

**Town of Walnut Cove
Board of Commissioner Meeting
April 13, 2021
Meeting Minutes**

Members Present:

Nellie Brown – Mayor
Elwood Mabe – Commissioner
Joe Bennett – Commissioner
Danny Hairston – Commissioner
Thomas Mitchell – Commissioner
Kim Greenwood – Town Manager
Amanda Town Clerk Amanda Bryant - Town Clerk
Ann Rowe– Town Attorney

Members Absent:

Meeting Call to Order: Mayor Nellie Brown called the meeting to order @ 7:00pm.

Pledge of Allegiance: Town Manager Kim Greenwood

Invocation: Wesley Durrell

Announcements:

1. Walnut Cove Volunteer Fire Dept. Monthly Meeting. Thursday, May 6, 2021 at 7:00 PM
2. Walnut Cove Planning/Zoning Board Meeting. April 15, 2021 at Walnut Cove Public Library @ 6:30pm.
3. The Cove Group, 1st Tuesday at 6:30PM at Oma's
4. Walnut Cove Board of Commissioners Monthly Meeting. May 11, 2021 at 7:00 PM at the Walnut Cove Senior Center.
5. Recycle: April 16 and April 30
6. Springfest – Saturday, May 15, 2021, downtown.
7. Town Fireworks, Saturday, July 3, 2021
8. Blood Drive, Walnut Cove Fire and Rescue. Saturday, April 24, 2021. 10-2:30

Adjustments to Agenda

Town Manager Greenwood we need to add under New Business Item d. Closed Session- Attorney Client Privilege and under New Business Item e. Attorney update

ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA

Public Comments – 0

1. Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of Minutes from March 9, 2021 and March 25, 2021

A motion was made by Commissioner Bennett to approve the minutes from the March 9, 2021 meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mabe. Motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Commissioner Mabe to approve the minutes from the March 25, 2021 Special meeting with the correction of the motion was made by Commissioner Bennett and the second was made by Commissioner Mabe. Motion carried unanimously.

b. Budget Amendment (Inspections Revenue to Inspections Expenditure) Attachment B

Due to the high volume of required inspections for the Lick Creek solar farm, Town Manager Greenwood has requested an increase of \$35,000 be added to the Revenue expenditure line and an approval of an additional \$35,000 to the Expenditure line. The Lick Creek Solar farm company has already paid for the inspections, however, to balance in our software, we need to appropriation as not to appear to spend more then we had budgeted for 2020-2021.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bennett to approve the Budget Appropriations for the Inspection Revenues and Inspections Expenditure lines. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hairston. Motion carried unanimously.

c. Town Hall Fund Approval (attachment C)

Town Manager Greenwood directed the Boards attention to Town Clerk Amanda Bryant. Town Clerk Amanda Bryant explained after reviewing the accounts in anticipation of the upcoming budget retreat it was noted the Town will need to open a separate checking account specially for the new Town Hall. Town Clerk Amanda Bryant explained this account will be a capital improvement account and the monies will only be used for the new Town Hall. She explained our budget when audited needs to be balanced and we did not anticipate the purchase of the property for a new town hall which has caused our budget to be unbalanced and will get bad remarks from our auditor. Town Clerk Amanda Bryant stated to make the budget balance and to stay in good standings with the auditor and the State we will need these funds kept in a separate physical bank account as well as kept separate in the accounting software as they are currently.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bennett to allow Town Clerk Amanda Bryant to open a new checking account for the Town Hall funds. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hairston. Motion carried unanimously.

d. Recognition of Sheriff Lemons

Town Manager Greenwood recognized Stokes County's new Sheriff Joey Lemons. Sheriff Lemons thanked the Board for allowing him to speak tonight. He stated he was a very blessed man. He has big shoes to fill following Sheriff Mike Marshall who he speaks with almost on a daily basis. Sheriff Lemons stated former Sheriff Marshall is doing well. He stated he appreciated the support of everyone and his door is always open. Mayor Brown thanked Sheriff Lemons for coming out and speaking tonight and though we will miss Sheriff Marshall we are happy Sheriff Lemons is here. She stated she is very thankful for the work of the Sheriffs department and everyone is very appreciative of the work they do.

