

March 5, 2021 (Recessed Meeting - Retreat)

Minutes of the recessed meeting of the Mayor and Board of Commissioners of the Town of Elkin, March 5, 2021, 9:00 a.m., at the Liberty.

Present: Mayor Sam Bishop, Commissioners Cicely McCulloch, Robert Ball, Jeff Eidson, Will Gwyn and Tommy Wheeler.

Also present: Town Manager Brent Cornelison, Assistant Town Manager/Director of Recreation and Parks Adam McComb, Finance Director Dina Reavis, Public Works Director Travis Butcher, Police Chief Monroe Wagoner, Fire Chief Kevin Wilson, Economic Development/Planning Director Leslie Schlender, Planner Sarah Harris (joined the meeting at 2:15 p.m. for a discussion on electronic gaming), Town Attorney Raymond A. Parker (arrived at 9:45 a.m.) and Town Clerk Cathie Tilley.

Welcome– Mayor Bishop

- Convened the recessed meeting and welcomed everyone.
 - o Turned meeting over to Town Manager Cornelison:
 - We have a full day ahead and expect to get a lot accomplished.
 - Hope to get our budget process started sooner than usual.

Financial Update – Dina Reavis:

- 2020 Audit:
 - o There was a slight increase in Cash and Investments.
 - o Saw an increase in both Revenues and Expenditures
 - o Fund Balance – General Fund:
 - Increased by \$636,701 to \$3,371,881.
 - Available Fund Balance 2020 increased \$658,771 over 2019.
 - o There was a slight increase in ad valorem taxes.
 - o Intergovernmental revenues increased from \$2,054,932 to \$2,614,598.
 - o Saw a decrease in Sales and Services and Cultural and Recreational.
 - o There were increases in General Government Expenditures and Public Safety.
 - o Debt service decreased from \$168,087 to \$70,704.
 - o Water Fund had a loss of \$125,994.
- Month Ending February 28, 2021:
 - o General Fund Actual-to-Date vs Budget
 - Revenues: 77%
 - Expenditures: 57%
 - o Sales and Use Tax - up
 - o Franchise Utility Tax - down
 - o Cable Franchise Fees – down
 - o Powell Bill – down

- Solid Waste Disposal – down
- NCCMT Portfolio Interest – down
- Beer and Wine tax – up
- ABC Revenue - up
- FY 2021 Year End Forecast:
 - General Fund Actual-to-Date vs Budget
 - Revenues: 100%
 - Expenditures: 85%
 - Enterprise Fund
 - Revenues: 97%
 - Expenditures: 82%
- Town Manager Cornelison:
 - Employee wage increases
 - Presented a comparison of actual salaries to the average for other towns the size of Elkin
 - Tax revenue neutral rate
 - Explained the process to calculate this figure
 - Catching up water bills from COVID
 - A result of the governor's executive order that prohibited utility shutoffs, late fees and reconnections and mandated providing a payment plan (six months) for delinquencies.
 - Debt Setoff
 - Staff recommends bringing an updated resolution for Board to consider.
- Attorney Parker:
 - In 1992, town extended water to Oak Grove Community.
 - Property owners gave deeds of trust to Town and the Northwest Piedmont Council of Governments.
 - One of these properties is going to be sold.
 - Northwest Piedmont Council of Governments has cancelled their deed of trust on this property.
 - Still looking to see if Town has cancelled their deed of trust.

10:30 a.m. – Mayor Bishop recessed for a 15-minute break.

10:45 a.m. – Mayor Bishop reconvened the meeting.

