

Town of Walnut Cove
Board of Commissioner Meeting
March 09, 2021
Meeting Minutes

Members Present:

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

Members Absent:

Thomas Mitchell – Commissioner

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

Pledge of Allegiance: Mayor Brown

Invocation: Commissioner Mabe

Announcements:

1. Walnut Cove Volunteer Fire Dept. Monthly Meeting. Thursday, April 1, 2021 at 7:00 PM
2. Walnut Cove Planning/Zoning Board Meeting. Mar. 18, 2021 at Walnut Cove Public Library @ 6:30pm.
3. The Cove Group (virtual)
4. Walnut Cove Board of Commissioners Monthly Meeting. April 13, 2021 at 7:00 PM at the Walnut Cove Senior Center.
5. Recycle: March 19 and April 2, 2021
6. Blood Drive at First Baptist Church on Friday March 13, 2021.

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

A motion was made by Commissioner Mabe to add a close session meeting to the agenda and item e. Attorney Update. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bennett. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion was made by Commissioner Mabe to accept the adjustments to the agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bennett. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comments – 0

A motion to was made to close Public Comments, the motion was made by Commissioner Hairston. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mabe. Motion carried unanimously.

1. Consent Agenda

Approval of Minutes from February 9, 2021

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

A motion was made by Commissioner Bennett to approve the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mabe. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Old Business

a. Public Hearing – Discharge Firearms in Town Limits Ban

A motion was made by Commissioner Hairston to open the Public Hearing – Discharge Firearms in Town Limits Ban. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bennett. Motion carried unanimously.

No one signed up to speak at the Public Hearing

A motion was made by Commissioner Hairston to close the Public Hearing -Discharge Firearms in Town Limits Ban. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bennett. Motion carried unanimously.

b. Firearms Ordinance

Town Manager Greenwood included a copy of the ordinance for each Board member. It was previously thought to already exist in the ordinance book but after some research and discussion with former employees it was discovered to not be so. The purpose of the firearms ban does NOT infringe on any second amendments rights of the citizens including the right to open and conceal carrier, defend their property or themselves. Town Attorney Rowe stated the next step for the Commissioners would be a motion to adopt and as a voting reminder the ordinance because it is the first time in front of the Board it must have a 2/3 vote not including the Mayor, it is not a simple majority. This is the statute for a new ordinance. Commissioner Hairston asked if we have enough to vote tonight of which Town Attorney Rowe stated yes, you must have 3 votes to pass.

Commissioner Hairston made a motion to adopt the Firearms Ordinance. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bennett. The motion carried unanimously.

c. Consideration to Adopt Resolution of Intent and Set Public Hearing to change Mayoral office to 4-year term. -- Town Manager Greenwood stated as previously discussed in Board meetings the discussion to change a mayoral term from a 2-year term to a 4-year term, Town Attorney Rowe will provide the timeline of what needs to happen. Town Attorney Rowe stated the Board if they choose must first adopt a resolution of intent to consider changing the term from a 2-year term to a 4-year term. The resolution was provided for each Board member which includes the dates for the public hearing (April 13, 2021), consideration of passing of the ordinance at the regular meeting on May 11, 2021. Once the timeline has been completed as with any amendment to the Charter it must be passed 90 days prior to an election. This is the appropriate way to complete this process, the second option would be to adopt the ordinance effective immediately, this would then allow the vote to be on the ballot in the November election. The resolution is the most streamline and effective way to proceed. Commissioner Hairston stated he agreed with the 4-year term. Town Attorney Rowe stated if everything goes by the timeline then whoever runs for the 2021 election the mayoral term will be a 4-year term. Commissioner Hairston asked if it could be on the ballot? Town Attorney Rowe stated it should be effective by November. Mayor Brown asked if the resolution will be voted on tonight, Ms. Rowe stated it would be

and should they adopt the resolution it would set the date for the public hearing in April, then in May it will be up for consideration. Commissioner Bennett stated he was good with a 4 year term.

