



# Town of HOLLY RIDGE

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## HOLLY RIDGE TOWN COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING June 11th, 2024 6:30 P.M.

Mayor Jeff Wenzel called the Regular Meeting of the Holly Ridge Town Council to order at 6:30 p.m. at the Holly Ridge Town Hall. Council members present were Councilman Hines, Mayor Pro-Tem Patti, Councilwoman Stanley; Councilman Misciagno, and Councilman Parnian. Also, present were the Town Manager, Heather Reynolds, Deputy Clerk, Tracy Martin, Finance Director, Chuck Strickland, Building Code Administrator Greg Lawrence, Community Development Director, Nate Rhue, and Chief Sorg.

### *Invocation and Pledge*

Rev. Danny McLamb – with Salem Baptist Church gave the Invocation and Mayor Wenzel led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### *Adoption of Agenda*

Manager Reynolds said the item on the lights for Summerhouse will affect the budget and Manager Reynolds suggested we move item 9-D to right after item number 4.

A motion was made by *Mayor Pro-Tem Patti* and seconded by *Councilman Parnian* to adopt the agenda as presented. *All Agreed.*

### *Persons Wishing to Address the Council*

*Gary Kibler – 607 Tom Nevers Way* said two years ago this was brought before the Town Council and it was approved to pay for our streetlights. Mr. Kibler said there is an access road that goes towards the clubhouse and the mail house, and it is a very active location, so you have like three roads converging on that same spot, and it is not well lit. Mr. Kibler said the pool is also located there and we would like the Town to consider purchasing and picking up the cost of these streetlights. Mr. Kibler said this is a safety and security issue.

Mr. Kibler said the current process is the bills come to Summerhouse first, they pay the bills and then Summerhouse sends the bills to the Town to be reimbursed. Mr. Kibler said we can have Jones Onslow Electric Membership Corporation send the bills to the Town directly, which is another thing Mr. Kibler would like to see done down the road.

Councilman Parnian asked what the cost would be. Mr. Kibler said around \$800.00 for the installation and the monthly bill would be around \$67.00 a month. Mr. Kibler said in total for the year the cost would be around \$1730.00.

Mayor Wenzel said we would now speak about item 9-D.

**Discussion and Possible Approval of the Installation of Three Additional Streetlights in Summerhouse and to Increase the Annual Amount Budgeted for Streetlights in Summerhouse**

Manager Reynolds said the onsite community manager for the Summerhouse development reached out to Manager Reynolds on May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024, to submit a formal request for three additional streetlights. Manager Reynolds said the manager had done the leg work on the cost and the installation was going to be \$930.00 to Jones Onslow and then it would be an increase of approximately \$66.57 per month for three lights. Manager Reynolds said this will affect the budget moving forward which is why Manager Reynolds asked the Town Council to move this line item up on the agenda.

Councilman Misciagno said if he is not mistaken, there is a little room to cover the streetlights in the budget. Mr. Strickland said right now the amount for the reimbursement that the Town pays for streetlights in Summerhouse is \$5200.00.

Mr. Kibler said the agreement was to pay for all the streetlights and Summerhouse rents the post to include electricity. Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said to him it is a safety issue because there are a lot of kids in the area. Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said it is a minor cost, and he thinks we can manage it.

Councilman Hines said when this came to him, he thought it mean streetlights and the way this looks it is for a parking lot. Mr. Kibler said there are three access roads that converge on the clubhouse and mail house also. Mr. Kibler said there are a lot of cars going back and forth in that area and there is a lot of activity in that area. Councilman Hines said he was the one that originally brought the idea up about paying for the streetlights and if you needed to add more lights to the streets, Councilman Hines does not have a problem with that, but the diagram looks like it is parking lots and we do not do parking lots.

Mr. Kibler said we can put the streetlights on the other side which is right on the street.

**Michael Bohn – 400 Caspian Court** said the reason we are talking safety is it is very dark in there and we have a lot of things that happen at night with the kids and everybody else and now the pool stays open later. Mr. Bohn said people are driving through this area and we have had people fall off the curb. Mr. Bohn said this is truly a safety issue. Mr. Bohn said if the lights need to be on a street, we will put them on the Spicer Lake Street side.

