



**OAK RIDGE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
NOVEMBER 4, 2021 - 7:00 P.M.
OAK RIDGE TOWN HALL**

MINUTES

Members Present

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

Staff Present

Bill Bruce, Town Manager
Sandra Smith, Town Clerk
Sean Taylor, Planning Director
Michael Thomas, Town Attorney
Sam Anders, Finance Officer

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

A. Invocation/Moment of Silence.

Denise Sacks, Missions Pastor at Shady Grove Wesleyan Church, offered the invocation.

B. Pledge of Allegiance.

2. MAYOR'S STATEMENT CONCERNING THE EMERGENCY

Mayor Schneider asked members of the public to wear their masks during the entire meeting in accordance with the Guilford County mask mandate. She said the public had been invited to join either in person or by viewing the livestream, and instructions had been widely publicized. She said the Town was meeting all statutory requirements while complying with the Governor's Emergency Order.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

Mayor Pro Tem Jim Kinneman made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, and Councilwoman Martha Pittman seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Councilman George McClellan moved that the minutes of the October 4, 2021, special meeting, the October 7, 2021, regular meeting, and the October 13, special meeting be approved, and Mayor Pro Tem Jim Kinneman seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

5. RESOLUTIONS, PROCLAMATIONS, ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Schneider recognized Milana Nostrand, a founding member of Troop 219G, for her Eagle Scout project that recognized veterans in Oak Ridge cemeteries.

6. REPORT FROM GUILFORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Sergeant Tucker reported that for the month of October that there were 77 calls made for service. He said the most significant calls were 20 burglar alarms, three larcenies, three noise violations, seven suspicious activity, and one weapons violation. He said the Carolina Squat Law would go into effect on December 1, 2021.

7. REPORT FROM OAK RIDGE FIRE DEPARTMENT

Jesse Hopper reported that for the month of October that there were 71 calls in Oak Ridge, 36 of which were rescue calls. He said department members had undergone 729 hours of training, and several were attending advance training courses. As a safety tip, Hopper urged residents with chimneys to have them inspected before using them.

8. ANNUAL FINANCIAL AUDIT REPORT

Chad Cook, Senior Manager at Dixon Hughes Goodman, reported that the Town had received a clean audit opinion for fiscal year 2020-21. He said the firm had found no disagreements or items to report, and no adjustments had been requested. The audit report is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of the minutes.

9. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

A. Consideration/approval of board/committee appointments.

Bruce requested the approval of Adrian Eckenrod as an alternate to the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board.

Councilman George McClellan made a motion appoint Adrian Eckenrod as an alternate to the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board, and Councilwoman Martha Pittman seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

B. Consideration/approval of moving funds to Veterans Memorial Restricted Fund.

Bruce said that per Council's direction and as approved in the budget, contributions to the Veterans Honor Green up to \$34,000 would be matched by the Town in this fiscal year. He said Council had requested the action of matching the funds and moving them into the restricted fund every quarter. Although listed on the agenda as two separate items, Bruce said Council could do both in one motion. When the

money raised is matched and added to what has already been placed in the restricted fund, the total raised for the Honor Green would be \$50,822.74.

Councilwoman Martha Pittman motioned to approve to move \$20,839.87 and for the Town to match \$21,161.87 for a total of \$42,001.74 to be moved into the Veterans Memorial restricted fund, and Councilman George McClellan seconded.

In response to a question from Councilman Nodine, Mayor Schneider said the current estimated cost is the project is \$150,000. She said the Committee will continue to raise funds, and it will raise money if the cost is over \$150,000.

Mayor Pro Tem Kinneman clarified that the Council had agreed to match up to \$34,000 in the current fiscal year with the potential of another \$34,000 in next fiscal year, for a total of up to \$68,000.

The motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

C. Any other business.

Bruce introduced Mike Rhodes, who will be handling the audio-visual for the Town Council meetings. He said that would free up Sean Taylor to handle the Planning Director's duties.

