

TOWN OF COATS
Board of Commissioners
Thursday, March 9, 2023
Official Minutes

The Town of Coats Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Thursday, March 9, 2023 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 Marc Powell
Commissioner Kelvin Gilbert
Commissioner Shirley Allen
Commissioner Allen Mosby

Others Present:

Nick Holcomb, Town Manager
Al Bain, Town Attorney
Connie Lassiter, Finance Director/Town Clerk
Ken Storicks, Chief of Police
Rodney Pleasant, Public Works Director
Mike Collins, Parks and 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: 5-0, unanimously approved

II. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes – February 9, 2023
- B. Approval of Attorney Bill – Services Rendered February 1-28, 2023
- C. Budget Amendment #5 – Police Department Vests
- D. ARPA Resolution – Letter of Intent to Fund
- E. ARPA Open Grant Project Ordinance

RESOLVED, to approve Consent Agenda.

MOTION BY: Commissioner Kelvin Gilbert, SECOND BY: Commissioner Allen Mosby
APPROVED: 5-0, unanimously approved

III. PRESENTATION

Mayor Chris Coats presented the Triton High School Football team and coaches with a proclamation recognizing their efforts and achievements made during the 2022 football season and playoffs.

IV. PUBLIC FORUM

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

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Cemetery Mausoleum Request

Nick Holcomb, Town Manager, reminded the Board that designated sections for mausoleums and standards for constructions had been approved by the Board of Commissioners in July 2021 based on recommendations by the Cemetery Committee and stated that there had not been any issues or complaints with the two existing mausoleums. Mr. Holcomb relayed that Mr. Durane Currin had requested permission for a double mausoleum on his plots and noted that because his plots were located outside the family section that his request was brought before the Cemetery Committee.

Michelle Godwin, Cemetery Manager and Committee Chairman, commented that a concern the Cemetery Committee had was the existing stones that were in place already and how it may affect the mausoleum being there and being operable; but upon further investigation, there was only one tombstone to the right of Mr. Currin's lots and that it would not affect the mausoleum as far as being operational. Ms. Godwin noted that the other concern was the digging of any future graves next to the mausoleum, but again this was found not to be an issue because it was already surrounded by existing graves that were in place. Larue Tart who had the only adjoining vacant burial plot owner had been notified and had given her consent for the mausoleum. The Cemetery Committee felt that with all facts investigated a mausoleum would not hurt anything in the location of Mr. Currin's plots.

Mayor Pro-Tem Jerry Beasley inquired about the ordinance, and Town Manager Holcomb replied that the ordinance read that a mausoleum shall only be permitted in sections designated by the Board and noted that when those rules were set for the first case the Board designated as a family section. In this case, the plot was able to meet all the criteria because it is a corner lot by the road. Mr. Holcomb recapitulated that the Board had the authority to designate a mausoleum section.

RESOLVED, approve the request as presented for the mausoleum.

MOTION BY: Commissioner Allen Mosby, SECOND BY: Mayor Pro-Tem Jerry Beasley
APPROVED: 5-0, unanimously approved

B. Interim Rules and Rental Fees – McKinley Point Property

Nick Holcomb, Town Manager, stressed the importance of putting rules in place for the newly acquired property on how we would want to handle things like the farm vendors that have been

setting up there in previous years. Mr. Holcomb added that an application process with a fee would help to manage the property to prevent anyone from just pulling off the road and selling. Mr. Holcomb stated that the Board had been given a draft of proposed rules and fees that addressed seasonal renting, daily renting, and full land renting whether it be by a private group or nonprofit organization and how that would work. He also mentioned that people had been accustomed to putting up signs on the property because it was such a visible corner, and the proposed rule addressed that issue as well.

Town Manager Holcomb recommended the approval of the proposed rules and fees on an interim basis and surmised that by the end of summer once we had some real life scenarios, we should have an idea of what would or would not be an issue.

Commissioner Shirley Allen asked if church/nonprofit signs and election signs would continue to be allowed. Mr. Holcomb replied that the proposed rule allowed for signage if you rented the property.

Mayor Pro-Tem Jerry Beasley inquired about signs in the right-of-way. Mr. Holcomb stated that the small two by three political yard signs could be put in the right-of-way 60 days before the election, but any sign bigger than that would be controlled by us.

Commissioner Marc Powell expressed the thought that we were striving for something for people to see when they come into town that would look good and didn't see continuing with people just throwing a sign up there. He thought it needed to meet certain criteria and needed to be discussed, but he was okay with doing something in the interim until it could be discussed. Town Manager Holcomb responded that the new UDO addressed some temporary signage, so there are some dimensions and standards.

Town Manager Holcomb communicated that he tried to make it clear on the rules that the focus was on agricultural related products so as to keep away from thrift sales and becoming an open air market type venue.

Commissioner Kevin Gilbert addressed the need for informing people of the Town's ownership to avoid conflicts with the people that had been using the space. Town Manager Holcomb expressed belief that it could be managed in a way to prevent any conflict and hoped people would be able to recognize the new ownership by the changes that would be taking place soon such as the new grass, gravel and fencing. Mayor Chris Coats suggested putting on social media.

RESOLVED, to adopt on an interim basis the draft rules and fees.