e. Fire Department Report, Chief Brian Booe

Town Manager Greenwood directed the Boards attention to fire Chief Brian Booe. Fire Chief Booe presented the Board with a handout with their quarterly report information including the amount of calls per month, training sessions and their community outreach services. For the month of January, they ran 110 calls with 48 calls in county and 52 calls within Town. They also completed training in their annual gear inspection, respiratory fit testing, and a new 6 firefighter class which will be concluded throughout the year as part of a county wide testing as well as completed training with assisting departments on the LUCAS CPR device. For their community service outreach they had roughly 35k visits to their social media account. For the month of February, they ran 82 calls with 49 calls in the county and 28 calls in Town, these calls included assisting with 2 major storms and 1 structure fire. For

February training they completed and hosted an orientation and safety class through Forsyth Tech, completed a safety survey with VFIS on department policies which included a recommendation for fire hose covers to prevent the fire hose from coming loose while in route. They were able to secure the fire hose covers and attach those to prevent problems that may arise. They also assisted with the second round of COVID vaccinations and provided the Town with information on gaming institutions from the UNC School of Government. For the community outreach they had ~31k visits to their social media platforms. For the month of March, there were 72 calls with 30 in the county and 27 in Town. They assisted in planning a mass vaccination clinic with the Stokes County health department which is scheduled for April and they have 330 citizens vaccinated. For training they participated in a set up panel interview for officer assessment center, this provides firefighters the opportunity to create an instant action plan, take a written test and then complete a panel interview. They also have a blood drive scheduled for April 24th from 10-2:30. They had ~9700 visits to their social media accounts for the month of March. Commissioner Hairston asked if the fire department was offering CPR training at this time, which Fire Chief Booe stated not at this time due to COVID but they are hoping to start back up soon. They are concerned about exposing themselves and citizens in the event someone comes in contact with a COVID infected person. Town Manager Greenwood asked Fire Chief Booe if he would explain how the LUCAS device has been beneficial to the citizens. Fire Chief Booe stated Francisco was the first to have a LUCAS system, then the County, WCFD and the City of King acquired one around the same time. It has been used to assist Salem Chapel FD to bring pulses back and kept the person alive until they arrived at the hospital. It has been used a few other times as well and gives them the opportunity to print off reports for the County medical director and has become a valuable tool. Town Manager Greenwood asked if the person transported made it, of which Fire Chief Booe stated he wasn't aware of the outcome of the patient of which Town Manager Greenwood stated he had learned the person was alive due to the use of the LUCAS machine. Fire Chief Booe stated he wanted to clarify he has taken a new job at the City of King and they have allowed him to continue being the Fire Chief of Walnut Cove. He wanted to thank everyone for their support and this is the best relationship the WCFD and the Town have had as long as he can remember.