10. NEW BUSINESS

Consideration/approval of Resolution R-21-08 to Establish Water System Management Plan

Bruce said that Council had in their packets a resolution that would approve three documents and authorize the submittal to the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) for water system approval. He said that the documents included the following:

1. Water System Management Plan
2. Water Rules
3. Water Conservation Plan

Bruce said that the documents were drafted by Envirolink, reviewed, and revised by the Water Subcommittee and staff, to include Town Attorney Michael Thomas. He said that Town Council had originally adopted the Water System Management Plan and the Water Rules in January 2020, and had since been revised, updated, and presented for Council's approval for submittal to NCDEQ.

Councilman George McClellan made a motion to approve Resolution R-21-08 to establish Water System Management Plan and to authorize the submittal to the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality for approval, and Mayor Pro Tem Jim Kinneman seconded.

Council discussion:

Councilman McClellan said that he believed that this was the next step as the Town developed a modest water system.

Mayor Pro Tem Jim Kinneman said that he wanted people to understand that if they currently had a well that this would not affect them. He said that this plan would apply to new developments with 30 or more homes.

Councilwoman Pittman said that she was excited about supporting the resolution because the Town had been working on it for so long. She asked Town Manager Bruce to confirm that if a resident had a well or lived in a development that already had a water system that this would not affect you. She also clarified that the Water Conservation Plan would eventually be in ordinances and in the rare case that it needed to be enforced that enforcement and the items under the conservation plan would only apply to the Town-owned assets, and Bruce replied that it would simply be for customers of the Town's water system.

Mayor Schneider said that the financials for this system would be kept separately from the Town's other assets. She said that she believed that it was the responsibility of this Council to plan for the future of the Town and that the water system had been considered for many years. Schneider said that this specific strategy had been investigated in detail over the last few years because things like this were done carefully and cautiously in Oak Ridge with an eye to the future. She said that this small modest system would allow the Town to gradually build the system through expansion and interconnections with the possibility of offering additional options to residents. Schneider said that the proposed water system would be linked to water access at the Oak Ridge Fire Department which was a separate project but would be linked eventually in a three-pronged plan where the Town starts a municipal water system, improves access to water for our fire department, and eventually will link these efforts through access to surface water.

The motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

11. PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Milana Nostrand, 8275 Coldwater Road, Stokesdale, announced the Wreaths over Northwest project, which would be an annual initiative to place donations on every veteran's grave three times per year. She said the Troop 219G was seeking donations for the project.
- Patti Dmuchowski, 7320 Hidden View Drive, Oak Ridge, said residents looking for examples of good works should look no further than their local Scout troops.

10. MONTHLY FINANCIAL UPDATE

Finance Officer Sam Anders presented the financial report, which is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of the minutes.

Councilwoman Martha Pittman made a motion to accept the financial report as presented, and Councilman George McClellan seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

Anders said that Council had received the financing bid processing results, and that three banks had bid on the project.

Mayor Schneider said that Mr. Anders was presenting information that Council requested during the Special Called Meeting on October 4, 2021. She said that Mr. Anders had worked closely with Finance Vice Chair Paul Benz to solicit financing bids for a potential loan of up to \$3.25 million to support construction of Heritage Farm Park.

Anders said that the lowest responsible bid was received from Truist for fixed rate of 2.19% for 15 years. He said that Paul Benz had done an incredible job with negotiating prepayment terms. Anders said that direction was needed from Council on how to proceed with Truist since it was the lowest responsible bid on funding this project.

Schneider asked Bruce to outline the process if Council approved that the finance officer and town manager move forward on preparing the loan documents.

Bruce said that staff would be pursuing several different courses to make sure that the Town would be able to begin construction in the spring. He said that the Town would need to make sure that the Local Government Commission had the paperwork that it needed to review and approve the financing which is a state statute. Bruce said that he would be working to get on their agendas to review the preliminary loan documents while working on the loan documents and negotiating the final terms and interest rates. He said that he anticipated having the lowest bid ready and loan documents finalized for Council to review and approve in January 2022.

Councilman McClellan asked how certain we were on getting this particular interest rate, and Anders replied that the interest rate that Truist had quoted would be good for 60 days.

