

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
COUNTY OF GASTON  
TOWN OF CRAMERTON**

**March 4, 2021**

The Board of Commissioners for the Town of Cramerton met on Thursday, March 4, 2021, at 6:00 p.m., as a virtual meeting via Zoom.

**Call to Order and Determination of Quorum.** Mayor Cauthen, Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas, Commissioner Abernathy, Commissioner Atkinson, Commissioner Neeley, and Commissioner Helms confirmed their attendance for the record. Mayor Cauthen determined there was a quorum.

**Staff Present:** David Pugh, Town Manager; Attorney Kevin Bringewatt; Josh Watkins, Planning Director; Police Chief Adams; Joel Lineberger, Finance Director; and Wilene Cunningham, Town Clerk.

**Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.** Commissioner Neeley provided the invocation and the pledge of allegiance was given by all.

**Adoption of Agenda for this meeting.** Commissioner Abernathy requested that the February 18, 2021 minutes be removed from the consent agenda. The Town Manager recommended the minutes be placed under the “Agenda Items not requiring a Public Hearing Board of Commissioners” section. A motion was made by Commissioner Abernathy to pull the February 18<sup>th</sup> draft minutes from the consent agenda for discussion later in the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Atkinson. Commissioner Helms voted yes, Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas voted yes; and Commissioner Neeley voted yes. The vote was 5 to 0 in favor to move the discussion of the February 18<sup>th</sup> draft minutes to a later time in the meeting. The Town Manager advised the Board that John Searby with the Catawba Riverkeeper Foundation will be providing a verbal update at tonight’s meeting. A motion was made by Commissioner Helms to adopt the agenda as amended. Commissioner Neeley seconded the motion. Commissioner Abernathy voted yes; Commissioner Atkinson voted yes; and Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas voted yes. The vote was 5 to 0 in favor of adoption of the amended agenda.

**Proclamations:**

**A Proclamation recognizing March 2021 as Women’s History Month.** A signed copy of this proclamation will be placed in the minutes book.

**Closed Session: [N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3)] Consult with the attorney to protect the attorney-client privilege.** A motion was made by Commissioner Neeley to enter into closed session. Commissioner Atkinson seconded the motion. Commissioner Abernathy voted yes; Commissioner Helms voted yes; and Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas voted yes. The vote was 5 to 0 in favor of entering into closed session.

Upon return to open session the Mayor asked for a roll call. Commissioner Atkinson stated he was present; Commissioner Neeley stated she was present; Commissioner Abernathy stated she was present; Commissioner Helms stated he was present; and Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas stated he was present. No action was taken by the Board while in closed session.

A motion was made by Commissioner Atkinson to return to open session. Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas seconded the motion. Commissioner Abernathy voted yes; Commissioner Helms voted yes; and Commissioner Neeley voted yes. The vote was 5 to 0 in favor.

**Consent Agenda (Action Item):** Consider approval of the consent agenda.

**a. Finance**

**i. Budget Amendment #9 for FY 2020-2021.**

**ii. USDA Loan Refinance**

**1. Set public hearing for March 18, 2021 BOC meeting.** A motion was made by Commissioner Helms to approve the amended consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Neeley. Commissioner Abernathy voted yes; Commissioner Atkinson voted yes; and Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas voted yes. The vote was 5 to 0 in favor to adopt the amended consent agenda.

## Agenda Items NOT Requiring a Public Hearing

### a. Board of Commissioners

#### i. Wayfinding Signs

##### 1. Neighborhood Signs

- a. **Action Item: Review, discuss, and provide feedback to the DRAFT Neighborhood Sign “Design Competition” RFP.** The Town Manager stated the ad hoc committee met today and offered some recommendations such as the use of the Land Use Plan for consistency; using the philosophy that the signs do not have to match in an effort of trying not to restrict creativity; and to remove the anonymous bid section. Commissioner Atkinson asked about previous designs that were offered and would they be considered. The Town Manager stated that Buzz Bizzell had provided some previous designs. Commissioner Helms asked why the Town was offering awards to companies and how did that benefit the Town. Commissioner Atkinson explained that this was basically an architectural competition where you award merit prizes in a competition, otherwise you are soliciting free design work. The Board consented to continuing with the proposed direction of the sign design competition.

