



**OAK RIDGE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
DECEMBER 5, 2019 – 7:00 P.M.
OAK RIDGE TOWN HALL**

MINUTES

Members Present

Spencer Sullivan, Mayor
George McClellan
Doug Nodine
Ann Schneider
Martha Pittman

Staff Present

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

Members Absent

Jim Kinneman, Mayor Pro Tem

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Spencer Sullivan called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

- A. Moment of silence.**
- B. Pledge of Allegiance.**

2. APPROVE AGENDA

Councilman George McClellan moved to approve the meeting agenda. Councilwoman Ann Schneider seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously (4-0).

3. APPROVE MINUTES

Councilwoman Schneider made a motion to approve the November 7, 2019 meeting minutes. Councilman McClellan seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously (4-0).

4. RESOLUTIONS, PROCLAMATIONS, ANNOUNCEMENTS

- None

5. REPORT FROM GUILFORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

- Capt. George Moore of District 1 of the Guilford County Sheriff's Office reported there were 73 calls for service in Oak Ridge the previous month, and said the average is about 80. He said he thought the person responsible for several house

break-ins in the district had been arrested. With the holidays approaching, he said it is the season for “porch pirates,” and he advised residents to retrieve delivered packages from their porches as soon as possible or have someone else do it.

In response to a question about some recent car break-ins in the park, Moore said a deputy was responding to another call and he saw a suspicious vehicle, which the deputy began following. The car’s occupant threw all the purses stolen from vehicles at the park out of the car. He said the person would be charged in the next couple of days.

6. REPORT FROM OAK RIDGE FIRE DEPARTMENT

- Capt. Ryan Rice reported, and as a safety tip, he encouraged residents to keep fresh trees watered.

7. RECOGNITION OF OUTGOING COUNCIL

- The Council recognized Mayor Spencer Sullivan, who had chosen not to seek re-election due to health issues. Councilman George McClellan asked Sen. Michael Garrett and Rep. John Faircloth to join him, and they presented the Order of the Long Leaf Pine, the state’s highest civilian order, to Sullivan.

8. OATHS OF OFFICE FOR NEWLY ELECTED/RE-ELECTED MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

- Superior Court Judge Stuart Albright administered oaths of office for George McClellan and Doug Nodine, who were re-elected to Council, and to newly elected council member Martha Pittman

9. ELECTION OF MAYOR

The election of mayor was handled by Town Clerk Sandra Smith.

Councilman McClellan nominated Councilwoman Schneider for mayor. Councilman Nodine nominated Councilman McClellan, but McClellan declined the nomination. Council’s vote in favor of Ann Schneider for mayor was unanimous (4-0).

Smith returned the floor to Schneider.

10. ELECTION OF MAYOR PRO TEM

Councilman McClellan nominated Councilman Kinneman for mayor pro tem. With no other nominations, Council’s vote in favor of Jim Kinneman for mayor pro tem was unanimous (4-0).

11. NEW BUSINESS

Resolution calling for water authority funds.

Schneider explained that the Town had been exploring the opportunity put forward by Rep. John Faircloth, Sebastian King, and Councilman McClellan requesting that funds the state had dedicated for a northwest Guilford County water authority be distributed equally to the towns of Oak Ridge, Summerfield, and Stokesdale.

The resolution read:

RESOLUTION R-2019-10

**A RESOLUTION CALLING FOR WATER AUTHORITY FUNDS FROM
NCGS SESSION LAW 2017-17 TO BE ALLOCATED FOR
LOCAL WATER INVESTMENT**

WHEREAS, After reviewing the high cost and impact on our Town's budget of a Regional Water Authority as envisioned in the Northwestern Guilford County Water System Preliminary Feasibility Study completed in September 2018, done in cooperation with representatives from the Town of Stokesdale, Town of Summerfield and Guilford County at a cost of \$170,000 and funded by an appropriation of \$3.6 million from the General Assembly in Session Law 2017-17; and

After consideration and adoption of a Resolution of Intent to Establish a Municipal Water System Utilizing Groundwater and Community Wells; and

After considerable due diligence from members of the Oak Ridge Town Council in the consideration of a Municipal Water System utilizing groundwater and community wells, including an operational, administrative and financial analysis that was completed in October 2019 and funded by the Town; and

After several discussions with the residents of Oak Ridge, including during an open house for the proposed Town of Oak Ridge Municipal Water System held at Town Hall on November 21, 2019; and

After discussions with state officials, community leaders and neighboring towns;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Town of Oak Ridge believes that a Regional Water Authority would place a tremendous financial burden on our Town and the other members of the regional study and recognizes that no further action is envisioned pursuant to a Regional Water Authority.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town of Oak Ridge would urge the legislature to pass a local bill that would reallocate the remaining funds of approximately \$3.4 million in equal portions to the Towns of Oak Ridge, Stokesdale, and Summerfield to support their specific water-related goals.