f. Springfest Update- Angie Bailey

Town Manager Greenwood asked for Angie Bailey to come forward and give the Board an update on Springfest. Ms. Bailey stated they have over 60 vendors so far and they have managed to get everything online to make it much easier to keep up with. We have a big variety of vendors with a lot of their older vendors returning. She has spoken with Fire Chief Booe, Stokes County Sheriff's office, Brandon Gentry and the Fire Marshall to make sure they are doing everything right. She also spoke with Christy Rogers who is donating all of the hand sanitizer for the event. Ms. Bailey presented the Board with pictures of hanging flower baskets that would attach to the light poles going down Main Street. She stated she has been working with a landscaper from UNCG School of the Arts, these pots can hold up to 2.5 gallons of water and up to 100lbs per pot. Ms. Bailey stated these are the same pots the Town of Rural Hall has, people will notice them immediately. If your Board chooses to purchase them, they will need 24 pots. Town Manager Greenwood asked if they made brackets for the pots, of which she stated yes, the poles in Walnut Cove are different sizes so the brackets come with the pots and will adjust to the size needed per pole. Commissioner Bennet asked if they will be parallel to the sidewalk and how far apart would they be. Ms. Bailey stated yes, they would be parallel and they would be back and forth across the road so it will be alternating. She also stated before they get started, she wanted to ask the Board if they would consider purchasing the pots. Mayor Brown asked the total number needed, she stated 24 pots. Commissioner Bennett asked who would be purchasing the flowers to go in them, she stated the Cove Group would be taking care of purchasing the flowers. Commissioner Hairston asked the cost, she stated the full cost would be \$3870.00, also she stated she knew she was supposed to have 3 quotes but

this is the only company that makes this type of pot. Commissioner Bennett asked how the pots were attached to the poles, she stated they were adjustable and you have one bracket with 2 screws. Commissioner Mabe asked if Duke Energy would allow them to be placed on the pole, Ms. Bailey stated yes she has spoken with Jimmy Fylthe and has the permission from them. Town Manager Greenwood asked if they would be below the flags, she stated they would be on the opposite poles, no pots would be on the same pole as the flags. Mayor Brown stated these pots would bring a major facelift to the Town. Commissioner Bennett asked how big the pots were, she stated they were 23" across, he commented they was pretty big and they would be beautiful. Ms. Bailey stated they are heavy duty. Commissioner Mitchell asked about the warranty of the pots, she stated they came with a 10-year warranty. Commissioner Bennett asked who would water the flowers once they were in the pots, Ms. Bailey stated the landscapers will take care of watering them. She has a monthly deal worked out with them. Mayor Brown stated she would highly recommend the Commissioners consider purchasing these pots. Commissioner Bennett asked each Commissioner their opinion of which Commissioner Hairston stated it did not matter to him. Town Manager Greenwood asked about the concrete planters around Town, she stated they were actually going to see if the Town would allow them to move them to Cove Square. They are having concrete poured and people will park on the concrete pad, they want to use the concrete planters to create a barrier in front of Cove Square. Town Manager Greenwood stated when they are ready for them public works can use the backhoe to move them for them. Ms. Bailey stated that would be awesome and would prevent her from having to hire someone to move them. Next Ms. Bailey presented the Board a picture of the Town of Blowing Rock welcome sign as well a similar design which had the Town of Walnut Cove's logo. She stated she would love to see the Town replace the current white welcome signs because they are rotting and deteriorating all but the one at the Boy Scout hut. The cost of the new sign would be \$7000 per sign which she knows they are expensive. She wanted to the Board's direction on how to proceed, if they need to look at other options or if the Board likes the pictures she presented. Commissioner Hairston asked if they would use the same foundation as the ones already there, she stated yes, Town Manager Greenwood stated Will Carter is working on new signage for the County as well, he may have some options. Mr. Carter state yes the wayfinding signs from the park down to Walnut Cove. Mayor Brown said this is the first thing people see when they come into Town. Ms. Bailey stated she gave a tour today and the people were noticing the things in Town that were unattractive, she stated the signs will be one of the first thing people see when they come to Town and will make a big difference in the appearance of the Town. Commissioner Bennett asked if this was something we could discuss at the Budget retreat. Town Manager Greenwood stated yes, he is waiting on the second batch of CARES Act money and may be something we can use it for. He also said it may be something we can purchase 1 or 2 a year until they are all replaced.

Commissioner Hairston made a motion to table the discussion of the new signs throughout the Town until the Budget Retreat. Commissioner Bennett seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bennett to approve the purchase of 24 hanging pots. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mitchell. The motion was carried unanimously.

Lastly, Ms. Bailey wanted to let the Board know she is currently working on a \$25K grant that would give back to the Community, and to small business owners within Town to help with revitalization of the outside of their businesses. She should know something in July.

