

Town of North Wilkesboro Board of Commissioners
Regular Monthly Meeting (Virtual)
May 5, 2020

The Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Board of Commissioners of the town of North Wilkesboro was held via ZOOM online platform in the respective homes and/or offices of the Commissioners, Town Manager and Town Clerk May 5, 2020.

The full meeting can be viewed at the following link:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eezLKX3QQM>

THERE WERE PRESENT via ZOOM: Robert L. Johnson, Mayor
Andrew Palmer, Commissioner/Mayor Pro-Tem
Angela Day, Commissioner
Debbie Ferguson, Commissioner
Michael Parsons, Commissioner
Bert Hall, Commissioner

ALSO PRESENT via ZOOM: Wilson B. Hooper, Town Manager
Debra Pearson, Town Clerk
Daniel Johnson, Town Attorney

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Robert Johnson called the meeting to order at 5:45 p.m. and delivered the Invocation. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Michael Parsons.

IV. Additions/Deletions to agenda:

There were no additions or deletions to the agenda.

V. Approval of the Agenda:

Manager Wilson Hooper made a request to move Item F. under section IX Business: to be heard prior to the Public Comments, Section IV. This was to allow time for LeeAnn Nixon to present the Wilkes County Small Business Recovery Program Donation proposal to the Board. **Commissioner Parsons made a motion to move the Agenda Item. Commissioner Ferguson seconded the motion. Motion unanimously carries by each Commissioner called upon by name to vote.**

LeAnn Nixon informed the Board of her proposal from the Wilkes EDC to establish a Small Business Recovery Program and ask consideration for a contribution of Town dollars to the program. The EDC Recovery Program will partner with the Town of Wilkesboro with contributions from Lowes Companies, The Herring Foundation, and private donations. With consideration, The Town of North Wilkesboro would call for and advertise for a Special Meeting of the Board of Commissioners to be held Monday, May 18th, 2020 to hold a Public Hearing and take a vote on the contribution. Manager Hooper called for a motion to approve the consideration of a contribution and to call for a public hearing in order to take a vote on the contribution. **Motion to call for a Special Meeting and Public Hearing was made**

by Commissioner Ferguson to approve a contribution of \$30,000. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Parsons. Motion unanimously carries by roll call of each Commissioner and vote. See Attachment F

VI. Public Comments:

Mayor Johnson opened the floor for anyone wishing to speak. Philip Mueller with Cooks Inc. along with Heather Murphy from the Health Foundation were in attendance and requested to speak. Mr. Mueller is requesting permission to post temporary safety signs for bicyclists. These signs will bring attention to cyclists, making cycling safer and encourage traffic to be mindful and give them more room on the road. Heather Murphy spoke on programs such as "Bike Block Party", funding a program to repair bikes for low income children and the success that program has had, and the possibility of having more bike racks available in the downtown area. Planning Director Meredith Detsch created a Proclamation naming May "National Bike Month" and the board was asked to approve the temporary sign placement. Manager Hooper called for a motion to approve placement of the temporary safety signs and approval of a "National Bike Month" Proclamation, promoting Civic activity.

Motion to approve temporary signage and a declare May 2020 as National Bike Month with a Proclamation was made by Commissioner Parsons and seconded by Commissioner Ferguson. Motion unanimously carries by each board member called by roll call and vote of approval. See attachment H

VII. Consent Agenda:

- A.) Approval of Meeting Minutes-Debbie Pearson
- B.) Budget Amendment-Connie Bauguess *See attachment B*
- C.) Audit Contract-Connie Bauguess *See attachment C*
- D.) Property Donation-Wilson Hooper *See attachment D*

VIII. Town Manager's Report

Manager Hooper spoke on updates from Governor Cooper. On May 8, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. a modified stay at home order will be addressed. More information will be provided them regarding opening of businesses, removing non-essential business closures, but with limited occupancy. Gyms, salons and theaters remain closed. Worship services will continue as long as they remain outdoors with social distancing. If numbers remain low Phase II may begin May 22. If numbers have increased by that time, it is possible these changes will end and return to stay at home orders will apply. Manager Hooper stressed the "3W's steps for safety Wear, wait, and wash... wear face mask, wait your turn with distancing of six (6) feet, and wash your hands". Manager Hooper also covered the short session of the General Assembly. He read from House Bill 1043 COVID19 Plan and Relief Fund Program highlighting some of the programs the Bill will cover. He also mentioned that virtual meetings are allowed as long and a "roll call" version of voting take place with these rules having been codified. Manager Hooper called upon Town Attorney Danny Johnson with any reporting he may have. Attorney Johnson noted that State Parks can reopen but local parks and playgrounds may not at this time. Mayor remarked he wanted to share with the group that he would rather err on the side of safety than on the side of death or sickness. He hopes that the Board of Commissioners will agree with him. Commissioner Parsons asked that the Mayor please take guidance from the Governor and keep in mind of the long- term fallout if local businesses stay closed.

