

TOWN BOARD MEETING – REGULAR MEETING

June 1, 2021

Present: Mayor George Holleman
Councilman Ronnie Robinette
Councilwoman Kimberly Brown
Councilman Jack Simms

Absent: Mayor Pro Tem Kenny Poole

The regular meeting was opened for business by Mayor Holleman at 5:30 p.m. Mayor Holleman read Psalm 100 as the invitation. The Pledge of Allegiance followed.

A motion was made by Councilman Simms and seconded by Councilwoman Brown to approve the May 4, 2021 regular meeting minutes as presented and to add item 8a. to the agenda. Item 8a.: Consideration of adopting of a Resolution approving the Local Water Supply Plan. The motion was passed unanimously.

Open Forum:

Justin Killian representative of the 1st NC Cavalry Regiment -Northern Civil War Re-enactments spoke before the Town Council. He asked to be allowed to plan a re-enactment here in Taylorsville due to our rich history and involvement during the Civil War. Mayor Holleman asked if the school systems would be attending? He suggested that Mr. Killian touch base with Dr. Hefner, Alexander County School Superintendent. Mr. Killian will gather more information regarding times and prospective places and what will be re-enacted and present to Mr. Odom and the Town Council. There were no other comments in open forum.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Brown and seconded by Councilman Robinette to open the public hearing regarding the zoning ordinance changes. The motion was passed unanimously. Seth Harris, Alexander County Planning Director presented information on Zoning Ordinance changes required by 160D Legislative updates to the Zoning and Sub-division Ordinance. The new Chapter 160D of the North Carolina General Statutes consolidates current city- and county-enabling statutes for development regulations (previously Chapters 153A and 160A) into a single, unified chapter. Chapter 160D places these statutes into a more logical, coherent organization. While the new law does not make major policy changes or shifts in the scope of authority granted to Alexander County, it does provide many clarifying amendments and consensus reforms that were required to be incorporated into the town's development regulations. As such, Chapter 160D requires that the town's zoning, subdivision, and other development regulations be updated to conform to the new law. Additionally as a result of Chapter 160D, cities and counties that have zoning ordinances must have an up-to-date comprehensive plan or land use plan by July 1, 2022. This is not something that is written in the ordinance, but a procedure that the town will need to follow to support development decisions. Chapter 160D is effective now, but the state granted local governments to have until July 1, 2021 for the development, consideration, and adoption of necessary amendments to conform local ordinances to this new law. Alexander County contracted with Western Piedmont Council of Governments (WPCOG) to update the town's current zoning and subdivision development regulations to conform with the requirements of Chapter 160D. A complete list of proposed

changes can be found at Town Hall. He noted that Alexander County will vote on the changes June 22, 2021. There were no comments from the public. The public hearing was closed by a motion from Councilman Robinette and seconded by Councilwoman Brown. The motion was passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Brown and seconded by Councilman Robinette to approve the changes to the Zoning Ordinance for the Town of Taylorsville as needed by the NC Legislative Chapter 160D. The motion was passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilman Robinette and seconded by Councilman Simms to open the 1st public hearing for the proposed FY 2021-2022 budget for the Town of Taylorsville, which includes projected funding from the American Rescue Revenues, proposed to be \$740,000.00. The total proposed budget is \$4,851,814.00 which is a 14.2% increase over the previous year's budget. The General Fund budget totals \$2,361,364 and is balanced with a property tax rate of 40 cents per \$100 valuation. The proposed budget reflects an estimated 21.4% increase, in part due to American Rescue Plan proceeds, improved local sales tax revenues, and ABC revenues, Covid-19 and the economic fallout from multiple executive orders, designed to protect citizens, while creating revenue dips absorbed completely at the local level. A 5% COLA is proposed to all employees both full and part time to reward the dedicated Town Employees who have persevered during the pandemic. The only general fund obligation is a true lease on 3 patrol cars and 1 public works truck, no other general fund debt exists. The streets and sanitation department has the most increase within the department due to proposed funding for re-paving streets and re-surfacing sidewalks. It was also noted that the re-wiring for holiday lighting could be included either as 1 expense of approx. \$70,000 or in 2 phases of approx. \$35,000 each year. The lighting must be replaced because Duke Power will not allow it to be repaired because it is too old. That is why there are gaps in the holiday lighting because when poles are hit by cars etc. and damaged the wiring cannot be replaced and new wiring cannot be added to old thus causing gaps in lighting. Manager Odom asked the Town Board to direct him on what they wanted to do regarding the holiday lighting. Mayor Holleman stated that he did not want the expense of the holiday lighting to come from the monies set aside for the re-paving and re-surfacing of the streets and sidewalks.

