



Town of HOLLY RIDGE

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HOLLY RIDGE TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES Annual Retreat March 31st, 2022 12:00 P.M.

Mayor Jeff Wenzel called the Regular Meeting of the Holly Ridge Town Council to order at 12:02 p.m. at the Holly Ridge Town Hall. Council members present were Councilman Hines, Mayor Pro-Tem Hall, Councilman Sholar and Councilwoman Stanley. Also present were Town Manager, Heather Reynolds; Planner Nathan Rhue; Deputy Clerk Tracy Martin; Chief Sorg, Public Works Director, Mike McFann and Finance Director, Chuck Strickland. Councilwoman Bragg was absent.

Invocation and Pledge

Councilman Hines gave the Invocation and Mayor Wenzel led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Adoption of Agenda

A motion was made by *Councilwoman Stanley* and seconded by *Mayor Pro-Tem Hall* to adopt the agenda. *All Agreed.*

Persons wishing to Address the Council

Mayor Wenzel called for a recess at 12:20 p.m.
Mayor Pro-Tem Hall left at 12:20 p.m. during recess

Workshop to Conduct Annual Retreat

Manager Reynolds stated Mayor Pro-Tem Hall needs to leave around 12:20 and we will break for lunch and then Mayor Pro-Tem Hall should be back in time for the meeting to begin.

Manager Reynolds said she met with staff a few weeks ago and in doing so policies and procedures were discussed. Manager Reynolds said we are beginning to see more normalcy

prior to COVID, and it is important to get back into the swing of things with our doors being open.

Manager Reynolds said after some research about policies and procedures, Manager Reynolds found some effective strategies for the Town Council and Manger relationships. As the town grows things become more difficult because of the growing pains. In the research it is a good practice for the Town Council and Manager to go over the suggested Rules of Procedures as well as the Code of Ethics.

Manager Reynolds said the Code of Ethics was adopted in 2010 and the Rules of Procedures were adopted in 2018. Manager Reynolds said because it has been a while, we need to make sure any updates that need to be updated are done so. These two documents are what govern your tenure as far as Code of Ethics that you are held to and the Rules of Procedures which were adopted by the Town Council so that meetings flow, and everyone has the same expectations.

Manager Reynolds while you are in your elected position there is training available such as the Ethics training which is required. Manager Reynolds said in the Town of Holly Ridge, we have a Council Manager form of Government. The Town Council is elected by the people, serves as a legislative body, directed elected Mayor serves as the Town Council Chair, and the Town Manager is hired by the Town Council and oversees the day-to-day operations.

Duties of the Mayor are presiding over the Town Council meetings, call Special Meetings, vote to break ties and any other powers that Town Council needs, and this can be done through the Charter or through the suggested Rules of Procedures. The Town Council duties are to make legislative decisions, set policies, appoint the Town Manager at the pleasure of the board and approve annual budget.

Duties of the Town Manager are to hire and terminate all employees, direct, and supervise the department heads, uphold the town, and state laws and regulations, prepare, and submit annual budget, report all the finance and administrative duties, implement the directives of the Town Council, and perform other duties as directed by the Town Council.

Manager Reynolds said she came upon an article by the School of Government, and it is the eight strategies for Council/Manager relations. Manager Reynolds chose a few that relate to our town and where we are today.

- Modernize processes and build organizational capacity. This means as an organization we implement together strategic goals which we have done in the past.
- Town Council and staff would address current and future community interest. Our Town Council has done an excellent job in doing this.
- Town Council and the Mayor work together to develop a highly effective local government.
- The local government is the most trusted out of all the governments. Managers who model ethical behavior and promote quality services inspire trust in government and

typically when creating a positive culture, it helps build confidence with the public. As a public servant, we are charged with trying to make sure we do not do anything to harm that trust.

Mayor Pro-Tem Hall would like to schedule a feedback review after July 1st, 2022, among the Town Council to see how well we are doing as a group.

Manager Reynolds said as a town, we are also responsible for providing vital information and making sure the information is up to date. This is where our social media comes into play such as the electronic signs, website, and Facebook.

Manager Reynolds said the third topic was the careful management of elected officials with employees. As a Town Manager, you have a legal responsibility to administer the town government but also manage and administer the town employees.

