

TOWN OF COATS
Board of Commissioners
Thursday, April 14, 2022
Official Minutes

The Town of Coats Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Thursday, April 14, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. in the Board of Commissioners' Meeting Room at Coats Town Hall.

Members Present:

Mayor Chris Coats
Mayor Pro-Tem Jerry Beasley
Commissioner Kelvin Gilbert
Commissioner Shirley Allen
Commissioner Marc Powell

Staff Present:

Nick Holcomb, Town Manager
Alton Bain, Town Attorney
Connie Lassiter, Finance Director/Town Clerk
Ken Storicks, Chief of Police

Members Absent:

Commissioner Allen Mosby

Staff Absent:

Rodney Pleasant, Public Works Director
Teresa Brown, Library Director
Mike Collins, Parks & Recreation Director

I. CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Mayor Chris Coats called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Mayor Coats delivered the invocation and led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

RESOLVED, to approve Agenda.

MOTION BY: Commissioner Marc Powell, SECOND BY: Commissioner Shirley Allen
APPROVED: 4-0, unanimously approved

II. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes
 - 1. March 10, 2022 Regular Meeting
 - 2. March 17, 2022 Budget Workshop
 - 3. March 19, 2022 Budget Workshop
- B. Approval of Attorney Bill – Services Rendered March 1-31, 2022
- C. Approval of Withers Ravenel – Pay Request of Invoice #156378

RESOLVED, to approve Consent Agenda.

MOTION BY: Commissioner Kelvin Gilbert, SECOND BY: Mayor Pro-Tem Jerry Beasley
APPROVED: 4-0, unanimously approved

III. PUBLIC FORUM

Mayor Chris Coats opened the Public Forum and after hearing no one closed the Public Forum.

IV. PRESENTATION

A. Presentation of Draft Downtown Streetscape Master Plan

Brian Starkey, Withers Ravenel Landscape Architect, gave a presentation of the Draft Downtown Streetscape Master Plan. Mr. Starkey explained that the study area included McKinley Street, Hwy 55, and Main Street from Carrie Street down to Ida Street and then over to Pope Street and Jackson Street. The process to develop the plan included community engagement through events such as Crank Up Coats and Farmer's Day, conducting a survey which included about 180 participants, community meeting, stakeholder conversations, and visual preferences to understand what the residents and the Town want to see. Mr. Starkey noted that getting to know the people of Coats through the initial planning process helped to identify opportunities and constraints involving history, safety, aesthetics, connectivity, destinations and storm drainage.

Results from the community survey:

- The primary reason for going downtown was overwhelmingly to eat; well behind that and pretty close together was attend an event, shop, conduct business and other.
- The Top 5 priorities for Coats Downtown Streetscape was aesthetic improvements followed closely by public amenities and then parking, historic interpretation and pedestrian safety.
- Safety considerations included pedestrian safety at roadway crossings, adequate lighting, pedestrian safety on sidewalks, moderating vehicle speeds and bicycle safety.
- The most beneficial design features for pedestrians are improved lighting, more places to sit, wayfinding/signage and wider sidewalks. The most beneficial design features for businesses are ADA accessibility improvements, more places to sit, improved lighting and traffic calming.
- Public art is important and people are proud of the existing art in Coats. Elements that people would most like to see are murals, building enhancements, decorative lighting and decorative site amenities.

Visuals of options for concept design on McKinley and Main Streets as well as tertiary streets with mention of tree plantings, wider sidewalks and parallel versus angled parking; option for multi-use space down Minnie Street (alleyway); plantings to help define parking on Main Street; green areas along the street providing benches and lighting; and intersection of Washington and Railroad Streets with notation of ten foot wide greenway. Final recommendations:

- McKinley Street Improvements – planted median, walks, minimize drive, crosswalks
- Main Street Improvements – parallel parking, wider sidewalks, tree plantings, crosswalks, lighting, amenities (benches and trash receptacles)
- Railroad Street Improvements – parallel parking, greenway, walks, bumpouts
- Alley/Minnie Street Improvements – parking, events, walk, public art

(Reference 1)

Recommendation for phasing of project:

- Phase One - Sidewalk and streetscape improvements to Railroad and Washington Streets; Incorporate Harnett County Bike/Pedestrian connection
- Phase Two – Underground power; Main Street improvements including alley
- Phase Three – McKinley improvements

Mr. Starkey stated that the final master plan could be completed based on Commissioners' comments and further discussion with Town Manager Nick Holcomb in 30 days.

