

**Commissioners Work Session
Thursday, February 27, 2020
Commissioners Room
5:30 p.m.**

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

Absent: Commissioner Bert Hall, Town Attorney Daniel Johnson

Staff present: Town Manager Wilson Hooper, Clerk Debra Pearson, Planning Director Meredith Detsch, Public Services Director Dale Shumate, and North Wilkesboro Police Major Scott Teague.

- Call to Order- Mayor Robert Johnson
- Invocation- Mayor Robert Johnson
- Pledge of Allegiance- NW Police Major Scott Teague

At the start of the meeting, at Town Manager Wilson Hooper's request, two items were added to the Agenda. Those items are: **VI.) Mayor and Commissioners topics-** Action to Amend the current scheduled Board of Commissioner's Board Meeting dates and to give an update to the current Raw Water Intake Project. The amendments to the Board's meeting calendar will be decided and voted on in the Mayor and Commissioners topics section. The latter item, **VII. b.)** Raw Water Intake Project Update discussion will follow agenda **Item VII.**, Work Items A). High Country Council of Government Update-Julie Wiggins and Phil Trew.

V. Approval of Agenda-

Mayor Robert Johnson called for a motion to approve the February 27, 2020 Agenda-Setting Work Session as amended. **Commissioner Parsons made the motion to approve and Commissioner Ferguson seconded the motion. Motion unanimously carries.**

VI. Mayor and Commissioners topics-

At this time, amending the Commissioners' meeting schedule was discussed. There are four (4) possible changes to be made if the Board is in agreement. It was decided that the March 26, 2020 Work Session would begin at 7:15 p.m. to allow Commissioners to attend a Wilkes Chamber of Commerce sponsored event. This event features State Treasurer Dale Folwell as the guest speaker at the government affairs session from 5:30 until 7:00 p.m.in the Wilkes Chamber of Commerce Boardroom. Another date discussed was to cancel the April 23, 2020 Work Session due to the attendance of the Board of Commissioners to Chamber Night held on the grounds of Wilkes Community College. This is an annual event coinciding with the first night of "MerleFest". The third and fourth items are to decide two dates to hold meetings dedicated to creating the Town's FY 21 budget. The dates agreed upon by the Board are March 31, and April 2, 2020. With these changes discussed and dates agreed upon, **Mayor Johnson called for a motion to approve the amendments to the Board of Commissioners Meeting Schedule. Motion to approve the March 26 time change, the April 23 meeting cancellation, and the March 31, and April 2, 2020 meetings to begin creation of the FY 21 budget, was made by Commissioner Parsons and seconded by Commissioner Ferguson. Motion unanimously carries.** Upon approval of this motion, staff will advertise and post the revised schedule according to statute.

VII. Work Items

A.) High Country Council of Governments Update – Julie Wiggins

Julie Wiggins and Phil Trew with the High Country Council of Governments HCCOG better known as “the COG” gave an informative update on current activity. Julie covered the many different areas they help. The “COG” is an agency established by the State of North Carolina to assist local governments and is recognized by the Federal Government as the designated administrative agency for certain federal programs in the region. The HCCOG provides services to local governments that enhance the well-being of their communities. They serve and are governed by seven (7) counties and nineteen (19) municipalities that comprise the High Country region. Those counties are: Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Mitchell, Watauga, Wilkes, and Yancey counties. Mayor Robert Johnson is on the Board of the HCCOG. There will be an increase of \$828.00 per year in dues phased in over the next three years bringing the annual dues to \$3800.00 annually from the current \$1126.00. This increase will be figured into the budget and placed on the upcoming agenda for approval.

Phil Trew has been with the COG for twenty-three years and spoke on current and upcoming project studies. A few items covered were the Oakwoods Road connector, ideas on Highway 421 to the CBD Loop, traffic calming studies, improvements to traffic flow on D Street, GIS mapping and comprehensive zoning ordinances. The Town currently has a contract of \$5000.00 per year to perform GIS mapping services. The Board thanked Ms, Wiggins and Mr. Trew for coming, for their time and updates.

b.) The second addition/amendment to the agenda was discussed next. This is the Raw Water Intake Project Update-Wilson Hooper-