2. Old Business

a. Public Hearing – Mayoral Term Change

A motion was made by Commissioner Bennett to open the Public Hearing – Mayoral Term Change. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mitchell. Motion carried unanimously.

1. Paul Harrell – 935 N. Main Street, Walnut Cove, NC. – Mr. Harrell stated it was a matter of interest for him, if the term for Mayor would be put on the upcoming ballot. Commissioner Hairston stated that was what he wanted to do. Mr. Harrell stated he understood there would be a vote in May. Town Attorney Rowe stated it takes more than a vote to amend a charter which is the case here. She stated the Board has two options today during the Public Hearing the Board is not allowed to take any action, but they consider a vote at the May meeting. At the May meeting if the Board chooses to vote they have two options. They can vote in an ordinance only if approved by the Town citizens or the Board can make an effective date of adoption, publish the ordinance subject to a referendum petition. Mr. Harrell stated he feels this is something the people of the Town should have some say in, Town Attorney Rowe stated any changes to the term must be done at least 90 days prior to an election. Mr. Harrell wanted to suggest in May consider a vote to place on the ballot and let the Town's people decide. Town Attorney Rowe stated she would have to check and see if the vote could be on the November ballot or if it is supposed to be a special vote but she would find out. Mr. Harrell stated he wanted to clarify he is not running for Mayor.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hairston to close the Public Hearing -Mayoral Term Change The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mabe. Motion carried unanimously.

b. Road Closure Resolution – Springfest May 15, 2021

Town Manager Greenwood stated we need to pass a resolution to close Main Street between 3rd street and 6th Street. The closure will be from 8am-4pm for Springfest. The WCFD, Stokes County Sheriffs Dept will be on had to assist that day.

Commissioner Bennett made a motion for an ordinance declaring a road closure for the Springfest celebration on May 15th from 8am-4pm. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hairston. The motion carried unanimously.

3. New Business

a. Request for RFQ, Street Mapping and Street Survey

As part of our Powell Bill funds requirement, we are required to complete a street survey every 5 years, because of the pandemic we were unable to complete it last year. We need permission to post a request for quote (RFQ) to receive bids to complete this requirement. Our goal is to have the bids in so we may present them at the May Board meeting. This RFQ will include Walnut Tree, we do not have the street map or street survey which includes Walnut Tree.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hairston to post a RFQ for Street Mapping and Street Survey. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bennett. Motion carried unanimously.

b. Public Works Department Software (attachment E)

Town Manager Greenwood directed the Boards attention to Town Clerk Amanda Bryant . Town Clerk Amanda Bryant presented the Board with information regarding Beehive Industries, a software program for the Public Works department that provides the department the ability to locate and map all water and sewer lines along with the opportunity to record any maintenance or repairs made to a

specific line. The software program works with an app that will be downloaded to each employee's smart phone which will allow them to be assigned work orders if the need arises. This program also gives the Town the ability to pull any reports and records needed for future use as well as record information for Town signage and fire hydrant maintenance. Town Clerk Amanda Bryant stated the first-year cost would be \$14,400 with an annual maintenance fee of \$7200. This would include training for the system and technical support if needed. She explained the software program is cloud based and would easily be retrievable in the event of a catastrophe was to happen at Town Hall. Fire Chief Booe asked if the program included fire hydrant maintenance and records of which she stated he did and he stated to the Board he would highly recommend this program which would help link the Town and the WCFD data. Town Manager Greenwood stated at the time we can pull records and reports for the Tag office and the Administration offices but we have no way of doing so with Public Works. Commissioner Hairston stated he felt this program would be a game changer for the Town. Commissioner Bennett asked if this system was similar to the water mapping grant, we have previously applied for of which Town Manager Greenwood stated yes, we have worked on the grant for years with no avail, this program will do the same thing without the wait. Town Manager Greenwood stated a lot of the Town information is stored in our brains and not in a system and we cannot always rely on people to be present if a problem was to arise. Town Clerk Amanda Bryant stated she has discussed the contract with Town Attorney Rowe, with Town Attorney Rowe finding two wording issues regarding the price but those would be addressed. Town Attorney Rowe stated if the Board chooses to approve the software program the motion could include a statement with the fixed price.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hairston to approve the Beehive Industries Software with the contract corrected with a fixed price. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bennett. Motion carried unanimously.