Concerns and comments from Commissioners included:

- Trees in the median on McKinley affecting travel of semi-trucks and farming equipment
- Possibility of overhead power lines; moving power lines
- Cost of project and finding funding

Bob Chandler of Withers Ravenel addressed the board in regards to acquiring funding for the project. He expressed the importance of having a plan when asking for grants.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Set Public Hearing Coats UDO – Planning Chair

Walter Weeks, Planning Board Chairman, noted that this was the biggest change in planning and development ordinances for the Town since probably twenty years ago. The revision of the UDO makes language easier to understand. There are significant changes because big changes have already started coming to the community. The revision is an attempt to look ahead and layout a roadmap that makes those changes follow some semblance of order and makes sense for Coats. A noted change is if someone wants to develop acreage in the ETJ, they have to have 2.5 acres per home. Mr. Weeks assured the Board that the Planning Board has worked hard for the past year on this revision.

Town Manager Nick Holcomb requested that the Public Hearing be set for May 12th and stated that the required advertisement with zoning map as well as the letters to property owners that do not reside in Harnett County were ready to be sent out. Mr. Holcomb mentioned that he expected there to be public comments and that the consultant would be there to help address concerns.

RESOLVED, to set Public Hearing for Coats Unified Development Ordinance and Zoning Map for Thursday, May 12.

MOTION BY: Commissioner Marc Powell, SECOND BY: Commissioner Shirley Allen
APPROVED: 4-0, unanimously approved

B. Award Audit Service Contract

Finance Director/Town Clerk Connie Lassiter addressed the Board requesting approval of contract for auditing services. Ms. Lassiter informed the Board that two firms responded to the request for proposals sent out in January with bids as follows (**Reference 2**):

- S. Preston Douglas & Associates LLP - \$11,000 for year 2022 with \$400/year increase over the next two years
- Thompson, Price, Scott, Adams & Co. P.A. - \$12,000/year

Ms. Lassiter noted that in fiscal year 2021 the intentions of the Board was to put out an RFP for this year since S. Preston Douglas & Associates had provided auditing services for the last six years. S. Preston Douglas & Associates submitted the lowest bid and meet expectations for experience and qualifications. The recent change in the position of Finance Director should be viewed with equal benefit as having new auditing firms reviewing financials.

RESOLVED, to award auditing service contract to S. Preston Douglas & Associates.

**MOTION BY: Mayor Pro-Tem Jerry Beasley, SECOND BY: Commissioner Kelvin Gilbert
APPROVED: 4-0, unanimously approved**

C. State SCIF Grant Package

Town Manager Nick Holcomb notified the Board that after technical corrections the \$40,000 is set to be sent to the Town for the purpose of Capital Improvement Project. A Conflict of Interest Policy, Statement of no overdue taxes and a Scope of Work document need to be approved by Council to trigger the release of the funds. **(Reference 3)**

Mr. Holcomb proposed renovation of the old Public Works Shop based on feedback from budget workshops which would result in increased safety, energy savings and appearance as well as being beneficial when putting on public market once everything is transferred to new shop if the Board desires.

Board comments regarding renovations:

- Money earned from sale of old shop after renovations would allow to fence in new shop
- Building needs to be brought up to code
- Renovating building would set a good example for other building owners
- Wasting money on building that is already run down when money could be used to make improvements at new shop to allow for everything being at one location
- Concern about return on investment; \$40,000 doesn't get a lot from a contractor's standpoint

RESOLVED, to spend \$40,000 State SCIF Grant on renovations to the old Public Works building.

**MOTION BY: Mayor Pro-Tem Jerry Beasley, SECOND BY: Commissioner Marc Powell
APPROVED: Ayes (3) Mayor Pro-Tem Jerry Beasley, Commissioner Shirley Allen and
Commissioner Marc Powell; Noes (1) Commissioner Kelvin Gilbert**

RESOLVED, to approve the Conflict of Interest Policy.