A motion was made by *Mayor Pro-Tem Patti* and seconded by *Councilman Parnian* to approve the streetlight project with the correction of where they will be located. *All Agreed.* Manager Reynolds said just for clarification, when we first started paying for the lights, we had allocated a penny. A penny now increases because of the tax collection rate and Manager Reynolds thinks we did not budget enough to cover a years' worth of streetlights in Summerhouse. Manager Reynolds asked if we are paying for all the reimbursements for their streetlights, or is there a fixed amount? Manager Reynolds said with this additional request, it will affect the line item.

Mr. Strickland said the agreement we had with Summerhouse at the time was \$50,000.00 because that was the equivalent of a penny in tax revenue which is about ten months. Mayor Wenzel said we have an agreement to pay for all the streetlights in Summerhouse.

### **Public Hearings**

#### **Text Amendment Request by the Town of Holly Ridge to Amend the Regulations for Billboards as Found in Section 7-10-2 (c) of the Town's Zoning Ordinance.**

Community Development Director, Nate Rhue said this text amendment is related to our off-premises signage ordinance or billboards, where the existing verbiage was supplied. Mr. Rhue said the maximum size is sixty-four square feet. They cannot be placed within a thousand feet of residential districts, or any other billboard seated thirty-two square feet. If they are smaller than thirty-two square feet, they cannot be placed closer than two hundred feet of a residential district or any other billboard. They cannot be placed in an area that appears or interferes with a site. All street sign regulations on state roads supersede this section.

Mr. Rhue said that is the requested text amendment related to this because as it is worded specifically, is that the State regulations would supersede our ordinance. The North Carolina General Statute that pertains to outdoor advertising is 136-126 to 136.140. Mr. Rhue said based on that statute, the synopsis of this request is that the State's regulations would allow for separation of three hundred feet for billboards outside municipal limits and one thousand feet inside municipal limits. The states authority related to billboards is 660 feet from the nearest edge of the right of it. They cannot be located unless they are zoned or unzone, zoned commercial or industrial here.

Mr. Rhue said if someone were to come and apply and being our ordinance is written that the state's ordinance supersedes ours, we would be obligated to follow through with that permit, hoping the state would not approve it. Mr. Rhue said the request is to add the verbiage in addition to the above all state signed regulations on state rate shall apply.

The Planning Board discussed this on May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024, and they recommended approval of the amendment and then also submitted the consistency statement that it would provide policies with clear directions to assist local business makings consistency findings for zoning and that it would be reasonable in the public interest because it would provide consistency to the intent

of the ordinance to ensure greater separation distance between billboards in intent to limit those items along the highways.

A motion was made by **Councilman Hines** and seconded by **Councilwoman Stanley** to go into Public Hearing. *All Agreed.*

**Dorothy Royal – 127 Sound Road** said there is a notation on there not within one thousand feet of residential, but when you are talking about new developments coming in on Highway 17 such as Evolve, you are going to have residential in the back and commercial in the front. Ms. Royal said it sounds like to her, the Town will be restricting these businesses up front from having any signage. Ms. Royal said with all these mixed uses coming in, there must be allowances for these businesses to advertise their business.

Ms. Royal said she is wondering where the thousand feet came about, because there are a lot of properties around here that are not that big that have residential next door to commercial, light industrial, and residential and the thousand-foot rule means none of them could have signs. Ms. Royal said we are asking more businesses to come on Highway 50 and that might be right next door to residential and if you put that thousand-foot limitation that is going to destroy them from having any kind of sign.

Mayor Wenzel asked if this is specifically for billboards or signs in general. Mr. Rhue said this is for off-premises signage. Mr. Rhue said these are for if you have a business down the road, and you have outdoor advertising off the premises.

**Christina Asbury – 308 Folkstone Road** said the limitations are within municipal limits and outside of municipal limits. Ms. Asbury asked what about the ETJ? Mr. Rhue said this would apply to all planning jurisdictions of the Town.

A motion was made by **Mayor Pro-Tem Patti** and seconded by **Councilman Parnian** to return to Regular Session. *All Agreed.*

A motion was made by **Councilman Hines** and seconded by **Councilman Parnian** to approve the Text Amendment Request by the Town of Holly Ridge to Amend the Regulations for Billboards as Found in Section 7-10-2 (c) of the Town's Zoning Ordinance.

*Voting was as follows:*

**Councilman Hines – Yes**

**Councilman Misciagno – Yes**

**Mayor Pro-Tem Patti – No**

**Councilwoman Stanley – Yes**

**Councilman Parnian – Yes**

***Motion Passes.***

**Discussion and Possible Approval of the Proposed Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Municipal Budget and Budget Ordinance for the Town of Holly Ridge**

Manager Reynolds said in accordance with section 159-11 of the North Carolina General Statute, Manager Reynolds would like to present a proposed North Carolina fiscal year 2024-2025 budget for the Town of Holly Ridge. All sections of the proposed budget are in performance with the local government budget and fiscal control act as amended. A balanced budget was presented. Manager Reynolds said a few highlights include the following.

