



TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING

Town Council Chambers

Tuesday, October 21, 2025 at 1:50 p.m.

Prepared By: Nicole Mayes

Present: Mayor George Holleman
Mayor Pro Tem Eric Bumgarner
Councilwoman Tamara Odom
Councilwoman Kim Brown
Councilman Jack Simms

Call to Order, Invocation, Pledge of Allegiance

George Holleman, Mayor

The Town Council special meeting was called to order by Mayor George Holleman on Tuesday, October 21, 2025, at 1:55 pm. No invocation or Pledge of Allegiance was held.

Discussion Items

1. Town Charter Amendment Ordinance

Nathan Hester, Town Manager

Town Manager Nathan Hester opened the discussion by explaining the need for a re-vote on the Charter Amendment. He noted that the initial reading on October 7, 2025, failed to receive the required three-fifths (3/5) majority vote per state statute, necessitating a new vote on the amendment which proposes changing the election cycle for the four council members (excluding the Mayor) to staggered terms.

Mayor George Holleman then opened the floor for general discussion.

Councilmember Jack Simms reiterated his past support for staggered terms as a measure to protect the board. However, he expressed concern about the associated costs, noting his original preference was to align the elections with the Presidential and Midterm cycles to realize cost savings for the Town and its taxpayers. Since the current proposal maintains the election schedule on odd-numbered years, he stated he was now in favor of leaving the cycle as-is to avoid incurring an estimated \$11,000 to \$14,000 expense.

Councilmember Eric Bumgarner agreed with Councilmember Simms, citing that staggered terms are common for school boards, county commissioners, and US Congress, which makes logical sense. However, he emphasized the significant cost difference, stating that aligning the election with Presidential/Midterm cycles could reduce costs from an estimated \$22,000 over a four-year cycle to approximately \$1,000, calling the cost-saving measure a "no-brainer."

The discussion then turned to the legal process required to change the election year. Mayor Holleman asked if an ordinance change would suffice. Councilmember Kim Brown recalled that the Town's attorney (Monroe Pannell) previously advised that a change could not be made without an act of the General Assembly. Councilmember Simms countered that the Board had the authority to change the election cycle if left on odd years, but moving it to Midterm/Presidential cycles would require a legislative request. Councilmember Tamara Odom sought verification, to which Councilmember Simms clarified that the board had the power to request the change or simply leave the election cycle as it currently stands.

Councilmember Odom inquired about the cost estimates. Councilmember Simms confirmed the figures were provided by Patrick Wike in 2023, stating a standalone election cost \$11,000 at the time, which would have been reduced to \$500 if held concurrently with the Presidential election. He added that the current Board of Elections Director, Cheryl Fiemster, anticipates the standalone cost could rise to \$14,000 due to increasing expenses.

Mayor Holleman confirmed with Town Manager Hester that the proposed ordinance would only implement staggered terms while maintaining the odd-year election cycle.

Councilmember Brown asked if investigating the General Assembly's approval for moving to the Presidential/Midterm cycle was possible. Councilmember Simms confirmed that the Town's representative and senator would likely submit the request. Mayor Holleman questioned whether such a change would be a local bill or if it would apply to all of North Carolina.

Councilmember Bumgarner asked about the effective date if the change was approved. Councilmember Simms estimated that the current election would occur in 2027, and the two lowest vote-getters would have to run again in 2028 to transition to the Presidential/Midterm cycle. Councilmember Odom stated she remained opposed to the proposed change.

Town Manager Hester requested a motion to either vote on the amendment or to not consider it and remain as-is.

Motion to leave the election cycle as-is was made by Councilmember Jack Simms, seconded by Councilmember Eric Bumgarner, and approved unanimously. In favor of the motion was Councilmember Jack Simms, Councilmember Eric Bumgarner. No verbal response from Councilmember Kim Brown, Councilmember Tamara Odom, or Mayor George Holleman.

Adjournment

With no further business to discuss the Mayor George Holleman requested a motion to adjourn at 2:05 pm.

Motion to adjourn was made by Councilmember Kim Brown, seconded by Councilmember Jack Simms, and approved unanimously.

Mayor

Councilmember

Councilmember

Councilmember

Councilmember

Attest: _____

Nicole Mayes, Town Clerk