

Commissioners Work Session
Thursday, March 26, 2020
Commissioners Room
7:15 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,

Staff present: Town Manager Wilson Hooper, Clerk Debra Pearson, Town Attorney Daniel Johnson, Planning Director Meredith Detsch, Public Services Director Dale Shumate, and North Wilkesboro Police Chief Joe Rankin.

- Call to Order- Mayor Robert Johnson
- Invocation- Mayor Robert Johnson
- Pledge of Allegiance- NW Police Chief Joe Rankin

V. Approval of Agenda-

Mayor Robert Johnson called for a motion to approve the March 26, 2020 Agenda-Setting Work Session. **Commissioner Day made the motion to approve and Commissioner Ferguson seconded the motion. Motion unanimously carries.**

VI. Public Comment Period Carried Over from Cancelled 3/3/2020 Meeting-

Mayor Johnson opened the floor for a public comment period at this work session due to there being no regular board meeting held in the town March 3, 2020. This meeting was cancelled in order to hold the annual budget retreat on Friday, March 6, 2020. At this time, there was no one that wished to speak.

VII. Work Items

A.) Coronavirus/COVID-19 Response Update and Emergency Powers Authorization (action) *See attachment A*

Town Manager Hooper spoke at length and gave a very informative report regarding the current situation of the town and the COVID19 update. He shared the most current figures and data from Wilkes County Health Department and Wilkes Regional Medical Center. A State of Emergency was declared by Wilkes County March 13, 2020, with concurrence from the Towns of North Wilkesboro, Wilkesboro, and Ronda. The State of Emergency was amended March 19, 2020. The State of Emergency prohibits gatherings of fifty (50) or more people and allows each entity (Town) to take additional steps to ensure public safety. Gatherings of ten (10) or more is now prohibited through April 30, 2020. The Town Manager requests certain emergency powers be delegated to him so that he may quickly and effectively respond to COVID19 related matters in such a way as to protect the health and welfare of the town residents and employees. Town Manager Hooper requests the Board approve Resolution 2020-006 formally endowing him the emergency powers to update personnel policy, amend the town's utility policy and modify business operations in response to coronavirus/COVID 19.

was Mayor Johnson asked for a motion to approve Resolution 2020-006 that would Grand Comprehensive Authority to North Wilkesboro Town Manager Wilson Hooper. **A motion to approve Resolution 2020-006 made my Commissioner Ferguson and seconded by Commissioner/Mayor Pro-Tem Palmer. Motion unanimously carries.**

B.) Board of Commissioners Meeting Plan and Schedule Update (action)

otherwise on how Due to the COVID19 outbreak and State of Emergency Declaration, Manager Hooper suggested the previously scheduled budget workshops for March 31st and April 2nd, 2020 be postponed or rescheduled. Postponing the budget workshops stems from the current emergency situation and that the current budget figures have been “blown to heck” as Manager Hooper puts it. Budget figures from all departments had been turned in for review by Manager and Council, and now Departments have been asked to trim back in order to safeguard spending. Budget figures still are expected to be approved by the end of the fiscal year unless mandated by the state, so a budget workshop as soon as possible is vital. Commissioners had questions to go about holding a board meeting having to use virtual media resources and the requirements to be met for providing transparency to the public. Manager Hooper and staff will be working on ways of conducting the town council regular monthly board meeting scheduled for next Tuesday, April 7, 2020. Manager Hooper intends to have information prepared for possible budget workshop dates to be decided at that time. Commissioners gave Manager Hooper full support in developing a meeting platform format. **Commissioner Parsons made a motion to allow Manager Hooper to amend the meeting schedule, to cancel the two budget workshops, and configure a public meeting of the Board of Commissioners via Zoom or possibly the Town of North Wilkesboro Facebook page. Commissioner Palmer seconded the motion.** When a media source has been decided, Manager Hooper’s staff will post details on all news media sources and the Town Website.

With no other business to discuss, a motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Parsons and seconded by Commissioner Ferguson. Mayor Johnson declared the meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Debra W. Pearson, Town Clerk

Robert L. Johnson MAYOR

APPROVED: _____

Attachment A

**RESOLUTION 2020—006 GRANTING COMPREHENSIVE AUTHORITY TO
NORTH WILKESBORO TOWN MANAGER**

RESOLUTION GRANTING COMPREHENSIVE AUTHORITY TO TOWN MANAGER REGARDING STATE OF EMERGENCY POWERS RELATING TO PERSONNEL, UTILITY, AND TOWN GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND GENERAL BUSINESS OPERATIONS DURING THE DURATION OF THE WILKES COUNTY STATE OF EMERGENCY AS DECLARED ON MARCH 13, 2020 DUE TO CORONAVIRUS/COVID-19

WHEREAS, as the global and nationwide state of emergency related to Coronavirus/COVID-19 continues to evolve rapidly, the Town of North Wilkesboro’s goal is to take responsible actions to ensure sustainability of public safety and essential services in the months ahead and alight mitigating strategies on the side of precaution whenever possible; and **WHEREAS**, on March 13, 2020 the Mayor of North Wilkesboro asked that the town be included in a State of Emergency declared by Wilkes County, and therefore such a state of emergency exists within the jurisdiction of the Town of North Wilkesboro; and

WHEREAS, the Town of North Wilkesboro employees will be directly impacted with issues as a result of the unprecedented COVID-19 State of Emergency; and town officials are committed to taking proactive measures to educate, prevent, and slow the spread of COVID-19 within the community and the town workforce; and

WHEREAS, the Town Manager has advised the Board of Commissioners that to protect the health and safety of residents of the Town of North Wilkesboro and to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 during rapidly changing circumstances, it will require the town to promptly address and resolve unprecedented challenges as they arise;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of the Town of North Wilkesboro, North Carolina, that during the duration of the State of Emergency within Wilkes County and the Town of North Wilkesboro, the Town Manager (or designee), is hereby granted authority to take necessary actions such as the following, but not limited to:

- Personnel Policy – to adopt amendments to the Town of North Wilkesboro Personnel Policy such as emerging practices regarding employee leave, designating essential vs. non-essential positions, promoting telework and flexible scheduling, etc;
- Utility and Town Government Policies – to take necessary action to address issues make adjustments to amend utility services such as temporarily suspend utility disconnections, non-payment fees, etc.;
- General Business Operations – to modify business practices such as alter business hours for walk-in customers, halt non-essential services, offer alternative business transaction techniques that mitigate public contact, etc.

This resolution shall take effect immediately upon its passage.

Adopted this the _____ day of March, 2020

Debra W. Pearson, Town Clerk

Robert L. Johnson MAYOR