- The tax rate will remain at thirty-four cents per \$100.00 of valuation and for the upcoming year, a penny has a worth of \$76,500, which is an increase of 6,500 over last year.
- Town Council has identified several priorities during the budget retreat, which include legal expenses, street repairs and paving throughout town.
- Drag Strip Road
- A cohesive vision for the Town
- Capital Improvement Plan
- Development of a strategic plan with vision and main street initiative
- Fire consultant plan.
- Non-water centric recreation facilities and building a municipal complex Emergency Operations Center.

Manager Reynolds said the non-water centric recreation facility is the only item that is not included in this proposed budget and at this time there is no cost associated with that. Manager Reynolds said we can work with Mr. David Bone with the Eastern Carolina Council of Government on this item.

Manager Reynolds said the large request under the Community Development Department this year is \$150,000.00 which is for contracted services. These funds are going to be used to cover contracted services for the commercial plan review.

- \$48,000.00 to update the Land Use Plan
- \$74,000.00 for the development of a unified development ordinance.
- \$22,000.00 to work with the Ordinance Review committee on the non-land use ordinances
- 3% Cola was proposed and a 3% Merit per staff.
- Part-time staffing for the Parks and Recreation was proposed in the amount of \$25,000.00.
- Two new police officers were approved.
- One additional Public Works employee

Manager Reynolds said members of the Town Council requested a public relations employee, included in this draft was not positioned but an option to contract with a local firm that was willing to take on the Town as a municipality.

The Grant writing position was moved to a contract basis with Withers and Ravenal. Budgeted this year is \$40,000.00 which will pay for approximately ten grant applications. Manager Reynolds said a bond or a loan amount of two million is shown in the revenues, this is for street improvements throughout the whole town. That shows as a revenue on the revenue sheet, but it also shows as an expense on the expense side.

Approximately \$300,000.00 is budgeted for the new technology to be implemented throughout the Town. In the Parks and Recreation capital improvements the Town budgeted \$90,000.00 towards the matching grant for the new ballfield lights, which will be a total cost of approximately \$180,000.00. Also included in the capital outlay is \$150,000.00 towards the restrooms in the municipal park. This year we are in the process of receiving \$100,000.00 as a state allocation towards our restrooms in the park. That should cover the engineering, design, and hopefully the demo.

Manager Reynolds said with the increase in items taken place in the community center, parks and recreation requested an installation of an office window at the front of the community center which would make things easier for that department. Manager Reynolds said we are investing in round tables for the community center. Ms. Madia put a request in for ten round tables and two hundred white chairs to go with the tables.

Manager Reynolds said there has been ongoing discussions about pickle ball courts, recreation center and interest in a splash pad facility. Another area for improvement is to upgrade or add a playground with ADA features that is all inclusive. Included in this budget is an additional \$10,000.00 to help support additional programming including tot time, pickle ball sessions, bingo, drive in movies in the park and more. Also included are additional funds to purchase our own inflatable movie screen, speakers, and FM transmitters.

Manager Reynolds said the Town Council and Fire Department have produced a solution of budgeting for a fire medic in Town. The Town will fund this position. It will allow for a full-time medic to be on staff in the fire department all the time. Manager Reynolds said we also included additional funds for the medic equipment such as cardio monitors and drug safe, and some additional licenses.

Manager Reynolds said we also included \$10,000.00 to be set aside in the Police Department so they can purchase swag for community initiatives.

Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said the number one thing on his list is a splash pad and he would like to know if there is, anyway, we could get the ball rolling and try to move forward with this? Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said perhaps not this year but perhaps we could allocate some funds for design research to show the community that we are using taxpayers' money for something tangible. Manager Reynolds said when we are looking at grants concerning recreation facilities, a lot of the projects that we have planned are not what is considered shovel ready. The turnaround time on these kinds of grants can be one to two years. Manager Reynolds said if the Town Council would like to move forward, a location needs to be decided, set aside funds for design and engineering so we can create a shovel ready project if that is a priority of

the Town Council. Mayor Pro-Tem Patti asked where the money would come from and the amount. Manager Reynolds said there is some money left in the Parks and Recreation and there is roughly \$600,000.00 to \$700,000.00 that are unused funds from the Partif.

Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said we must get started on things. Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said we have been discussing many different options for a long time and nothing is ever done. Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said he has been here seven months and all he hears are ideas. Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said the website is costing over \$300,000.00 which is a one-time cost. So next year it is not going to cost a hundred thousand. If we are shovel ready with a splash pad, we now have the money without increasing anything to come towards a splash pad. Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said he brought up the splash pad before the budget is approved, so perhaps we could allocate a certain amount of funds for design and engineering to make it shovel ready so you can start applying for grants.

Mayor Wenzel said normally we would take that \$600,000.00 to \$700,000.00 and roll it back into the fund balance, but we could say we would like to take \$100,000.00 of that surplus and put that towards a particular project and then roll the balance in to it.

Councilman Hines asked what the liability on a splash pad and does it have to be supervised? Manager Reynolds said there does not have to be someone there to supervise, but there does have to be someone that has splash pad certification.

Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said he has seven kids with another one on the way and we frequent the splash pad a lot at Long Leaf Park in Wilmington. There is a fence around it, and it cuts off at a certain time. Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said it is play at your own risk and there is no lifeguard on duty. Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said the certification is no different than checking the chemical levels of a pool. Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said it would be a high cost to get it going and minimal cost on the water bill.

Councilman Hines said he thinks the splash pad would be more beneficial to the citizens than spend \$95,000.00 to put lights up at the ballfield that a limited of citizens use.

Councilman Misciagno said a splash pad is not a priority of his right now. Councilman Misciagno said he would like to focus on fire and EMS which we are getting accomplished this fiscal year. Councilman Misciagno said we need to focus on the internet and web page which we have accomplished. Councilman Misciagno said we also have the Holly Ridge Housing Authority legal expenses which are unknown at this time. Councilman Misciagno said we need to sit tight and get through these next twelve months.

Councilman Hines said this is not something we need to decide tonight because we have money in the budget to do so if we choose to. Manager Reynolds said we did not budget for Partf because we won't make that. Manager Reynolds said we would have to move something around. Manager Reynolds said it would be a fund balance appropriation.

Mayor Wenzel asked Manager Reynolds to find out how long it would take if we reached out to an engineer to get back to us regarding a splash pad. Manager Reynolds said Withers and Ravenal have a whole team of engineers and Manager Reynolds thinks it could be a quick turnaround.

A motion was made by **Mayor Pro-Tem Patti** and seconded by **Councilman Parnian** to prioritize a splash pad and see if we can get an engineering design and potentially allocate funds at the end of this fiscal year.

Councilman Hines said we have a budget that has been drawn up and now we are adding stuff to it. Councilman Hines said this should have been brought up months ago, but it was not, so why do we want to include this in the budget now. Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said he is not asking for money in the motion. Councilman Hines said Mayor Pro-Tem Patti is asking for money to spend to do something with it.

Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said it was just discussed that we have \$700,000.00 moving over and this is a good way to get ahead of things that the community wants. Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said the community wants something like this.

**Voting was as follows:**

**Councilman Hines – No**

**Councilman Misciagno – No**

**Mayor Pro-Tem Patti – Yes**

**Councilwoman Stanley – No**

**Councilman Parnian – Yes**

**Motion Fails**

**Discussion and Possible Approval of the Proposed Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Municipal Budget and Budget Ordinance for the Town of Holly Ridge**

A motion was made by **Councilman Parnian** and seconded by **Councilman Misciagno** to go into Public Hearing for proposed fiscal year 2024-2025 municipal budget. **All Agreed.**

**Dorothy Royal – 127 Sound Road** said there are companies that do splash pads just for municipalities and Ms. Royal called three last week. The budget is between \$50,000 to \$300,000.00 depending on how detailed you want to get. Ms. Royal said this includes the engineering, installation, maintenance and the train.

Ms. Royal said for the last ten years, she has looked over the budget and there is never any money assigned to training. Ms. Royal said there are a lot of people moving here and she feels the zoning and building department could benefit from more training. Ms. Royal said July 1<sup>st</sup>, the building rules are changing in a drastic way. They are going to implement a whole lot of things that no longer need permits if the jobs are under \$40,000.00. Ms. Royal said she would

like to see training for all employees in all departments to help simplify things and to keep things more current. Ms. Royal said if we do this \$300,000.00 website, she hopes that we have a wonderful permitting department in there because we are the only town around here that you physically must pick a handwritten permit up.