* * *

Councilman McClellan made a motion to approve the resolution. Councilwoman Pittman seconded the motion.

Councilman McClellan said the Town had been discussing a water system since before he was elected to Council when Ray Combs was mayor. He said he thought the request was important for the Town as it gives the Town the opportunity to acquire funds to purchase some water systems in new subdivisions, as was laid out to the Council in September.

Councilman Nodine said he would like to support the resolution, but he did not feel the Town had done its due diligence. He said if the paragraph in the resolution that said due diligence had been done by the Town was removed, he could support it.

Councilwoman Pittman said she felt supporting the resolution would allow the Town to invest the funds in a way that meets Oak Ridge and local needs, not regional ones. She said she would support the resolution.

Mayor Schneider said she understood Councilman Nodine's point, but said the Town continued to do ongoing due diligence. She said if the money were released as requested, it would be a great boon to the community. She added that it was important that the dollars already allocated be released to the local towns.

12. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

A. Update on ORYA Usage Agreement.

Town Manager Bill Bruce reported that the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board is still reviewing the agreement and will discuss it further at its December 19 meeting. Bruce recommended the current agreement remain in effect until a new one is adopted.

Councilwoman Pittman moved to extend the Usage Agreement with Oak Ridge Youth Association until the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board, the Council and the Finance Committee have an opportunity to review the proposed changes. Councilman McClellan seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously (4-0).

B. Discussion/approval of water system management plan and water rules.

Bruce presented the draft management plan and draft water rules for the proposed municipal water system. He requested Council approve the documents and instruct staff to construct a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the system.

Councilman Nodine said he did not think the Council had completed its due diligence.

Councilman McClellan made a motion to adopt the water system management plan and the water rules. Councilwoman Pittman seconded the motion.

Discussion ensued, with Councilwoman Pittman saying she was also anxious to see the actual costs of such a system. She said that she understood the way to do that is to set parameters on the system, which is what adopting the documents would do.

Mayor Schneider said she understood Nodine's desire to see cost estimates but adopting the documents would not commit the Town to creating a water system.

Nodine said he understood the procedure, but he thought the Town had obtained a consultant when it would have been more appropriate to ask the consultant to first provide costs.

McClellan said the RFP would get the Council hard numbers, but the RFP had to be created first.

Council's vote in favor of the motion was 3-1 (Nodine against).

Town Attorney Michael Thomas reminded the Council that approval by a supermajority was required on the first hearing, so the approval of the documents would need to be voted on again at the January 9 meeting.

Councilman McClellan moved to instruct staff to prepare an RFP. Councilwoman Pittman seconded the motion, and it was approved by a 3-1 vote (Nodine against).

Thomas said he did not see a reason staff could not proceed with preparing the RFP, even though the RFP would refer to the water rules, which had not yet been adopted. Bruce said it would take some time to gather all the specifications needed, and Schneider said she thought it would be unlikely that the RFP would be put out before the Council's January 9 meeting.

13. PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Andre Groulx, 7801 Briar Road, said he was a daily walker at the park, but he was uncomfortable after the recent car break-ins. He said he understood money for a security system may be available to the Town, but he said the subject had been discussed for several years. He urged Council to act on getting a security system in the park as soon as possible.
- Rita M. Lewandowski, 5202 Golden Acres Road, said although \$100,000 may be available in the State budget for the Town to install a security system, she thought a better solution could be found. She said even if the Town installed cameras, they might only be capturing activity in the parking lot, which would leave out areas such as restrooms and other areas. She said she thought more discussion was needed on the subject.

14. 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 Pittman made a motion to accept the Finance Officer's report as presented. Councilman McClellan seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously (4-0).

15. COMMUNITY UPDATES

A. Oak Ridge Military Academy.

Dr. Steve Wilson spoke representing ORMA, saying that cadets were planning to appear in several area parades soon. He said that enrollment continued to grow, and that he appreciated the flashing light installed on Oak Ridge Road at the pedestrian crossing in front of Holt Dormitory.

Wilson then changed subjects, saying vaping is a tremendous problem in every school. He said the local tobacco shop had sold vaping devices to cadets, and that he had spoken to the owner of the shopping center twice and owner of the tobacco shop. He said the shop was only 50 yards from the school's campus, and something needed to be done about it.

