

## NORTH WILKESBORO BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Work Session Held via ZOOM  
Thursday, January 28, 2021  
5:30 p.m.

**Members present:** Mayor Robert Johnson, Commissioner Angela Day, Commissioner Debbie Ferguson, Commissioner Michael Parsons, Mayor Pro-tem Andrew Palmer, Commissioner Bert Hall.

**Staff present:** Town Manager Wilson Hooper, Clerk Debra Pearson, Town Attorney Daniel Johnson, Town Planner Meredith Detsch., Dale Shumate and NW Police Captain Charles Thornburg.

- Call to Order- Mayor Robert Johnson
- Invocation- Mayor Robert Johnson
- Pledge of Allegiance- NW Police Captain Charles Thornburg
- **Action Items**  
Each Action Item was voted upon individually.  
A.) Resolution for NW Police Chief Joe Rankin to Receive Side Arm and Badge upon Retirement- **Motion to approve was made by Commissioner Parsons, seconded by Commissioner Day. Item unanimously approved by individual roll call of each Commissioner.**  
B.) Personnel Policy Update- **Motion to approve Personnel Policy Update was made by Commissioner Ferguson, seconded by Commissioner Parsons. Item unanimously approved by individual roll call of each Commissioner.**  
C.) “Lodge” Text Amendment- **Motion to approve the Text Amendment made by Commissioner Palmer, seconded by Commissioner Hall. Item unanimously approved by individual roll call of each Commissioner.**  
**A motion to call for a Public Hearing 02/25 & 26/2021 for the Lodge Text Amendment was made by Commissioner Palmer, seconded by Commissioner Hall. Motion unanimously approved by roll call of each Commissioner.**

**IV. Additions/Deletions to the Agenda-** Mayor Robert Johnson asked the Board if there were to be any additions or deletions to the January 28, 2021 Work Session agenda. Town Manager Hooper noted a necessary date change for items C. Lodge Text Amendment and H.) Heavy Truck Ordinance Discussion. The date to call for a Public Hearing for both of these items was Incorrectly posted as February 26 and 27, 2021. This has been changed to February 25 and 26, 2021.

**V. Approval of the agenda-** Mayor Johnson called for a motion to approve the amended agenda at this time. **Motion to approve the January 28, 2021 Town of North Wilkesboro Commissioners' amended Work Session Agenda was made by Commissioner Ferguson and seconded by Commissioner Palmer. Motion unanimously carries by roll call.**

**VI. Work Items:**

- A.) - FY19-20 Audit Presentation – Connie Bauguess and Craig Hopkins were in attendance at the Work Session. Mr. Hopkins said the Audit went very well and that Finance Officer Bauguess does a great job of keeping records and commented that she submits information timely. Town Manager Hooper commented that Finance Officer Bauguess' record keeping is meticulous. The audit was very favorable for the Town.
  
- B.) NWFD FEMA Grant Application – Dale Shumate- This is a request to file for a FEMA Grant for 1.M dollars. Public Service Director Shumate, presenting for Fire Chief Martin, is asking to purchase a 1.25M dollar firetruck and for Board approval to apply for the Grant. The new vehicle will replace the current 1985 model that no longer meets OSHA regulations. The Board will be asked to grant permission for NWFD to apply for grants at the February 2, 2021 meeting.
  
- C.) NWPD Officers' Survey Results and Police Chief Recruitment Discussion – Wilson Hooper- Twenty-eight North Wilkesboro Police Officers participated in a survey to gather opinions and thoughts on the current state of the North Wilkesboro Police Department and ideas on recruiting a new Police Chief. NW Police Captain Charles R. Thornburg is currently acting as Chief of Police upon Chief Joe Rankin's recent retirement. Integrity was the characteristic the majority of surveyed Officers stated was most important in this position. Commissioner Parsons stated the North Wilkesboro Police Department has achieved the highest level of professionalism. He commented they were courteous, well informed and very professional in appearance and actions. Commissioner Ferguson agreed and stated that Commissioner Parsons did a stellar job at describing the Officers of the Department. Commissioner Palmer thanked Town Manager Hooper for conducting the survey and that he feels compensation needs to be competitive and he would like to see the department more proactive on the issues of speeding and parking. Town Manager Hooper will continue to work on the position profile and job description. This item will be brought back for Board approval at the February 25, 2021 work session.
  
