

**Town of Walnut Cove  
Board of Commissioner Meeting  
June 8, 2021  
Meeting Minutes**

Members Present:

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

Members Absent:

Ann Rowe– Town Attorney

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

**Pledge of Allegiance:** Town Manager Kim Greenwood

**Invocation:** Reverend Linda Moore

**Announcements:**

1. Walnut Cove Volunteer Fire Dept. Monthly Meeting. Thursday, July 1, 2021, at 7:00 PM
2. Walnut Cove Planning/Zoning Board Meeting. June 17, 2021, at Walnut Cove Public Library @ 6:30pm.
3. Walnut Cove Board of Commissioners Monthly Meeting. July 13, 2021, at 7:00 PM at the Walnut Cove Senior Center.
5. Recycle: June 11, June 25, and July 9, 2021.
6. Rosenwald Day, Centennial Celebration, Senior Center, June 19, 2021.
7. Fireworks, Independence Day Celebration, July 3, 2021. 6:00 PM Lions Park.

**Adjustments to Agenda**

Town Manager Greenwood stated the only adjustment was the revised copy of the Moratorium which will be addressed in Old business.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Bennett to approve the adjustments to the agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hairston. Motion carried unanimously.**

**Public Comments – 2**

Angie Bailey – The Cove Group. Wanted to thank the Board for the hanging baskets and for the support during Springfest. They are very excited about Thursday night, it will be the first Concert in the Cove at Cove Square, featuring a local band called Second Time Around and it will begin at 6:00pm. They will have a food truck and lemonade truck as well. Next, she wanted to get permission for some upcoming events as well as some that will need a road closure, for a few festivals and events.

Fall Fest: October 2<sup>nd</sup> from 12-8pm., Halloween October 30<sup>th</sup>, 4-8pm. Christmas in the Cove December 4<sup>th</sup> from 4-8pm. For the Christmas in the Cove, they will use a side street and shouldn't need but an officer or two to help redirect traffic. She also asked about the county signs for the park, Town Manager

Greenwood stated if the Board approves and we get the DOT approval. Commissioner Bennett stated the road definitely needs to be closed for Halloween, it is a wonder no one was killed. Ms. Bailey stated the WCFD estimated ~10k people at the last Halloween event. Town Manager Greenwood asked if there were any rain dates for the events listed of which Ms. Bailey said they did not discuss rain dates. Greenwood stated he would get this typed up for the July meeting for a vote. Ms. Bailey asked if it would be inappropriate to start advertising and planning for the Fall Fest, Greenwood stated it shouldn't be a problem the DOT has always been good to use, but may need to wait just to be sure. Ms. Bailey also asked about the portable speed bumps used during Springfest if we can put those on Summit Street again, which seemed to help with traffic.

Donna Hairston – She wanted to address a problem with the property beside of her property. The former property owner passed away and left the estate to his grandchildren. The grandchildren live in Raleigh and were only concerned with the contents of the home, Mr. Rutledge is the attorney from what she has gathered. The yard is overgrown, there is an abandoned car, there are weeds everywhere which are starting to come over onto her property. She had considered using some of her retirement money to fix the property but decided against it. She needs something done with this problem. Commissioner Hairston asked if the property was condemnable, Ms. Hairston stated it needs to be. Mayor Brown asked if Cory has seen the property, Town Manager Greenwood asked if the address was 604 Marshall Street, and Cory has sent them a letter with no response. Mayor Brown stated it is the property where Jim Dalton's travel agency used to be across from Hedgecock Building Supply. Mayor Brown stated she would follow up and have Cory review the property as well. Town Manager Greenwood asked if it was just overgrown grass. Ms. Hairston stated it was a little bit of everything and is in bad shape.

Commissioner Hairston asked if we could have Andrew look at the property. Town Manager Greenwood stated we can take a different approach previously they did not want to go onto private property but this is a safety and health hazard. We can mow these abandoned properties and take a lien out against the property. If the grandchildren are interested in selling the property this will block the sale until the lien is paid. Mayor Brown stated it will be looked into and she will follow up.