He then talked about the Toys for Tots campaign, which ORMA participates in. He said for several years, cadets had stood at the corners of NC 68 and NC 150, soliciting for the charity. He said he heard that the activity was now against Town ordinances, and he had asked Town Manager Bruce what was the worst that could happen if the school ignored the ordinance; he said Bruce had responded that someone could call the sheriff's office and sheriff's deputies could come and tell the cadets to leave. He then pointed out Mayor Schneider, who he said a deputy had told him that she reported the cadets and the deputy had to come and tell them to leave the intersection. Wilson, a retired pharmacist, said he had sold drugs, such as blood pressure or heart medication, to individuals without a refill on their prescriptions because he knew they had to have the drugs. He said he had broken the law because the health and welfare of the customer was involved. He said he had worked hard on the relationship between ORMA and the Town Council but said it would help if the Council would participate more in building the relationship. He said if the Council wanted to pass an ordinance against soliciting at the intersection, it should say charitable organizations were exempt.

B. Planning & Zoning Board.

Chair Ron Simpson reported that the Board's November meeting had been devoted to upcoming changes in the law regarding zoning and development. Simpson said the Town may have to do extensive modifications to its ordinance, but that it had until January 1, 2021 to do so.

C. Mountains-to-Sea Trail Committee.

Co-chair Bill Royal reported that work on the second trail continues, with about three-fourths of a mile completed. He said four trail workdays were planned, and the committee is also continuing to work on a trail naming proposal. Royal also said the committee planned to put up some temporary signs in the Cascades Preserve because members had received some feedback that some hikers had gotten confused.

D. Historic Preservation Commission.

Chair Debbie Shoenfeld said the Commission held a meeting in November and approved a Certificate of Appropriateness request for signage at the old Post Office building. She said preparations were being made for the Christmas at Maple Glade event, which would raise funds for historic preservation on the campus of ORMA.

E. Merchants of Oak Ridge.

No report

F. Special Events Committee.

Town Clerk Sandra Smith presented the report in Chair Patti Dmuchowski's absence, saying that the first Thanksgiving Parade with Santa and Light Up the Night event would be held on December 7 and that the committee is also helping with the Christmas at Maple Glade event. Work continues on planning a veterans' memorial.

G. Oak Ridge Youth Association.

Joel Rose reported that the winter sports season had begun, with over 300 youth registered for basketball and cheerleading and 50 coaches involved. He said registration for boys' lacrosse has begun, and the youth association was starting a new lacrosse program with new partners involved. He said the Teen Leadership group had held a Thanksgiving Eve flag football event that raised more than \$300 for charity. Rose also reported on the Colts' Dash, a local race for Oak Ridge Elementary students. He said representatives of the youth association had met with representatives of Oak Ridge Elementary and Guilford County Schools and were able to get new lights in the gym at Oak Ridge Elementary. He announced the organization's annual public meeting on December 15 at Town Hall.

H. Parks & Recreation Advisory Board.

Vice Chair Phyllis Anders reported the Board had held a special meeting on October 28 to discuss the Oak Ridge Youth Association park usage agreement. She said the draft park Master Plan had been presented at the November 21 meeting, and a special meeting was also held on December 5 to discuss the Master Plan more.

16. PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Frank Whitaker, 2338 Oak Ridge Road, spoke regarding Steve Wilson's request regarding the solicitation ordinance, saying he had seen some horrific accidents at the NC 68/150 intersection. He said the solicitation ordinance is a good one that needs to be enforced.
- Rita M. Lewandowski, 5202 Golden Acres Road, said there were many horse owners in the area, on January 9, a meeting would be held about reviving the Oak Ridge Horse Show. She said the show was an important part of Oak Ridge's heritage, and she hoped to have a plan to present to the Council in February. She said an Oak Ridge resident had pledged to give \$10,000 to build horse trails.
- Rep. John Faircloth said the state used to be known for its equine business, which had slowly died away, and that many years ago, the Oak Ridge Horse Show was the first show in which his daughter had participated. Rep. Faircloth said the \$100,000 had been appropriated for security at Oak Ridge Town Park, but first the state

budget needed to be adopted. He said the \$100,000 would not solve all the Town's problems, but it would be a start.

17. COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Several Council members thanked former mayor Spencer Sullivan for his service. Mayor Schneider pointed out that the mayor has no more power than any other Council member, and that the mayor's primary role is to communicate with other Council members and with residents.

18. ADJOURNMENT

Councilman McClellan made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:39 p.m. Councilwoman Pittman seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously (4-0).

Respectfully Submitted:

Sandra B. Smith, NCCMC, CMC
Town Clerk

Ann K. Schneider
Mayor