

MINUTES OF THE WHITSETT TOWN COUNCIL
December 14, 2021
Whitsett Town Hall Building

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

The regular meeting of the Whitsett Town Council was held on Tuesday, December 14, 2021 at the Whitsett Town Hall. The following members of the Town Council were present: Mayor Richard Fennell, Mayor Pro Tem Jerry Rice, Council Members Cindy Wheeler, Lee Greeson, and Craig York.

Also present were Town Administrator Gary Deal, Planning Board Chairman Tyler Harris, *The Alamance News* reporter Tomas Murawski, and 3 Town residents.

Of special note and privilege, was the presence of NC Representative Jon Hardister, who would be administering the oath of office to elected officials and presiding over the election of the mayor.

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

SPEAKERS FROM THE FLOOR

Mayor Fennell asked for any speakers from the floor, and there were none.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Adoption of the Minutes

Mayor Fennell asked for any changes to the amended minutes from the July 13, 2021 regular meeting; and hearing none, asked for a motion to adopt the corrected minutes. A motion to adopt the amended minutes was made by Mayor Pro Tem Jerry Rice; motion seconded by Council Member Craig York. The motion to adopt the amended July meeting minutes carried by unanimous vote.

Mayor Fennell then asked for any changes to the minutes for the November 9, 2021 regular meeting; and hearing none, asked for a motion to adopt the minutes. A motion to adopt the minutes as written was made by Council Member Craig York; motion seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Jerry Rice. The motion to adopt the November meeting minutes passed by unanimous vote.

2. Any Other Old Business

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

MAYOR RECESSES COUNCIL MEETING

At 7:07, Mayor Fennell recessed the regular meeting of the Town Council to proceed with the swearing in of two newly-reelected Council Members. Mayor Fennell asked Representative Jon Hardister of the North Carolina General Assembly to preside over the next portion of the meeting.

SWEARING IN and ELECTION OF MAYOR

1. Swearing In Ceremony

Representative Jon Hardister administered the oath of office first to Lee Greeson, and then to Cindy Wheeler. Both would serve four-year terms. Congratulations was extended by Representative Hardister to both.

2. Election of Mayor

Following the ceremony, Representative Hardister continued to preside over the election of the mayor. Representative Hardister opened the floor for nominations for the office of mayor.

Mayor Pro Tem Jerry Rice nominated Richard Fennell for Mayor; nomination seconded by Council Member Lee Greeson. Representative Hardister asked for further discussion or debate and hearing none, asked for aye/no vote. Stating the ayes have it, Representative Hardister congratulated Mayor Fennell who would serve in his mayoral capacity for another two years until the next municipal election is held in 2023.

ELECTED MAYOR PRESIDES

NEW BUSINESS

Mayor Fennell announced new business at 7:15, and proceeded with the election of Mayor Pro Tem and the appointments of financial officers.

1. Election of Mayor Pro Tem

Mayor Fennell continued with a motion to nominate Jerry Rice for the office of mayor pro tem; motion seconded by Council Member Cindy Wheeler. The unanimous vote retained Jerry Rice as Mayor Pro Tem for the upcoming two years.

2. Appointment of Finance Officer

Mayor Fennell proceeded with a motion to reappoint Mayor Pro Tem Jerry Rice as Finance Officer; motion was seconded by Council Member Cindy Wheeler. The motion carried by unanimous vote; and Mayor Pro Tem Jerry Rice would resume as Finance Officer.

3. Appointment of Assistant Finance Officer

Mayor Fennell continued with a motion to appoint Council Member Craig York as Assistant Finance Officer; motion seconded by Council Member Lee Greeson. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Both officers will serve in their respective positions for two years.

4. Adoption of Council Meeting Dates for 2022

Mayor Fennell asked for any comments on the 2022 schedule for regular monthly Council meetings; and with none, asked for a motion to retain the second Tuesday of each month for Council meetings and adopt the next year's dates as presented. Mayor Pro Tem Jerry Rice made a motion to adopt the 2022 calendar; motion seconded by Council Member Lee Greeson. By unanimous vote; the 2022 Town Council meetings schedule was adopted, and would be forwarded to Guilford County for posting.

