homes not having a driveway connection to help divert the rainwater from the older residents' homes. Septic tanks were discouraged as the soil does not perk. Some residents have them and others have CMUD sewage system service. Fast forward to 2017 when flooding was never an issue until Vermillion/Valencia developments were built. Two sewage lines were created for the new homes on Holbrooks Road. New Haven Park had 16 homes until 2018 when it became the last frontier where land not in a development was for sale. Since 2018, 11 new homes have been built by different contractors and flooding has increased. We know we need to get with DOT because they are state roads.

Phil Carey said a couple of things I wanted to talk to you guys about tonight primarily having to do with fiduciary responsibility as you guys sit on the dais this evening. I'm a city guy in terms of I view Huntersville as a city, so if you guys hear me say city, I understand that the charter says town, but when you are the 16th largest population center in the whole entire state and you share a county with the 15th largest population in the entire country, there's a mindset difference and that's one of the things that I wanted to talk to you guys about tonight because you guys took an oath that said when you make a vote, when you are up discussing, you are doing what is best for the city, not for an individual, not for your business partner, not for the person that gave you a wink and a nod, not for your best buddy. You are doing what needs to be done in your opinion for the city of Huntersville. As you guys start this process with the budget, as you guys look at other votes that you have had and will have, my ask is that you do that on a consistent basis – be able to communicate verbally to all of us for the record why you took a vote – no shortcuts, no winks, no talking to your buddies and I'm saying this because I'm going to have to come back and give you guys some information on some things that have happened in the past – factual information that is unacceptable and you guys are going to have to say well, that is kind of unacceptable or you're going to say yeah, that is for the best interest of the city and Phil is wrong. But it's very important that you guys make sure that you are doing what is best for the city at all times, no exceptions. If there's any point in time that you are struggling with that, you're just too close to an individual or you are too close to a business partner or whatever, recuse yourselves. I snooped a little bit. I saw the attorney and she's very qualified in terms of government background. That's the person

that you are going to go to and just ask her – I’ve got a relationship here or I’ve got this and that. I guarantee you, she’ll be able to rattle off two or three questions to determine whether or not you need to recuse yourselves. But it’s very important that you guys do that because what’s happening in the past that I have seen and that I’m going to have to talk about is unacceptable to me and I hope it’s unacceptable to you all and as a municipality that is this large, you’ve got to do better than what we have had in the past. You’ve got to and so that’s what I’m here to say today. I will be back with some other details, but you’ve got the resources right here to make sure you are doing the right things all the time, use them. You don’t need to look outside, you’ve got it right here.

AGENDA CHANGES

Commissioner Quarles made a motion to adopt the proposed agenda. Commissioner Bergsman seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.

CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of Minutes – April 29, 2024. Commissioner Quarles made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 29, 2024 Special Town Board Meeting. Commissioner Walsh seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.

Approval of Minutes – May 6, 2024. Commissioner Quarles made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 6, 2024 Regular Town Board Meeting. Commissioner Walsh seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.

Approval of Minutes – May 8, 2024. Commissioner Quarles made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 8, 2024 Special Town Board Meeting. Commissioner Walsh seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.

Approval of Minutes – May 15, 2024. Commissioner Quarles made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 15, 2024 Special Town Board Meeting. Commissioner Walsh seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.

Approval of Minutes – May 20, 2024. Commissioner Quarles made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 20, 2024 Regular Town Board Meeting. Commissioner Walsh seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.

Approval of Minutes – May 22, 2024. Commissioner Quarles made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 22, 2024 Special Town Board Meeting. Commissioner Walsh seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.

Operations Center Lease Agreement – ElectriCities. Commissioner Quarles made a motion to approve Fifth Amended and Restated Operations Center Lease Agreement with ElectriCities. Commissioner Walsh seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.

Fifth Amended and Restated Operations Center Lease Agreement attached hereto as Exhibit No. 3.