**Christina Asbury 308 Folkstone Road** said she is here to speak about her opposition to the proposal to pay or compensate members of the Planning Board and other citizen volunteer committees for their service. Ms. Asbury said she believes this represents a waste of taxpayer money. Ms. Asbury said the Town's budget is already thin with some unexpected expenses that happened and allocating funds to pay volunteers is not a prudent use of volunteer resources. Ms. Asbury said we have essential services that need funding such as public safety, rescue squad, fire, and affordable housing. Ms. Asbury said every dollar counts and the Town should prioritize spending that directly benefits all the residents. Ms. Asbury said this proposal lacks criteria and could lead to feelings of resentment or division of volunteers. Volunteerism is about giving back to the community and working together for the common good. Introducing compensation could change the nature of the volunteer service, potentially attracting individuals motivated more by a minimal, yet still their financial gain rather than a genuine desire to serve their community.

Ms. Asbury said in conclusion Ms. Asbury urges the Town Council to reject this proposal and instead reallocate these budgeted funds to volunteer training.

A motion was made by **Mayor Pro-Tem Patti** and seconded by **Councilman Misciagno** to return to Regular Session. *All Agreed.*

Manager Reynolds said she sent out the proposed cost for the pay study, which is an item that has not been resolved. The cost came back to approximately \$92,000.00 plus travel expenses. Manager Reynolds recommended \$15,000.00 to the governing board for contracted services if the Town Council would like to move forward with the pay study this year.

Manager Reynolds said the Mayor and Town Council pay has never been discussed and the Town Manager approval amount within the budget ordinance within the budget ordinance.

Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said the pay study is to look at surrounding communities and decide if Town employees should be paid more. Manager Reynolds said they look at classifications as well. Manager Reynolds said the last pay study we had done was in 2018. Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said he has never heard of pay studies before and he has worked in education, school districts and municipalities and 2018 was not that long ago. Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said he could call another municipality to see what their employees make because it is a public record. Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said he does not see the need for a pay study now.

After some discussion, the Town Council agreed there was no need to conduct a pay study at this time.

Mayor Wenzel asked about the next topic which is Mayor/Town Council pay.

Councilman Misciagno said he wanted to be consistent with other municipalities. Councilman Misciagno said we are not the lowest and it was not as bad as he thought it was going to be. Councilman Misciagno said like Ms. Asbury said, we do this for service and this year, Councilman Misciagno did not want to make any changes. The Town Council agreed not to give the Mayor or Town Council a pay increase.

There was discussion about increasing the amount of money the Town Manager can approve without the Town Council's approval. Mayor Wenzel said he brought this up when there was a request to repair a road coming into the Neighborhoods of Holly Ridge and the amount was around \$2700.00 and Manager Reynolds had to bring this before the Town Council for approval because it was over the Town Manager's amount of \$2500.00.

Mayor Wenzel said we should be able to trust our Town Manager to spend funds that are already in the budget. Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said he thinks it needs to remain at \$2500.00 to make sure the Town Manager and then the Town Manager can have the support from the Town Council on decisions that are made. Councilman Parnian said he would be okay with an increase of \$5000.00. Councilman Parnian said Manager Reynolds always communicates with the Town Council about expenditures, so it is not like Manager Reynolds will have free range to spend.

Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said that Manager Reynolds is not obligated by the rules to show, and again it is not that we don't trust Manager Reynolds, it is that \$5000.00 gives Manager Reynolds the power to spend without the Town Council's approval.

Councilman Hines said history tells us this is a rare occurrence. Finance Director, Chuck Strickland said it happens more than you think. There are times when three to four times a year vendors come in requesting us to do things and we must circumvent and let the vendors know everything must go before the Town Council for approval. Councilman Hines said he thinks \$2500.00 is sufficient for now.

Councilwoman Stanley said she thinks Manager Reynolds amount should increase to \$5000.00.

Mayor Wenzel said there are three Town Council members who are okay with a \$5000.00 increase for Manager Reynolds to spend without the Town Council's approval, so Mayor Wenzel asked if they could add this to the budget that they will vote on.

Councilman Hines said in the past Councilman Hines has always asked for a penny reduction in taxes. This year Councilman Hines did not ask for a penny because we are getting to the point that we should try and keep it the same. Councilman Hines said after reviewing the budget, he could have asked for a penny reduction but with the budget that the Town Council approves tonight, next year we will have to an increase in taxes. Councilman Hines said in two

years there will be a reevaluation and taxes will have to go up yet again. Councilman Hines said he is not going to be in favor of this year's budget for that reason.