5. Adoption of Proposed Engagement Agreement for Services to be Provided by Cobb, Ezekiel, Loy and Company, P.A.

The revision to the original proposal presented in August had been delayed due to the firm's staffing shortage as a result of the ever-present pandemic; and Mayor Pro Tem Jerry Rice made a motion to table the issue for a future Council meeting. The motion was seconded by Council Member Lee Greeson; and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

6. Approval of Purchase of and Transition to QuickBooks Online

The current version of QuickBooks (QB) that the Town Hall is currently using is 2016 Desktop installed on the clerk's workstation. It is not only time to upgrade to the latest version; but would be beneficial for a more accessible method, i.e., online for ease of access on various computers and not dedicated to only one. The online QB is recommended by the Town's accounting firm of Cobb, Ezekiel, Loy & Company, whereby they, too, would have equal access and use of Town QB

records from their offices in addition to Town Hall. Both entities would be sharing the same records, and would have access for entering checkbook transactions, making journal entries, running various financial reports, etc. The monthly charge, CEL believes, is well worth having remote usage from anywhere, anytime to accounting records—the Town and CEL alike.

Mayor Fennell asked for any discussion from Council; and with none Finance Officer/Mayor Pro Tem Jerry Rice made a motion to endorse the purchase of the QuickBooks Online; motion seconded by Council Member Lee Greeson. The motion carried by unanimous vote and CEL would be contacted for assistance with installation and setup.

7. Discussion on Ball Field and Restrooms

Council Member Lee Greeson and Town Administrator Gary Deal led discussion on the Town's ball field and new restrooms. They referenced the agreement with Gibsonville to use the facilities that was put in place almost two years, and stated that an updated agreement, outlining who would be responsible for what, would be drafted and forwarded to Gibsonville for concurrence. The contract would be very similar to the past original.

As for the mowing of the field outside of Gibsonville's agreement when its season has ended, Town Administrator Deal stated that the Fire Department may be willing to maintain the field for a nominal donation. Deal will check into this.

Council Member Greeson also mentioned that the Greater Vision Academy on Brightwood Church Road had expressed interest in using the field from February to May in the afternoons for two hours on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays. The Town saw no issue with this request.

8. Any Items from Council Members

Mayor Fennell asked for any items from Council Members; and Council Member Cindy Wheeler raised the issue of an abandoned mobile home at the end of Whitsett Park Road. Town Administrator Deal stated that he would send a letter to the property owner for intentions, as well as contact the county for enforcement.

6. Announcements

Mayor Fennell asked for any announcements; and hearing none, extended a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to everyone as did all members of the Council.

7. Speakers from the Floor

Mayor Fennell asked for any speakers from the floor, and resident Annette Radcliffe, who resides at 7242 Greeson Road, addressed Council about a lot of junked items that had been dumped along Greeson Road and had remained since Thanksgiving. Representative Hardister offered to contact DOT to handle removal. Ms. Radcliffe and Council Members expressed their thanks.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Planning Board

Board Chairman Tyler Harris reported that the Planning Board was continuing its research and comparison of planning fees and, primarily water tap fees and other charges relative the Town's water system. Harris turned to Representative Hardister concerning any infrastructure grants that may be or become available. Hardister stated he was aware of an NC Commerce rural infrastructure grant, as well as some future Federal monies that were expected to become available as early as January. Hardister will look into both sources, and report back to the Town.

2. Enforcement Officer

There was no enforcement activity since last Council meeting.

3. Town Administrator

Town Administrator Gary Deal reported that there were various electrical issues with respect to the ball field, the restrooms, and the Town Hall building, including the cafeteria. He would be contacting a recommended electrician for an estimate on repairs and/or improvements.

In addition, Deal reported that he had been contacted by the Sheriff's Department to see if the Town would have any objections to the department installing security cameras, via a grant, to surveil Town grounds and monitor traffic along NC Hwy 61. Deal anticipated no issue, and would convey to department to move forward. Deal would report at next month's meeting any progress or new information.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Council, Mayor Fennell invited a motion to adjourn. Mayor Pro Tem Jerry Rice made the motion to adjourn; motion seconded by Council Member Cindy Wheeler. The motion passed by unanimous vote; and the December 14, 2021 Town Council meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:47 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the Whitsett Town Council is scheduled for 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, January 11, 2022 at the Whitsett Town Hall.

/s/

/s/

Gary Deal, Town Administrator

Richard Fennell, Mayor

APPROVED: January 11, 2022