Capital Project Ordinance Amendment for Transportation Projects. Commissioner Quarles made a motion to adopt Eighth Capital Project Ordinance Amendment for Transportation Projects. Commissioner Walsh seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.

Eighth Capital Project Ordinance Amendment for Transportation Projects attached hereto as Exhibit No. 4.

Budget Amendment – Parks & Recreation Sponsorship Revenue. Commissioner Quarles made a motion to approve budget amendment appropriating Sponsorship Revenue in Parks & Recreation for \$14,000 for Growers Market, LaLaCaboosa, Movies in the Park and Just Kidding Around events. Commissioner Walsh seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.

Budget Amendment – The Park Greenway. Commissioner Quarles made a motion to approve budget amendment appropriating General Fund Balance in the amount of \$170,000 for The Park Greenway design due to the additional greenway length. Commissioner Walsh seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.

Budget Amendment – Pedestrian Crossing. Commissioner Quarles made a motion to approve budget amendment appropriating Fund Balance in the amount of \$275,000 for the enhanced pedestrian crossing of NC 115 at North Mecklenburg High School. These funds will be used for the design, right-of-way and construction of the pedestrian crossing. Commissioner Walsh seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.

Community Development Block Grant Cooperative Agreement. Commissioner Quarles made a motion to approve Community Development Block Grant Cooperative Agreement with Mecklenburg County. Commissioner Walsh seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.

Community Development Block Grant Cooperative Agreement attached hereto as Exhibit No. 5.

Call for Public Hearing – Petition #TA24-06. Commissioner Quarles made a motion to call a public hearing for Tuesday, July 16, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. at Huntersville Town Hall, 101 Huntersville-Concord Road, Huntersville, NC 28078 on petition #TA24-06 Farmhouse Cluster Changes, a request by the Town of Huntersville Staff to amend Article 3.2.1(e), 3.2.2(e), and Article 12.2.1 "Open Space" to amend farmhouse cluster requirements by requiring an 80' vegetated buffer along the street frontage and to not allow open space and tree save to be located within private building lots. Commissioner Walsh seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.

Call for Public Hearing – Petition #TA24-07. Commissioner Quarles made a motion to call a public hearing for Tuesday, July 16, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. at Huntersville Town Hall, 101 Huntersville-Concord Road, Huntersville, NC 28078, on Petition #TA24-07, a request by the Huntersville Planning Department to amend Article 3.2.3(c) of the Huntersville Zoning Ordinance, eliminating the family-only occupancy requirement from the General Residential district regulations to achieve consistency with the rules governing Accessory Dwelling Units in other residential zones. Commissioner Walsh seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.

Call for Public Hearing – Petition #TA24-08. Commissioner Quarles made a motion to call a public hearing for Tuesday, July 16, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. at Huntersville Town Hall, 101 Huntersville-Concord Road, Huntersville, NC 28078, on Petition #TA24-08, a request by the Huntersville Planning Department to amend Article 12.2.1 of the Huntersville Zoning Ordinance, to update the language to specify where a Family Care Home's one-half mile radius distance is measured from. Commissioner Walsh seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.

Call for Public Hearing – Petition #TA24-09. Commissioner Quarles made a motion to call a public hearing for Tuesday, July 16, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. at Huntersville Town Hall, 101 Huntersville-Concord Road, Huntersville, NC 28078, on Petition #TA24-09, a request by the Huntersville Planning Department to amend Article 8.10 and Article 12.2.1 of the Huntersville Zoning Ordinance, to closer align our rules regarding building separation to North Carolina Building Code Standards and North Carolina Residential Code Standards. Commissioner Walsh seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.

