



**BELVILLE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

January 18, 2024

Board of Commissioners Present:

Mike Allen, Mayor
Chuck Bost, Mayor Pro Tem
Ryan Merrill, Commissioner
Morgan Mehler, Commissioner
A. Hunter Smith, Commissioner (appointed during meeting)

Board of Commissioners Absent:

None

Staff Present:

Athina Williams, Town Manager
Sharon Niemann, Town Clerk
Brenda Williams, Finance Clerk / Deputy Town Clerk
Ian McLeod, Grounds / Recreation Assistant
Jace Sanchez, Recreation Assistant
Kerry Wooding, Finance Clerk
Brenda Hewlett, Admin. Support Specialist
Norwood Blanchard, Town Attorney
Kemmy Goodson, Town CPA

Others Present to Address the Board:

Mark Lyons, 604 Pine Branches Circle, Belville, NC 28451
Ralph Bennett, BOC Candidate
Joe Cranford, BOC Candidate
A. Hunter Smith, BOC Candidate

ITEM # 1 – CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Mike Allen called the January 18, 2024, BOC Regular Meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Welcomed all, a quorum was present.

ITEM # 2 – INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Mike Allen led the invocation asking for guidance for our Town, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. Mayor Allen welcomed all, and recognized Jon David, District Attorney representing Brunswick County.



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ITEM #3 – APPROVAL OF AGENDA

ACTION – Mayor Pro Tem Chuck Bost **MADE THE MOTION** to approve the Agenda, with the addition of the Public Comments ITEM#4f. **VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.**

ITEM #4 – CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Approval of the 1-5-2024 Special Meeting Minutes
- b. Tax Collector Report – December 2023 and January 2024
- c. Finance Report
- d. Code Enforcement Report / Street Maintenance Report
- e. **R24-02 Resolution Declaring January as Blood Donor Awareness Month**

ACTION – Mayor Pro Tem Chuck Bost **MADE THE MOTION** to approve the Consent Agenda. **VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.**

f. PUBLIC COMMENTS

ACTION – Mayor Pro Tem Chuck Bost **MADE THE MOTION** to open the Public Comments. **VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.**

Mark Lyons, 604 Pine Branches Circle, Belville, NC 28451, who recently moved to Belville wanted to comment on his desire for bike trails and recycling. Mr. Lyons is happy to see some bike trails coming and would like to see an expansion of the trails to reach businesses, so you would not have to drive everywhere. He believes that Chappell Loop and Ploof Roads are currently too dangerous to ride a bike. Mr. Lyons is hoping the Town will consider this for the future. He would also encourage the Town to consider recycling pick up. Mayor Allen asked him to come in and meet with him to discuss these topics.

ACTION – Commissioner Morgan Mehler **MADE THE MOTION** to close the Public Comments. **VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.**

ITEM #5 – PRESENTATIONS

a. R24-03, R24-04, R24-05 Resolution(s) by the Belville Board of Commissioners Expressing Gratitude and Appreciation to First Bank for providing 100 lbs. of Food to the Blessing Box during their Power of Good Food Drive.

- 1. R24-03 Recognizing the efforts of Jan Lydon, Belville First Bank Manager**
- 2. R24-04 Recognizing the efforts of Donielle Bacon, Area Retail Manager**
- 3. R24-05 Recognizing the efforts of Ryan Alexander, Business Development Officer**

ACTION – Commissioner Ryan Merrill **MADE THE MOTION** to approve R24-03, R24-04 and R24-05 recognizing First Bank and those individuals listed above. **VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.**



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Town Manager Athina Williams explained the Blessing Box project was started by William Long, an Eagle Scout, and is helping provide food for those in need. Girl Scout Troop #411 has been helping to replenish the food supply in the Blessing Box, and First Bank has stepped in to accept Food donations which they graciously added to our inventory. Mayor Mike Allen expressed his thanks for First Bank being a corporate sponsor who is proactive in our community helping combat food scarcity, and for committing personnel and resources for a good cause.

ITEM #6 – APPOINTMENTS

- a. Board of Commissioner Vacancy
 - 1. Appointment of Commissioner

Mayor Allen expressed he was honored to have such qualified candidates, and provided an opportunity for each BOC candidate to introduce himself. Three of the four candidates were in attendance and came forward: Ralph Bennett, Joe Cranford, and Hunter Smith. Mayor Allen and Mayor Pro Tem Chuck Bost reiterated that the candidates were exceptional, and they hope whoever is not selected will consider other board vacancies in the Town.

Commissioner Morgan Mehler nominated Hunter Smith to fill the Board of Commissioner vacancy. Commissioner Ryan Merrill nominated Joe Cranford. The Board of Commissioners voted three votes for Hunter Smith, (Mayor Allen, Mayor Pro Tem Chuck Bost and Commissioner Morgan Mehler) and one vote for Joe Cranford (Commissioner Ryan Merrill). Mayor Mike Allen announced that the majority of votes went to Hunter Smith, who is our new commissioner. Albert Hunter Smith III was administered the Oath of Office by Mayor Mike Allen, who welcomed him aboard, and Commissioner Albert Hunter Smith took his seat.

Commissioner Hunter Smith addressed the audience and stated that he appreciates this opportunity to be on the Board.

- 2. Appointment of ABC Board Liaison - Staff recommended Commissioner Ryan Merrill.

ACTION – Commissioner Morgan Mehler **MADE THE MOTION** to appoint Ryan Merrill as the ABC Liaison. **VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.**

- 3. Appointment of Finance Liaison – Staff recommended Commissioner Morgan Mehler.