**MOTION BY: Mayor Pro-Tem Jerry Beasley, SECOND BY: Commissioner Shirley Allen
APPROVED: Ayes (3) Mayor Pro-Tem Jerry Beasley, Commissioner Shirley Allen and
Commissioner Marc Powell; Noes (1) Commissioner Kelvin Gilbert**

RESOLVED, approve the Statement of no overdue taxes.

**MOTION BY: Mayor Pro-Tem Jerry Beasley, SECOND BY: Commissioner Marc Powell
APPROVED: Ayes (3) Mayor Pro-Tem Jerry Beasley, Commissioner Shirley Allen and
Commissioner Marc Powell; Noes (1) Commissioner Kelvin Gilbert**

RESOLVED, to approve the Scope of Work document.

**MOTION BY: Mayor Pro-Tem Jerry Beasley, SECOND BY: Commissioner Shirley Allen
APPROVED: Ayes (3) Mayor Pro-Tem Jerry Beasley, Commissioner Shirley Allen and
Commissioner Marc Powell; Noes (1) Commissioner Kelvin Gilbert**

RESOLVED, to approve the Individual that will sign contract.

**MOTION BY: Mayor Pro-Tem Jerry Beasley, SECOND BY: Commissioner Marc Powell
APPROVED: Ayes (3) Mayor Pro-Tem Jerry Beasley, Commissioner Shirley Allen and
Commissioner Marc Powell; Noes (1) Commissioner Kelvin Gilbert**

VI. MANAGER & DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Nick Holcomb, Town Manager, updated the Board on the following:

1. ARP Standard Allowance – School of Government recommends that those receiving less than \$10 million claim the standard allowance; use to pay salaries and benefits
2. Burn Ordinance – Fire Department said needs to be more clear; requested Board be thinking about whether or not they want burning in town at all
3. July 10K Run – Harnett County Run Club wants to hold on July 30th; start/finish at Senior Center; no road closures; might need extra officer; looking at about 100 runners
4. Ethics Training for newly elected Officials will be May 26th at Town Hall

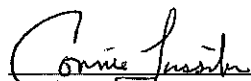
Chief of Police Ken Storicks presented Police Department statistics for March. **(Reference 4)**

VI. RECESS

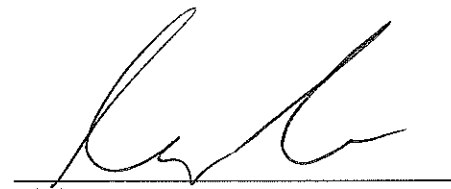
RESOLVED, to recess the meeting to continue on Thursday, April 28 at 6:00 p.m. to present re-evaluations and discuss budget.

**MOTION BY: Mayor Pro-Tem Jerry Beasley, SECOND BY: Commissioner Marc Powell
APPROVED: 4-0, unanimously approved**

Meeting recessed at 8:37 p.m.



Connie Lassiter, Town Clerk



Chris Coats, Mayor

**TOWN OF COATS
Board of Commissioners
Thursday, April 28, 2022
Official Minutes**

The Town of Coats Board of Commissioners reconvened the recessed Thursday, April 14, 2022 regular session on Thursday, April 28, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. in the Board of Commissioners' Meeting Room at Coats Town Hall.

Members Present:

Mayor Chris Coats
Mayor Pro-Tem Jerry Beasley
Commissioner Allen Mosby
Commissioner Kelvin Gilbert
Commissioner Shirley Allen
Commissioner Marc Powell

Staff Present:

Nick Holcomb, Town Manager
Connie Lassiter, Finance Director/Town Clerk

A quorum being present, Mayor Chris Coats called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

FY 2022-2023 Budget Discussion

Town Manager Nick Holcomb informed the Board that the unknown factor of the property re-evaluation that was missing in previous budget discussion had been made available now which resulted in an increase of property values. The Board was provided the following:

Proposed Tax Rate & Levy

	21-22	22 Evaluation	22-23 Revenue Neutral	22-23 Proposed
Rate	0.0059	0.0059	0.004272	0.0049
Total Taxable Value (Real & Personal)	112,521,235	155,370,264	155,370,264	155,370,264
Projected Levy	663,875	916,685	663,875	761,313

10 cent tax rate decrease - 0.59 to 0.49
However, 6.28 cent rate higher than "Revenue Neutral"
Could not afford any new positions requested if tax rate is left at "revenue neutral"

Each cent on the tax rate brings approximately \$15,000
To afford a second police officer, using property tax revenues, the rate would need to be increased to 53 cents

The Town Manager explained that the proposed rate of 0.0049 would allow for 5% COLA for employees, addition of one Police Officer and hiring of Full Time Parks and Recreation Assistant Director. The Police Department had requested the addition of two Police Officers. The Town Manager expressed that adding the second officer would not allow for the hiring of the new position in Parks and Recreation Department.

