



MINUTES
TOWN OF STOKESDALE
REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
8325 ANGEL PARDUE ROAD
STOKESDALE, NC 27357
May 12, 2022 AT 7:00PM

Members present: Mayor Mike Crawford, Mayor Pro-Tem Derek Foy, Councilman Tim Jones, Councilman Jim Rigsbee, Interim Town Clerk Dale Martin, Town Attorney Tom Medlin, Finance Officer Kim Thacker

Councilman Jimmy Landreth was not in attendance.

1. Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance, Invocation:

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Mike Crawford at 7:07pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Pastor Ed McKinney of Stokesdale United Methodist Church gave the invocation.

2. Review and Adopt Agenda:

Councilman Jones requested an agenda amendment to add a discussion about their Metropolitan Planning Organization representative. He also wanted to add a discussion and vote on job advertising for the Town Clerk position.

Motion by Councilman Rigsbee to approve the agenda as amended. Mayor Crawford seconded the motion.

Vote: Mayor Crawford-aye, Mayor Pro-Tem Foy-aye, Councilman Jones-aye, Councilman Rigsbee-aye. Motion carried.

3. Review and Approve Minutes (August 5, 2021; August 12, 2021; September 2, 2021 Open Session; September 2, 2021 Closed Session; April 7, 2022 Budget Workshop; April 14, 2022 Regular Town Council Meeting):

Motion by Mayor Pro-Tem Foy to continue consideration of August 5, 2021 meeting minutes, seconded by Councilman Jones.

Mr. Foy clarified that he wished to ask the Town Clerk a few questions about the minutes.

Vote: Mayor Crawford-aye, Mayor Pro-Tem Foy-aye, Councilman Jones-aye, Councilman Rigsbee-aye. Motion carried.

Motion by Mayor Pro-Tem Foy to approve the August 12th, 2021 meeting minutes as presented, seconded by Mayor Crawford.

Councilman Jones reminded the council of his reticence to provide approval for minutes of a meeting that he did not personally attend. He clarified that should his vote delay the approval of minutes, he would review recordings, documents, and anything else needed to weigh in properly.

Vote: Mayor Crawford-aye, Mayor Pro-Tem Foy-aye, Councilman Jones-nay, Councilman Rigsbee-aye. Motion carried.

Motion by Mayor Pro-Tem Foy to approve September 2nd 2021 meeting minutes as presented, seconded by Mayor Crawford.

Vote: Mayor Crawford-aye, Mayor Pro-Tem Foy-aye, Councilman Jones-nay, Councilman Rigsbee-aye. Motion carried.

Motion by Mayor Pro-Tem Foy to approve September 2nd 2021 Closed Session minutes, seconded by Mayor Crawford.

Vote: Mayor Crawford-aye, Mayor Pro-Tem Foy-aye, Councilman Jones-nay, Councilman Rigsbee-aye. Motion carried.

Motion by Mayor Pro-Tem Foy to approve April 7th 2022 Budget Workshop minutes, seconded by Mayor Crawford.

Vote: Mayor Crawford-aye, Mayor Pro-Tem Foy-aye, Councilman Jones-aye, Councilman Rigsbee-aye. Motion carried.

Motion by Mayor Pro-Tem Foy to approve April 14th 2022 meeting minutes as presented, seconded by Mayor Crawford.

Vote: Mayor Crawford-aye, Mayor Pro-Tem Foy-aye, Councilman Jones-aye, Councilman Rigsbee-aye. Motion carried.

4. Public Safety Reports: Fire Department

Fire Chief Todd Gauldin reported the following: 40 medical calls, 25 fire calls, 21 other calls, overall increase in calls, and an ongoing trend towards more calls overall. He also cautioned everyone to take care with their seasonal appliances, particularly grills. He encouraged everyone to properly put out charcoal fires and to be attentive to gas grills, specifically noting to not allow the gas to build up too much before lighting the grill.

5. Administrative Reports:

a) Planning Board

Mayor Pro-Tem Foy discussed ongoing plans for a parade and an undefined fall event (perhaps a Back-to-School event). Councilman Rigsbee mentioned a request for a memorial park bench. Councilman Jones stated that the park grill near the first shelter was still uninstalled and needed to be addressed.

b) Administrative Report from Interim Town Clerk

Interim Town Clerk Dale Martin reported the following for April - 10 meters installed, 16 applications for transfers of service, 55 meters on hold for builders, 75 meters in stock, 650 water bills sent out, 17 work orders prepared, 27 811's processed, 14 picnic shelters processed, ongoing work to update records for backflow, one ABC permit being processed, plans in process for water line extension in the Blacksmith subdivision, collaboration with NCDOT on road work improvement plans, notification from DEQ that a Clean Watersheds Needs survey was required, continuing to put budget books together, subdivision list in progress, residential building permit application ongoing (for which May 13th is the last day to file an appeal).