IX. Business:

E.) FY 21 GF Water Sewer Fund Budget Presentation and Call for Public Hearing-Wilson Hooper
Manager Hooper briefed the board and gave a presentation on the General Fund and Water Sewer Budget. The General Fund budget is \$6,690,000. And \$2,855,331. for the Water/Sewer Fund. Highlights of the budget are: No increase in property tax rates, one new full time Engineer for the N. Wilkesboro Fire Department, a 2.5% cost of living increase for eligible town employees, and an increase of \$1000. in the Planning and Inspections Department to fund research and preparation of a Non-Residential Building Code. A public hearing will be requested for June 2, 2020. A copy of the budget will be made available for public viewing on the town website, and is posted at the entrance to Town Hall. **Manager Hooper asked for a motion to receive the draft budget ordinance and to call for a public hearing for June 2, 2020. Commissioner Ferguson made the motion to approve with Commissioner Day seconding the motion. Motion unanimously carries with each board member stating their name and their vote to approve. See Attachment E**

X. Policy:

G.) Water Rates Resolution- Wilson Hooper

Manager Hooper spoke briefly on a water rate resolution. The Town of North Wilkesboro Resolution 2020-008 Resolution of Intent to Raise Wholesale Water Rates will raise wholesale water rates by \$.09 per 1000 gallons in FY 2021 and FY 2022. Wholesale water rates are set by contract with four wholesale customers. These customers are Mulberry-Fairplains Water Association, West Wilkes Water Association, Blue Ridge Water Association and Broadway Water Association. Contracts with Mulberry Fairplains and Broadway Water require a notification of intent to increase, and were notified of the intent to increase by hand delivered letters and have a 45-day commitment period after the the new rate has been proposed. That date is May 15, 2020. The additional revenue raised by the increase will be used to help pay for future capital improvements to the system over the next five years. This still remains lower than the current rate for the Town of Wilkesboro. Manager Hooper called for a motion to approve the Resolution of Intent to Raise Wholesale Water Rates. **Commissioner Ferguson, stating her name, made a motion to approve the Resolution of Intent to Raise**

Wholesale Water Rates for FY 2021-2022, with Commissioner Palmer stating his name, seconding the motion. Motion unanimously carries by roll call of each Commissioner and vote. See Attachment G

H.) FEMA Hiring Grant- Fire Chief Jimmy Martin

This is a request to authorize town staff to apply for a three-year FEMA SAFER grant to help fund the cost of an additional full-time firefighter in the FY2021 recommended budget. This new SAFER grant lasts three (3) years and will fund 75% of the cost of the position in years one (1) and two (2), and 35% of the position in year three (3). The Town will be responsible for wages for the fourth year. The FY2021 recommended budget includes a \$53,115. request to fund a fourth full-time Engineer for the NWFD. The new position is requested due to the fact the current SAFER grant will require the town to pay our current Engineers significant overtime if we do not have that fourth employee. **Manager Hooper called for a motion to approve preparation and submission of an application to the FEMA SAFER program for these funds. Commissioner Palmer made the motion to**

approve with Commissioner Parsons seconding the motion. Motion unanimously carries by individual roll call of each Commissioner and vote.

XI. Mayor and Commissioner Topics:

Mayor Johnson earlier thanked LeeAnn Nixon, Wilkesboro Mayor Michael Inscore, Wilkesboro Commissioner Archibald, Heather Murphy with the Health Foundation and Phillip Mueller with Cooks Sports for participating in our virtual Town Hall meeting. At the end of the meeting, he also thanked Chief Rankin, the Commissioner and the rest of the staff for everything they do for the Town of North Wilkesboro.

XII. Adjourn:

With no other business to discuss Mayor Johnson called for a motion to adjourn. **Commissioner Palmer made the motion to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.**

Attachment F.