ACTION – Commissioner Ryan Merrill **MADE THE MOTION** to appoint Commissioner Morgan Mehler as Finance Liaison. **VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.**

Town Staff asked the Board to approve Advertisements for:

- b. Planning Board Vacancy
- c. Park and Recreation Vacancies
- d. ABC Board Vacancies



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The Board tasked the staff with and approved the advertisements for one Planning Board Vacancy, two Parks and Recreation Vacancies, and two ABC Board vacancies. Mayor Allen asked the current BOC candidates to consider these openings.

Joe Henson, ABC Board Chairman came forward to present a check of \$124,704, representing a portion of the ABC store profits, and discussed plans for relocating a store.

ITEM #7- PUBLIC HEARING

The Public Hearing is for the purpose and consideration and action upon proposed text amendments to revise administrative and enforcement authority of the Zoning Ordinance Section 9.5.1 and revision to the Subdivision Regulations Ordinance regarding site plan development approval.

Town Manager Athina Williams explained that this was a staff-initiated text amendment and the purpose is to correct a few items in the Zoning Ordinance section 9.5.1 and Revise the Subdivision Regulations Section 303.3.1 to amend the agency names.

ACTION - Commissioner Ryan Merrill MADE THE MOTION to open the Public Hearing. VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.

Mayor Allen asked for comments. There was no one present who wished to speak at the Public Hearing.

ACTION - Commissioner Ryan Merrill MADE THE MOTION to close the Public Hearing. VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.

ACTION – Commissioner Morgan Mehler MADE THE MOTION to approve Ordinance 2024-01 and Ordinance 2024-02. VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.

ACTION – Commissioner Ryan Merrill MADE THE MOTION to approve the Consistency Statement related to these two ordinances. VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.

ITEM #8 – OLD BUSINESS

a. Update on Belville Riverwalk

1. NC State University College of Design project

Town Manager Athina Williams introduced our project with the Landscape and Design Students at NC State University College of Design and asked Ian McLeod, Grounds and Recreation Assistant to give us an update on the project. Ian explained that the NC State professors and students came to the Town and the Riverwalk for the Introductory Meeting. The instructors described the project stating that graduate level students in the NC State Department of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning will be doing a site-specific master plan of the Belville Riverwalk which will include park improvements and amenities, the entrance and parking, greenspace, open space, and the study will include erosion mitigation suggestions. The instructors came back to capture drone footage for the study this morning. We look forward to their planning and design suggestions and will be working with them throughout the project,



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making sure they address our concerns, and look forward to their recommendations. Town Manager Athina Williams added that the students are completing this project in the Spring 2024 semester, and we look forward to working with them in this partnership. Mayor Pro Tem Chuck Bost reiterated that he enjoyed meeting the students and is excited to see the planning and design alternatives they suggest.

b. Street Repairs / Drainage Repairs

Town Manager Athina Williams explained that we are working on a Feasibility Study to try to correct some of the stormwater and drainage issues in the Town. We had the kickoff meeting with WithersRavenel on January 5th to go over the flooding issues we have in the Town and will dig deeper in this study to see how we may be able to resolve some of the blockages and correct the drainage problems throughout the Town.

c. Update on Multi-Use Paths

Town Manager Williams explained that the Resolution for an increase in funds for the Multi-Use Paths has passed WMPO Board level, and the staff will bring it before the WMPO Board at the January 31st meeting. We already have the contractor, so after the project is fully funded, the construction will begin, and it should be completed within 120 days.

Mayor Mike Allen added that he is glad to see this project come to fruition, as it was initiated many years ago.

ITEM #9 – REGULAR AGENDA

a. Transportation Update

Mayor Allen explained that he is the WMPO representative, and they are going to be voting on a new bridge to replace the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge at the next meeting. They would like for us to agree to a toll bridge which would allow us to apply for federal funds, but at a later date, we hope to be able to vote against the toll.

b. Annexation Petition – Burckhalter Property Certification of Sufficiency

Town Manager Williams explained that the Town Clerk has completed the Certification of Sufficiency, and we would like to move the annexation forward to a Special Meeting of the Board of Commissioners. Mayor Allen agreed that we should move forward with the meeting.

ACTION – Mayor Pro Tem Chuck Bost **MADE THE MOTION** to accept the Certificate of Sufficiency on the Burckhalter property. **VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.**

c. Wage and Classification Plan - Planner

Town Manager Athina Williams clarified that we have been advertising the Planner position for over a year, but we are having difficulty recruiting someone at that level. We would like to increase the Wage grade to 23, which is \$65,000 annually.



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ACTION – Mayor Pro Tem Chuck Bost **MADE THE MOTION** to extend the pay grade for the Planner Position to \$65,000. **VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.**

ITEM #10 – CLOSED SESSION

a. N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11 (a)(3) – To consult with the attorney including litigation; and N.C.G.S. § 143-31.11(a)(4) – To discuss matters relating to the location or expansion of industries.

ACTION – Commissioner Morgan Mehler **MADE THE MOTION** to go into Closed Session. **VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.**

ACTION – Commissioner Ryan Merrill **MADE THE MOTION** to come back into Open Session. **VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.**

ITEM #9 – OTHER ITEMS AND REPORTS

a. Town Attorney Norwood Blanchard – We discussed a strategy for purchase of real property and the USG lawsuit. No Action was taken.

b. Board of Commissioners – None

c. Mayor – Mayor Allen thanked everyone for attending.

d. Town Manager – Congratulations to our new Commissioner Hunter Smith.

ITEM #10 – ADJOURNMENT

ACTION – Commissioner Ryan Merrill **MADE THE MOTION** to Adjourn the Meeting. **VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.**

Minutes Compiled by Sharon A. Niemann

SIGNED:

Mike Allen, Mayor



ATTEST:

Sharon A. Niemann, Town Clerk