Call for Public Hearing – Petition #TA24-12. Commissioner Quarles made a motion to call a public hearing for Tuesday, August 6, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. at Huntersville Town Hall, 101 Huntersville-Concord Road, Huntersville, NC 28078, on Petition #TA24-12, a request by the Huntersville Planning Department to amend several sections of the Huntersville Zoning Ordinance. The purpose of the amendment is to transfer selected uses from being permitted by Special Use Permit to Conditional District Rezoning and with Conditions, and delete some uses permitted by Special Use Permit. Commissioner Walsh seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 to 0.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Petition #ANNEX24-01. Mayor Pro Tem Hunt called to order public hearing on Petition #ANNEX 24-01, a request by Shea Homes Carolina, LLC, to annex 59.462 acres into the Town of Huntersville.

Brian Richards, Planning Director, entered the Staff Report into the record. *Staff Report attached hereto as Exhibit No. 6.*

The Petitioner, Shea Homes Carolina, LLC has filed a petition to consider voluntary, non-contiguous annexation. A Resolution of Intent to Annex was adopted by the Board of Commissioners on May 6, 2024. The proposed area to annex is 59.462 acres. All statutory requirements for annexation have been met.

Staff recommends approval of Petition #ANNEX24-01.

There being no questions or comments, Mayor Pro Tem Hunt closed the public hearing.

OTHER BUSINESS

Petition #ANNEX24-01. Petition #ANNEX24-01 is a request by Shea Homes Carolina, LLC to annex 59.462 acres into the Town of Huntersville.

Brian Richards, Planning Director, entered the Staff Report into the record. *Staff Report attached hereto as Exhibit No. 7.*

Commissioner Bergsman made a motion to approve the Ordinance on Petition #ANNEX24-01, a request by Shea Homes Carolina, LLC to annex 59.462 acres into the Town of Huntersville.

Commissioner Walsh seconded the motion.

Motion carried 5 to 0.

Annexation Ordinance attached hereto as Exhibit No. 8.

FY25 Electric Rate Changes. David Lucore, Electric Systems Manager for ElectriCities, said I have the recommended FY25 electric rates for your approval this evening. *Refer to PowerPoint attached hereto as Exhibit No. 9.* To begin with, there are no proposed increases in retail rates for residential, commercial or industrial, but there are a few minor changes. The REPS charge, that has decreased for this year and that is something that is added to each customer's bill and it's determined what the value is or should be by the Power Agency, so it's a pass through for renewable energy credits. Residential is a slight decrease of 2 cents. Commercial is a little bit decreased and industrial a little bit more than that.

There are two additional rates that I am recommending. The first one is a Renewable Energy Credit Rate Rider (RECR-2) and this is for solar and any kind of renewable energy. The current methodology that we have is a buy-all/sell-all methodology, which basically means that everything that a customer's solar panels or other renewable energy source, they are required to sell all of that energy to the utility and the utility is requiring to purchase all of that energy at the avoided rate cost. The new rate will provide a net billing methodology which allows consumers to actually use the energy that they produce in their homes and then any excess that they produce and comes back on the utility, they will be credited at the avoided rate cost. If there's no energy transfer between their solar panels and the utility then their bill would only be based on what they've actually consumed from the utility, so there's a little bit of difference in methodology there. This rate would not be effective until October 1. We are in the process of updating our customer service billing software and we need to have that in place so that we can accurately bill this new rate. We also need to buy additional electric meters that can meter both forward and reverse current in energy, so that's the reasons why the delay is until October 1 to allow us to get those in place.

The second rate that I'm recommending is a low load factor commercial service schedule. This is for individual EV chargers, welders, many other kinds of customers whose usage is very low but continuous. The way this is metered we don't have a rate schedule to meter this type of service that would accurately recoup the investment that we are putting into that kind of service. I'm recommending we add that in the next fiscal year.

All of these fee schedule changes that I'm recommending are due to increased costs, labor, materials, fuel. Everything has increased and we need to keep up to what our expenses are. As you can see, there's some changes on the reconnect fee, returned check fee. A lot of these have not been raised in many years and just trying to bring those into alignment with current prices and cost.

Commissioner Bergsman said could you provide some more information on the new rider. There's that additional metering monthly cost that's mentioned in the agenda packet. Can you just give a little explanation on what's the reasoning and why we need that.