RESOLUTION OF INTENT TO APPROPRIATE TOWN OF NORTH WILKESBORO
FUNDS TO WILKES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION FOR USE IN THE
WILKES SMALL BUSINESS RECOVERY PROGRAM

WHEREAS, in spring 2020 the nation was beset by the Coronavirus, a highly contagious virus which can lead to an illness with severe respiratory and other symptoms known as COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, public health authorities and medical experts warned that the virus could quickly spread through the population and overwhelm the capacity of the state's healthcare system if measures to prevent its spread were not undertaken; and

WHEREAS, state, county, and municipal governments across the nation declared States of Emergency giving them legal authority to take measures deemed necessary for the health and safety of their citizens; and

WHEREAS, state, county, and municipal governments implemented measures intended to prevent the spread of the virus; and

WHEREAS, these measures included a statewide "stay at home" order, bans on non-essential travel, the closure of certain businesses, and limits on the operations of remaining businesses; and

WHEREAS, the measures had a chilling effect on the economy, particularly small businesses; and

WHEREAS, leaders from the Wilkes Economic Development Corporation established a grant program designed to help small businesses affected by the changing economy cover expenses incurred during the state of emergency; and,

WHEREAS, the North Wilkesboro Board of Commissioners recognizes the importance of small businesses to the town's economy and wishes to support the program with a financial contribution.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners of the Town of North Wilkesboro, with the adoption of this Resolution, appropriates \$30,000 from the town's FY20 Contingency Fund to the Wilkes Economic Development Corporation for use in the Wilkes Small Business Recovery Program.

Adopted this _____ day of May, 2020.

Robert L. Johnson, Mayor

ATTEST:

Debra W. Pearson, Town Clerk

Attachment G.

TOWN OF NORTH WILKESBORO
RESOLUTION 2020-008
RESOLUTION OF INTENT TO RAISE WHOLESALE WATER RATES

WHEREAS, the Town of North Wilkesboro sells treated drinking water to four rural water associations (RWAs) in Wilkes County; and

WHEREAS, the revenue received from sales to RWAs constitutes a significant percentage of the Town of North Wilkesboro's overall water/sewer revenue; and

WHEREAS, the Town of North Wilkesboro is planning to undertake a series of significant capital projects designed to improve the safety and efficiency of its water/sewer system over the next several years; and

WHEREAS, the current rates are inadequate to cover the costs of these improvements, currently estimated to be greater than \$4 million; and

WHEREAS, these projects will benefit both in-town and wholesale water customers; and

WHEREAS, the North Wilkesboro Board of Commissioners wishes to spread the burden fairly between all customers, both in-town and wholesale; and

WHEREAS, the Town Manager's recommended budget also calls for an increase in in-town rates.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners of the Town of North Wilkesboro, with the adoption of this Resolution, publicly expresses its intention to raise its wholesale water rates from their current level of \$2.10 per 1000 gallons of water to \$2.19 per 1000 gallons in FY21, and \$2.28 per 1000 gallons in FY22.

This the _____ day of May, 2020.

Robert L. Johnson, Mayor

ATTEST:

Debra W. Pearson, Town Clerk

Attachment H.



PROCLAMATION

May is National Bike Month in North Wilkesboro

May 5th, 2020

WHEREAS, the bicycle is an economical, healthy, convenient, and environmentally sound form of transportation and an excellent tool for recreation and enjoyment of North Wilkesboro's scenic beauty; and

WHEREAS, throughout the month of May, the residents of the Town of North Wilkesboro and its visitors will experience the joys of bicycling through educational programs, races, commuting events, charity events, public awareness events, or by simply getting out and going for a ride; and

WHEREAS, the Town of North Wilkesboro's roads and greenways attracts bicyclist each year providing economic health, transportation, tourism, and scenic benefits; and

WHEREAS, creating a bicycling-friendly community has been shown to improve citizen's health, well-being, and quality of life, growing the economy of the Town of North Wilkesboro, attracting tourism dollars, improving traffic safety, supporting student learning outcomes, and reducing pollution, congestion, and wear and tear on our streets and roads; and

WHEREAS, the Town, the League of American Bicyclists, schools, parks and recreation departments, police departments, companies, non-profit agencies and civic organizations will be promoting bicycling during the month of May every year; and

WHEREAS, these groups are also promoting greater public awareness of bicycle operations and safety education in an effort to reduce collisions, injuries, and fatalities and improve health and safety for everyone on the road; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the Board of Commissioners of the Town of North Wilkesboro, do hereby proclaim the month of May, as ***Bike Month*** in North Wilkesboro, and urge my fellow citizens to observe this month by enjoy bicycling in our great community while practicing safety measures both on a bicycle and while traveling in other motor vehicles.

Signed this the 5th day of May 5th, 2020.

Mayor Robert Johnson

Debra W. Pearson, Town Clerk