Mayor Pro-Tem Foy then read an email from Republic Waste concerning the change in trash and recycling vendor for the Town. It clarified a few details about the process as they ceased operations, with the last day of service being June 30th. Mayor Crawford added that the new company, GFL, had provided an email and phone number citizens could use to ask questions.

c) Events Committee

No report

d) Property Committee

No report

6. Financial Reports: Finance/Budget Officer: Kim Thacker

Finance Officer Thacker presented the financial reports for both the General Fund and the Water Fund, detailing the account balances as of April 30, 2022.

Starting with the General Fund, for the Bank of Oakridge the checking was at \$23,260.88, the CDARS account was \$2,559,664.96. For Fidelity Bank, the checking account was at \$261,713.88, petty cash at \$150.

For the Water Fund, she reported a Bank of Oakridge CDARS account balance of \$499,798.07. The Fidelity checking was \$591,334.99. The CRF Fund was \$160,695.12, NC Management Fund at \$522,642, and the Fidelity Savings account was \$45,050.99.

Responding to a question from Mayor Pro-Tem Foy, Mrs. Thacker stated the bill expected several months ago from Guilford County for municipal elections had not yet arrived, noting she would follow up on it.

7. Citizen's Comments from the Floor (3-minute limit per speaker):

Cheri Pikett, 7804 Robinson Rd, Summerfield, NC – Spoke of her concerns with the current curriculum in Guilford County public schools, referencing her belief that children were being subjected to coercive subject matter. She stated that students were being taught “critical race theory” via “social emotional learning,” and taught about Frankfurt School Marxists. She followed up claiming that this was a “religion” and “based on skin colors and groups,” and was therefore in violation of certain laws prohibiting religion and discrimination in public schools.

She also claimed that “these programs have damaged thousands of our children,” and wanted to somehow prevent this supposed curriculum from “continuing” in Guilford County schools.

Eileen Thiery, 8101 Meadow Springs, Rd., Stokesdale, NC– Asked for clarification about the maintenance responsibility for the area around the Town Clock. She stated that, being the Stokesdale Town Clock, she might expect the Town to officially take over the maintenance of the area at the base of the structure and then officially budget for that maintenance.

Old Business

8. Consideration of an amendment to revise the Town of Stokesdale Water Line Specifications (continued from April 14th meeting):

Councilman Jones suggested that, for new water lines, the Town should exclusively use 8-inch PVC class C900 pipes. Mayor Pro-Tem Foy agreed, and also mentioned that this was because he had already moved to make this change in the past. Mr. Jones agreed with Mr. Foy, as both recalled voting to make this change on two previous occasions (in 2017 and 2020). Mr. Jones also stated that, though he understood that some contractors preferred the 6-inch pipe for the lower costs, he was not sure why 6-inch pipe was still allowed and being used in new projects considering those previous attempts to change the requirements. He also stated that the Fire Department had requested the use of 8-inch pipes as well as the pipes provide better quality (in terms of both volume and pressure) when dealing with fires.

It was also mentioned that Interim Town Clerk Dale Martin had flagged several writing errors, mostly grammatical, in some of the documentation and that those errors should be corrected.

Motion by Councilman Jones to make changes to the Water Line Specifications which would correct grammar and formatting, correct the hydraulic modeling submittal, and change the specification allowing for 6-inch or 8-inch pipe to instead exclusively use 8-inch PVC class C900 pipe for water lines. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Foy.

Vote: Mayor Crawford-aye, Mayor Pro-Tem Foy-aye, Councilman Jones-aye, Councilman Rigsbee-aye. Motion carried.

9. Discussion on Drink Machine located at Town Park (continued from April 14th meeting):

Motion by Councilman Jones to unplug the park drink machine, wrap it in a tarp, mark it as out of order, and then to have the Finance Officer estimate the electricity cost of running the machine since it was installed and bill whoever holds the contract for the machine that amount.