Town Council request usually goes through the manager's office to help plan with the workflow. The Town Council does not typically direct the workflow of the employees.

Equal treatment to all the Town Council members and there would be no surprises either way between the Town Council or the Manager.

The Town Council and Manager freely give and seek feedback. This is to maintain an open line of communication.

Mayor, Town Council and Managers should ask themselves how they are doing a couple of times throughout the year.

Town Council and the Manager work together to develop a highly effective local government.

Manager Reynolds said in March, we typically hold the budget retreat and in April or May we start receiving the projected revenues and invoices we receive on an annual basis. In late April, early May the budget message and the options for the budget will be presented to the Town Council and then workshops will begin having our budget workshop. In June we finalize the proposed budget, and we hold the Public Hearing in June, and the new fiscal begins July 1st.

The town's population trends over the past few years has grown by one hundred or so each year and with the 2020 census we have gone from around 2800 to over 4100 citizens.

Manager Reynolds said with the new tax evaluation we have increased over two hundred million in property values. If you look at our tax rate over the past few years, we have been able to reduce taxes and this year as well because of the tax evaluation.

Councilman Hines said that is a miss number because we have been reducing taxes and people are still paying more out of their pocket for services. Councilman Hines said everybody's

property value is going to go up and every little bit we can try to save for our taxpayers is what we need to do.

Manager Reynolds said as of the 28th of this month the Town Council has a list of all the account balances, and we are sitting where we usually are this time of year. We have 2.6 million in the general fund even with all the expenditures that were done this past year. Manager Reynolds said if all the current variables were to remain the same in the preliminary numbers that she and the Finance Director, Chuck Strickland plugged in, there would be around an \$800,000 surplus that the town could use for upcoming projects. According to the preliminary numbers this year, a penny would be worth approximately \$63,000.00 versus \$40,000.00 last year.

Manager Reynolds said this slide is an overview of our capital improvement program and the different projects that we have done. We have moved forward on all of them but three. The streets last year, we included two cents of the property tax to go into that fund in addition to our Powell Bill monies. Manager Reynolds said \$50,000 was budgeted for the multi-use path to the Pender County line. We completed a lease for our police radios, which are around \$14,000 a year over the next 4 years. This past year and the year before we purchased the sewer jet, trailer vacuum, light arrow board, new zero turn mowers, tractor, and the only thing we have not purchased was the tract loader out of all the equipment request.

The Master Park Plan was recently adopted, so the Mayor and Town Council will be able to set some goals for these projects.

The restroom at Morris Landing is on-going but we were able to move the restroom about 1000 feet and we recently filed for an extension on the grant and if need be, we can file for an additional 6-month extension.

The vehicles were completed last year for the lease agreement and is approximately \$115,000 per year and all the current vehicles have been upfitted.

The renovation plan to design and build a municipal complex for in the future has not been completed. It is on the Town Council/Mayor request for this year coming up.

We have not implemented any type of program for stormwater.

Manager Reynolds said we have twenty-four full time employees, and this upcoming budget year staff is requesting four additional full-time employees which will be in each individual department.

The Mayor and Town Council request is to re-start planning on how to fund a town hall expansion, add an Assistant Town Manager position, reduce taxes by one cent, set aside two cents for street maintenance, repair, fund, and staff a welcome center on Highway 17. Councilwoman Stanley spoke with Yard Scapes about purchasing one of their buildings to be used as the welcome center.

Manager Reynolds did not receive any request from the Holly Ridge Fire Department, but she did receive a request from Turkey Creek Fire Department and Turkey Creek Fire Department Chief Hardison, has made a request for \$10,500.00 and he justifies that by needing a portable radio for interior attacks. Manager Reynolds said she was not sure what this means. Councilman Hines said it means a fire attack inside of a building and he hopes they already have radios for this kind of attack.

Manager Reynolds said Chief Hardison justified it with additional turnout gear for his department. Chief Hardison said the cost of safety equipment has skyrocketed.

Manager Reynolds said the next topic is Economic Development and Mark Sutherland is here on behalf of Jones Onslow Economic Development.

