

Zebulon Board of Commissioners
Minutes
January 8, 2024

Present: Mayor Glenn York, Quentin Miles, Amber Davis, Jessica Harrison, Shannon Baxter, Beverly Clark, Joe Moore-Town Manager, Lisa Markland-Town Clerk, Chris Ray-Public Works, Jacqui Boykin-Police, Chris Perry-Fire, Sheila Long-Parks & Recreation, Bobby Fitts-Finance, Michael Clark-Planning, Kaleb Harmon-Communications, Eric Vernon-Town Attorney

Mayor York called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The pledge of allegiance was led by Commissioner Davis.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Baxter asked to remove West Horton Street Drainage Project: Fund Transfer (Ordinance 2024-26) from consent and to add clerk position, appointed boards, Gill Street Park, and Horton Street House to the agenda.

Commissioner Davis asked to remove Tuition Assistance Program (Ordinance 2024-25) from consent.

Commissioner Baxter made a motion, second by Commissioner Miles to approve the agenda as amended. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

SCHOOL RECOGNITIONS

A. East Wake High School

Mayor York recognized student Caro Dorothy Pethos and teacher Lisa Gibson both from East Wake High School.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No one signed up to speak.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Governing Board Meeting Schedule

Joe Moore stated the meeting schedule came before the Board at their December regular meeting and some had conflicts with the mini retreat dates.

Commissioner Baxter stated she wanted to do two retreats instead of nine mini retreats, wanted a team building component added for the Board and to revisit the schedule in December 2024.

Commissioner Harrison agreed two retreats would be more beneficial as well as a team building exercise.

Commissioner Miles stated he would be in a class on February 5, 2024 and would not be able to attend the meeting. There was discussion about the regular February meeting being changed to February 13, 2024.

Commissioner Baxter made a motion, second by Commissioner Davis to adopt the regular meeting schedule through January 6, 2025 with the amendment to move the February 5, 2024 meeting to February 13, 2024 and for staff to bring back options for a retreat schedule.

Commissioner Harrison stated as long as there was a quorum then the meeting should take place. It was not fair to the public and staff to continually change meeting dates to accommodate Board members' schedules.

There was no further discussion and the motion passed with a vote 4 to 1 with Commissioners Baxter, Davis, Miles, and Harrison voting in favor and Commissioner Clark voting in opposition.

Joe Moore asked about the mini retreat schedule and if the Board wanted to keep the January 25, 2024 retreat.

Commissioner Baxter made a motion, second by Commissioner Miles to cancel the mini retreat on January 25, 2024. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Parks and Recreation

i. Park Acquisition (Ordinance 2024-23, Ordinance 2024-24 and Resolution 2024-16)

Sheila Long presented for the Board's consideration to create a Park Acquisition Capital Project Fund, allocate Recreation Impact Fees to that fund, and authorize staff to begin searching for property in target acquisition zones.

As of November 17, 2023, the Town collected \$4,676,000 in Recreation Impact Fees. Recreation Impact fees could not be used to renovate existing amenities. The funds must be used to improve the impact of growth on the existing level of service for parks.

Commissioner Baxter wanted to change the last sentence on Resolution 2024-16 from "staff will return to the Board for approval of final purchase agreements" to "staff will return to the Board after the search process concludes to discuss results, allocate funds and approve purchase agreements." Sheila Long stated staff would be looking at multiple sites and that it would be an ongoing process. Staff was given direction at the Board's mini retreat to always be looking for opportunities that would be a best fit for Zebulon.

Commissioner Baxter stated the Board should be informed about the location and cost prior to the letter of intent.

Mayor York stated the negotiation process would take place in closed session.

Commissioner Miles asked if staff could move forward with a search if funds were not added to a capital project fund. Sheila Long spoke about the challenges staff would face if a capital project fund was not created.

Commissioner Clark made a motion, second by Commissioner Harrison to approve Ordinance 2024-23.

Commissioner Baxter asked about the difference between the ordinances. Bobby Fitts explained the first ordinance established the capital project fund and the second ordinance appropriated the funds from the impact fees to the capital project fund.

There was no further discussion and the motion failed with a vote 3 to 2 with Commissioners Miles, Davis and Baxter voting in opposition and Commissioners Harrison and Clark voting in favor.

Joe Moore stated there was no reason to consider the remaining items and staff would not initiate looking for park property without adoption of the first ordinance.

B. Planning

i. Downtown Zebulon MOU and Bylaw Review

Teresa Piner spoke about the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and bylaws including amendments and highlights. Staff gave review and feedback of the MOU and bylaws from the October work session. The changes were reviewed. The Board selections with MSD would be a minimum of nine members with three property owners, three business owners and three members with a combination of downtown or abutting residents, Town representatives, County representative, school representative, non-profit, civic group or faith-based group.

There was discussion about those in the MSD boundary being on Mainstreet Board. Ms. Piner stated those in the MSD discount would be affected directly and want strong representation from those in the boundary.

Commissioner Miles asked how others outside the boundary could have their voices heard. The downtown master plan would start in the spring and would have people throughout the Town participating.

Commissioner Baxter asked about the possibility of representation of a Town citizen and not just a citizen living in the downtown or abutting area. Ms. Piner stated she would go back to the Mainstreet Board for them to discuss others options and to see what other communities had done in the past.

