



**OAK RIDGE TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING
JUNE 18, 2020 – 7:00 P.M.
OAK RIDGE TOWN HALL
(Meeting held electronically via Zoom)**

MINUTES

Members Present

Ann Schneider, Mayor
Jim Kinneman, Mayor Pro Tem
George McClellan
Doug Nodine
Martha Pittman

Staff Present

Bill Bruce, Town Manager
Sam Anders, Finance Officer
Michael Thomas, Town Attorney
Sandra Smith, Town Clerk

This meeting was conducted remotely under N. C. Gen. Stat. § 166A-19.24 by use of simultaneous communication using the Zoom online platform and in which Town Council members participated by simultaneous communication. Town Council members were joined and participated in the entire meeting, unless otherwise noted.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Ann Schneider called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. APPROVE AGENDA

Mayor Pro Tem Jim Kinneman motioned to approve the meeting agenda, and Councilman Doug Nodine seconded. Via roll-call vote, the motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

**3. PUBLIC HEARING
2020-21 Fiscal Year Budget**

Mayor Schneider said this was the second of two public hearings on the Fiscal Year 2020-21 budget. The first public hearing was held on June 4, and citizens wishing to speak that night had been invited to do so by signing up in advance or by submitting their comments by phone or email. She added that comments would continue to be accepted for 24 hours after that night's meeting and that Council would hold another meeting on June 22 at 2 p.m. to formally adopt the budget.

In response to Schneider, Town Manager Bill Bruce said he had no further comments on the proposed budget, which was the same as what had been presented two weeks earlier.

Mayor Schneider noted that John Jenkins, chair of the Finance Committee, had shared his support for the budget at the June 4 meeting.

Schneider explained the rules and opened the public hearing.

Public comments:

- Town Clerk Smith said no comments had been received either by phone or email, and no one had asked to speak during the meeting.

Mayor Schneider closed the public hearing. She reminded Council that no action would be taken that night, but that Council would vote on the budget at the special called meeting on June 22.

Council questions/comments:

- Councilman George McClellan said the budget reflected a projected 8 percent drop in revenue, it decreased expenses, and it would still provide a surplus to be added to the fund balance and which could be used for capital expenses. He said he thought the budget was conservative, it takes into account the realities taking place in today's world, and it meets the need for services that Oak Ridge's citizens have come to expect.
- Mayor Pro Tem Kinneman said this would be a good time to talk about the Oak Ridge Youth Association (ORYA) Usage Agreement, because a budget amendment would be needed in the future to cover those changes. He noted that up until this year, ORYA had been subsidized by the Town roughly \$20,000 per year, something that had not explicitly been made known. Instead of charging ORYA for field use, the Town had been allowing it at no charge. If adopted, the new Usage Agreement would allow a credit for ORYA to use however they wanted at the park – for field rental, lights, field prep or shelter rental. It would also clearly quantify the support the Town has been giving to the youth association. He said the Town would be in partnership with ORYA, and ORYA would specify that it was supported by the Town. The Town had also asked for a non-voting member on ORYA's Board. Kinneman said he thought the Town would also be making a substantial investment by building new athletic fields on the Whitaker property to support ORYA.
- Town Manager Bruce said the budget amendment Kinneman spoke of would be around \$15,000.
- Councilman Nodine and Councilwoman Pittman said they had no questions.
- Mayor Schneider said the Council had received some anonymous gripes in the Northwest Observer newspaper regarding the proposed 2.5-percent salary increase for staff. She said the budget was a collaborative process and many opportunities had been provided for participation and public input, including the second public hearing on the budget that was held earlier in that night's meeting. She said she found it difficult to take seriously such anonymous comments when so many opportunities for participation were given. Schneider noted that Greensboro had proposed giving a 2-percent increase to a staff of nearly 3,000 and Summerfield was proposing 2.75-percent increases for its employees. She said of a survey by the NC League of Municipalities, 60 percent of the 28 municipalities that responded planned to give their employees raises that averaged 2.5 percent. She added that the amount of the proposed employee salary increases was less than one-half

percent of the total proposed budget. Schneider ended by saying that she was in strong support of the proposed budget.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Councilman McClellan made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:15 p.m., and Mayor Pro Tem Kinneman seconded. Via roll-call vote, the motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

Respectfully Submitted:

Sandra B. Smith, CMC, NCCMC
Town Clerk

Ann K. Schneider
Mayor