

TOWN BOARD MEETING – SPECIAL CALLED MEETING

October 25, 2024

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

A special meeting was opened for business by Mayor George Holleman at 10:30 a.m. Mayor Holleman recognized a quorum was physically present for the meeting and recognized that Mayor Pro Tem Eric Bumgarner was attending virtually.

Invocation was given by Mayor Holleman followed by the pledge of allegiance.

Open Forum:

There was no public comment forum held at the special meeting.

Business Items:

Mayor Holleman opened discussion for dissolution of merger with Catawba County ABC Board and Taylorsville ABC Board. Mayor Holleman read aloud the resolution to dissolve merger. Mayor asked council if there was discussion. Jack Simms asked if it was true that the town requested the merger dissolution. Discussion between council members and clarification was given by the Town Manager on the statement in the resolution being agreed upon. The resolution does not state that the town requested it. The resolution states that the Town of Taylorsville agrees to the dissolution of the merger.

Council woman Kim Brown made a motion to adopt resolution, seconded by Tamara Odom. Eric Bumgarner asked if this vote was just for the dissolution and that was confirmed by the Town Manager. The resolution passed with a four to one vote in favor of the dissolution, with councilmen Jack Simms voting against.

Mayor Holleman began discussion on the next resolution on the agenda. The Town Manager informed the council that he had amended the original resolution in the agenda packet and had sent an updated resolution on the previous day. The amended resolution added the Catawba County Commissioners and the Taylorsville Town Council into the last paragraph on the resolution. Mayor Holleman read the resolution in full. The resolution is to re-establish the Taylorsville ABC Board as an independent board after the dissolution of the merged board with Catawba County ABC Board.

Councilwoman Kim Brown made a motion to adopt the resolution, seconded by Tamara Odom. Councilmen Jack Simms asked a clarification question about the resolution. Vote was held and the resolution passed with a vote of three to two with Councilmen Jack Simms and Mayor Pro Tem Eric Bumgarner voting in opposition.

Mayor Holleman opened discussion on the potential purchase of a town Christmas tree. The tree would be a thirty-four-foot artificial panel tree. Town Manager Nathan Hester read through three different quotes by various vendors who sell the same type of tree to inform the council on the prices for the tree through the various vendors. Discussion was held between council members and staff on the particulars of each quote particularly taxes, ornament packages, delivery costs, and the potential to use corporate sponsorship donations to offset the costs.

Councilwoman Brown asked if the trees other than Mosca were manufactured in the United States. Town Manager and staff did not have a definitive answer where they were manufactured. Continued discussion on warranty for the tree through the individual vendors, the costs of ornament replacement, and insuring the tree through the town's insurance provider.

Town staff did not provide a recommendation to council on either vendor. Town Manager Nathan Hester stated that each vendor seems to sell the same type of product and that it was the decision of council on which vendor they wanted to choose. Councilwomen Brown stated she was worried some vendors may not be manufacturing their product within the United States. Discussion was held on the timeline to order, purchase, and have the tree delivered or picked up.

Town Manager informed the council that they could vote on which vendor to use and go with, but there would need to be a budget amendment presented to council before the actual purchase of the tree.

Mayor Holleman voiced his opinion of this being the wrong time to purchase the tree and that the council needed to take more time to consider the purchase of the tree. Councilwoman Kim Brown disagreed with that opinion and stated that the town has been working through this challenge for years. Mrs. Brown stated that the town was not being supported financially by the County and that the Town needed to purchase the tree. She stated that she had not heard any negative feedback from community members. Mayor Holleman stated that he had heard negative feedback from the community.

Kim Brown made a motion to purchase the tree. Councilmen Jack Simms stated he was opposed to the purchase of the tree and that people within the community were struggling right now through hard times. HE also stated that we don't know the true cost of the tree. Councilwoman Brown said that she did some research on purchasing a real tree from Western NC and it was \$6,000 for ornaments and lights. So, if we spent that every year then we have spent the cost of the tree. Jack said that the town residents were going to be upset and inquire why we did not give them that money back through a tax deduction.

Councilwoman Tamara Odom stated that one of the reasons she ran was that people wanted downtown beautification and this is a step in the right direction toward beautifying the downtown. Mrs. Odom stated that purchasing the tree would uplift the spirits of the community during these rough times and bring some unity.

Mayor Holleman said that this seems to be in competition with the County and we should be doing this together. Mrs. Brown said that she did not agree that this was in competition with the

county and because we had already received donations, we need to move forward with purchasing the tree.

Mr. Jack Simms told the mayor to call the motion. Clarity was needed on the previous motion. Town Manager Nathan Hester instructed the Council on the difference between the vendors and the prices for the motion. The Manager stated that if they didn't want to choose the vendor today then they could wait until November 5th. The Town Manager mentioned that Mosca Design has a robust reputation within the community but does not know that the other vendors do not manufacture their products.

Eric Bumgarner stated he did not have a preference between any of the vendors discussed, though he liked the idea of using Mosca since it was manufactured in North Carolina. He did state that their quote was seven thousand dollars higher than the other vendors. Mr. Bumgarner stated he was in favor of the tree and that it would improve the city. He also stated that he has not heard any negative feedback at this time and that the town will need to provide a level of investment within the downtown if they want to see the downtown improve. The live tree was mentioned, and Public Works Director Aaron Wike stated that the town does purchase a live ten-foot tree from Western North Carolina every year and place it in front of town hall.

Kim Brown makes a motion to approve purchasing a tree from Mosca Design, seconded by Tamara Odom. A vote was called and the decision to purchase the tree passed with a three to two vote with Mayor George Holleman and Councilmen Jack Simms voting in opposition.

Kim Brown asked who all from council would be at Hometown Halloween and light discussion was held about the specific vendors and participation by the community during the Halloween event.

Jack Simms made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Eric Bumgarner. All voted in favor of adjournment at 11:05 a.m.

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

Mayor

Councilman

Councilman

Councilman

Councilman

Attest: _____
Yolanda T. Prince, Town Clerk