



**OAK RIDGE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
OCTOBER 6, 2022 - 7:00 P.M.
OAK RIDGE TOWN HALL**

MINUTES

Members Present

Ann Schneider, Mayor
Jim Kinneman, Mayor Pro Tem
George McClellan
Martha Pittman
Spencer Sullivan

Staff Present

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

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

A. Invocation/Moment of Silence.

Reverend Mike Carr offered the invocation.

B. Pledge of Allegiance.

2. APPROVE AGENDA

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

3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Councilman George McClellan moved that the minutes of the September 1, 2022, regular meeting be approved, and Councilwoman Martha Pittman seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

4. RESOLUTIONS, PROCLAMATIONS, ANNOUNCEMENTS

Due to early voting taking place in the council chambers from October 20-November 4, Mayor Schneider announced that the Council's meeting on November 3 would be held in the Family Life Center at Oak Ridge First Baptist Church.

5. REPORT FROM GUILFORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Cpl. J. Swaringen reported that 191 calls had been received for the month of September, including some vehicle break-ins in the Linville Oaks neighborhood.

Councilman McClellan suggested that the sheriff's office assign a deputy to Tarleton Drive to discourage speeding by parents who were dropping off their children at Oak Ridge Elementary School in the mornings.

6. REPORT FROM OAK RIDGE FIRE DEPARTMENT

Chief Gibson reported that there were 78 calls in September, including 33 medical-related calls, six vehicle accidents and one vehicle fire. He said that firefighters ran nine calls related to Hurricane Ian which produced heavy rain and winds that knocked some trees and power lines. Gibson reported that staff had received 847 hours of training.

7. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

A. Consideration/Approval of reappointment of Larry Stafford as ETJ south representative to Planning & Zoning Board.

Councilwoman Martha Pittman made a motion to reappoint Larry Stafford an ETJ south representative to the Planning & Zoning Board and Councilman George McClellan seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

B. Consideration/Approval of matching Veterans Honor Green donations raised July – September 2022 and moving donations and Town match to the Veterans Honor Green Restricted Fund.

Councilman George McClellan made a motion to approve matching Veterans Honor Green donations raised from July – September 2022 and moving donations and Town match to the Veterans Honor Green Restricted Fund, and Mayor Pro Tem Jim Kinneman seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

C. Consideration/Approval of file retention schedule and ARPA file retention.

Councilman George McClellan made a motion to approve the recommended Program Records Schedule, and Councilman Spencer Sullivan seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

8. NEW BUSINESS

A. Consideration/Approval of Recommendation from Water Advisory Committee.

Vice Chair Brian Hall said that in reviewing the Town's goals for the municipal water system that the committee recommended obtaining a written proposal from consultant Wooten Co. to provide engineering services for a water tank behind the Oak Ridge Fire Department and for a water main connection from the water tank to Forsyth County down Highway 150. Hall said that part of the scope of work would include securing a letter of commitment from Winston-Salem/Forsyth County

Utilities to supply water to Oak Ridge and guidance on the appropriate order in which to proceed through this process. He said that the committee believed that this was an important next step in this continual press toward a public water system that would service our town.

Mayor Schneider asked Council members to ask Hall any questions before a motion was made.

Kinneman asked how often the Oak Ridge Fire Department would use the water tank. He said that he had asked this question before and was concerned about the justification regarding the water tank.

Hall said that there were several justifications for the system. He said that water was necessary for life, and that getting a reliable source of water into the town was really important. He said many residents would say that the groundwater was unreliable. Hall said that previous studies indicated that the closest reliable source of water was from Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Utilities. Hall said that fire protection clearly was a reliable source of water under pressure that would provide water to the fire trucks but also to the sprinkler systems that exist in some of the town's bigger buildings. He said that the public availability of water would clearly be a benefit and critical for the future success of the people who lived here.

Pittman said that she was in agreement with the need for the water tank because she knew that water sources for fire protection had been shrinking. She asked if the new park well would have the capacity to fill the water tank until we could provide the trunk line, and Hall responded yes.

Councilman Spencer Sullivan made a motion that Town Council request a proposal from the Wooten Company or similar consulting engineering firm to provide engineering services for the 250,000 gallon elevated tank, for the water main to connect to connect the tank to Winston-Salem/Forsyth at the county line, and that the scope of work would include securing a letter of commitment from Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Utilities to provide water to the town and guidance as to the appropriate order of construction on how to proceed, and Councilman George McClellan seconded.