Manager Hooper informed the board of an update on this project. It is actually named the “Yadkin River Raw Water Intake and Treatment Plant Actiflo Project.” The Town’s project has two major components: a new intake on the Yadkin River and an enhancement to the treatment plant system called “Actiflo.” The Intake Project and Actiflo or not bound together. Actiflo helps treat the turbidity of the raw water that comes in from the Reddies River and will help the town meet state requirements for water quality. The Actiflo system is \$3.5M of the \$8M project. Town Manager Hooper recommends we proceed with the Actiflo portion of the project and defer the raw water intake project portion until a community solution can be created. Because of our need the state has agreed that an Actiflo-only project would qualify for state funds and they have agreed that it is eligible for funds. This change will require that we reapply for state funds for the intake portion once the community solution is created. This preserves funding for part of the project (Actiflo) rather than risking all of it going back to reclassification.

B.) Town Attorney Recruitment – Wilson Hooper

Town Manager Hooper reports he has consulted with the UNC School of Government and the North Carolina League of Municipalities with both agreeing that hiring a full-time attorney for a town the size of North Wilkesboro would be unusual, but with the list of legal needs the town has, it could warrant a full-time position. Small towns typically have part-time attorneys, but an assessment of the town’s legal needs coupled with a forecast of potential future legal needs makes the full-time model worth considering. A full-time attorney could also be used to work on complex administrative projects, extending the capacity of the town’s professional administrative staff. Town Manager Hooper suggests the Board include the question of a full-time attorney into its budget deliberations in order to consider the additional costs alongside other town needs. Manager Hooper included his draft of a ***Town Attorney Job Description Full-Time*** listing expectations from the prospective candidate along with education requirements. Manager Hooper also presented an estimated legal department budget showing a current part-time salary and then projected costs reflecting one-time department supplies, such as computers, desk, etc., and other professional and contracted services for full-time salaried attorney. Currently Attorney Daniel Johnson is serving as interim attorney. Attorney Johnson was appointed interim Town Attorney on January 23, 2020.

C.) Board Retreat Pre-Work – Wilson Hooper

Town Manager Hooper asked the board to rank the 91 items on the Town's 2018 Comprehensive Plan into their most prioritized top 20 to be discussed at the annual Board Retreat to be held Friday, March 6, 2020 at Community House in Morganton, NC. The asterisks by each item represent each Board member's priority of business. Perry James, CFO of the City of Raleigh and current municipal operations consultant with NCLM will be the retreat's facilitator. Town Manager Hooper will use this information from the day long retreat to establish work plans for himself and department heads.

Goals and Policies

The goals and policies outlined below were developed to reflect a combination of data received from public input sessions and information gathered for development of the plan. To the greatest extent possible, the goals reflect the desires as expressed by the community while taking into account the reality of the town's physical, social, and economic situation. Policies in bold are those deemed high priority.

Ranked in popularity:

Policy 2 - Work with the Wilkes EDC, Chamber of Commerce, & Downtown North Wilkesboro Partnership to ensure that businesses & entrepreneurs are aware of the resources that are offered in our community. ****

Policy 3 - Maintain a strong relationship with the Wilkes EDC, Wilkes Chamber of Commerce, Town of Wilkesboro, County of Wilkes, High Country Council of Governments, and North Carolina Department of Commerce. ****

Policy 18 - Partner with the private sector to develop the Block 46 and areas surrounding the historic downtown.*****

Policy 32 - Continue to work with property owners to revitalize downtown buildings.**** **Policy 38** - Enforce the adopted Minimum Housing Standards in all residential neighborhoods.*****

Policy 39 - Support a minimum housing program in areas of town containing deteriorated and dilapidated dwellings.*****

Policy 37 - Implement the housing study throughout the town limits.****

Policy 10 - Work with businesses and the Wilkes EDC to forecast facility "buildout" and alternatives for facility growth or relocation.***

Policy 33 - Utilize efficient and effective maintenance methods to improve the public spaces within downtown.***

Policy 44 - Continue cooperation with North Wilkesboro Housing Authority.***

Policy 59 - Develop Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for water and sewer system development.***

Policy 72 - Create and enhance greenway linkages and access to regional park facilities as a centralized greenway system.***

Policy 49 - Continue to replace substandard or failing water lines, sewer lines and supporting facilities.***

