

TOWN OF WEBSTER

Minutes for May 3, 2017 Board Meeting



The Board of Commissioners for the Town of Webster met for their regular monthly meeting at the Webster Town Hall, 1411 Webster Road. Mayor Tracy Rodes called the meeting to order at 5:18 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Commissioner Billie Bryson, Commissioner Danell Moses, Commissioner Larry Phillips, Commissioner Leigh Anne Young, and Mayor Tracy Rodes, Commissioner Allan Grant

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Will Morgan and Louise Stephens, Webster residents; Scott Baker; Dr. Don Tomas, SCC

GENERAL MEETING

Approval of Agenda

Mayor Rodes requested the minutes be amended to remove New Business Item c) and replace it with payroll accounting, and to add an item d) sympathy / memorial for Ms. Davis.

MOTION: Commissioner Larry Phillips made a motion to accept the agenda as amended. Commissioner Billie Bryson seconded. Motion carries.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes for the April council meeting were presented for review.

MOTION: Commissioner Grant motioned to approve the minutes. Commissioner Phillips seconded. Motion carried.

Informal Comments by Public

Local cyclist Scott Baker presented a layout of a potential bicycling improvement plan. He thanked the board for allowing bikes to be on the sidewalks, and for repairs to the sidewalks. He asked for consideration of a curb cut off of North River road where it accesses Highway 116. He said the curb height made access difficult for cyclists. He suggested a cut similar to a driveway access ramp. The curve is dangerous when traffic tries to get around merging cyclists. The curb cut allows cyclists to get off of the road and onto the sidewalk. An additional curb cut would prevent cyclists traveling on N. River Road in traffic where marked on the visual provided by Mr. Baker. The suggested location is slightly uphill from the uphill curve. Mayor Rodes asked if DOT could be of any assistance. Commissioner Phillips advised that it is possible that DOT may have funding for this type of project. Mayor Rodes said that the Town of Webster would check on who has the authority to approve and fund this project. Rodes stated that she or Phillips would contact the DOT and add this project to the agenda for the next Town meeting.

Special Guest: Dr. Don Tomas, SCC

Dr. Tomas reminded the board that SCC had asked for a ¼ penny sales tax, which was approved. Based on this funding, the priority to fund a new Health Sciences building was initiated. Dr. Tomas stated he wanted to share the current status of the new building with the board and what is planned for the future. Dr. Tomas presented an aerial site plan to the board showing the surrounding roads, the Burrell Building Tower, Balsam Center, Founder Hall, and the Proposed Health Science Building to be located between and behind the Balsam Center and Founders Hall. There will be a bridge from the 3rd floor to a landing at Founders Hall. There will be a sidewalk connected the other side of the building to the Balsam Center. Dr. Tomas then presented a perspective from the roundabout of the design of the building – a three story building designed to tie into the current landscape. Dr. Tomas mentioned that the ordinance required buildings over 60 feet not to overshadow other building. The ground level of the lowest point of the building to the peak of the top corner is 67 – 70 feet. The line of sight from the front parking area / ATM side still give visibility to Founders Hall above the proposed building.

Dr. Tomas then addressed proposed parking in the site plan. The ordinance requires 1 parking space for 400 square feet of building space. They have approximately 900 spaces. 274,000 square feet is the projected size of the building. Dr. Tomas stated that the proposed building would use 40 parking spaces, still leaving enough spaces to meet the requirements since they will be gaining 65 from a new lot near Founders Hall.

Dr. Tomas addressed one further item: the lettering on the building. The proposed letters are 8'4" in height for the "Southwestern" (5'4" for small case letters) name, with letters beneath "Community College" in 3'4" letters. SCC is considering shadow lights, or lights that shine from the ground up to the building; and potentially lights will an



automatic shut off. There will be no back lighting. Commissioner Young asked if this building sign replaces the street sign. Dr. Tomas said that the building signage is in addition to any existing signage. They are redesigning the current directional sign. It is called a gate sign or monument sign. A wayfinding sign is planned for the Burrell Building access area. Dr. Tomas said that these size letters are necessary to be visible from the road and in proportion to the building. The new building also allows Burrell Building to continue to be visible from the main road. The building will be brick and off white. Commissioner Grant asked if Success Avenue would still be used. Dr. Tomas stated that it will. Will Morgann asked if Dr. Tomas has a breakdown of office space vs. classroom space. Dr. Tomas said that the building is majority classroom and student space. Office space is about 400 sq. feet. The first floor is going to include an outpatient or community clinic for physical therapy as a part of SCC's educational programs. The architect is LS3P.