c. Laserfische Document System (attachment F)

Town Clerk Amanda Bryant also presented the Board with information regarding a document system. This system would allow the Town to scan in all documents as required by the General Statutes, this would allow easy retrieval of those documents. The program is an expensive one but the City of King uses the program and has really helped them in the event of document retrieval. All minutes and other important documents would be in this system which also gets us another back up system in the event something was to happen to the hard copies that are on file. Town Clerk Amanda Bryant explained currently if someone requests a document it can take up to a week to find the documents needed. Town Attorney Rowe state the couple of times a public records request has been made it has taken some time to find it. Town Clerk Amanda Bryant explained the system has the ability for users to search a key word and it will locate every document which contains that word. The initial price is \$18,511.00 which includes everything for the first year including set up and support as which the annual maintenance fee will be \$7,481.00. Commissioner Bennett asked if this could be something we table until the Board meeting.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hairston to table the Laserfische Document System until the Budget Retreat. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bennett. Motion carried unanimously.

d. Assign Budget Retreat Dates

Town Manager Greenwood told the Board we are very blessed, and as of right now it looks like for our revenue, is at the ~\$1million mark. Town Manager Greenwood stated we need to get the Budget Retreat dates and it has been suggested to hold the budget retreat in May. Commissioner Mitchell asked if May 7th or May 13th would work. Town Manager Greenwood stated it would be best if we meet

before the 7th. Commissioner Mitchell asked about May 4th? Commissioner Hairston asked if it was during the day? Town Manager Greenwood stated let's make it May 4th at 9am as long as the library is available that day. Town Manager Greenwood asked Christine Boles Library manager and she stated it would be marked for the Board. Town Attorney Rowe stated we would need a motion to advertise the Budget Retreat.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bennett to advertise for the Budget Retreat on May 4th, 2021 at 9am at the Walnut Cove Public Library. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hairston. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Departmental Reports

Attorney Update

Town Attorney Rowe wanted to give an update to the Board as to the current standings of some things. She first wanted to direct Mr. Paul Harrell regarding his public comment earlier stating the answer to his question the term for mayor office you have 2 options should the Board adopt the ordinance changing the term effective upon the vote at a special election. There are specific requirements such as 70 days after the adoption. If they choose the other route effective immediately and referendum petition may be submitted 30 days of notice, the petition will be filed with 10% of the registered voters then they can have a special election. Town Attorney Rowe wanted to update the Board on the appeal filed by the Terramore Development Group. Previously the Board had given authorization to Town Attorney Rowe to receive service on behalf of the Town, she accepted the service and wanted to point out a piece of clarification. The Town itself is not specially named but the Planning and Zoning Board and its members are listed. She is currently working on the next steps. Lastly the laptops issued she is preparing the procedural rules to adopt regarding zoom meetings. She is almost finished with those and she will have a couple of recommendations such as zoom meetings can only take place when the Town is under a State of Emergency. In the event of a zoom meeting no one can be in attendance and we must be under a State of Emergency. Additionally, regarding the laptops, the amount of support which is needed in regards to allowing access for the public to comment, stating there will need to be someone to allow people into the meeting as well any public comments that may arise. She recommends once those details are worked out but does recommend to not host a quasi-judiciary hearing, those need to be face to face. She is trying to create a simple and effective ordinance. Also, she recommends to allow closed session meetings electronically and in regards to public comments we can create a form for a citizen to complete and submit it online or mail it in. Town Attorney Rowe stated she should have it by next month. Commissioner Hairston stated for her to keep up the good work. Town Attorney Rowe stated the last thing she needed to cover with the Board is the AT&T contract for the use of our water towers. She had received the contract from AT&T regarding the water tower at Plant St. They are looking for a renewal with lower terms, the contract does not expire until 2023 but in the event an agreement can not be made it will take some time to remove them and secure a new location. They are currently considering negotiations, she spoke with Jamie Hicks our contact and they have reviewed others and it seems AT&T is paying an above market rate, she stated mostly likely to agree to the rate reduction and she can't make a recommendation at this time but in May she hopes to have the contract for the Board to approve. Commissioner Bennett stated he has had cell towers on his property before and the rate has always went up not down, Town Attorney Rowe stated they came to us in 2018 and she told them at that time it was too soon to discuss and will discuss at a closer time. Our Consultant the 2-year mark is appropriate and she will have the correct market information at the May meeting. Commissioner Mabe stated we need firm information, Town Attorney Rowe stated she would have it in May.

