



**OAK RIDGE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
SEPTEMBER 1, 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
Ashley Royal, Deputy 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 Andy Lambert 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 Councilwoman Martha Pittman seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Councilman George McClellan moved that the minutes of the August 4, 2022, regular meeting and the August 4, 2022, closed meeting be approved, and Councilwoman Martha Pittman seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

4. RESOLUTIONS, PROCLAMATIONS, ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Recognition of former Council Member Doug Nodine

Schneider invited audience and council members to share their remembrances about former Councilman Doug Nodine who passed away on July 23, 2022. Several audience members and all council members spoke about their reflections on Nodine.

B. Announcement to honor Roger Howerton

Schneider announced that a park bench would be unveiled and dedicated to former Councilman and Mayor Pro Tem Roger Howerton in honor of his ninetieth birthday this year at Heritage Day on Saturday, September 24, 2022, at 2 p.m. Council members spoke about the importance of Howerton's service to the town.

5. REPORT FROM GUILFORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Col. Dill reported that 227 calls had been received for the month of August. He said that an enclosed trailer had been stolen from a local church on August 10, 2022, Dill said that there had been the usual traffic issues associated with the new school year, and encouraged parents of Oak Ridge Elementary School to follow the school's traffic pattern.

6. REPORT FROM OAK RIDGE FIRE DEPARTMENT

Lt. Ritchey reported that there were 82 calls in August, including 43 medical-related calls. He said that personnel had received 827 hours of training during the month of August. As a safety tip, Ritchey reminded residents that cooler temperatures combined with low humidity create dryer conditions. He encouraged residents to make sure all outside fires are contained. Ritchey said that residents could obtain a burn permit on the fire department's website.

7. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

A. Consideration/Approval of Todd Hall as alternate for Water Advisory Committee, reappointment of Phyllis Anders to Parks & Recreation Advisory Board, and Patti Paslaru to Planning & Zoning Board.

Councilman Spencer Sullivan made a motion to appoint Todd Hall as an alternate on the Water Advisory Board, to reappoint Phyllis Ander to the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board, and to reappoint Patti Paslaru to the Planning & Zoning Board. Councilman George McClellan seconded, and the motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

B. Discussion of Salary Study Update.

Ann Taylor with the Piedmont Triad Regional Council presented the results of the Town's 2022 Salary Update Study, which is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of the minutes. Taylor noted that the pay scale for Town Park groundskeepers was particularly low compared to what other municipalities pay, and she recommended reclassifying the positions to higher pay grades resulting in an average pay increase of 9%. Taylor also recommended reclassifying the Deputy Town Clerk's position to reflect expanded duties and the Town Clerk's position to incorporate duties of an Assistant Town Manager.

Town Manager said that he proposed accepting Taylor's recommendations but with a 2% salary increase per pay grade instead of 2.5%.

Mayor Pro Tem Jim Kinneman made a motion to adopt the revised Pay Plan #2, the new Town Clerk/Assistant Town Manager position, and a budget amendment of \$43,282 to implement market adjustments and promotions, and Councilman George McClellan seconded.

Council discussion:

Kinneman said that the Town had struggled to find Park Groundskeepers which was one reason that the pay scale study was done. He said that expanding the responsibilities of the Deputy Clerk and the Town Clerk made sense.

McClellan said that he supported the recommendation because it kept the Town's employee salaries competitive.

Pittman said that she was a firm believer that compensation should always accurately reflect skills and abilities. She said that the numbers clearly supported the recommendation of the Town Manager.

Sullivan said that by paying attention to being competitive with employee salaries that it told our staff that we value them and do not want to lose them.

Schneider said that staff members were the Town's most valuable resource. She said that the cost of turnover is high and that in many cases much higher than the cost of retention. Schneider said that retention was the key goal in implementing these recommendations. She suggested that the salary survey be done every two - three years. Schneider said that Town staff demonstrated every day that they are here to serve Oak Ridge residents so implementing these recommendations would serve our Town and our future.

The motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

C. Any other business.

- Bruce provided an update on Heritage Farm Park reporting that the 24-hour drawdown test on the new well confirmed that it will provide enough water for the park's irrigation and restroom needs. He said that the Town's engineer would complete the construction drawings and finalize permitting so that the project could go out for bid. Bruce said that construction should begin during the first part of 2023.

8. NEW BUSINESS

Approval of Resolution R-2022-06 to Lease or Rent Property

Bruce read Resolution R-2022-06 which is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of the minutes. He recommended that Council approve the Resolution.

Councilman George McClellan made a motion to approve R-2022-06 a resolution to lease or rent office space to Environlink, the Town's municipal water operator for \$1.00 a year, and Councilwoman Martha Pittman seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

9. PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Ricky Jones, 8364 West Harrell Road, apologized for being slow to address being in violation of the Town's ordinances. He said that he had experienced several personal hardships and thanked the Town Manager and Planner for their patience. Jones said that he would continue working with the Town to resolve the problem.

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 Spencer Sullivan seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

11. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Historic Preservation Commission

No meeting

B. Planning & Zoning Board

No meeting

C. Mountains-to-Sea Trail Committee

Co-chair Anne Steele reported that the committee met on Tuesday, August 23, 2022. She said that the committee would have a booth at Heritage Day, and would be offering supplies and directions on how to make hiking polls from bamboo. Steele announced that a workday would be held on Saturday, September 3, 2022, from 9 a.m. – 12 noon.

D. Conservation Easement Committee

Chair Stephanie Ferrell said that the committee met on August 17, 2022, to discuss members contacting 9 residents to follow up on the letters that were sent out to targeted residents and properties regarding the grant program.

E. Special Events Committee

Chair Patti Dmuchowski reported that the committee members would serve food in the Town's concession trailer at RidgeFest. Dmuchowski said that the committee would also be hosting a pound cake contest at Heritage Day, and that plans were being made to host a Veterans Day ceremony at the amphitheater on Thursday, November 10, 2022.

F. Parks & Recreation Advisory Board

Co-chair John Garrett reported that the Board met on August 18, 2022, and approved Reece Bell to serve at the teen advisor. He said that the Board had approved a draft of the 2023 Oak Ridge Youth Association's Usage Agreement and approved three additional Board members to serve on the 2023 Music in the Park Subcommittee. Garrett announced that the last Music in the Park event of the season would be held on Saturday, October 8, 2022, from 5 – 9 p.m. and would feature two bands.

G. Finance Committee

No meeting

H. Water Advisory Committee

No meeting

I. Heritage Day

Deputy Clerk Ashley Royal reminded everyone that Heritage Day would be held on Saturday, September 24, 2022, from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. in the Redmon Field at Oak Ridge Town Park.

12. COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION REPORTS

A. Oak Ridge Elementary School

Royal read a report from Oak Ridge Elementary School which is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of the minutes.

B. Oak Ridge Youth Association

OYYA Community Relations Advocate Randy Collins reported that the first night of RidgeFest, September 8, 2022, would be ORYA night, and that ride ticket packages would be discounted \$5.00.

C. Oak Ridge Military Academy

No report

13. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

14. COUNCIL COMMENTS

15. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Pro Tem Jim Kinneman moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:39 p.m., and Councilwoman Martha Pittman seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

Respectfully Submitted:

Ashley R. Royal
Deputy Town Clerk

Ann K. Schneider
Mayor