Kim Ferrell – The Palmetto Group wanted to invite everyone out on July 2<sup>nd</sup> to the Palmetto Theater, they will be having their first ticketed event. The tickets will be first come first served and the doors will open at 5 with the show started at 7:30. Alan Bibee will be performing.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Bennett to close public comments, the motion was seconded by Commissioner Hairston. Motion carried unanimously.**

### **1. Consent Agenda**

a. Approval of Minutes from May 4, 2021 and May 11, 2021

**A motion was made by Commissioner Bennett to approve the minutes from May 4, 2021 and May 11, 2021 meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mabe. Motion carried unanimously.**

**b. Public Hearing- Consideration of Updated Zoning Ordinance.**

**A motion was made by Commissioner Bennett to open the public hearing, the motion seconded by Commissioner Hairston. The motion was carried unanimously.**

No one signed up for public comments.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Mabe to close the public hearing, the motion was seconded by Commissioner Mitchell. Motion carried unanimously.**

**c. Public Hearing – 2021-2022 Budget Proposal**

**A motion was made by Commissioner Hairston to open the public hearing for the 2021-2022 budget proposal. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bennett. Motion carried unanimously.**

No one signed up for the public hearing.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Hairston to close the public hearing, the motion was seconded by Commissioner Mabe. The motion carried unanimously.**

**d. Darren Rhodes, Grant Information Update PPT.**

Town Manager Greenwood introduced Darren Rhodes from the NC Dept. of Commerce, who has been completing a market analysis survey and Gap analysis on the Town. Mr. Rhodes wanted to thank the Board and he reviewed the handouts presented to each Board member. He explained the difference between good flow of money and bad flow of money. The leakage total of money is the spending power an average person spends which is around 40% of their income. There are many opportunities for new businesses in Town such as a outdoor clothing and supply store to provide the necessary clothing and equipment for people going to Hanging Rock. Buddy Timm asked with economic growth brings higher taxes which makes it harder on the poor, Mr. Rhodes stated with the economic diversity report it has a good mix service, retail, manufacturing and government services because of this a big share of the taxes should be on companies and not the residents. Walnut Cove is ideal for small manufacturing businesses such as metal fabrications.

**2. Old Business**

**a. Sweepstakes – Moratorium (attachment B)**

Town Manager Greenwood stated the information in the packet was not complete and asked the Board to use the handout with the complete information he handed out prior to the meeting. The current moratorium expired May 31, 2021; this moratorium is an extension of the moratorium which will expire on November 10 which will give time to complete the data collection. Commissioner Bennett asked if this would prevent any new sweepstakes from coming into Town, Greenwood stated yes, no new sweepstakes businesses and not effect the current businesses.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Bennett to extend the Sweepstakes Moratorium, the motion was seconded by Commissioner Hairston. Motion carried unanimously.**

**3. New Business**

**a. Consideration of Adoption of updated Zoning Ordinance (attachment B)**

The new zoning ordinance approved by the legislature that is to go into effect on July 1, 2021, each Board member received a copy of the changes made. You can do one mass vote to cover the changes and adopt them in one vote. Ginger Booker contracted thru PTRC has revised the needed changes which were very extensive. The good thing this will shorten the process but more detailed in exactly what is approved for applications for items such as conditional use permits. All of the current forms will need to be changed as well as reassess all of the fees, it is very expensive to advertise. Mayor Brown confirmed the effective date of July 1, 2021.

**Commissioner Bennett made a motion to adopt and replace the current zoning ordinance, the motion was seconded by Commissioner Mitchell. Motion carried unanimously.**

**b. Consideration of 2021-2022 Budget Ordinance (attachment C)**

Town Manager Greenwood stated he was very proud of our Board during our budget retreat, they did not increase tax rates, no increase to water and sewer rates and agreed to invest funds into the WWTP. Cory has reached out to Ammons regarding dredging the lagoons, and we are working with Randy Griffith regarding the altitude valve. They also set aside funds for some much-needed maintenance.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Bennett to approve the 2021-2022 Budget Ordinance, the motion was seconded by Commissioner Hairston. Motion carried unanimously.**

**c. Consideration of purchase Gravely 600 Mower (attachment D)**

Town Manager Greenwood provided the Board with a picture of a Gravely 600 mower stating the current mower was purchased 8 years ago. The town has always purchased used mowers and we have gotten good service out of our current Gravely mower. We would like to use the current mower at the WWTP, abandoned homes and other projects such as these. The new mower will be for the park. Greenwood has spoken with King Lawn & Garden and the price was good and we have a great relationship with them.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Hairston to purchase the Gravely 600 mower, the motion was seconded by Commissioner Bennett. Motion carried unanimously.**