Council discussion:

Sullivan said that he had been involved since 2005 in working toward a municipal water system for the town. He said that it was important to note that the town had been fortunate to have received two grants that would more than cover the estimated cost of the elevated tank and will provide a partial funding for the water line. Sullivan said that the first step of getting the water tank showed our commitment and it would enable us with a way to provide water to not only the park but to the fire department off of the new well that will be drilled in at the park. He said that there would be enough water from the well to not only fill the tank but also for the fire department's new training facility where they would have pressurized water supply.

McClellan said that by going ahead with the water tank that it would help with fire suppression and would also help to reduce homeowners' insurance. He said he was proud to support this project.

Kinneman said that his main concern was that Council was not presented with a presentation showing the options that the committee went through and why they decided not to take those options. He said that Council had been talking about having tanks located throughout the town with wells and other approaches. He said that he would have appreciated a pros and cons listing of all of the different solutions from the committee. Kinneman said that he did not hear why this solution was better than the other solutions. He said that he would have expected the members of the Water Advisory Committee to know the answer to how often the fire department would expect to use the water tank. Kinneman said that he would be fine with the water line from Forsyth County if he knew the Town would have customers and how much it would cost to maintain the water tower every year. He said that the Water Advisory Committee had been working on this plan for months but wanted a decision from him in five minutes.

Schneider said that during water meetings that Chief Gibson said that they would use the water tank three to four times per month.

Hall told Kinneman that he had great questions. He said that the recommendations from the engineer should provide answers to his questions.

Kinneman said that he had heard that there would be water tanks placed around town but said that was not the proposal that the Committee was putting forward.

Hall responded that the Town would not be purchasing a tank or lines but were just asking for the engineer to be approved.

Pittman said it was Council's responsibility to not only meet the needs of residents but to also plan for the future. Pittman said that she did not know the answers to all of Kinneman's questions because she was not an engineer so she would rely on those who were to provide guidance. She said that it was important to take incremental steps toward municipal water because she felt that it was most important to consider safety and the well-being of residents now and in the future. Pittman said that requesting the study was the next step in the process.

Schneider said that the Town had this opportunity because of the high performing well that could fill the water tank and that the Town had received money from the state to pay for this project that would expire in June 2023. She said that having a water tank at the Oak Ridge Fire Department would be an enormous upgrade to their department.

Sullivan said that the foundation of the committee's discussions revolved around the fire suppression study. He said that one of the goals was to enhance fire suppression capabilities but also the parallel goal was that whatever the Town built would provide the backbone of a municipal water system. He said that if our only goal was fire suppression then the smaller tanks would have sufficed. Sullivan said that the primary goal was a municipal water system and part of the motion for the engineering company that we hire would be to develop the order in which we should proceed as funds become available.

Kinneman said that he was not opposed to the project but was concerned that we have not gone through due diligence of considering why this was the right choice. He said that he would have expected that the committee to have shared how much it would cost to maintain the water tower.

Schneider said that the maintenance on the water tower would be normal and a reasonable thing to include in the study.

Kinneman said that he thought it sounded like it was a foregone conclusion that the Town would need a pipe from Forsyth County, and Schneider responded that she thought that was not a true statement. She said that she thought that the Water Advisory Board did think that was the right way to go but that the engineering study would provide us with the information that would allow us to decide if we can or cannot do what they are recommending.

Pittman asked Bruce if the bid, once the proposal for the work and scope of the engineering study had been received, would come back to Council for approval, and Bruce replied yes.

Bruce said that staff would request a Request for Qualifications, would expect that the Water Advisory Committee would review them and would make a recommendation to Council to approve entering into a contract with the most qualified firm. He said that if Council wanted another step to review the RFQ before it was advertised that Council could do that.

Schneider said that the contract would come before Council for approval.

Pittman said that the contract would lay out in great detail and asked if Council would have their eyes on it again, and Bruce replied yes.

Pittman asked if Council members could interact with members of the Water Advisory Committee regarding future reports, and Bruce replied yes.

The motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

B. Consideration/Approval of Hill Studio contract for bid process & construction Administration for Farmhouse Community Center.

Bruce said that he recommended that Council approve the proposal from Hill Studio for bid assistance and construction administration on the Farmhouse Community Center project and authorize staff to advertise the project for bids. He said that the total cost for bid assistance would be \$3,000, and the total including construction administration would be \$17,500.