Commissioner Baxter made a motion, second by Commissioner Miles to table the Downtown Zebulon MOU and Bylaw Review for further discussion. There was no discussion and the motion passed with a vote 4 to 1 with Commissioners Baxter, Miles, Davis and Clark in favor and Commissioner Harrison in opposition.

C. Administration

i. Health Insurance opt-out

Joe Moore explained at the Board's meeting on December 4, 2023, the Board requested staff analyze the financial and policy impacts of offering a 100% equivalent of health insurance premiums to those who "opt-out" of the Town's health insurance coverage. Employees and Board members insured by another eligible group plan, such as health coverage provided through retirement or the employer of a spouse or parent, are offered an option out of the Town's health insurance coverage.

Commissioner Baxter stated the staff recommendation showed the value would be reduced from the $\frac{3}{4}$ payout. Joe Moore stated staff would bring forward an evaluation of the impact of reducing the amount of the payout at the next insurance renewal. Commissioner Baxter asked for staff to come back earlier if there was a plan to decrease the opt out value of the plan. Staff would bring the information sooner if possible but was determined by when the insurance provider gave the renewal information.

D. Finance

i. West Horton Street Drainage Project: Fund Transfer (Ordinance 2024-26)

Commissioner Baxter asked about the cost of the West Horton Street project. Bobby Fitts explained the project was less than the \$1.8 budgeted. If there were funds not spent they would be rolled into fund balance. Commissioner Baxter asked if the money saved could be rolled into a specific project. Staff explained that was possible but would not know the final cost until the project was finished. When the project was closed out staff could recognize funds if the project was under budget. The Board could decide to roll funds to a specific project at that time.

Commissioner Clark made a motion, second by Commissioner Miles to approve Ordinance 2024-26.

Commissioner Baxter stated there was potential to capture the funds for a future project.

There was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

ii. Tuition Assistance Program (Ordinance 2024-25)

Commissioner Davis asked about the requirement for employees to receive tuition assistance. Lisa Markland stated there was a policy in place and gave details of how an employee can receive tuition assistance.

Commissioner Miles asked if there was a cap on how many employees can take advantage of the program. Staff stated there was a cap on the funds in the program and an employee can receive up to \$1,000 per fiscal year. The program was popular this year and was the first time the funds had been depleted out and additional funding was needed.

Commissioner Harrison made a motion, second by Commissioner Baxter to approve Ordinance 2024-25.

Mayor York stated the Town was moving forward and the budget may need to be increased for employees to take advantage of the program.

There was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

E. General

i. Clerk Position

Commissioner Baxter asked if the Board could see all the Clerk applications. Lisa Markland stated staff was directed to contract the process through Developmental Associates and spoke about the process.

Mayor York stated there would be a five-minute recess.

The meeting reconvened at 7:27pm.

ii. Appointed Boards

Commissioner Baxter stated several members needed to be appointed to the appointed boards. Lisa Markland spoke about the advertising that was done. Commissioner Baxter asked to have the video promoting the appointed boards posted to the website.

iii. Gill Street Park

Commissioner Baxter asked for the feedback for Gill Street Park and wanted the results of the survey at the February meeting. Sheila Long stated she would share the report with the Board and could add it for discussion at a work session.

iv. East Horton Street House

Commissioner Baxter stated the Town acquired two pieces of property and wanted the Board to schedule a walk through of the property. Sheila Long stated she would coordinate with staff to schedule a walk through.

BOARD COMMENTS

Commissioner Clark stated it was the first meeting of 2024 and the Board would work as a team for the Town.

Commissioner Harrison thanked those in attendance at the meeting.

Commissioner Miles spoke about the Police Academy and encouraged those to look at the Town's website about information to be a vendor for events.

Commissioner Baxter stated severe weather was coming.

Mayor York stated he was looking forward to doing the Town's business in 2024.

MANAGER’S REPORT

Lisa Markland gave an HR update.

Michael Clark gave a monthly development update.

CLOSED SESSION

The Board needed a motion to go into closed session under NC GS 143-381.11(a)(3) to consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the public body, which privilege is hereby acknowledged.

Commissioner Harrison made a motion, second by Commissioner Miles to go into closed session. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

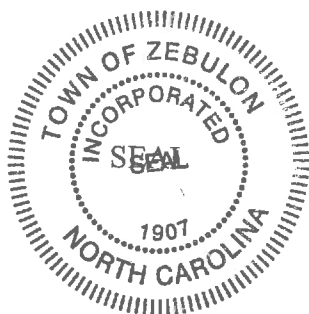
NOTE: In closed session, Commissioner Miles made a motion, second by Commissioner Clark to come out of closed session. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

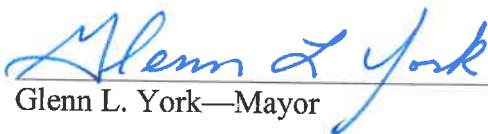
Commissioner Harrison made a motion, second by Commissioner Baxter to direct the Town attorney to file an action to condemn a portion of property owned by the Boys & Girls Club located at the intersection of Shepard School Road and Old Bunn Road. The scope of the condemnation is as follows:

1. Along Shepard School Road, (i) permanent right of way, (ii) permanent utility easement and (iii) temporary construction easement.
2. Along Old Bunn Road, (i) temporary construction easement.

Commissioner Miles made a motion, second by Commissioner Baxter to adjourn. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

Adopted this the 13th day of February 2024.




Glenn L. York—Mayor


Lisa M. Markland, CMC—Town Clerk