Special Appropriations (Town Manager Cornelison)

- Following is requested funding for this year:
 - Elkin Rescue Squad - \$8,200
 - Elkin Valley Trails Association - \$10,000
 - Reminded Board that \$5,000 is placed in Adam's budget to be earmarked for trails
 - Northwestern Regional Library - \$80,000
 - Foothills Arts Council - \$9,000
 - Foothills Arts Council – Foothills Theater - \$5,000
- Discussion:
 - Commissioner Wheeler:

- As a former department head and having budget requests turned down, it is hard to see money given to outside agencies
- Town Manager:
 - These figures are included in the current budget.
- Commissioner Eidson:
 - It is time to start looking at letting these agencies look for grants, conduct fundraisers, etc. because of our capital requests.
- Mayor Bishop:
 - Asked Adam McComb how much the Recreation and Parks Department spend on trails.
 - This question resulted in much discussion regarding the trails and their upkeep.
- Representatives in attendance from the agencies were given an opportunity to address the Board.
 - Heard from EVTA and Elkin Library.
- Each agency request was discussed at length.
- Following discussion, it was the consensus of the Board to provide the following funding:
 - Elkin Rescue Squad - \$5,000
 - Elkin Valley Trails Association - \$5,000 (this is included in the Recreation and Parks Budget each year)
 - Northwestern Regional Library - \$80,000
 - Foothills Arts Council - \$9,000
 - Foothills Arts Council – Foothills Theater - \$5,000

Water Fund Projects and Ronda Water Assessment Update (Ryan Hager)

- Update on capital project objectives:
 - Raw Water Supply
 - Improvements to the raw water line, emergency raw water line and raw water pumping station.
 - Completed.
 - Water Supply
 - West Zone improvement for additional supply to Wilkes County.
 - North Zone tank control modifications.
 - Original Timeline – FY 17-23.
 - Original Cost - \$3,344,000.
 - Fire Protection
 - West Zone Improvements.
 - East Zone Improvements.
 - Showed picture of a cast iron waterline from our system.
 - Talked about problems from them getting clogged.
 - Original timeline – FY 17-22.
 - Original Cost - \$1,667,000.
 - Aging Infrastructure
 - North Zone Improvements.

- East Zone Improvements.
 - Original Timeline – FY 21-30.
 - Original Cost - \$3,091,000.
 - Miscellaneous
 - Miscellaneous system needs and costs provided by Elkin staff.
 - Original Timeline – FY 15-30.
 - Original Cost - \$1,000,000.
 - WTP generator.
 - Completed FY 19-20.
 - Next Steps
 - West Zone water supply improvements (preliminary).
 - New 250k gallon tank - \$1,900,000.
 - Water line improvements - \$1,400,000.
 - Total - \$3,300,000.
 - Recommend applying to DWI for funding
 - April 30, 2021 application deadline.
 - Fall 2021 determination of funding.
 - Two to three-year process until constructed.
- Ronda-Elkin MRF
 - Ronda received a grant in partnership with Elkin.
 - There has been discussion about Elkin taking ownership of Ronda's water system.
 - Study's objective is to analyze:
 - Elkin taking over ownership of Ronda's water system.
 - Elkin providing contract operation and maintenance services.
 - Review current status of Ronda water system including:
 - Identification of water system assets.
 - Preliminary condition assessments.
 - Review water production and purchase.
 - Routine operations and maintenance tasks.
 - Staffing needs.
 - Billing operations and water user rates.
 - Evaluate operating budget.
 - Based on completed preliminary assessments, make recommendations on:
 - Need for further asset inspections and evaluations.
 - Need for rehabilitation of assets.
 - Need for capital improvement projects.
 - Town Manager Cornelison:
 - WK Dickson has a general understanding of the Ronda system.
 - Need to do further assessment.
 - We are waiting on Ronda to come back to us with their information.
 - We will work with Ryan to see what the numbers look like and bring back to the Board.

- Are we going to increase their water rates?
 - Contract states we will increase their rates as we increase Elkin's rates, but we have not done that.
 - We have them at \$3.50 right now; should be at \$7.00.
 - Commissioner Eidson suggested we send Ronda a letter explaining we held off increasing rates while waiting for their study.
 - Study has not been completed, and do not know when it will be completed.
 - Let them know we are raising their rates to \$7.00.
 - Come back to this Board with what they say.

12:00 p.m. Mayor Bishop recessed the meeting for lunch.

12:45 p.m. Mayor Bishop reconvened the meeting.