Commissioner Shirley Allen asked if the Police Department could get by with just adding one additional officer. Mayor Pro-Tem Jerry Beasley recalled that Police Chief Ken Storicks stated that he could make

it work with one additional officer and that the School Resource Officer helped when school was out. Commissioner Allen Mosby commented that maybe the second officer could be added next year.

Town Manager Nick Holcomb mentioned that the County was planning on going Revenue Neutral which should mean 35% will see tax decrease.

Commissioner Shirley Allen asked what if we leave rate at 0.0059 or if rate is cut this year and then two years later rate needs to go back up. The Town Manager noted that in two years there should be 150-200 new homes adding to the tax base and with new development it should take care of itself.

Town Manager Nick Holcomb asked for Commissioners' thoughts on Parks and Recreation Department. Commissioner Jerry Beasley emphasized importance of setting expectations. The Town Manager requested help from the Board to develop a list of expectations. Commissioner Kelvin Gilbert stated that the Town should invest money to make a place people love and recreation is a big part of that.

Nick Holcomb, Town Manager, informed the Board that the Water Fund was not balanced. Mr. Holcomb expressed the need for a CIP plan so that the Town would be ready next time State Funds are available in lieu of the purchase of a pump that was requested by the Water Department. Mr. Holcomb indicated that the old CIP plan was outdated. Commissioner Jerry Beasley stated that the Town had completed the most important projects on the old CIP plan. The Town Manager asked the Board to assess if the few items left on the old plan are the most important in rank now. Commissioner Kelvin Gilbert asked for the cost of developing a new CIP plan to which Mr. Holcomb replied approximately \$50,000. Commissioner Jerry Beasley suggested pulling the money out of appropriated to fund the CIP plan and rent a pump when needed which was the consensus of all Commissioners.

Town Manager Nick Holcomb communicated that getting closer to balancing the Solid Waste fund was contingent on getting an accurate count on number of cans. A request had been made to get current numbers from the County. Commissioner Jerry Beasley reiterated that he believed people have cans that are not paying. Commissioner Kelvin Gilbert stated that when new cans are put out by new company it would be a good time to get accurate count. The Town Manager stated that at the last budget meeting he didn't want to raise rates and asked for the Boards' thoughts. Commissioner Jerry Beasley suggested up to \$22. General consensus of Board was to increase rates to meet shortfall. Commissioner Kelvin Gilbert expressed that he had no problem with increasing rate just not more than needed.

Nick Holcomb, Town Manager, indicated that we may need to back off estimated property tax revenue due to appeals which could change total.

Commissioner Jerry Beasley inquired about medical insurance renewal. Town Manager Nick Holcomb responded that the current medical insurance provider renewal rate went up 16% as well as an increase in the dental renewal premium. Mr. Holcomb relayed that Finance Director/Town Clerk Connie Lassiter had worked with insurance companies and was able to find provider that would only increase medical insurance premium by about 5% with better coverage and the new dental plan will actually save money.

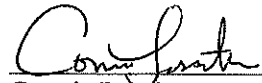
Town Manager Nick Holcomb reminded the Board that the official presentation of the proposed budget would be on May 12th. Mr. Holcomb acknowledged that he understood the Board to be okay with a slight increase in garbage rate if needed. Mr. Holcomb mentioned adding Engineer Fees to the Planning Department fee sheet due to the expense of needing engineered plans and that he would get with Public Works Director regarding sewer tap fees. Water taps will go up because of radio read meters.

Adjourn

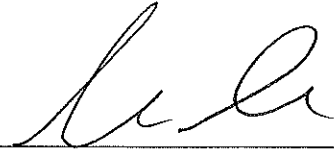
RESOLVED, to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION BY: Commissioner Marc Powell, SECOND BY: Commissioner Shirley Allen
APPROVED: 5-0, unanimously approved

Meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m.



Connie Lassiter, Town Clerk



Chris Coats, Mayor