The budget for the Water & Sewer Fund totals \$2,490,450.00, an increase of 8.2%. The Town of Taylorsville has completed several major water projects; Black Oak, 5th Ave Tower Road, and major waste water repairs at the treatment plant. The Solar Project power up is still delayed by COVID 19, and Duke Energy's permitting process. The Town has a \$57,000.00 rebate reserved by Duke Power when the project is complete. Two upcoming projects consist of a new force-main sewer project on Hwy 90 East and additional Treatment Plant upgrades, pending LGC Approval. Expenditures for the Water & Sewer Fund total \$2,490,450.00. The amount represents the Town Council's proactive approach regarding improvements to public infrastructure with 2 ongoing grant projects. It is important to note that \$13.0 million dollars in grant and zero interest loans have been awarded to the Town of Taylorsville in the last 14 years. As a very cautionary note, the enterprise fund has operated in the red the last 3 years due to many adverse weather events and the Covid -19 Pandemic. Mr. Odom also noted that due to excessive weather events, the water & sewer system incurred significant expenses and repairs to the operational infrastructure. Extensive repairs were needed on sewer lift stations, collection system, force mains and the waste water treatment plant. He noted that a rate structure will need

to be considered that will bring the water & sewer fund back into a positive cash flow. The W&S fund cannot continue to operate spending more dollars than it generates without the general fund subsidizing its existence. Rate increases will be annually recommended beginning with this year until such time as we can return to a profitable position in the enterprise fund. With no further comments, the public hearing was closed by a motion from Councilman Simms and seconded by Councilwoman Brown. The motion was passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Brown and seconded by Councilman Robinette to open the public hearing regarding the Utility Billing dates as set by Town Ordinance Title 5- Public Works. The motion was passed unanimously. It is proposed to move the meter reading date, the actual final payment date before being considered late date and the actual billing date for each utility billing cycle up by 5 days. Therefore, the meters will be read on approximately the 15th of each month, the last day to pay before being considered late and incurring a penalty will be the 20th and the date that the billing will be generated and posted to the computer system and utility bills printed will be the 30th. The reason for this shift in dates is to try to bring revenues billed and actually collected more within the same month in order to help with balancing. The volume of credit card payments has increased tremendously. There are many different kinds and some of those cards don't actually clear and we truly receive the revenue for as much as 5 to 6 days which makes balancing extremely difficult. Councilman Simms mentioned that he would like to see the fees that the Town incurs for accepting credit-card payments passed along to the users instead of us incurring the expense from the credit card processors. Manager Odom stated that he will contact other Town's and County's to see how they handle passing the convenience fee on to the user's for the ability of paying by credit//debit cards. There were no further comments and the public hearing was closed by a motion from Councilman Robinette and seconded by Councilwoman Brown.

A motion was made by Councilman Simms and seconded by Councilman Robinette to approve the adoption of the Resolution to amend the Town Ordinance Title 5- Public Works - Utility Billing as stated by the Resolution. See attachment A, which is hereby incorporated and made a part of these minutes. The motion was passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Brown and seconded by Councilman Simms to approve a departmental transfer within the police department totaling \$59,000.00 from salaries to part-time salaries for \$30,000.00 & to capital outlay for \$29,000.00 in order to purchase a 2019 Dodge Charger (demo model) with complete police equipment package. The motion was passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilman Robinette and seconded by Councilwoman Brown to approve the adoption of the Resolution adopting the Local Water Supply Plan as stated. See attachment B, which is hereby incorporated and made a part of these minutes. The motion was passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilman Simms and seconded by Councilwoman Brown to approve a one-time relief funding allocation to Alexander Central Fire Department for \$7,500.00 for assistance with COVID-19 expenses. This is allowed/covered under the American Rescue Revenue funding. The motion was passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilman Simms and seconded by Councilwoman Brown to approve a one-time relief funding allocation to 957 Mobile Café for \$5,000.00 for assistance with COVID-19 expenses due to increased meal preparation and increased material expenses in order to be ADA compliant. This is allowed/covered under the American Rescue Revenue funding. The motion was passed unanimously.

Doug Bowman, Police Chief, noted that the narcotics officer has been working with other agencies here in Taylorsville. Last week a bust was conducted on A Step Above Car Wash after a lengthy investigation, resulting in multiple arrests and confiscation of various narcotics, guns and cash. In another case, multiple drink machines have been broken into across town. An arrest has been made. The Police Dept. borrowed the Sheriff's Dept.'s speed trailer and placed it near the Library. However, the speed trailer was needed by the Sheriff's Dept. and was returned. Ethan Windsor passed a class and exam and is now a certified instructor and he can now instruct others at the PD. The radio's from the 2020 grant are now being programmed and will be in service soon. We are applying for a 2nd grant for additional equipment in October 2021.

David Odom, Town Manager stated that the City of Hickory is requesting to purchase water from the town due to Old Wilkesboro Road being repaired which will temporarily affect approximately 7 homes and their water service. He also mentioned that the electric costs for the annual holiday lighting totals \$5,000 to \$6,000 each year. Town Hall is now open to the public and is on a normal operating schedule for all employees as was in operation prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. We have not received an official date on the return of the inmate labor.

Mayor Holleman mentioned that former Pastor of First Baptist Church Mr. Dan Redding and Mr. Travis Wike passed away recently. He mentioned the obituaries and expressed condolences to their families.

The next regular scheduled meeting will be June 15th, 2021 at 5:30 pm.

With no other business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.

Mayor

Councilman

Councilman

Councilwoman

Councilman

Attest: _____
Yolanda T. Prince, Town Clerk