Mayor Rodes asked Dr. Tomas to provide written details on the numbers that he orally provided to the Town Council. Mayor Rodes suggested that if any of the above items are not currently allowed, the best path forward might be a variance. Dr. Tomas agreed. Dr. Tomas said that SCC will need the Board's approval is needed by before May 24th for the architect to proceed with the current design. Dr. Tomas gave his contact information to the board so that he can be contacted if needed.

Mayor Rodes asked for an amendment to the agenda to add an item to New Business for SCC Building.

MOTION: Commissioner Young made a motion to add the amendment to the agenda by Commissioner Young. The motion was seconded by Grant. Motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA

Financial Report

Joyce Pope presented the April profit and loss report and current bank balances:

Beginning town fund balance per April report:	\$150,485.68
Cleared expenditures totaled	1,190.09
Deposits	968.09
Checking cleared balance Macon	87,817.29
Macon CD 12	25,076.78
Macon CD 48	37,319.61
Ending Town fund balance	\$150,263.68

Mayor's Report

Service Project: The Community Table has stated they need help on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 4pm – 6pm. Mayor Rodes asked if the board wants to go ahead and volunteer when they can, or put off volunteering until June so that more people can attend. Young stated she can volunteer this month. It is optimal to have 2 people or more to help with their dinner service. The entire town is invited to participate, and Mayor Rodes stated she will advertise this on the Facebook page. Mayor Rodes will work on a date.

Sheriff's Deputy Matt Hawkins stopped by to introduce himself to the Board. He is taking the place of Lucas and we will still have Josh Yopp patrolling the Town of Webster. 12 hours per month, three hours per week is the current requirement. Larry showed Officer Hawkins how to get into the Town Hall building. His check will be left on the credenza for his pickup. He will leave his daily patrol sheets on the credenza as well.

Mayor Rodes told the board about attending the NC League meeting in Franklin on May 2nd. Danell Moses, Joyce Pope and Tracy Rodes attended. A lot of valuable information was given out. Rodes stated that two points were made that affect Webster: (1) Their rate on Workman's Comp would be the best rate since we will get a discount by bundling this with our current property & liability insurance. (2) Mayor Rodes asked Paul Myers with the League whether it was helpful for local Towns to write resolutions when the League is for or against legislation. Mr. Myers said that resolutions were not helpful and that it was more effective to make a phone call to representatives. Mayor Rodes stated that she felt resolutions can be useful to educate the public on the Board's stand.

Council Member's Reports - None



OLD BUSINESS:

- a) **Budget:** our new budget goes into effect July 1st; therefore, it needs to be done by the end of June.
- b) **Police protection.** Mayor Rodes checked with another security service to see if we could get more safety patrols. They said they could only patrol private property. Commissioner Phillips got some recommendations from the Jackson County Sheriff. We can get a uniformed officer for 40 hours per week at a cost of \$46-48,000 per year and requires a 4-year contract. They would furnish the car. The town could set the officer's hours. Phillips recommends that during our budget talks we look seriously at doubling our taxes from 5 c. to 10c. He would like to send a letter out to all residents of Webster explaining the reason for a tax increase (to bring in a police officer and make other Town improvements) and get Town approval or denial for a tax increase. Phillips feels that safety is an important issue for the town. Louise Stephens stated that she was told there have been break-ins on North River Road. Phillips will check with the county to verify. Young asked if the sheriff gave any other options other than the fulltime officer. The Sheriff stated that is getting difficult to get his officers to work extra hours on their days off to provide coverage to the Town of Webster. Currently the officers work on their convenience. Webster is currently part of the Sheriff's regular route but the Town has been paying for extra coverage. Rodes said that last year we had budgeted \$8000 but only received \$5000 in bills and coverage. Grant asked if the Town of Sylva could be of any assistance. Phillips said he had already checked with them and was told they don't have the manpower to assist. Rodes stated that since we now have a second officer, maybe we will see increased coverage. We have not received full coverage (per budget) in a while, so we will need to see what increased coverage will do. The board appreciates the work Phillips has put into looking at options with the Sheriff.
- c) **Resolution Opposing SB 94:** Mayor Rodes handed out a resolution opposing SB 94, which would allow partisan elections for municipal offices. The Board had already voted to oppose this bill so Rodes advised the board she will sign it.
- d) **Resolution Opposing HB 64.** Mayor Rodes handed out a resolution opposing HB 64. The Board had already voted to oppose this bill so Rodes advised the board she will sign it.
- Duke Energy.** Will Morgan offered to contact Duke Energy to check on the status of the new contract. Duke had contacted Moses to ask when the board met and how many members are on the board.