Mr. Foy requested that the motion be broken into two motions, one to mark it as out of order and one related to the billing. Mr. Jones agreed and withdrew his motion.

Motion by Councilman Jones to unplug the park drink machine, wrap it in a tarp, and mark it as out of order, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Foy.

Mayor Crawford asked if the machine was actually in use at all, but it was unclear.

Mr. Jones asked where the authority was coming from to pay for the electricity costs of the machine, to which Mr. Foy responded that the cost for the machine was likely just included in a general power bill and so was not being independently paid for. Mr. Jones clarified that he was unsure of how the machine had been installed without council approval in the first place. Mayor Crawford explained that approval had been given, but he was not sure if the person that gave that approval had the authority to do so. Mr. Jones then said that he would be comfortable withdrawing his motion now that he had voiced his concerns, hoping though that the issue would be discussed further and eventually resolved.

Mayor Crawford commented that he had been in contact with a representative at the Coca-Cola Company and is waiting for a response from them.

Mr. Jones asked Town Attorney Medlin how the Town might proceed if they did not hear back from the company on this matter. Mr. Medlin suggested that, if all appropriate attempts to make contact failed, then the Town would be justified in simply unplugging the machine.

Councilman Rigsbee suggested, considering that they were still attempting to get a response from the company, that they could merely continue the matter. The other members agreed with this suggestion.

Motion by Councilman Jones to continue the matter, seconded by Mayor Crawford.

Vote: Mayor Crawford-aye, Mayor Pro-Tem Foy-nay, Councilman Jones-aye, Councilman Rigsbee-aye. Motion carried.

New Business

10. Consideration of invoice from the Friends of Stokesdale for Town Clock landscaping:

Motion by Mayor Crawford to pay the invoice to the Friends of Stokesdale.

Mayor Pro-Tem asked for clarification, Mayor Crawford stated that he did not think the Town should take over the maintenance of the area at the base of the Town Clock but did think that this invoice should be paid. Councilman Rigsbee commented that his concern, regarding potentially taking over the maintenance of this area, was that it was at a separate location from Town Hall which might necessitate a renegotiation of terms with their landscaping team. He clarified that the terms under which the Town operates require that they plan expenditures in advance, and that they avoid making payments which were not budgeted for before-hand. For that reason, either attempting to adjust the landscaping contract currently in place for Town Hall or paying the Friends of Stokesdale to maintain the Town Clock area were legally difficult propositions. Mr. Foy reminded everyone that a policy which he drafted which would possibly offer a solution to this issue was also on the agenda.

Town Attorney Medlin reminded the council that a motion had been made but was not yet seconded. The motion was seconded by Councilman Rigsbee.

Councilman Jones and Mayor Pro-Tem Foy offered to make the payment themselves to get around the legal concerns brought up by the council on this matter (potentially setting a precedent by using Town money to pay an invoice which was not on the budget). Mr. Rigsbee suggested that this could, instead of being paid as an invoice, be resolved as a donation.

Amendment by Councilman Rigsbee to donate (rather than pay) the Friends of Stokesdale in the amount of \$465.49 for the beautification of the downtown area. The amendment was accepted by Mayor Crawford.

Vote: Mayor Crawford-aye, Mayor Pro-Tem Foy-aye, Councilman Jones-nay, Councilman Rigsbee-aye. Motion carried.

Motion by Councilman Jones to gather invoices from the Friends of Stokesdale relating to the Town Clock area maintenance and Mural project, and to have Town staff locate the agreements between the Town of Stokesdale, the Fire Department, and the Friends of Stokesdale for council review. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Foy, but Mr. Foy commented that he was unsure if the council had the authority to make such a request.

Mr. Jones asked Mr. Medlin for clarification, stating that to his knowledge NC state law required all public funds given to a non-profit organization be subject to an audit trail. Mr. Medlin responded that Mr. Jones was entirely authorized to make the request, but he was unsure what the results would be if the Friends of Stokesdale refused the request.

Mr. Rigsbee asked why they should request invoices from the Friends of Stokesdale as opposed to just checking their own records. Mr. Jones then explained that their own records would not show them where the money actually went, whereas by reviewing the Friends of Stokesdale's records the council could confirm how the public's money had actually been used.

Mr. Foy then read NC General Statute 55A-16-24, which requires that a non-profit which receives over \$5000 in grants, loans, or in-kind donations from a local government to provide financial documents upon a written demand. He then clarified that therefore, Mr. Jones' request was indeed aligned with state law.