Councilman Misciagno said the Town Council came to a consensus and that is why the Town Council is here today and he does not want to change a thing related to the budget.

Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said he agrees with Councilman Misciagno, the Town Council has had two workshops going over the budget and Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said he did not hear Councilman Hines mention one time he would like to decrease the tax rate by a penny.

Councilwoman Stanley and Councilman Parnian both agree with Mayor Pro-Tem Patti.

Manager Reynolds said she would like to go over a couple of changes. Manager Reynolds said the fire medic salary was off close to \$6,000.00 so we would need to add \$6,000.00. Manager Reynolds said this would change the original amount of \$185,000.00 to \$190,000.00 and some change. We had our CPA year last year and she noticed our insurance line items were running low because the State Health Care plan always approves their rates after we adopt the budget because they run on a federal year. Manager Reynolds adjusted the insurance for all departments, and it was a minimum of \$10,000.00.

Councilman Hines asked Chief Longo why a difference in the amounts was there. Chief Longo said the original request was not for twenty-four hours and the 4% 401K.

***Mayor Wenzel called for a recess at 7:57 p.m.***

***Mayor Wenzel called the meeting back to order at 8:12 p.m.***

Manager Reynolds needed to go over one more item with the Town Council for the itemized budget. Manager Reynolds said the program coordinator position was budgeted for full-time and it was not calculating into the spreadsheet correctly. Manager Reynolds said that number includes her salary.

A motion was made by ***Mayor Pro-Tem Patti*** and seconded by ***Councilman Misciagno*** to adopt the as presented Town of Holly Ridge budget ordinance fiscal year 2024-2025.

***Voting was as follows:***

***Councilman Hines – No***

***Councilman Misciagno – Yes***

***Mayor Pro-Tem Patti – Yes***

***Councilwoman Stanley – Yes***

***Councilman Parnian – Yes***

***Motion Passes.***

***Town Manager Report***

- Manager Reynolds said following up on the software upgrades, we have completed all the software demos.
- A special meeting is needed to hold a public hearing on some lot sales in the Industrial Park.
- Staff continue to work on the project inventory sheet with Councilman Parnian
- Last month Julia was with us through Zoom to present the grant applications through the RCCP. These were successfully submitted.
- The Town has submitted grant funding for the greenway project, feasibility design and engineering cost and on the Emergency Operations Center, which is the municipal complex for feasibility design and engineering on that project as well.
- Summer camp kicks off Monday, June 17, 2024.
- July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024, there is a continuing education for retirement and healthcare. Sound Retirement solutions has partnered with our Parks and Recreation department to offer five free classes in our Council Chambers to talk about Medicare and Medicare retirement.

### Consent Agenda

- A. Approval of the Following Minutes
- March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024, Annual Budget Retreat
  - May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024, Regular Meeting
  - May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024, Closed Session
- B. Department Head Reports
- Finance Department
  - Fire Department
  - Police Department
  - Planning & Zoning Inspections Report
  - Parks and Recreation
  - Grants Report
- C. Committee Reports
- Planning Board
  - Board of Adjustment
  - ONWASA
  - Busy Bee Committee

A motion was made by **Councilman Hines** and seconded by **Mayor Pro-Tem Patti** to approve the Consent Agenda. **All Agreed.**

- D. **Request to Approve the ONWASA Administrative Service Agreement for the Operation of the Satellite Office.**

**Old Business**

**Discussion and Possible Action to Appoint Members to the Ordinance Review Committee**

Manager Reynolds said this has been an ongoing topic since December of last year. During last month's Town Council meeting, the Town Council agreed to send out a questionnaire to all eleven applicants. There are eleven applicants for five positions and nine returned the survey. The Town Council decided that the two that did not return the survey would not be eligible to be on the committee.

Mayor Wenzel said anyone who does not receive any votes will be removed from the running. Everyone needs to write their names on the ballot.

Vote 1 - Manager Reynolds said the person that did not receive a vote this time was Dorothy Royal.

Vote 2 – Manager Reynolds said Chris Rackley received five votes.

Vote 3- Manager Reynolds said there was a tie with four votes for Mr. Brannan, Chris Buffalino, and Richard Royal.

Mr. Sassano had three votes.

Manager Reynolds said the members of the Ordinance Review Committee are as follows: Herbert Brannan, Chris Rackley, Roy Cooley-Sassano, Chris Buffalino, Richard Royal.