Councilwoman Martha Pittman made a motion to approve the proposal from Hill Studio for bid assistance and construction administration on the Farmhouse Community Center project and authorize staff to advertise the project for bids contingent upon the project being phased out if Council decided not to move forward, and Councilman George McClellan seconded.

Council discussion:

Pittman said that the cost was the hotly debated topic concerning the Farmhouse Community Center. Pittman said that she believed that we have what we need to receive bids on the project. She said that there was no reason to continue to delay and debate the project but that having real costs in hand was what Council needed.

Sullivan said that the one thing that he had always talked about regarding this project had been the cost. He said that he would continue to pursue getting those costs down. Sullivan said that he was in favor of getting to the point of bidding this project out.

Kinneman said that getting numbers would be important. He said that he wanted to make sure that the contract would be contingent upon if Council decided to follow through with the project, and Bruce responded that Hill Studio understood but that it would make sense for the motion to formally included in the wording.

Councilman McClellan said that he was in favor of this project but agreed that Council needed to see real numbers. He said that he believed that this was a worthy project in the Historic District that would preserve the farmhouse.

Schneider thanked Councilman Sullivan for his assistance with the engineering work on the project. She said that \$455,000 had been budgeted, but that \$380,000 had already been received for this project. Schneider said that she was excited to see what the bids would show and hoped that some local firms would choose to bid on this project.

The motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

C. Consideration/Approval of McGill contract amendment for additional work needed at Heritage Farm Park.

Bruce said that he recommended that Council approve the proposed addendum from McGill Associates for \$22,400. He said that additional work was needed to revise the construction drawings to accommodate the use of the new primary well and secondary well as water sources at Heritage Farm Park. Bruce said that after authorization of the addendum that McGill estimated that it would take approximately eight weeks until engineering would be complete, and all regulatory agencies had signed off on being able to bid the project out.

Mayor Pro Tem Jim Kinneman made a motion to approve the McGill contract amendment in the amount of \$22,400 for additional work at Heritage Farm Park, and Councilwoman Martha Pittman seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (5-0)

9. PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Derek Mobley, 6012 Crystal Spring Court, Greensboro, said that he was running as the Democratic candidate for the District 3 county commissioner's seat.

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.

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

11. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Planning & Zoning Board

It was reported that the Planning & Zoning Board would undergo board training on October 27, 2022.

B. Mountains-to-Sea Trail Committee

Committee member Mike Kimel reported that their participation in Heritage Day was successful. He said that 60 bamboo hiking poles were handed out. He announced that a workday would be held on Saturday, October 22, from 9 a.m. – noon and that the opening ceremony for the Headwaters Trail would be held on Friday, October 21 at 2 p.m.

C. Conservation Easement Committee

No meeting

D. Special Events Committee

Chair Patti Dmuchowski reported that the committee made \$2,300 from concession stand sales at RidgeFest. She said that \$700 was raised from the pound cake contest at Heritage Day and reminded Council of the Veterans Day ceremony that would be held at the amphitheater on Friday, November 11, 2022, at 10 a.m.

E. Parks & Recreation Advisory Board

Co-chair John Browning reported that the Board did not meet in September but invited everyone out to the last Music in the Park event of the series that would be held on Saturday, October 8, 2022.

F. Finance Committee

No meeting

G. Water Advisory Committee

Their report was presented during the meeting during New Business.

H. Historic Preservation Commission

Chair Debbie Shoenfeld reported that the Commission had not met in three months. She said that HPC was in the process of working on a book that would highlight the historic properties of Oak Ridge.

12. COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION REPORTS

A. Oak Ridge Youth Association

ORYA Community Relations Director Randy Collins reported that ORYA sold 220 carnival ride tickets on the first night of RidgeFest. He said that fall sports were underway, and that the association has 175 volunteer coaches. He announced that the Teen Leadership group would be hosting a Terror Trail on October 21-22 & 29-30. Collins said that 50 young women recently completed a self defense class.

B. Oak Ridge Military Academy

No report

C. Oak Ridge Elementary School

Town Clerk Sandra Smith said that she had emailed out the report from Oak Ridge Elementary School to Council members.

13. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

14. COUNCIL COMMENTS

15. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Pro Jim Kinneman moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:43 p.m., and Councilman Spencer Sullivan seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

Respectfully Submitted:

Sandra B. Smith
Asst. Town Mgr./ Town Clerk

Ann K. Schneider
Mayor