Commissioner Bennett made a motion to adopt the resolution of intent to consider an ordinance amending the charter of the Town of Walnut Cove to provide for election of the Mayor for a term of four years and setting the date for a public hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hairston. The motion passed unanimously.

3. New Business

A. Informational – “Encounter 1.11 Outreach Ministry” Town Manager Greenwood received an email from Julia Hooker from Encounter 1.11 Outreach Ministry, their goal is to fulfill the physical and spiritual needs and partnered to bring food to those in need. They are doing a great job. Mayor Brown commented it is a nice service and they will bring it to you.

B. Consideration of FMS Bill Pay option to pay online.

Town Manager Greenwood introduced Daren Rhodes from the NC Dept of Commerce. Each Board member received a handout with a timeline for the Market Analysis and Economic Development Assessment. Mr. Rhodes stated he was happy to be here and wanted to go over some details of the market analysis. As far as the Data collection process they are currently collecting data and the money that is going out daily as well as what is coming into the Town. The analysis will review the economic slowdown, a lot of surveying the community and relying on the community as well. The third item listed on the timeline included a steering committee, the information gathered will be usable recommendations from the citizens of the Town. Lastly the implantation and planning will help the Town identify ways and help find ways to fund programs to encourage economic growth in the Town. The NC Dept of Commerce will facilitate the meetings, reports, interviews, and surveys for the Town, this will include gathering information. Also, the steering committee can be any body willing to help or work on this project. They will work with UNCG to understand the tourism, as well regional economy, and main street development. They will tour the Town to get a sense of what is going on and the challenges and opportunities. The outcome will be the market analysis, data presentation, local capital assessment, small business sustainability along with new business recruitment as well as helping businesses to grow in Town. Mayor Brown commented this will benefit the Town. Along with the NC Dept of Commerce Town Manager Greenwood directed the Boards attention to Town Clerk Amanda Bryant. Bryant presented the Board with a proposal for online bill pay. She explained Invoice Cloud works with the current accounting software FMS who recommended them. Bryant along with Office Manager Brandi Bowman attended two meetings to understand the program and the ease to users stating this program will give the citizens of Walnut Cove the opportunity to pay online which is a common question as well as auto draft payment option. Bryant explained she and Bowman spend multiple hours a week manually entering each credit card payment, this new system is connected to the current FMS software and will automatically apply to each customer’s account once a payment is made. Bryant recommended to the Board the need for this program. Mayor Brown stated she thought this was a great thing for the citizens and a good option for the citizens.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bennett to approve the FMS Bill pay option to pay online. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mabe. Motion carried unanimously.

C. Approval of Special Events – Springfest and Fireworks

Town Manager Greenwood directed the Boards attention to Ms. Angie Bailey representative for the Cove Group and Walnut Cove Senior Center. Ms. Bailey expressed the Cove Groups desire to host Springfest this year on the third Saturday of May. Ms. Bailey stated in the past they have set up vendors 12' apart for Fire Code, with the Covid Pandemic they will have them spaced further apart, along with hand washing stations and will encourage social distancing. She is asking the Board to please consider allowing this event, stating Kathy from Just Plain Country held her event and everything turned out fine. Mayor Brown commented it is time to move on, our numbers are down, Ms. Bailey has witnessed a lot in the health care industry and we have to live our life. We need to remember to be cautious and she also agrees it is a good idea to have Springfest. Ms. Bailey stated she has spoken with Tammy Martin the director of Stokes County Health department and the numbers are now down in the single digits. Commissioner Hairston stated his concern was Governor Cooper has his executive orders and we must consider those which includes gatherings outside of 50 people or less. Ms. Bailey stated she believed the new order has changed that but she would have to double check. Mayor Brown stated Governor Cooper did change the order, if people can go to Food Lion and Ingles then it should be fine, people will need to use common sense and we must trust a higher power people have survived and we can't stop living. We have vaccines we can go to the grocery store, malls and more, we can not control but we can recommend. If people are scared they can stay home this is a good thing for people of the Town as well as the Vendors. Ms. Bailey stated she is working with Tammy Martin on recommendations to stay safe as well as working with the Walnut Cove Fire Department and have to acquire a permit through the County. She also commented the Governors order may change between now and then, his orders usually change once a month and the current order is 25 people indoors and 50 outdoors. Commissioner Bennett understands Commissioner Hairston's concerns but if we do all the safety measures it is time to move on.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bennett to approve Springfest and Fireworks. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mabe. The motion vote ended with two yes votes with Commissioner Hairston voting no.