Mr. Sutherland said economic development is about creating prosperity. JOED wants a strong tax base, increase individual's wealth and a strong business community that is growing. Mr. Sutherland said Holly Ridge is doing all three of those items that were just mentioned. Mr. Sutherland said we have helped Holly Ridge put into place some protocols that work for us now, but it will also work when there are 80,000 people living in and around town.

Mr. Sutherland said the town will come out of Camp Davis Industrial Park Phase II with a nice piggy bank and Mr. Sutherland said the town needs to think about placing the money in some fund in your budget for economic development, so it does not get diluted.

Mr. Sutherland said shell buildings are an investment in products and economic development equals sites and buildings. There are no shell buildings in Onslow County. Mr. Sutherland says this keeps him out of many deals because the first block is do you have existing buildings and usually this is the only thing the client is interested in. Most people do not want to wait to build a building, they want a building in place.

Mr. Sutherland said strategic plan out lives our personalities. Mr. Sutherland said we put the strategic plans with some goals and objectives that are grounded today and that are linked to that and then we hand off to the new folks that come into town. Mr. Sutherland suggested the town do this and then monitor the implementation.

Mr. Sutherland said the town's staff cannot do economic development by themselves. There are some citizens in town that have great ideas about economic development. This could be a committee that the town appoints, or we could encourage and possibly form a committee of 100.

Mayor Pro-Tem Hall asked Mr. Sutherland if he was saying the town needs to invest in building shell buildings or try to find private citizens to build them. Mr. Sutherland said the private sector is always first then if the private sector is falling short then maybe buy the land and offer a land lease. Mr. Sutherland said he was speaking about industrial shell buildings like the size of Atlantic Seafood. Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said the town needs commercial space

as much as it needs the residential space. Mr. Sutherland said this will come and you will have to have the residential space to accommodate the commercial space.

Councilman Sholar asked to be excused due to a family emergency at 12:55 p.m.

Councilwoman Stanley stated she thinks the town needs a fabric store for citizens that do crafts.

Manager Reynolds said there is also a request from the Greater Topsail area Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Scott Franko is leading up an economic development summit and Mr. Franko submitted a request for \$2500.00 for a contribution from the town which would come out of next year's budget.

Manager Reynolds said we have agreed to support JOED's Improvement campaign, and this is an agreement we already signed last year where we contribute \$5000.00 a year for five years. Manager Reynolds said she would also like to look at increasing the yearly operating contribution to JOED.

Manager Reynolds said the Re-Branding committee has been working hard and once they complete their design and Town Council approves, a topic of discussion will be about a sign at Camp Davis Industrial Park with the new town's logo.

Manager Reynolds said this budget year coming up has been difficult from the Finance and Manager Reynolds standpoint because we did not have departments with large request this year other than personnel.

Manager Reynolds said each department will have a summary they would like to present to the Town Council.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Chief Sorg said the first item is the certificate program and it is aimed at education, training and pay grades. The idea with this is longevity and retention and a hiring tool.

Chief Sorg stated the idea is a two percent increase in pay if you obtain an associate degree, bachelor's degree, or a master's degree. There is also an intermediate certificate and advance certificates. The way you get the full benefit of the program is to come in the beginning of your career and stay. There is also a traffic certificate which is obtained at the Justice Academy in North Carolina which is over five hundred hours of training. This would take someone fifteen to twenty years to obtain all these certificates.

Chief Sorg said there is not a way to go back and make this retroactive. The reason the \$9,058.47 is on the screen is you would get a two percent increase just for having it now. The ones that are going to be put forward for acceptance are going to be associates, bachelors, PHD, intermediate law enforcement degree, advanced, CIC which is the investigators

certificate, North Carolina Justice Academy, traffic certification will receive a two percent increase if they have all or one of those mentioned above.

Chief Sorg said a pay grade seven is another one that is based on the same things, but it is at a lower percent. It is a grading system that puts requirements around rank and around careers. You must have time and a certain number of training classes.

Chief Sorg said he is pushing for a pay increase when a new person is hired. Chief Sorg said this would increase the starting pay to \$40,000.00 from \$36,895.00.