**New Business**

**Presentation of a Microchip Scanning Station by Ms. Susan Passey the Director of Paws 4 Purpose, which is a Local Animal Welfare Non-Profit Organization**

Manager Reynolds said Susan Passey, the director of a local animal welfare nonprofit Paws 4 Purpose, has requested to speak with the Town Council about installing a pet microchip scanning station in Holly Ridge. Ms. Passey will ask the Town Council to consider the Police Department as the best location to install the station if approved because it is away from the heavy traffic on Highway 17. There are also typically personnel in or around the building and there are security cameras that record 24/7.

Ms. Passey said they support the Onslow County Animal Shelter, and they do a lot of things to help with adoptions. Ms. Passey said one of the newest projects is a microchip scanning station.

Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said he has been talking to Susan for a few months about this. Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said there is no cost to the Town, and everything is being donated.

A motion was made by **Mayor Pro-Tem Patti** and seconded by **Councilman Parnian** to approve the location to install pet microchips scan station at the Police Station. **All Agreed.**

**Possible Adoption of Budget Amendment # 7 for Fiscal Year 2023-2024**

Finance Director, Chuck Strickland said this budget amendment is asking for no new money whatsoever. It is just an allocation of funds from a different department to cover shortages of another department. Some of the line items you see the Town Council discussed earlier which was the insurance line items.

Mr. Strickland said there are some issues that we fight with our software provider Edmunds every single year regarding salary line items. They are wrong so we are trying to fix that, so we don't have to worry about findings on the budget. The capital outlay was a budget amendment for the bucket truck. The canine line item was due to our K-9 Razmus having to have surgery.

A motion was made by **Councilman Misciagno** and seconded by **Mayor Pro-Tem Patti** to approve budget amendment # 7 for fiscal year 2023-2024. **All Agreed.**

**Discussion and Possible Approval to amend the By-Laws for the Busy Bee Committee**

Manager Reynolds said the Busy Bee Committee has been operating for about one year. The inaugural was held in April. There was some discussion about simplifying and clarifying responsibilities of the committee.

Mayor Wenzel, Manager Reynolds, Ms. Audrey Madia, Tony Rydzynski and Dorothy Royal discussed privatizing the Bee festival for a couple of reasons. Ms. Royal and her volunteers could move a lot more efficiently without the government being involved. Manager Reynolds said we have proposed that the Bee festival could make a request to the Town each year during the budget process for an allocation to the Bee festival. This year we included \$15,000.00 in which was the money that the sponsorships raised. Manager Reynolds said in exchange for that allocation, the Town would receive the naming rights, so it would be the Town of Holly Ridge Bee Fest. The Town would also receive a booth on the day of the festival.

A motion was made by **Mayor Pro-Tem Patti** and seconded by **Councilman Misciagno** to privatize and hand off the Bee Festival organization that Dorothy Royal would put together. **All Agreed.**

Mayor Wenzel asked Manager Reynolds how many members she thought needed to be on the Bee committee which would be the Town which would be for advocacy, and education. Manager Reynolds stated she thought five members would be sufficient.

Mayor Pro-Tem Patti asked when we called the members of the Bee committee, were they aware that that it would be another committee created for the Bee festival? Or was there an assumption that we are going to work as the Bee City Committee but also as the Bee Festival Committee with Ms. Royal. Deputy Clerk, Tracy Martin said the wording was do you want to be on the committee, but the Bee Festival will be separate.

Ms. Royal said all the people she spoke to said yes, they wanted to stay on the committee. Ms. Royal said she does not think reducing the size is necessary because it is still a volunteer committee to spread the word throughout the year to schools, and communities. Ms. Royal said she does not think knocking the number down will help at all. We have great people that want to keep promoting this.

Mr. Tony Rydzynski said he was interested in staying on the Town committee and not the festival committee.

Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said at some point the Bee City Committee will have to work with the Bee Festival committee even though they are the same people. The Town will have to talk about the festival and educational initiatives need to align to the Bee Festival as well.

Manager Reynolds said the by-laws have the current setup proposed, so all the members would just roll.

A motion was made by **Mayor Pro-Tem Patti** and seconded by **Councilman Misciagno** to accept the amended by-laws that were presented in the packet and for all nine members that were previously on the Busy Bee Committee to continue to be on the Busy Bee City Committee.

Attorney Fountain said there was a section on the proposed by-laws. It is the new article in 9-3 regarding the Town having a naming right and having the Town seal on all promotional material. If the festival is going to be a separate entity, as has been voted on, Attorney Fountain thinks it would be better to make sure it is a separate festival that the Town is sponsoring. Attorney Fountain said this is how the Blueberry Festival, Azalea Festival and others are done.