Administration

We will publish a RFQ for street paving next week and I will present to the Board the response. We are also required to advertise for an RFQ for the engineering for the construction of Town Hall. Brandi has made the arrangements with the fireworks company, stage and portable toilets for the July 3 fireworks. We have other proposals, scanners, printers etc. to improve the flow of the office to be addressed at the budget retreat. All the laptops have been issued and hope this will be a valuable tool. The last report I have received from Emergency Management indicates that our COVID infection rate is headed in the right direction. Hopefully, in the near future, this will no longer be a topic of discussion.

License Plate Office

The LPA had an excellent March. The following is their Net figures.

DMV Transactions:	\$15,376.46
<u>Notary:</u>	<u>\$2,595.00</u>
Net Profit:	\$17,971.46

Code Enforcement

The Planning Board meeting will be Thursday of this week at the library. I know a couple of times on the agenda concerns a variance in the fencing and a conditional use application regarding new housing.

Public Works

As mentioned previously, we are advertising for much needed paving. As soon as the asphalt plant reopens, our public works will do the patch work. As we did last year, our public works will complete the mowing for town property. We will also do street cleaning for the upcoming Springfest.

5. Items of General Concern

Commissioner Bennett asked Ms. Bailey if the cement will be set up before Springfest, she replied yes understands it will be. Commissioner Mitchell asked about Plant Street, the road is in really bad shape. Town Manager Greenwood stated when the new Round-About's come to 65/311 they will direct traffic to Plant St. They know they have to resurface it beforehand. Plant Street is a state road. Commissioner Bennett asked when the project will begin, Town Manager Greenwood stated January 2022 and the interchange will be July of 2022. Mayor Brown stated she has had some complaints brought to her regarding Commissioner Hairston. She stated the Town does not condone these actions and it is not the responsibility of an elected official to block a citizen with their car. This behavior makes the Board and the Town look bad and it will not be accepted. We do not carry ourselves in this manner, we do not have the authority to act on the behalf of the Sheriff's department or the Health Department. Our job is to look out for what is best for our citizens of the Town, to protect them and this kind of behavior is embarrassing to me. Mayor Brown asked Town Attorney Rowe if there is any legal action that needs to be addressed. Town Attorney Rowe stated actually if the question is about legal options we can go into closed session but otherwise these things need to be addressed in open session. Mayor Brown wanted to make sure citizens felt safe. We are to be good examples to our Town. It has come to me and it needed to be addressed. She wanted to thank the Town staff, the Sheriff for your support and the citizens. She wanted to thank everyone and especially God for leading us and guiding us during this pandemic.

Commissioner Mabe made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bennett. Motion carried unanimously.

6. Meeting adjourned at 8:55PM

Nellie Brown, Mayor
Town Clerk

Date

Amanda Town Clerk Amanda Bryant ,

Date