Vote: Mayor Crawford-aye, Mayor Pro-Tem Foy-aye, Councilman Jones-aye, Councilman Rigsbee-aye. Motion carried.

11. Discussion and vote on proposal by Charles R. Underwood, Inc. for maintenance on Town's Altitude Valve:

Councilman Jones clarified that this item was actually about a pressure reducing valve and pilot valve, not an altitude valve. He then explained the situation (overdue maintenance) as well as some of the differences between the mechanics of the valves mentioned.

Motion by Councilman Jones to approve proposal by Underwood for \$4,803.75 to rebuild pressure reducing valve, install a new pilot valve, and perform all associated labor. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Foy.

Vote: Mayor Crawford-aye, Mayor Pro-Tem Foy-aye, Councilman Jones-aye, Councilman Rigsbee-aye. Motion carried.

12. Discussion of Town Policy relating to Non-Profits requesting funding from Town:

Mayor Pro-Tem Foy proposed a policy allowing Non-Profits to request funding from the Town. He explained that he designed this policy based on similar policies used by other towns. Some of the major elements of this policy were: the non-profit would inform the town of what services they provide, how many volunteers and members they have, any funds they have received from the Town in the past three years; provide two years of tax information; and a description of how the requested funding would be used.

Motion by Mayor Pro-Tem Foy directing the Town Attorney to review the proposed Non-Profit funding request policy. If approved the policy would be effective retroactively to May 12, 2022. The motion was seconded by Mayor Crawford.

Councilman Jones proposed an **amendment** that the Town would expect Non-Profits to provide invoices, cancelled checks, and other records to keep track of how public money was being used by the non-profit. Mr. Foy agreed to the usefulness of the amendment and accepted it.

Councilman Rigsbee voiced a concern that this policy might interfere with their ability to donate to the Stokesdale school. The council suggested that, not being a non-profit, it should be exempt.

Vote: Mayor Crawford-aye, Mayor Pro-Tem Foy-aye, Councilman Jones-aye, Councilman Rigsbee-aye. Motion carried.

13. Town Policy on Closing a Water Account:

Mayor Pro-Tem Foy clarified that this policy was focused on abandoning a water tap, and that his wording may benefit from some updates moving forward.

Councilman Jones discussed a few points about how the water system in the town was arranged, and what some of the options were for dealing with an abandoned tap. He and Mr. Foy clarified a few points as to how contractors might remove meters and backfill holes, and what the concerns were with the different options. They both agreed that, despite the challenges, getting a policy in place sooner rather than later would be a major benefit.

Motion by Mayor Pro-Tem Foy directing Town Attorney to review proposed process on abandoning a water tap, if approved the policy would be retroactively effective to April 12, 2022. The motion was seconded by Mayor Crawford.

Mr. Jones cautioned that, should there be no fees involved for abandoning a water tap, the Town would then be responsible for the costs. Additionally, he recommended that disconnected meters

be checked occasionally to ensure that property owners were not illegally accessing water services.

Mayor Crawford asked what the actual cost should be, Mr. Jones explained that he didn't have a number ready off the top of his head but that he felt it would be unwise to not charge at all.

Mr. Foy proposed that the following line be added to the policy: "To abandon a water tap property owners should pay a \$250 abandonment fee."

Councilman Rigsbee asked if there was a cheaper and less permanent alternative to the methods suggested up to that point. Mr. Jones explained that, with simple padlocks or pinlocks, any citizen with a few tools and some know-how could easily remove those locks and continue accessing water services after the official abandonment and disconnection. He also mentioned that, in the process of removing locks, it was common to cause damage which the Town would ultimately need to pay for. Mr. Rigsbee then suggested that it might be better, overall and financially, to assume that citizens were trustworthy and use cheaper methods in the abandonment process. Mr. Foy agreed that he would generally assume that the citizens were trustworthy, and that the council likely didn't need to worry overmuch about water theft.

Council continued to discuss different options for how to lock or remove meters, and what processes might be put in place to avoid unnecessary costs while still checking to ensure water services were not being access illegally.

Mr. Medlin suggested that the language be changed to indicate only that an abandoned tap would be rendered inoperable rather than removed, which would allow for operational leeway.

Vote: Mayor Crawford-aye, Mayor Pro-Tem Foy-aye, Councilman Jones-aye, Councilman Rigsbee-aye. Motion carried.