Mr. Lucore said the meter that will register both directions is a higher cost meter and we have to pass that cost on to the customer. To maintain that meter, it cost more money basically. That's a monthly recurring charge and it's a little over \$2, but that's typical of any net billing methodology.

Commissioner Hunt said can you talk about the off-peak charging.

Mr. Lucore said a question was asked about off-peak or the way we refer to it in the utility industry it's time of use and basically a customer would be billed for the energy they consume based on the time of the day that they use it. Peak times would be more expensive, off-peak times would be less expensive. At this current time there's no need to add a time of use rate. The utility system is in good shape. We are not to the point that we need to add a time of use rate. As customers continue to add more EV

chargers and more loads to the system, then that will be something that we may need to look at in future years to try to incentivize people to use energy in the off-peak period to reduce our peak loads.

Commissioner Walsh made a motion to approve the FY25 electric rate changes.

Commissioner Bergsman seconded the motion.

Motion carried 5 to 0.

Electric Rates and Electric Service Policy attached hereto as Exhibit No. 10.

FY2025 Budget Ordinance. Anthony Roberts, Town Manager, said I spoke to Commissioner Rivers earlier today. I told her I would say this, I know it doesn't mean anything, but she said let everyone know that she is in favor of the budget. I told her I would say that, so I'm saying it. As far as the FY25 Budget Ordinance, I don't really have a presentation on it. Ultimately, we would ask you to adopt the ordinance and that will set the tax rate at 22.75 cents.

Commissioner Walsh said I will also be supporting the budget this evening. I want to thank all the staff members who are part of this budget process. Under the leadership of our Town Manager Anthony Roberts, you spent countless hours providing input for the budget. The process started back in February and culminates with our vote this evening. This is a good budget for the Town and our citizens. It addresses the needs of a growing municipality. We are investing in our future including our new municipal fire department and more police officers. We will soon be using voter approved bond money to support our commitment for infrastructure projects including more roads, sidewalks and greenways. Our most important asset is our Town employees. This budget shows our support for them by addressing our employees' pay. Again, thanks to the staff and my fellow Board members for all the hard work putting this budget together.

Commissioner Dumas said I wanted to take a moment to thank the staff and those who attended our sessions over the last few weeks. That was the first time we'd ever done public sessions with discussion and open questions to our staff. It took a lot of work and a lot of effort and a lot of hours that aren't business hours for our staff, so I'm really grateful to Jackie and the rest of the team for doing that. Thank you so much. For everybody who attended and asked questions and joined us, it was valuable to me and I don't want to speak for everybody else, but I believe valuable to the rest of the team here. I am personally not excited about a 5-cent tax increase and I wasn't sure when I saw the proposed budget that I was going to be able to be in favor of it, but I have reviewed the 600-page budget. I have asked questions and pushed back on line items that stood out and I've pushed back on several projects over the last several months and had conversations over the last several weeks about projects that might be able to be pushed. The fact is that our town is in desperate need of investment, a lot of what Nick has already commented on. More people brings more revenue, yes, but it also brings more expense and it's happened so quickly in our town that widening a road or adding roads or finding connectivity costs money and we haven't been able to stay on top of that. We haven't planned enough in the past and haven't invested in that growth effectively. If we had, we wouldn't be feeling the pain as bad as we are right now. We wouldn't have orange cones at every corner like we do right now, or so much traffic and safety issues on holidays and weekends. We're taking action to make sure that we are in a better place. It's ultimately what's right and best for our town. I am also in favor of this budget.