Attorney Fountain said if there is going to be an overlap between the membership, we need to make sure that during the meetings, that they do delineate on what they are doing with the public committee and that they do not handle any public committee business during the private festival meetings.

Councilman Hines suggested we table this item. Mayor Pro-Tem Patti did not think we needed to table this item.

**Voting was as follows:**  
**Councilman Hines – No**

*Councilman Misciagno – Yes*  
*Mayor Pro-Tem Patti – Yes*  
*Councilwoman Stanley – Yes*  
*Councilman Parnian – Yes*

*Motion Passes.*

**Town Council Comments**

Councilman Parnian thanked everyone for coming. Councilman Parnian said this is an amazing place and we are setting two new committees. One is branding and marketing and one political connection that we brought on last month. Councilman Parnian said he hopes that the community will stay involved and participate as we grow. Councilman Parnian said he is excited to be part of this great Town Council and membership.

Councilwoman Stanley thanked everyone for coming tonight and she thanked everyone for their prayers for the Stanley's and what they have been going through. Councilwoman Stanley said she hopes she will be back next month to.

Mayor Pro-Tem Patti thanked everyone for coming out. Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said he hopes we noticed he is a get things kind of guy and Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said he can be aggressive at times. Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said the staff and Town Manager know this, but he has our best interest in mind. Mayor Pro-Tem said it is an example by this budget. We spent a lot of time with this budget, and he thinks it is a good budget. Mayor Pro-Tem Patti thinks we are moving in the right direction. Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said he wants to make this place the best place for our kids and our future.

Councilman Misciagno said he would echo everyone's comments and he is happy to see the Ordinance Review Committee come about. Councilman Misciagno said he is excited to see future grants.

Councilman Hines said ONQASA is going to have their budget workshop tomorrow night and they are going to have a public hearing the next week. Councilman Hines said more than likely water service is going to go up \$10.00. This is due to not having an increase in about ten years.

**Announcements**

- Thursday, June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024, Eastern Carolina Council Board Meeting – 233 Middle Street New Bern
- Thursday, June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024, Jacksonville Urban Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting – beginning at 3:30 p.m. in the Jacksonville Station – 1300 N. Marine Blvd Jacksonville

- Tuesday, June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024, Planning Board Meeting – beginning at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers
- Thursday, June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024, Busy Bee Committee Meeting – beginning at 4:00 p.m. in the Community Center
- Thursday, June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024, ONWASA Board Meeting – beginning at 6:00 p.m. in the Jacksonville City Hall

Mayor Wenzel said he has people coming up to him all the time asking about the growth coming to Holly Ridge. Mayor Wenzel said we are in the middle of Wilmington and Jacksonville and their growth is growing towards us. Mayor Wenzel said the budget here is forward looking with some things that need to be done for the Town to be able to continue to function.

A motion was made *Councilman Hines* and seconded by *Mayor Pro-Tem Patti* to go into Closed Session. *All Agreed.*

A motion was made by *Councilman Hines* and seconded by *Councilman Misciagno* to excuse Councilwoman Stanley at 9:05 p.m. The meeting. *All Agreed.*

#### Closed Session

**To establish or instruct the public body’s staff or negotiating agents concerning the position to be taken by or on behalf of the public body by negotiating the amount of Compensation and other material terms of an employment contract or proposed employment contract per North Carolina General Statute 143-318.11 (a) (5).**

A motion was made by *Councilman Hines* and seconded by *Mayor Pro-Tem Patti* to return to Regular Session. *All Agreed.*

A motion was made by *Mayor Pro-Tem Patti* and seconded by *Councilman Misciagno* to terminate the current Town attorney contract per our clause and to authorize the staff to purchase an appreciation gift. *All Agreed.*

A motion was made by *Councilman Parnian* and seconded by *Mayor Pro-Tem Patti* to authorize the Town Manager to execute the proposal by Corrie Lee of Equitas to serve as the Town Attorney. *All Agreed.*

A motion was made by *Councilman Hines* and seconded by *Councilman Parnian* to adjourn at 9:17 p.m. *All Agreed.*

*Attest:*

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*Jeff Wenzel, Mayor*

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*Tracy Martin, Deputy Clerk*

*These minutes were recorded and prepared by Deputy Town Clerk, Tracy Martin.*

DRAFT