Councilman McClellan asked what would happen if the bids came back for more than \$3.25M, and Bruce replied that Council could choose to allocate more money from the fund balance or to phase the project and re-bid the project.

Mayor Pro Tem Kinneman clarified that in January 2022 that Council would approve the loan and the bids if they met their needs. He asked if Council decided to back out of everything would Council owe anybody any money, and Anders replied that no money would be owed to anybody.

Councilman Nodine asked how long the fixed rate would be good for, and Anders replied that the rate would be fixed for 60 days.

Councilwoman Pittman said that she was pleased that the financial bidding results included good rates and met all of the criteria that Council had set.

Mayor Schneider thanked Finance Vice Chair Benz and Finance Officer Sam Anders for their work with the financial bidding process. She reminded everyone that the reason that there was a range of the loan from \$2.75M - \$3.25M was to include a cushion for possible bid variations. She said that she was in favor of moving forward with the loan.

Mayor Pro Tem Jim Kinneman made a motion to authorize Finance Officer Sam Anders and Town Manager Bill Bruce to prepare the loan documents and submit them to the Local Government Commission for approval, and Councilman George McClellan seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

11. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Finance Committee.

No report

B. Water Advisory Board.

No report

C. Historic Preservation Commission.

Barbara Engel reported that the Commission met on October 20, 2021, and approved a COA request for JAAJK, LLC for a new single-family residence at 5308 Williard Road. She said another COA request for the Town of Oak Ridge for construction of Heritage Farm Park located at 1921 Oak Ridge Road was approved.

D. Planning & Zoning Board

Town Clerk Sandra Smith read the report, which is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of the minutes.

E. Mountains-to-Sea Trail.

Bill Bruce shared an update on the construction of the side path for the MST. He said that the side path construction on Haw River Road and Pepper Road was well underway and would connect two sections of the MST. Bruce said that the contract is about halfway done and that the clearing for the new trailhead parking lot on Linville Road had begun. He said that the parking lot would have a 10-space gravel lot for people to access the new Headwaters Trail which is part of the MST. Bruce said that he anticipated the side paths and the new parking lot to be done before the end of the year.

F. Conservation Easement Committee

Mayor Schneider reported that the committee had its first meeting to review the conservation easement report and talked about plans for further informing themselves as well as starting to plan next steps.

G. Special Events Committee

Chair Patti Dmuchowski thanked the Council for approving the first matching funds for their fundraising efforts. She said over \$50,000 had been raised and was in their reserved fund. She thanked Town Clerk Sandra Smith and Finance Officer Sam Anders for working the numbers to get their updated fundraising figures. Dmuchowski reported that the committee had their second meeting with Revington Reaves, consultant design group, to finalize the remaining details and to start work on the pavers that will become available for the public to purchase. She said that the committee would host a groundbreaking ceremony at the new veterans site on Thursday, November 11th after the Veterans Day ceremony. Dmuchowski said that Veterans Day ceremony would take place at the amphitheater on November 11, 2021, at 10 a.m. She said that Light up the Night event would be held on December 4, 2021, at from 2 - 8 p.m. with a rain date of December 5, 2021.

H. Parks & Recreation Advisory Board

Co-chair John Garrett reported that the Board met on October 21, 2021, and thanked Phyllis Anders for her work on the 2021 Music in the Park series. He said the Board also reviewed the draft of the Oak Ridge Youth Association's 2022 Usage Agreement. He said that the Board agreed to add to the agreement the ability for a girls' field hockey team to utilize the multipurpose fields for just one year.

12. COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION REPORTS

A. Oak Ridge Elementary School.

Town Clerk Sandra Smith read the report, which is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of the minutes.

B. Oak Ridge Youth Association.

No report

C. Oak Ridge Military School.

No report

13. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Sam Anders, 1829 Oak Ridge Road, thanked the Town for their support of the recent Oak Ridge Fire Department's BBQ fundraiser. He said that 90% of the food was sold within the first 20 minutes and that the remaining was sold within the last 50 minutes.

14. COUNCIL COMMENTS

15. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Pro Tem Jim Kinneman made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:26 p.m., and Councilwoman Martha Pittman seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (5-0).