Commissioner Quarles said if I was able to, I would exempt myself from paying taxes, but I'm not exempt. As Commissioner Walsh said, we've received an abundance of information in regards to the

budget as far back as February. We've had the community engagements and we've also gotten emails, so I want to thank those who have come out, but I can say that overwhelmingly we got more people in support of us moving forward with the Manager's approved budget which says a lot about our constituents. I'm not going to dwell on the indecisions of the past, nor am I going to talk about any misleading rhetoric. If I do, that angry cup of coffee may appear again. Huntersville will no longer be the municipality with no full-time fire department. I think we should have done that quite some time ago and I'm happy that this budget will support a full-time fire department. I talked to a woman a few weeks ago. Her 17-year-old son was in a car accident on 73. She and her husband were out of town and they panicked because it took some time for the first responders to get to their son. This past Wednesday we had a fatal accident on Highway 73. Less than 24 hours after that the fire department was at The Landings attending to a massive fire there. Twenty-four hours after that, Commissioner Rivers and myself were here in this Board Room and we heard the fire trucks screaming down the road. They are an extremely busy fire department. I would not want to move forward without having enough fire fighters to fill the seats in our fire trucks. I would not want to be the parent who says I wished I would have had more support with our fire department. Our town has not used any Town funded dollars on our police department. Community, we hear you guys. We see on your social media posts and your comments to us that I wished I was notified about this incident or that incident. This budget will allow us to have proper police staffing to patrol your neighborhoods and to get you the information that you need. This budget also is loaded with road projects. We've heard the former mayor talk about delayed projects. That's probably why we have the problems we have today is because road projects were delayed. As Commissioner Dumas said, we need to invest in our town, so this budget is definitely investing in our roads, public safety and with that I must say that I will be supporting the Manager's proposed budget.

Commissioner Bergsman said first I want to thank the community members who attended one of our budget information sessions or multiple in some cases. I greatly appreciate everyone's opinions and thoughts in this process. I also want to recognize the hard work accomplished by the Mayor and my fellow commissioners in the diligence you put into this process. To our staff, when the Board asked for more participatory budget process you really stepped and delivered to an incredible level and I thank you for that and I believe I can speak for all of us that we thank you for that. I'm still at awe at all you were able to accomplish in a short period and the efficiency with which you put together a well thought out budget that delivers on numerous desperately needed road and transportation improvements, the transition to a full-time fire department and also incorporates recommendations from the recently completed compensation study. I recognize and salute your hard work. It's a good budget and it's investing in our community, which we need to do. As we move forward, I did also want to recognize a few comments that were made during the public hearing and engagement sessions about incorporating the separate solid waste fee into the tax rate and it reminded me of some notes I took last year during last year's budget talks. I empathize with the frustration on this topic. I think a change like this should not be made hastily without due diligence, study and guidance from our staff and experts. However, I would love to see the Board in the next year ask staff to study options on this. I believe it could be more equitable than our current policy if we are able to incorporate the solid waste fee into the tax rate in a way that more single-family homeowners would pay either the same amount or less than the current annual fee, and I do support this budget.

Mayor Pro Tem Hunt said as my fellow commissioners have noted, all of us have spent hours reviewing capital improvement projects and the FY25 budget book which is the size of a novel. We cut things out, we asked questions of staff and each other, answered questions from residents, we interacted with Jackie's Excel spreadsheet. While no one could see every single action we took, we grappled with this and gave it serious deliberation. No one wants to pay more taxes, right. Many of us were hit with the

county reval and we are not immune from paying the tax increase either, however I am keeping in the forefront of my mind what I am getting for this increase and how I'm investing in the community that I love. So for \$15 to \$20 a month we're getting full-time firefighters, increased police protection, investing and retaining our amazing staff, road improvement projects, greenways and more. Politically it might be better for me to make a different decision and say that I don't support anything beyond the 2.8 cents for the bonds. That might be politically expedient for me. However, I think it's the right thing to do to properly invest in the town because it's not just about me, it's about the common good.

Commissioner Dumas made a motion to approve the FY2025 Budget Ordinance.

Commissioner Walsh seconded the motion.

Motion carried 5 to 0.

Budget Ordinance attached hereto as Exhibit No. 11.

CLOSING COMMENTS

None

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

Approved this the 17th day of June 2024.