Surry County Economic Development Update (Todd Tucker)

- Appreciates the Town's support.
- Has been an interesting and challenging year for everybody.
- Although many companies had layoffs due to COVID-19, most companies in Surry County are in the process of hiring people back that were laid off.
- Presented an overview of 2020 addressing topics including but not limited to the following:
 - Unemployment
 - Some local businesses hired back employees that had been laid off and also added employees.
 - Some are back to pre-COVID numbers.
 - We are heading in the right direction.
 - Project inquiries and client visits.
 - Inquiries were up from the previous year.
 - Most inquiries want an existing building, and several want a site.
 - There is a lot of competition with sites.
 - Projects
 - Majority of existing industry and small business numbers were down because of COVID.
 - Expect this trend to continue in 2021.
 - Marketing
 - Events were cut back due to COVID (meetings and trade shows were canceled).
 - Presented several marketing techniques that have been updated or added during the shutdown.
 - Attended a few virtual trade shows and workshops.
 - Programs
 - COVID negatively affected marketing and programming.
 - Working on more things virtually and will utilize technology going forward.

- Zoning
 - Briefly discussed zoning and its effects on economic development.
- Finished FY 19-20 under budget.

Improvement Projects

- Town Manager Cornelison gave Mayor and Commissioners a list of the improvement projects.
 - Asked board members to rank each project from 1 (low) to 5 (high) after hearing all presentations.
- **Town Manager Cornelison and Leslie Schlender**
- *Heritage Arts and Trails Center Exterior and Interior next Phase*
 - Exterior—Brent (cost estimates):
 - Paved Trail - \$17,000
 - Concrete Trail - \$45,000
 - Amphitheater - \$100,000 - \$300,000
 - Interior—Leslie:
 - Sign – getting ready to go into fabrication
 - “It Starts with a River” – \$25,000
 - If it is interactive – \$80,000 - \$200,000
- *East Main Street Alley Parking—Brent (cost estimates)*
 - Asphalt – \$35,000
 - Curb and gutter – \$25,000
 - Landscaping – \$5,000
 - Total – \$65,000
 - Discussed making it look rustic by using gravel rather than concrete.
- *Market Street Square—Brent*
 - Presented:
 - Concept of proposed idea
 - Description of work and projected costs - \$259,000 (additional services - \$125/hour)
 - Discussed looking at doing something ourselves.
 - Staff will investigate other options.
- *Entrance/Gateway Signage—Leslie*
 - Showed pictures of a lighted sign
 - Provided renderings of sign placement (near the Fairfield Inn area)
 - Is constructed of Corten steel with a rock veneer on a concrete base with lights
 - Cost is \$25,000
- **Brent Cornelison**
- *New Fire Station Study*
 - Last year, site seemed like a high priority
 - Possible locations include:
 - Rescue Squad
 - Surry Center (property behind KFC)
 - Eldon Parks Road and Claremont

- Johnson Ridge Road
 - Has been some discussion with the county about their property.
 - This is the primary location.
 - Considered a feasibility study on all four locations.
 - Cost will be \$21,000.
 - County said to go ahead with a feasibility study on their site.
 - Cost will be \$7,000.
- **Adam McComb**
- *Recreation and Parks Projects*
 - Proposed projects for FY21-22
 - Re-pave and stripe parking lots at Municipal Park
 - Phase 1 Around Recreation Center Building - \$65,000
 - Phase 2 From creek to Pool - \$62,000
 - Phase 3 Around tennis Courts and ballfield - \$55,000
 - Total - \$182,000
 - East Standard Street Upgrades – Dog Park – New Location
 - Friends of Dog Park are going with an updated plan
 - Does not include on-street parking
 - Total cost - \$51,100
 - They are proceeding with their fundraising.
 - Hollywood Cemetery Columbarium
 - Cremation is becoming more popular; therefore, have looked into prices for columbarium
 - Site prep - \$5,000
 - Columbarium - \$20,000
 - Purchase one and then add another one depending on demand
 - 64 niches (front and back)
 - Recommend pricing \$500/niche for residents; \$1,000/niche for nonresidents
 - Water Plant Demolition
 - Demolish cistern on itself, bury stirring tanks in cistern and cap with fill
 - Almost all of the demolished structures will remain on-site due to using crushed concrete as filling
 - Leave water plant offices and maintenance for storage and Fire Department training
 - Add outdoor accessible restrooms adjacent to the water plant
 - Cost estimate - \$85,000
 - Baseball Field Re-Lamp
 - Replacing current lights with LED will almost double foot candles