**4. Departmental Reports**

**Administration**

Springfest was very successful for the Town. We commend Angie Bailey with the Cove Group for preparing for a major event. Also, our appreciation to the Walnut Cove Fire Dept., Stokes Sheriff’s Office and Public Works for working the event. All went with no injuries or problems and had a big crowd. Final preparations are being made for our annual fireworks for July 3. The band and sound system folks have been contracted. Brandi has also arranged for food vendors, the sound stage and fireworks folks. Our Public Works will groom the park with mowing and trash pick up as we approach the date. We have not received bids for the our street mapping but are getting responses for the engineering bid for Town Hall. The Town Clerk is completing documents to begin our online bill pay system. Once established, all administrative employees will be trained in the use of the system. All the necessary paperwork has been completed and submitted for the Family Cares Act funding and should receive our first installment in the coming days. A separate account has been established from our regular operating account for the funds. Also the budget vs. actual that is included in the packet will show how well the Town has faired in a pandemic. For the administration we came in \$137k less then originally budgeted, Water and Sewer had a gain of \$73k more then anticipated and the LPA office had a gain of \$16k. As of right now there is ~\$2.8million in the bank.

**License Plate Office**

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

DMV Transactions:	\$11,672.95
Notary:	<u>\$1,587.00</u>
Net Profit:	\$13,259.95

### **Code Enforcement**

The zoning administrator will have a busy May/June. The new land usage policy written by Ms. Booker is hopefully approved this evening. The planning/zoning board will review some of the changes this month at their meeting. There is a lot of new material to learn and we will adjust accordingly. There are some pending applications awaiting the July start day with the new process.

### **Public Works**

Public works has had a busy month one sewer line near the Nail Salon/Food Lion area has been totally replaced. The line is repaired and grass sown back from our work. We had several small leaks possibly from a surge in water pressure along Windmill street. Those leaks have been fixed. As time allows, we have completed some patching from repair work in town. The progress for the Altitude Valve at the vault is proceeding. Electricity will need to be in place at the vault. This being a county property, we will work with them in getting power to the vault. As with all summers, we devote as much spare time as possible to our mowing projects. Our Public Works spent days on removing the old fence line and brush at the WWTP the last week of May. It looks great and our numbers are in compliance with the WWTP. We plan to have the second lagoon dredged this summer. Cory has reached out to the last Contractor specializing in this type of work and hope to have this completed in early September. Dr. Burchell recommends to wait to complete the dredging in the fall when the ammonium levels are low to avoid a fee if the ammonium levels were to spike during the dredging process. We are very thankful for Dr. Burchell and his team, they have been able to save the WWTP and the Town and a lot a money and the WWTP will be functionable for decades.

### **Items for future consideration**

Fracking Moratorium renewal by November.  
Family Cares Act funding this summer.

### **5. Items of General Concern**

Mayor Brown wanted to remind everyone this year is an election year with herself, Commissioner Mabe, Commissioner Bennett and Commissioner Mitchell all up for re-election. The sign up date is July 2-16<sup>th</sup> and she plans on running again. Town Manager Greenwood stated the election board had called him stated we could have the option to host early voting which would be an additional charge, currently we pay \$5500 per election and this would increase if we have early voting. We have never had early voting in the past but wanted the Board to have the option. Commissioner Hairston stated to leave it like it is now and use the money in Town, Commissioner Bennett agreed as well. Mayor Brown wanted to congratulate all of the 2021 graduates including Commissioner Mitchells son Trey who graduated from UNC Chapel Hill and has already secured a job. The solar farm is on track and will soon host a job fair with pay ranging from \$17.50/hour to \$40/hour. Caroline Armijo has begun work on the basketball court in a James Brown theme, Commissioner Hairston stated they have already paved it. Commissioner Mabe asked if we will be hosting another fall clean up, he has had several citizens contact him about it. Town Manager Greenwood stated it was very popular and it would be up to the Board. Commissioner Hairston commented lets get it planned. Town Clerk Amanda Bryant stated she had planned to mention it in the July meeting and has spoke with Cory regarding a better plan then before. The area was so large it was hard for Public Works to keep up with the amount of items the citizens were getting rid of but she will get this planned and scheduled. Ms. Bailey spoke up and stated they would be willing to help Mr. Rhodes with the survey for the Town and she wants the DeHart dentist office lot if anyone knows how to obtain it.

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

**6. Meeting adjourned at 8:39PM**

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Nellie Brown, Mayor

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Amanda Bryant , Town Clerk

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Date

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Date