Policy 1 - Work closely with new & existing businesses to guide them through zoning and permitting processes.**

Policy 8 - Work with RPO to insure adequate transportation projects are included into the TIP for movement of goods, services, and customers.**

Policy 14 - Promote infill development on vacant land.**

Policy 13 - Consolidate development regulations into a Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). **

Policy 21 - Encourage the use of existing buildings and sites within current town limits.**

Policy 25 – Institute a building reuse/rehab grant for downtown buildings.**

Policy 29 - Develop and implement streetscape plan for pedestrian uses.**

Policy 34 - Implement the Downtown Masterplan (2010) and the Community Livability Action Plan (2014).**

Policy 52 - Continue to inventory existing water and sewer transmission systems for needed modifications and repairs.**

Policy 57 - Establish primary raw water intake from W. Kerr Scott Reservoir through collaboration with the County and Town of Wilkesboro.** (Still primary water intake source)

Policy 58 - Update map and GIS database of water, sewer, and stormwater systems.**

Policy 63 - Inventory existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities for needed modifications and repairs.**

Policy 67 - Prioritize sidewalk and multi-purpose path construction and repair as part of capital improvement programming.**

Policy 74 - Encourage private sector to fill recreation needs that the town identifies cannot be provided publicly.**

Policy 78 - Provide a Capital Improvement Program to guide the provision for park and recreation facilities.**

Policy 79 - Cooperate with private sector entities to provide a variety of recreational opportunities. **

Policy 80 - Encourage an annual evaluation to assess parks and recreation needs of the community. **

Policy 90 - Connect significant historical areas with greenways and pedestrian facilities. **

Policy 4 - Identify and nurture non-traditional, but growing employment sectors. *

Policy 6 – Offer FREE zoning & sign permits to all applicants.*

Policy 7 - Identify and appropriately zone areas deemed necessary for larger businesses to thrive. *

Policy 9 - Provide water and sewer services to areas identified as being high growth areas. *

Policy 11 - Allow for more mixing of uses.*

Policy 12 - Allow for more conditional and special use districts*

Policy 15 - Rezone commercial properties that have residential homes and zero (0) commercial development potential to appropriate district.*

Policy 17 - Analyze current non-conforming land uses*

Policy 20 - Encourage building reuse by district.*

Policy 24 - Support development of NCDOT Project R-4744, Industrial Park Connector.*

Policy 26 - Continue to implement corridor overlay districts with design standards for Highways 421B, 268, 115, and 18 entering town.*

Policy 27 - Work with the County to improve the entrances to town.*

Policy 30 - Incorporate festival and park-type uses in the downtown.*

Policy 31 - Incorporate Yadkin Valley Heritage Corridor designs into Neighborhood district, Town property, & historic downtown signage.*

Policy 36 - Require the use of fences, berms, walls, or landscaped materials to provide a buffer between all residential uses and adjoining non-residential uses, when practical.*

Policy 42 - Maintain clean, walkable, and safe streets in all neighborhoods.*

Policy 47 - Annex “doughnut hole” areas inside town limits.*

Goal C.1 - Encourage Fiscally Responsible Utility Extensions, Expansions and Servicing*

Policy 48 - Implement higher density/mixed use zoning codes.*

Policy 50 - Identify and annex water and/or sewer customers who are being serviced by Town utilities, yet are not in town where practical.*

Policy 53 - Adopt a policy and standards for the extension of water and sewer services into the Town's Extraterritorial Jurisdiction.*

Policy 54 - Identify areas for the extension of water and sewer services into the Town's Extraterritorial Jurisdiction.*

Policy 56 - Monitor sewer system efficiency to ensure against infiltration and inflow problems.*

Policy 60 - Require Stormwater control systems be provided for development depending on scale and impact of use.*

Policy 64 - Collaborate with the County and NCDOT in the implementation of the 2017 Wilkes County CTP.*

Policy 65 - Encourage developers to use established traffic calming designs to control automobile movement through residential areas.*

Policy 68 - Incorporate regionally-adopted long-range transportation plans into the Town's Transportation Plan.*

Policy 70 - Coordinate with NCDOT to upgrade pedestrian facilities as a part of NCDOT road projects.*

Policy 75 - Convert the Southern Railway right of way to a centralized greenway and park.*

Policy 83 - Encourage mixed use commercial development in watershed.*

Policy 87 - Establish a Historic Preservation Commission.*

Policy 88 - Promote the use of incentives to ensure historic preservation.*

Policy 89 - The Town shall actively pursue grants and other funds to further historic preservation programs.*

Other items:

- Real estate of town owned properties (real estate policy) prioritize a real estate plan
- Public Safety
- **(DOWNTOWN- Strengthen appearance and streetscaping)**

At 7:15 p.m., before the closed Session began, the board recessed briefly.