#### ii. Cramerton Planning & Zoning Board Vacancy

1. **Action Item: Consider recommendation of BOC sub-committee to fill P&Z Vacancy.** The selection committee interviewed two (2) candidates. Commissioner Atkinson stated that both candidates presented with very different backgrounds. They both were passionate about serving the Town. Commissioner Neeley stated she was impressed with both candidates. Commissioner Atkinson and Commissioner Neeley selected Mr. Giesey to serve on the Planning and Zoning Board. Mayor Cauthen stated he would reach out to the other candidate, Sarah Koprowski, to discuss other possibilities for her to serve in the Town. A motion was made by Commissioner Neeley to appoint James Giesey to serve on the Planning and Zoning Board. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Atkinson. Commissioner Abernathy voted yes; Commissioner Helms voted yes; and Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas voted yes. The vote was 5 to 0 in favor.

#### iii. Fiscal Year (FY) 2021-2022 Budget

1. **Action Item: Consider setting FY 2021-2022 full day budget work session for week of April 19, 2021.** A motion was made by Commissioner Helms to set the FY 2021-2022 full day budget work session for Thursday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>. Commissioner Neely seconded the motion. The meeting will begin at 8:30 a.m. and end sometime between 2:00 and 3:00 p.m. Individual breakfast orders and lunch boxes will be provided. This meeting will possibly be a hybrid meeting at the Community Center. Commissioner Abernathy voted yes; Commissioner Atkinson voted yes; and Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas voted yes. The vote was 5 to 0 in favor.

- iv. **Amended Minutes:** Mayor Cauthen stated detailed draft minutes had been prepared from the February 18<sup>th</sup> Board meeting. A motion was made by Commissioner Abernathy to adopt the amended February 18<sup>th</sup> draft minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Atkinson. Commissioner Helms voted yes; Commissioner Neeley voted yes; and Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas voted yes. The vote was 5 to 0 to accept the amended minutes.

**BIG BOARD:** The Town Manager stated that most of these items were discussed on Saturday at the Goals and Objectives meeting. The Central Park trails are close to being finished. Discussion is being held with Representative Foxx’s office to set up an advocacy meeting about the Brownfields grant. Commissioner Helms apologized for missing the Goals and Objectives Board meeting.

**Manager’s Report:** The Town Manager commented on the number of meetings that had been held since January by the Board. He thanked the Board for juggling their schedules to accommodate the extra meetings and also to staff for their help.

**COVID 19 update:** Group III vaccines are now available. Information has been sent to all department heads advising them that municipal officials, which includes elected officials, are now eligible to sign up for the vaccines. Commissioner Abernathy asked about the process of signing

up for the vaccine and if the next dose has to be exactly twenty-one (21) days later. She said she has a possible conflict with the timing of the second dose. Commissioner Neeley stated the follow up dosage for the Pfizer vaccine is twenty-one (21) days later, Moderna's vaccine is twenty-eight (28) days later, and Johnson and Johnson offers a one-time dose. Commissioner Atkinson stated his second vaccine shot appointment was scheduled at the time he received the original dosage.