MOTION BY: Mayor Pro-Tem Jerry Beasley, SECOND BY: Commissioner Marc Powell

APPROVED: 5-0, unanimously approved

C. Ferguson AMI Meter Contract

Nick Holcomb, Town Manager, informed the Board that the most recent update from Ferguson was that they were hoping to start in Coats in the third quarter of this year which would mean there would be no expense until after July 1 when the ARP revenue replacement funds would have been moved to the Water Fund. Town Manager Holcomb mentioned that staff had worked to fine tune the number of meters and based off the latest pricing the cost would be about \$429,000. He noted that it would be close but not exact because between now and August there could be a change in the number of filled houses.

Town Manager Holcomb emphasized that care had to be taken when using a sole source that one of the three standards were met. In this case, Ferguson had the exclusive contract in North Carolina for Sensus meters, and the Sensus meters are the only meters that would communicate with Harnett County. Standardization or compatibility being the overriding consideration, the meters had to be compatible with Harnett County because we were interdependent with our billing and meter reading.

Town Manager Holcomb confirmed that Town Attorney Al Bain had reviewed the contract and asked if the Board would like to hear more from the Sales Rep. The consensus of the Board was that it had been discussed enough over the past two years.

Town Manager Holcomb requested that the Board authorize him with the supervision of the attorney to move forward.

RESOLVED, to authorize Town Manager Nick Holcomb to move forward with the meter project.

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

VI. MANAGER & DEPARTMENT UPDATES

A. Review of Financial Statement

There were no questions or comments.

B. Main Street Power Poles

Nick Holcomb, Town Manager, informed the Board that the Duke Energy crew had switched out the old poles on Main St. and did an okay job on cleaning up the dirt on the sidewalk. The Christmas lights were on the old poles and a bunch of underground plugs that came up where the trees were in grassy spots are gone now.

He asked the Board to consider options for events such as Farmer's Day when a lot of money had to be spent on boards to plug in to for power that were not attractive and suggested that there were better options that would be a permanent solution. He added that Duke had a Christmas light program with a small charge and urged the Board for input on their likes and dislikes for the Christmas lights.

Town Manager Holcomb imparted that Duke had spent a lot of money in the area on their replacement project and that the Town should see a lot of improvement in terms of cutoffs as Duke would be able to isolate sections to prevent town-wide cutoffs.

C. Chamber Heritage Day

Town Manager Nick Holcomb directed the Board's attention to a flyer from the Chamber for a Main Street Market to be held in place of the previously approved Heritage Day after discovering

that the first Monday of May wasn't quite as important in the founding of the town. There would be a lot of the same things offered with the new-to-you vendors as previously planned such as food trucks, local boutiques, and arts and crafts vendors. Mr. Holcomb added that the Chamber would still like Main Street to be shut down, so he wanted to make sure the Board was still okay with it since the event changed before the Chamber started advertising.

The following comments and concerns were expressed by the Board:

- Power supply for the vendors since the plugs were gone now
- Appearance of yard sale and looking like a junkyard
- Suggested event better suited for Community Building
- Burdening Public Works and Police Department
- Food Trucks taking away from restaurant business

Tricia Bristow, Chamber Director, answered that vendors needing power would be directed to use generators. She assured the Board that she would monitor vendors to make sure they followed rules that would be given to them. The Community Building stays booked on most Saturdays. Ms. Bristow stated that the time of the event would not conflict with serving dinner at restaurants, and she could envision people having lunch at Cornerstone or Kicking Camel in order to have a place to sit down to eat.

RESOLVED, to approve the 2023 calendar change for the Main Street Market on April 29th from 9:00am until 2:00pm.

MOTION BY: Commissioner Kelvin Gilbert, SECOND BY: Commissioner Marc Powell
APPROVED: 5-0, unanimously approved

Town Manager Nick Holcomb concluded his updates by commenting that the Board should have gotten an email from the Wiley Nickel office about grant funding opportunities. He informed the Board that he would be on a call tomorrow to discuss things going on in town such as the downtown streetscape, the new park property, subdivisions, open space and the Black River to see what might qualify but noted that they were looking for projects that would benefit the nation.

D. Parks Capital Improvement

Mike Collins, Parks and Recreation Director, updated the Board on park improvements at McKinley Street property as follows:

- Started property cleanup, trees were removed and gravel brought in
- Planned to encompass the area with fencing and add more gravel
- Grass had started to grow and should notice greener area soon
- Community volunteer offered to care for property once everything is up and growing

Mr. Collins noted that renovations on the ball fields were complete, and they were looking at hosting some tournaments because the men's league fell through. He encouraged the Board to ride through the park to see the grass and flowers and mentioned that people were using the walking trail. Mr. Collins stated that he was in the process of putting a brochure together to show what Coats has to offer for parks and recreation.

Mr. Collins invited the Commissioners to schedule a walk through individually or maybe in pairs to talk and help decide about what to budget for a park capital project.

VII. ADJOURN

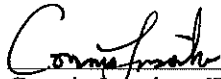
Mayor Chris Coats called for a motion to adjourn.

RESOLVED, to adjourn.

**MOTION BY: Commissioner Allen Mosby, SECOND BY: Commissioner Shirley Allen
APPROVED: 5-0, unanimously approved**

Meeting adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

The attached documents of reference are incorporated herewith and are hereby made a part of these minutes.



Connie Lassiter, Town Clerk



Chris Coats, Mayor