- D.) Retreat Planning – Wilson Hooper- Manager Hooper asked the Board for input as to what they wanted to cover during the upcoming Board Retreat. The Board has agreed on Friday, March 5, 2021 to hold the retreat. The Board would like to hold the retreat locally and use local restaurants for meals. Some topics suggested by the Board for discussion at the retreat are parks, landscaping, possibly creating a landscaping board, a new program for business outreach, housing, finishing the mural at the Marketplace. Commissioner Ferguson stated she would like to focus discussion on police and fire departments and discuss a plan for downtown appearances. Tourism Director Crystal Keener will contact Ashley Barton at the Art Gallery and Town Clerk Debbie Pearson will contact the Stone Center for the Performing

Arts to see if they could accommodate the board in order to maintain social distancing, thus observing the COVID-19 safety regulations.

H.) Heavy Truck Ordinance and Traffic Follow-up – Wilson Hooper- Due to voiced concerns from residential property owners over the course of the past several months, Town Manager Hooper and staff have compiled a briefing sheet to help in updating Chapter 11 of the Town Code that prohibits tractor-trailers or other heavy truck from using certain town street without a permit. The current statute, NCGS 160-A-300 reads “A City may by ordinance prohibit, regulate, divert, control and limit pedestrian or vehicular traffic upon the public streets, sidewalks, alleys. And bridges of the city.” Changes would include ordinance language and policy choices would be whether to have a heavy trucks ordinance, vehicle weight/classification restrictions, the streets that the changes would apply to, whether to designate a single truck route for through trucks, and how diligently the town would enforce the ordinance. Certain residential streets are currently being used as “cut-throughs by large commercial vehicles and have been observed to run stop signs and speed through these areas thereby creating a safety hazard. A Public Hearing is required before any such ordinance passage. This item will be on the agenda for the February 2, 2021 regular meeting. **Motion to call for a Public Hearing 02/25 & 26/2021 for the Heavy Truck Ordinance was made by Commissioner Palmer and seconded by Commissioner Hall. Motion unanimously carries by individual roll call of each Commissioner.**

I.) Hwy 268 Annexation Request – Meredith Detsch- Property owners of 33.3 acres on NC Hwy. 268 wish to market their property to developers of townhomes, condominiums or single-family homes, which are needed in the community. The property is behind Liberty Grove Baptist Church at the corner of NC 268 and River Road/Liberty Church Road in North Wilkesboro. A request to have the property rezoned to R20 has been submitted to the Planning Board. The Planning Board discussed the request and stated they would like to see a development agreement or plan associated with the request to rezone. They would also like deed restrictions to prohibit manufactured homes on the sites. The property owners stated in their letter that the price of the properties would likely discourage that type of buyer. Studies would have to be done to see the costs of policing, waste collection and street maintenance. The board of Commissioners can accept or reject this request. Comments from the Board included the fact that the property is not in proximity to town, there is no plan for development at this time and this size property being annexed would put the town to its limit on annexed properties. Commissioner Parsons stated that at this time, he could not support this request. There was no decision made on this item and no further discussion.

J.) Closed Session (if necessary)- **There was no closed session meeting held this evening.**

With no other items or concerns to be discussed, Mayor Johnson called for a motion to adjourn. **Motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Palmer and seconded by Commissioner Day. Motion unanimously carries.**  
**The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.**

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Debra W. Pearson, CLERK

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Robert L. Johnson, Mayor

APPROVED \_\_\_\_\_