Ms. Bailey asked if the Town would take care of the request to close the road. Town Manager Greenwood stated yes, the Town would, also he wanted to make sure the vote included hosting the 4th of July fireworks and received a verbal approval from the Board.

D. Closed Session – Attorney Client Priviledge

Commissioner Mabe made a motion to go into closed session, the motion was seconded by Commissioner Bennett. Motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Brown called the meeting to back to order at 8:14PM and announced that no action was taken during the closed session.

E. Attorney Update

Town Attorney Rowe stated she had two matters to discuss the first being the water tanks/cell towers, she has been contacted by the vendors AT&T regarding the tower on Plant St. They are looking to renew the lease and want a rate reduction, our consultant stated the contract isn't up but this is the normal time frame they begin to review the contract. The other matter is regarding the Qusi Judicial Hearing for the Terramore group who represents Dollar General. They have filed an appeal and she spoke to their attorney at 5pm today. She has requested a copy of the appeal but hasn't received it at this time, she has no further information regarding the appeal until she views the actual appeal. Mrs.

Rowe asked the Board's permission to receive the summons on behalf of the Town, in order to do so the Board will need to vote to give her permission. The authority to receive the appeal on behalf of the Town allows the Sheriff to deliver the appeal to Ms. Rowe. She recommends this, once Mrs. Rowe has received the appeal she can provide more information on the appeal. Mayor Brown states she feels it is best to let Mrs. Rowe handle it.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bennett to give Town Attorney Ann Rowe the authority to receive the appeal on behalf of the Town. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hairston. Motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Rowe stated she would keep the Board updated.

4. Departmental Reports

Administration

We are gathering documents regarding the USDA loan for our new town hall. Our next step is to advertise for a civil engineer. We have received the deed for the property acquired. Amanda is finishing up creation of email addresses for Commissioners and planning board. COVID-19 update from Emergency Management email.

License Plate Office

The LPA had a solid February. The following is their Net figures.

DMV Transactions:	\$10, 119.19
Notary:	<u>\$1,489.00</u>
Net Profit:	\$11, 608.19

Code Enforcement

Cory has assumed his duties as Code Administrator and ORC. It has been demanding workload but he is doing well with it. The P/Z board is meeting on its regular schedule and will have some items to consider at the next meeting on March 18.

Public Works

Public Works had had a busy month. We were the victim of a theft of one of our trucks. The Stokes Sheriff's office is working on the matter and I believe we will make the recovery. I have attached the On-Call schedule. We have taken the MLK well offline since last fall. We have had no complaints of the water quality and actually received compliments on how good the water is. We plan to leave the well offline, except for emergencies, due to the expense of changing the filtration system on that particular well. We have made repairs on several small leaks but none major. We are preparing for our mowing season and will have some streets that need paving this spring and summer.

Items for Future Consideration:

1. We will have to schedule a budget retreat day, probably scheduled in the March meeting. Please consider any dates that work best and the location that works best for you.
2. As we move forward with town hall, we will soon have plans and designs (hopefully) for you to consider.

5. Items of General Concern

Mayor Brown stated she has heard no complaints with the water. Commissioner Hairston asked for an update regarding the public works department uniforms and was informed by Town Manager Greenwood the guys have received the pants and are awaiting the shirts. Commissioner Hairston stated

the guys represent the Town and will look good. Mayor Brown wanted to thank every citizen and Board member for everything they do in Walnut Cove.

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

6. Meeting adjourned at 8:34PM

Nellie Brown, Mayor

Amanda Bryant, Town Clerk

Date

Date