**TOWN OF COATS**
**Board of Commissioners**
**Thursday, Oct. 29, 2026**

The Town of Coats Board of Commissioners met in special session on Thursday, Oct. 29, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. in the Board of Commissioners' Meeting Room at Coats Town Hall.

**Members Present:**
Mayor Chris Coats
Mayor Pro Tem Kelvin Gilbert
Commissioner Shirley Allen
Commissioner Monique Warren-Clegg
Commissioner Todd Pope

**Staff Present:**
Barbara Hollerand, Town Manager
Courtney Knight, Finance Director
Jade Stone, Town Clerk
Wes Blount, Public Works Director
Sarah Goldsmith, Parks and Recreation Director

**Members Absent:**
Commissioner Marc Powell

**Others Present:** Brian Taylor, Town Attorney

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

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

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mayor Coats called for a motion to approve the agenda.

**RESOLVED,** to approve the agenda.
**MOTION BY:** Commissioner Warren-Clegg
**SECOND BY:** Commissioner Pope
**APPROVED:** Unanimously Approved

**BUSINESS ITEMS**

1. Discussion with the Coats Area Chamber of Commerce

Debbie Cann, chamber board member, stated that Allen Faircloth would be presenting on behalf of the chamber.

Mr. Faircloth, chamber board member, thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak. He stated that the meeting was not a chamber/Town discussion but rather, a Coats community conversation. He spoke regarding new requirements that were required for Farmers Day including insurance and law enforcement coverage. He asked the Board what was dictating the insurance requirements, and Mayor Coats said it was the Town's insurance provider, the North Carolina League of Municipalities.

Mr. Faircloth questioned the timing of the new requirements and stated there were inconsistencies with what other towns require for similar events.

Mayor Coats stated that staff has begun reviewing Town procedures and making recommendations for process improvements rooted in legal requirements and liability considerations.

Mr. Faircloth asked for clarification on what kinds of positions would satisfy the Town's law enforcement requirements for the event. He expressed frustration with the requirement that the chamber should pay for additional public safety staff this year. He said the chamber had no objection to completing the use agreement/waiver for the Downtown Square but questioned the trash collection requirement.

Mayor Coats spoke regarding staff shortages in the Police Department, noting the staffing issue also existed with Farmers Day.

Mr. Faircloth stated that the Town has funds in the Police Department budget that could be used to provide supplemental staff for the event. He disagreed that the Town's staffing issues justified requiring the chamber to pay for the additional officers this year.

Mayor Coats and chamber representatives discussed examples of how some other towns manage law enforcement staffing at events.

Mayor Pro Tem Gilbert stated that his understanding of the meeting's purpose was to work collaboratively with the chamber and unite behind a solution.

Ms. Cann reminded the Board that the chamber had requested the meeting with the intent to work through the issues. She expressed frustration with the Town's response. Commissioner Allen encouraged the discussion to move toward finding solutions.

Mr. Faircloth agreed and asked what the Town is requiring of the chamber to hold the event. He asked if the Town would require the chamber to pay for additional law enforcement personnel, get the road closure authorization, double its insurance and to collect trash both from Town receptacles and in the cans brought in for the event.

Mayor Coats and Mr. Faircloth discussed the Town's response letter that addressed the chamber's recent questions on the Christmas events.

Angela Rezqallah, chamber president, spoke regarding unity between the Town and the chamber. Stephanie Carpenter, chamber executive director, spoke regarding recent social media posts. Mayor Coats spoke regarding social media and First Amendment rights. He stated the town manager is the chamber's point of contact should the chamber have additional questions. Ms. Cann spoke regarding the chamber's letter, chamber members, social media, and the Town's public image.

Mr. Faircloth and Mayor Coats spoke regarding local and state regulations guiding the Town's event approval process, budgeting for permanent staff, costs associated with hiring off-duty officers, and future planning for events.

Ms. Cann asked that should the chamber not be able to fund additional law enforcement positions, would there be other options or would the event be cancelled. Mayor Coats spoke regarding the potential liability with understaffing the event. Ms. Rezqallah spoke regarding the need to resolve the issues and asked who should take the lead with securing the additional officers. Town Manager Barbara Hollerand indicated that Police Chief Ken Storicks would be the chamber's point of contact regarding law enforcement personnel.

Ms. Rezqallah spoke regarding the importance of safety. Commissioners Pope and Allen spoke regarding the importance of having conversations and working together.

Ms. Carpenter spoke regarding the costs associated with hosting events. Mr. Faircloth stated that Farmers Day generated a profit of $3,000 and that the Christmas parade was a subsidized event that did not turn a profit. He reminded the Board of the chamber's nonprofit status.

Discussion ensued on the alternatives for making application for the road closures to NCDOT. Ms. Hollerand confirmed that she had received the chamber's NCDOT special event application and stated that it was a Board decision as to whether the Town or the chamber would file the application.

Discussion ensued as to the process for closing the streets and the timeframe remaining before the event.

Mayor Coats reassured the chamber that the Town was not looking to cancel the event.

Discussion ensued regarding Town trash cans. Chamber representatives stated that they would bring in trash cans for the event and empty the Town trash cans as well.

Mayor Coats asked for a consensus of the Board to look into the option of funding additional officers. Commissioner Warren-Clegg requested that the finance director verify there were available funds. She asked the Chamber representatives if they could also share in the expense. Ms. Rezqallah stated that they would look into options as well but would need to speak with Chief Storicks.

Consensus of the Board was for Chief Storicks to review the requests and then to discuss the staffing needs with the chamber.

Mayor Coats confirmed that both the chamber and the Board were in agreement to work together to resolve any outstanding issues with planning the Christmas events.

**CLOSED SESSION PURSUANT TO § 143-318.11 (3) AND (6)**

**RESOLVED**, to enter into closed session at 8:14 p.m.
**MOTION BY:** Mayor Pro Tem Gilbert
**SECOND BY:** Commissioner Allen
**APPROVED:** Unanimously Approved

Board entered back into open session at 8:50 p.m.

Mayor Coats asked Commissioners if they had any additional comments. Hearing none, Mayor Coats called for a motion to adjourn.

**RESOLVED**, to adjourn the meeting.
**MOTION BY:** Commissioner Warren-Clegg
**SECOND BY:** Commissioner Pope
**APPROVED:** Unanimously Approved

Meeting adjourned at 8:51 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Minutes prepared by Town Manager Hollerand.**

Chris Coats
Mayor

ATTEST:

Jade Stone
Town Clerk