- Cost: Lighting and installation - \$30,000
- Crater Park Street Parking
 - There is a lot of use at this park
 - To add diagonal street parking:
 - Monroe Street - \$20,000
 - Standard Street - \$80,000
- Future Projects
 - Crater Park street parking - \$100,000
 - Handicap parking - \$35,000
 - Pickleball courts - \$60,000
 - Outdoor games - \$13,000
 - Contingency - \$12,000
 - Total - \$220,000
 - Less PARTF Grant (\$110,000) and Powell Bill (\$80,000)
 - Town investment - \$30,000
- Soccer Park Land Identification
 - Classen property
 - Industrial park
 - Hurt property
 - Described fields that could be at each location and their usage.
- Municipal Pool Spray-Park Expansion
 - Pool built in late 1970's with Land and Water Conservation Funds
 - Going to have to re-plaster pool - \$100,000
 - Spray-Park - \$185,000
 - Need Board direction prior to pursuing hard budget numbers
- Elkin Recreation Center Expansion
 - Built in 1988
 - Need Board direction prior to pursuing hard budget numbers
- Following the presentations, Town Manager Cornelison asked Board Members to rate these projects (1, 2, and 3).

2:15 p.m. Mayor Bishop recessed the meeting for a 10-minute break.

2:25 p.m. Mayor Bishop reconvened the meeting.

Electronic Gaming Operations Discussion (Sarah Harris)

- We currently have four establishments in Elkin
 - 1428 Suite 100 North Bridge Street (next to Subway) – 115' to R-8; 198' to Robin Road and 291' to Elk Court
 - 2125 North Bridge Street (Ridgeview Shopping Center) – 70' to R-20; 587' to 142 Glendale Road
 - 1617-1647 North Bridge Street (Elkmont Shopping Center)

- Two establishments (Ubox and McDollards) – both 75' to church property line (Ubox is 479' to church structure; McDollards is 230' to church structure)
- These can be regulated through zoning.
- Our ordinance reads, "Location: No adult establishment or tattoo establishment shall be located within 500 feet of any zoning district boundary line of R-8, R-12, R-20 and/or within 1,000 feet of a property line of any school, park, church or similar place of religious service; and/or within one-half mile of any other adult establishment or tattoo establishment.
- Three out of four of these establishments are out of compliance.
- Planning Board has been receiving a lot of complaints about these businesses.
 - Want to know how you want to address this.
- Establishment at 1428 Suite 100 North Bridge knows he does not meet requirements.
- Following discussion, Commissioner Eidson made a motion to send letters to these establishments notifying them they have sixty (60) days to come into compliance. There were no questions. Upon a second by Commissioner Gwyn, the motion was unanimously approved.

Departmental and Advisory Board Updates

- ***Economic Development, Planning and Main Street (Leslie Schlender)***
 - Main Street
 - New businesses – 11
 - Expansions – 4
 - Closed – 3
 - Highlighted:
 - Investments and renovations
 - Building issues
 - Improvement and accomplishments
 - Economic Development
 - Items of interest included but were not limited to:
 - Vaughan Bassett (possible brewing project)
 - Old Wal-Mart
 - Carter Mill Road
 - Former Middle School
 - Elkmont Shopping Center (Harbor Freight)
 - Rite Aid
 - CC Camp Road (carwash next to Taco Bell)
 - PGW Drive
 - Memorial Park Drive
 - Spring Valley Apartments
 - Darnell Property
 - ACC Coatings
 - Housing project next to Town Hall (stormwater run-off plan)