NEW BUSINESS:

- a) **Workmans comp:** Mayor Rodes said that our property & liability insurance is up for renewal and we can try to bundle workman's comp. insurance with it, or seek an outside provider. Phillips asked Morgan to find out if the new states that commissioners are to be treated as employees. Rodes read the board GS 97-2 stating the commissioners must be treated as employees but do not receive other benefits such as health insurance.
- b) **Adoption of a Clean Energy Resolution.** Commissioner Young emailed the board a copy of the Town of Sylva's resolution to support the state goal of clean energy by 2050. Dillsboro and Jackson County are also working on resolution. Young has asked Avram Freidman, the head of the Canary Coalition, to speak at the June board meeting. Phillips said he researched and NC is a leading state in the nation in clean energy. Many counties are supporting solar energy and wind energy. Phillips voiced his support of such a resolution with board discussion. Young noted that when we pay our monthly Duke Energy bill, we have the option to pay extra to pay towards solar power. The board could offset Duke energy bills by buying solar energy credits, which would result in a net increase of approximately \$32 per month. Rodes asked Young to provide more details as well as have the board hear Mr. Freidman speak before we create a resolution.
- c) **Payroll Services.** Mayor Rodes spoke with Excel payroll services. They charge an 8% fee. The Town is required to match social security payments, as well as get workers comp insurance. Excel requires a contract for each employee to be signed. Mayor Rodes will check with Bronwyn again as well as Stanberry Insurance. Additionally, Mayor Rodes requested Board approval to open a new account at Entegra Bank solely for the purpose of offering payroll services requiring 2 signatures. Moses made a



motion to open such an account. Grant seconded. Motion passed. Joyce Pope stated that she would research the IRS section stating whether or not a contractor can be converted to employee status, thereby giving the individual both a 1099-MISC and a w-2. Pope stated she is willing to be paid as a contractor through the end of the town's fiscal year. Moses made a motion that the board pay Joyce Pope as a contractor through the end of the fiscal year, then move her to employee status at the start of July.

- d) **Sympathy/memorial for Ms. Davis:** the board signed a sympathy card to be sent to the family of Ms. Davis.
- e) **SCC building variance.** A board of adjustment would be required to pass a variance. Mayor Rodes will check on a board of adjustment. Town commissioners are allowed to have overlap, according to attorney, and serve on both boards. It is not preferable, but allowable for a small town. The current board members are out of date and need to be updated. Harry Almond told Phillips he is resigning. We do not know if Lila and Richard Chevell are active. The board discussed whether or not the parking that is provided meets zoning requirements. The board feels that if SCC meets zoning requirements, then no further action is required.
- f) **Board of adjustment.** Rodes will verify the members of the Board of Adjustment. If the board of adjustments approved a variance, it is presented to the County. The ordinance is meant to protect residences but there are no residences nearby. Attorney will speak to Michele Smith about the three issues Dr. Tomas addressed. He stated that he feels that a variance will be required. SCC falls into a government zone, as does the Town Hall and the old school. A variance is a one-time exception. Morgan advised that the signage would fall under government entity and is acceptable. However, the parking and building height might need a variance. A board of adjustment would need to check on these issues. Morgan advised that SCC could make a formal request for a variance by having a request formally typed up since Webster does not have a formal variance request. Mayor Rodes will ask Dr. Tomas to address all three of his points in his variance request. Mayor Rodes requested the agenda be amended to add new business item for new appointments to the board of adjustment.

MOTION: Commissioner Phillips made a motion to amend the agenda to add new appointments to the Board of Adjustment. Commissioner Grant seconded. Motion carried.

- g) **Add new appointments to the Board of Adjustment.** The board discussed potential membership for the board of Adjustment.

MOTION: Commissioner Phillips made a motion to appoint Leigh Ann Young to the board of adjustments. Commissioner Grant seconded. Motion carried.

Mayor Rodes stated that we will need to schedule a second short meeting to take place after the board of adjustments meets to finish addressing the SCC requests.

Reminders - Next Meeting: June 7, 2017

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: Commissioner Moses moved to adjourn. Commissioner Phillips seconded. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

Tracy Rodes

Tracy Rodes, Mayor

Joyce Pope

Joyce Pope, Town Clerk