D.) Town Manager Performance Review (Closed Session)

At 7:20 p.m. a closed session meeting was called by Mayor Johnson Pursuant to GS 143-3180.11 (a)(6) *Personnel*-. **Motion to go into closed session was made by commissioner Parsons, seconded by Commissioner Day.** This session is to consider the employment agreement and six-month performance review of Town Manager Hooper. **Motion unanimously carries.**

Mayor Johnson called for a motion to close the Personnel Review session. **Motion was made at 8:05 by Commissioner Ferguson, seconded by Commissioner Day. Motion unanimously carries.**

Return to open session was called by Mayor Johnson, **with a motion made by Commissioner Ferguson, seconded by Commissioner Parsons at 8:07. Motion unanimously carries to return to open session.**

E). Town Manager Performance Review (Open Session)

It is the consensus of the Board to approve Resolution 2020-005 Terms of Employment for North Wilkesboro Town Manager. This 3.5% pay increase is based upon the Board of Commissioners' review of Mr. Hooper's performance and the satisfactory completion of the six-month probationary period. **Motion to approve Resolution 2020-005 , Terms of Employment for North Wilkesboro Town Manager, was made by Commissioner Ferguson, seconded by Commissioner Parsons. Motion unanimously carries. See background information sheet and Resolution 2020 -005 attachment.**

With no other business to discuss, a motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Parsons. Mayor Johnson declared the meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Debra W. Pearson, Town Clerk

Robert L. Johnson MAYOR

APPROVED: _____

E. TOWN MANAGER PERFORMANCE REVIEW (OPEN SESSION)

Approve a resolution indicating the end of Town Manager's probationary employment period due to satisfactory performance and approving a 3.5% base pay increase per the terms of his employment agreement.

STAFF RESOURCE: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: Administration budget

BACKGROUND:

- The Board of Commissioners publicly approved an employment agreement with the Town Manager at the June 27, 2019 meeting. The Town Manager began work on July 29, 2019.
- The employment agreement stipulates that upon satisfactory completion of a six-month probationary employment period, the Town Manager's salary be raised 3.5% to \$93,163.20.
- The Board met in closed session, as permitted by state law, and deemed the Town Manager's performance satisfactory.
- Per the current terms of the employment agreement, the next performance review will take place in August. Subsequent annual performance reviews shall also take place during the month of August.

ACTION:

- According to state statute, only hiring/firing must take place in open session. The courts have given no clear guidance on whether other personnel actions must take place in open session.
- However, according to the UNC SOG taking this action in open session "honors the underlying policy of openness embodied in the open meetings law" to which the town is subject.
- It also a symbol of the town's commitment to transparency and financial stewardship.

ATTACHMENT:

- 1.) Resolution

RESOLUTION 2020-005
TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT FOR
NORTH WILKESBORO TOWN MANAGER

WHEREAS, on June 27, 2019 the Board of Commissioners of the Town of North Wilkesboro appointed Wilson Hooper as Town Manager and;

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners and Mr. Hooper mutually agreed to terms of employment outlined in an employment agreement and;

WHEREAS, the employment agreement stipulates that upon satisfactory completion of six-month probationary employment period the Board shall increase Mr. Hooper's base salary by 3.5% and;

WHEREAS, the Board has conducted a review of Mr. Hooper's performance for the initial six months of employment and deems it to be satisfactory and;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners of the Town of North Wilkesboro, with the adoption of this Resolution, officially ends Mr. Hooper's probationary employment period and agrees to the compensation increase as outlined in the employment agreement.

This the _____ day of _____, 2020

Robert L. Johnson, Mayor

ATTEST:

Debra W. Pearson, Town Clerk