- Mill Property (might be donated to town; Foothills Arts Council signed agreement with owner)
 - Trail easement going east out of town
 - Russell property
 - Yadkin Valley Bank (building being looked at)
 - Bonanza Group
 - Chatham Park
- Tourism
 - Explore Elkin
 - Trail Days
- Planning
 - Due to COVID, Planning Department saw a slight decrease in zoning permit applications
 - 2019 – 76 applications
 - 2020 – 56
 - Development is up
 - In 2021, have seen an increase in zoning permit applications for new businesses including:
 - Elks Edge Carwash
 - Cookout
 - Harbor Freight
 - Cypress Trails
 - There has been a noticeable decline in violations
 - We attribute this to residents being at home during COVID
 - Possibly making investments in properties (painting, landscaping, etc.)
 - FY 21-22
 - Will finish updating Land Use Plan and Town Ordinances
 - Projected to complete in August
 - Breakdown of Activities:
 - Zoning Permits – 42%
 - Zoning and Code Violations – 31%
 - Zoning Verification Letters – 7%
 - Address Requests – 7%
 - Minor Subdivisions – 5%
 - Conditional Use Permits – 4%
 - Flood plain permits, variance, re-zonings – 4%
- **Police – Chief Monroe Wagoner**
 - Service Calls:
 - Accident – 719
 - Alarm – 862
 - Checkpoint – 229
 - Escort – 197
 - Involuntary commitment (medical) – 634

- Security Check – 5,622
 - Warrant – 188
 - Street Duty – 830
 - Stranded Motorist – 263
 - Suspicious Activity – 1,502
 - Traffic Stop – 2,364
 - Unlock Vehicle – 600
 - Other – 5,962
 - Criminal Offenses:
 - Child Abuse – 38
 - Disturbance – 366
 - Domestic – 184
 - DWI – 31
 - Drug Violations – 119
 - Alcohol Violations – 143
 - Missing – 19
 - Vandalism – 113
 - Uniform Crime Reporting Crimes:
 - Sex Offense – 5
 - Assault – 69
 - Burglary – 77
 - Larceny – 377
 - Vehicle Theft – 56
 - Fraud – 91
 - Phone Calls:
 - 911 – 1,050
 - Administrative – 20,179 (incoming and outgoing phone calls)
 - Assist Others – 14,800
- **Fire – Chief Kevin Wilson**
- Ran a total of 532 calls
 - Fire – 36
 - Medical - 260
 - Hazardous (no fire) – 16
 - Service Call - 74
 - Good Intent – 54
 - False Alarm and False Call – 71
 - Severe Weather and Natural Disaster – 20
 - Special Incident - 1
 - Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant (\$485,726) ended in November
 - Responded to 40 calls from neighboring departments
 - Members:
 - Volunteers – 30
 - Paid – 15
 - Retired – 16
 - Non-member – 1

- Total of 62 on roster
- **Recreation and Parks – Adam McComb**
 - COVID Impacts to Department:
 - Staff has made the best of our time as possible with COVID-19.
 - Hoping some regulations will relax.
 - Athletics:
 - Spring refunds in 2020
 - Had some Fall clinics for soccer and baseball
 - November 2020 – flag football program.
 - Spring 2021 – sports planned with Health Department input for youth soccer and youth baseball
 - Registration numbers for soccer, t-ball and machine pitch are going well
 - Little League Baseball – had seven register; cannot have a team.
 - Will be running some clinics
 - Pool:
 - Hope to open pool for summer swim activities and summer camp.
 - Program adjustments will be made as directed by Health Department
 - Revenues and foot traffic down due to COVID
 - Capacity limits were mandated
 - Only had public swim/lap swim and pool rentals
 - Did not have swim teams and lessons
 - Recreation Center:
 - Revenues and foot traffic are low
 - Capacity limits
 - Facemask requirements
 - Projects:
 - Flood repair
 - Ongoing
 - Will take most of fiscal year to recover
 - Will be assessing park grounds and green spaces to see if over seeding is required
 - Upcoming Projects:
 - Gold Star Memorial – VFW
 - Goal of dedication on Memorial Day 2021
 - Dog Park
 - Friends of the Dog Park are fundraising money to install fence and develop facility
- **Public Works – Travis Butcher**
 - Water Plant:
 - New raw water valve (electric)
 - New turbidity monitors (cut down ½ of turbidity)