14. Fee Schedule: Text Amendments:

Mayor Pro-Tem Foy proposed that a line be added to the Town fee schedule specifying a \$500 fee for text amendments, plus the cost of advertising should a public hearing be necessary.

Mr. Foy then provided an example of the current text amendment process. The citizen in his example requested a text amendment and paid a total of \$200 for the process while the Town, through advertising costs and staff time, incurred a cost of around \$2,000.

Motion by Mayor Pro-Tem Foy directing the Town Attorney to review the proposed Text Amendment policy and the proposed changes to fees and process, and if approved the policy would be retroactively effective to May 12 2022. The motion was seconded by Mayor Crawford.
Vote: Mayor Crawford-aye, Mayor Pro-Tem Foy-aye, Councilman Jones-aye, Councilman Rigsbee-aye. Motion carried.

15. Release of Performance Bond Letter of Credit for Cold Water Terrace subdivision:

Council, Finance Officer Thacker, and Town Attorney Medlin discussed the details of this item and how it related to DOT processes. Mr. Medlin suggested that this should not be a staff matter, as it was council that needed to confirm for their own purposes that everything was being completed properly. Councilman Jones then responded that he didn't think the bond was a part of their ordinance but was not sure if it included other items that did require attention. Mr. Jones then raised concerns that the plans had not been reviewed or approved, nor had the related installation been inspected, by a Town of Stokesdale engineer. Mr. Medlin then asked if the bond specifically referred to any water infrastructure, as it would in that case have required an engineer to sign off. However, if it was a bond for road-work, then NCDOT would need to sign off instead. Interim Town Clerk Dale Martin then stated that she did not believe the bond covered any water infrastructure.

Motion by Mayor Crawford to release the bond for phase 1 of case #21-05-STPL-04404, seconded by Councilman Jones.

Council discussed Stokesdale's responsibility to address this issue, with Mayor Pro-Tem Foy commenting that many of the roads seemed to be in Forsyth County. Clarification was provided that some roads were in Guilford County and under the Town's responsibility.

Vote: Mayor Crawford-aye, Mayor Pro-Tem Foy-aye, Councilman Jones-aye, Councilman Rigsbee-aye. Motion carried.

16. Discussion of MPO Representative:

Councilman Jones explained that, for the Metropolitan Planning Organization, Stokesdale had been represented by a Summerfield Council Member for many years. He suggested pursuing some way to become more directly involved in their representation. Councilman Rigsbee commented that he would reach out to a contact to get more information.

17. Discussion of Job Advertisement for Town Clerk:

Motion by Councilman Jones to post the job advertisement for the Town Clerk position on Indeed, with the League of Municipalities, and the Town of Stokesdale website and Facebook page. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Foy.

Suggestions were made to use a service to narrow the field and find appropriate candidates, rather than simply send it out on general job sites. Mr. Jones **amended** his motion that verbiage be added per their having joined the Local Government Retirement Commission, seconded by Mr. Foy. A proposed job application submission date was set for May 27th. Councilman Rigsbee proposed an additional **amendment** that it also be advertised in the Northwest Observer. The amended motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Foy.

Vote: Mayor Crawford-aye, Mayor Pro-Tem Foy-aye, Councilman Jones-aye, Councilman Rigsbee-aye. Motion carried.

18. Citizen's Comments from the floor (3-minute limit per speaker):

Bobby Dalton, Stokesdale, NC – Spoke of her concerns about recent changes in property values and the related appeals process. She requested the Council get involved in the matter, as she was unhappy with how her property was appraised. Council thanked her for commenting on this matter as they shared her concerns.

19. Council Comments:

Councilman Rigsbee thanked all for attending and Mayor Pro-Tem Foy thanked staff for their work. Councilman Jones thanked staff as well, and also thanked Bobby Dalton for staying until the end of the meeting. He then noted his particular concern about property evaluations, in general and for families, as groceries and gas prices were also increasing. Mayor Crawford also thanked everyone for attending and encouraged everyone to vote in the upcoming primary.

20. Adjournment:

Motion by Mayor Pro-Tem Foy to adjourn at 10:35pm, seconded by Councilman Jones.

Vote: Mayor Crawford-aye, Mayor Pro-Tem Foy-aye, Councilman Jones-aye, Councilman Rigsbee-aye. Motion carried.

Approved: July 14, 2022

Michael E. Crawford, Mayor

ATTEST:

Dale F. Martin, Town Clerk