#### **General Staff Reports (as needed)**

- **Update from Two Rivers Utilities, Mr. Mike Bynum.** A copy of the report will be placed in the minutes book.
- **Finance Department:** Mayor Cauthen thanked Mr. Lineberger for all of his hard work on the loan refinancing for USDA. Mr. Lineberger stated he hopes to have a short presentation on that topic at the March 18<sup>th</sup> meeting. Budget preparation is underway as well. Still waiting on the additional financing package for the paving.
- **Police Department:** Chief Adams stated he would have an update at the next meeting about some police training that will happen next month.
- **Fire Department:** Nothing to report.
- **Parks and Recreation Department.** Mr. Smallwood stated there will be additional flood cleanup on Riverside and Goat Island Parks with a minimal impact on any events. John Searby with the Catawba Riverkeeper Foundation was introduced. He updated the Board regarding future engineering studies about removal of the spillway at Armstrong Ford Road. NCDOT owns the former bridge and spillway and are looking at what steps will be needed for the removal process. The Catawba Riverkeeper Foundation is working with Mayor Cauthen and Town staff on the South Fork River Health Committee and the Central Council of Governments to look at ways we can improve the health of the river such as water quality, flood control and mitigation, and recreational access which will make the South Fork River a better amenity and asset to the local communities. The Catawba Riverkeeper Foundation is moving their headquarters from Charlotte to downtown McAdenville into a renovated Pharr Yarns mill building and will be making reports to an old greenhouse building off of the South Fork trailhead. The Town of McAdenville is installing a launch at the greenway below the dam. This will allow citizens and visitors the ability to travel from McAdenville to Cramerton via water along with a public kayak rental program which will be available in a few months. Mr. Searby stated there would be a shuttle service from the South Fork Trailhead in McAdenville to the Spencer Mountain access and they can paddle back with guides. There is an agreement with the City of Belmont for flat water kayaking at Loftis Park. Kayakers will also be able to put in at the Town of McAdenville and paddle to the Town of Cramerton. Kayakers will be able to launch in McAdenville or Cramerton. Shuttle service will be provided between both towns. Commissioner Abernathy asked if feedback would be sought from the Town Board or other people in Town before the kayak route is fully implemented. Mayor Cauthen stated no action has been taken at this time other than planning and looking at practicality. The Town Manager stated Mr. Searby has sent some language about a memo of understanding regarding the trips that would involve kayaks and canoes and how this process would work. Attorney Wolter along with Eric Smallwood have reviewed this information and this will be brought to the Board for their review and allow public comments and feedback. Commissioner Abernathy said these plans sound very exciting, but she wants to make sure that the Board and others have the exact specifications on how this is going to work. One of the options offered was that people could park in Cramerton and then be shuttled up the river and then paddle down to Cramerton. She said that would be okay if they park at Riverside Park, but if cars are parking where Goat Island meets downtown that is not a smart plan in her opinion. She said she walked through Riverside Park on Sunday and there were no other cars or people in that parking lot or anyone using the kayak/canoe launches. She asked that all things be considered before plans are implemented. The Town Manager said information will be brought back to the Board. Commissioner Abernathy stated she is very excited about the potential, and that we should be very careful and deliberate with those plans.
- **Planning and Zoning:** Two (2) preliminary plat requests will be brought before the Board at the next meeting. The plat requests are from VCM and Courtyards at New Hope.
- **Legal:** Nothing to report.
- **Town Clerk:** Nothing to report.

## Topics of Discussion for Each Commissioners

Commissioner Abernathy formally welcomed Commissioner Helms to the Board. She said thank you to the members of Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and how proud she is of them. They meet once a month and they are very involved and engaged. Each of the members of the advisory board took time to complete an informal assessment of the River Link Trail and brought this report back in order to use their observations to generate ideas for improvement. Their work is so important and she thanked all of the Parks and Recreation advisory board members and Mr. Smallwood who does an outstanding job as our Parks and Recreation Director.

Commissioner Atkinson welcomed Commissioner Helms to the Board and stated he was looking forward to working with him. Commissioner Atkinson asked if a meeting could be scheduled with the NCDOT and the Police Department looking at traffic issues at the railroad underpass. The Town Manager stated he would coordinate that meeting.

Commissioner Helms stated he was glad to be back on the Board and was looking forward to working with everyone.

Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas asked if the March 18<sup>th</sup> meeting was going to be a hybrid meeting or a full Zoom meeting. The March 18<sup>th</sup> meeting will be a Zoom meeting. The April budget meeting will be a hybrid meeting. Consideration for possible future meeting at Town Hall will be discussed at a later date. Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas said the road near the Cramerton Christian Academy crosswalk at Woodlawn Avenue is deteriorating and would Public Works please take a look at that area of the road. He thanked Public Works for their assistance in getting the pothole repaired at Eighth Avenue and Market Street.

Commissioner Neeley welcomed Commissioner Helms. She said the Community Committee will meet next week. They have a new member, Tony Maiolo, who is a chef. Tanner Stroman has joined as a student ambassador along with Kaitleen Leazer. The fifth annual River Sweep event will be held on Saturday March 13<sup>th</sup>. She reminded everyone to follow the 3w's: wash your hands; wear your mask and double mask if possible; and maintain social distance. If water is not available to wash your hands then use a hand sanitizer of at least sixty (60) percent.

Mayor Cauthen stated he has a meeting scheduled with Tony Maiolo who was recently appointed to the Community Committee to discuss the current street lighting at the South Fork Village neighborhood. The Planning Director is looking at the Town's lighting policy. Commissioner Atkinson volunteered to assist in finding a baseline measurement on the Town's current lighting. Mayor Cauthen stated there seems to be an increase in littering over the weekends. He stated that there may need to be some additional littering enforcement by the Police Department along with educational messaging.

**Adjournment:** A motion was made by Commissioner Neeley to adjourn the meeting at 7:53 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Atkinson. Commissioner Abernathy voted yes; Commissioner Helms voted yes; and Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas voted yes. The vote was 5 to 0 in favor.

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Will Cauthen, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Wilene Cunningham, Town Clerk