- Finished water meter vault
- Chlorinators
- Surface wash motor rebuild
- Plug for clear well overflow protection from floods
- Flood gates for reservoir
- Repaired floc mixers
 - Cost estimate - \$15,000
 - Employees did work; replaced with stainless
 - Cost \$500
- Future Water Plant Projects:
 - Convert to electric actuators; they are more efficient than air.
 - High service pump replacement (current ones are 53 years old).
 - These are responsible for pumping 750,000 gpd
- Distribution:
 - Risk and Resiliency Assessment and Emergency Response Plan.
 - Standard Street water line project – railroad access to Bridge Street:
 - Cost estimate - \$50,000
 - Employees did work
 - Cost - \$9,500
 - Installed 700' of 6" C900
 - This connected the two mains on the south side of the railroad tracks
 - Hydrant at Terminix had a flow of 339 gpm
 - Went to 1,298 gpm
 - North Elkin Water Tank:
 - Interior sand blasted and recoated
 - Colony Lane:
 - New hydrant and line valve
 - Water line 60' of 6", 400' of 2"
 - Flushed hydrant
 - Flushed hydrant for park – 300' of 2"
 - New flush points installed
- Streets:
 - Oversize pickup
 - Will pick up one oversized item for \$25
 - Will not have to wait until April for item to be picked up (Bulk Item Pickup Day)
 - Trimmed trees along Ivy Circle, Brookwood and Dillon
 - Right-of-way mowing
 - Brush pickup
 - Removed sand from Memorial Park Drive and library parking area
 - Maintaining trash and recycle cans
 - Help EVTA with millstones

- Leaf pickup
- Victoria Street is to be paved
- Bridge Street islands
- Street sign maintenance
- Compact Track Loader
 - Need to replace Backhoe – Cost \$110,000
 - Compact Track Loader – Cost \$87,000
 - Can be used by more than one department
 - Street cleanup
 - Stack brush at garage
 - Clean sand off Memorial Park Drive
 - Forklift
 - Snow Removal
 - Mowing
 - Anytime there is an issue at the park, have to call someone to come in to do the work
 - Staff decided it would be more cost effective to purchase compact track loader.
 - Following discussion, it was the consensus of the Board to use money that was overbudgeted to make this purchase.

Final Discussions and Comments for Staff

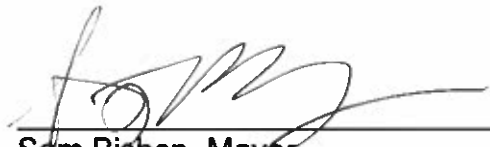
- Adam McComb:
 - Recreation fees need to be advertised before July 1st.
 - We plan to have two swim sessions:
 - One pool session - \$5
 - Two pool sessions - \$8
 - We run the tennis tournaments now:
 - Tournament fee - \$15
- Commissioner Eidson:
 - Is there a policy on street parking on Dillon Street?
 - Discussed on-street parking and some problems it creates on this street.

Closing Remarks (Mayor Bishop)

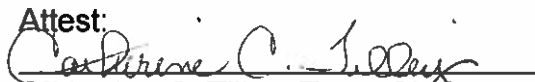
- Thanked staff for all their work.
 - A lot has been accomplished.

Commissioner McCulloch made a motion to go into closed session according to NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3) for a legal update from the Town Attorney. Upon a second by Commissioner Gwyn, the Board went into closed session at 4:05 p.m.

The Board returned to open meeting at 4:10 p.m. There being no further business, Commissioner McCulloch made a motion to adjourn. Upon a second by Commissioner Gwyn, the motion was unanimously approved. The Board adjourned at 4:10 p.m.



Sam Bishop, Mayor

Attest:


Catherine C. Tilley, Town Clerk