



**OAK RIDGE TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING
JUNE 22, 2020 – 2:00 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 2:00 p.m.

2. APPROVE AGENDA

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

3. DISCUSSION/APPROVAL OF 2020-21 FISCAL YEAR BUDGET

Mayor Schneider noted that two public hearings had been held on the proposed budget and the period for public comment had ended 24 hours after the second meeting. She asked Town Clerk Sandra Smith if any additional comments had been received during that 24-hour period, and Smith said none had.

Councilman McClellan motioned to adopt the proposed 2020-21 fiscal year budget, and Mayor Pro Tem Kinneman seconded.

Council questions/comments:

- Councilman McClellan said he had no questions, but he was in favor of the budget.
- Mayor Pro Tem Kinneman said the proposed budget was a good one, and that the Town was in a position to make changes to it in the future if they are warranted since the Town has a solid fund balance. He noted that a budget amendment may be needed once the Oak Ridge Youth Association User Agreement has been accepted.
- Councilman Nodine said he had no comments.

- Councilwoman Pittman said the budget was fiscally responsible and, even with a reduction in revenue, it still provides a surplus. Although it does tap into the fund balance, it does so for capital projects, which she said are an investment in Oak Ridge. She said she supports the proposed 2.5 percent pay raise of employees due to their experience, knowledge, dedication and flexibility. Pittman said the budget maintains a low tax rate. She said she had heard some comments about a tax increase possibly being required in the future because of this budget, but she did not see that happening. She noted that the budget had been put together by a diverse group, including the Finance Committee, Finance Officer, two members of Council, and the Town Manager. Pittman said she had learned that the budget does allow for some flexibility should changes be needed. She said overall it was a good, fiscally responsible budget.
- Mayor Schneider reiterated that creating the budget was a collaborative process that included input from Committees, and that both she and Councilman Nodine were on the Finance Committee. She said she was grateful to the Finance Committee, to the residents who had commented, to the Finance Officer and Town Manager, and to the committee chairs and members for their input. She noted that over a 4-month period, there had been 11 drafts of the budget, which took into account the changing economy. She said she was grateful for the budget process and that no tax increase was needed. She added that the Town is in a strong financial position and was able to take on initiatives from the Strategic Plan.

Via a roll-call vote, Council's vote to approve the budget was 4-1 in favor (Nodine voting against).

Town Attorney Michael Thomas commented on remote meeting participation and noted that Council had not adopted a policy on that yet. He said that remote participation could be allowed at the next meeting, with the sitting physical quorum voting in favor to allow a remote participant to join. He said Professor Frayda Bluestein at the School of Government had written on the topic, and that it was an allowable practice. Thomas said if Council wanted, he could circulate a short, effective policy before the next meeting. Schneider said she would like that, and McClellan agreed.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Councilman McClellan made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:11 p.m., and Councilwoman Pittman 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