Councilman Hines asked about the exercise facility. Chief Sorg said it is an enclosed carport with a facility inside. Chief Sorg stated he would like at some point and time physical fitness would be part of everyone's evaluation. Chief Sorg said he would for the location to be between the Police Department and the Maintenance office building. This way all the employees could utilize the building as well. Chief Sorg said all that he would like to have in the gym is kettle bells, rowing machines and free weight and a squat racket. This equipment would cost around \$3000.00, and the building is around \$13,000.00. The concrete would be around \$5500.00.

Chief Sorg said the department is one radio short for the patrol cars. Chief Sorg said this past year the police departments budget is thin due to some extra expensed with the new K-9 Razmus.

Chief Sorg said regarding overtime, he would like to have a line item for overtime into the salaries and once it is gone, we will go back to comp time. This would be an incentive for working late.

Finance Director Chuck Strickland said from a finance standpoint for the Police Department, they are different than the rest of Town Hall as far as hours they work. Mr. Strickland said this would benefit the town.

Chief Sorg said they are one taser short. The new taser on top of the training carts we use and having to buy every year and if we were to buy one taser it would cost \$7,524.00 and to lease it will cost about the same thing, but for five years they will give us department wide new tasers every year. If at anytime during the five years, the taser breaks, they will replace it no questions asked. The training cartridges run around \$700.00 and over the next five years that cost would run around \$3500.00. Chief Sorg said you are looking at spending \$5000.00 on one taser and one cartridge should something go wrong with these two items. Chief Sorg said he had rather ask for the lease agreement and receive thirteen new tasers and cartridge than one taser and one cartridge.

Chief Sorg said the last thing is the RMS upgrade. Chief Sorg said he has reached out to the county, but they have not replied with an actual number. Chief Sorg said they are building us into the county system. Chief Sorg said if they look up a criminal from Jacksonville, we can't see what is on their system and to get into any detail, we must call.

Councilman Hines asked Chief Sorg how he would prioritize his wish list. Chief Sorg put the following in order.

1. Radio, Tasers, and RMS
2. Overtime
3. Certification program
4. Gym facility

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Community Development Director Nate Rhue said the only thing is department needs is another employee. The reason being is the growth that the town is experiencing. Mr. Rhue said his department can take care of what they need to such as per call or per basis but for the most part it is not on the level that Mr. Rhue feels his department can do provided another employee is provided.

Mr. Rhue said last year his department was budgeted for \$324,033.38. Mr. Rhue said to date, the permits that have been issued and paid for are 333 with a total number of 4,582 inspections and a total dollar amount of \$280,794.48 so far.

Mr. Rhue said in 2021-2022 fiscal year, it was made up of Mr. Rhue, Marsha Gray and one probationary employee from inspections. Since then, the department has added another probationary employee. Mr. Rhue said from inspections standpoint the state issues these certifications which include five trades, electrical, plumbing, mechanical building, and fire. The town does not have an in-house fire inspector, but we do have that on a contract basis. Mr. Rhue said the probationary levels are good for three years.

Mayor Pro-Tem Hall asked if the probationary period was on their certifications or if this was the employment with the town. Mr. Rhue stated it is for their certifications.

Councilman Hines asked how much the town is paying out for fire inspectors. Finance Director Chuck Strickland said it is per basis. Mr. Strickland said he could tell the Town Council what has been paid to date. Councilman Hines said this would depend on what we are paying out for someone else doing the work. Mr. Rhue said the town has paid so far \$10,020.00 for someone to come in a do our fire inspections.

Councilman Hines asked what the cost of an additional car would be. Manager Reynolds said around \$7000.00

Councilman Hines asked what the total cost would be to hire someone including benefits. Manager Reynolds said \$15,000 to \$20,000.

Chuck Strickland stated the Planning and Zoning department is the town's lease expensive department in the entire town.

Mayor Wenzel called for a recess at 2:40 p.m.
Mayor Wenzel called the meeting back to order at 2:50 p.m.

PUBLIC WORKS

Mike McFann said he is requesting two additional full-time employees for his department. One employee will be an entry level employee and a salary one with a level 10 in his department which equates to around \$2500.00 more than the entry level.

Mike McFann said with the additional employees it will divide the department in half. Mr. McFann said he is hoping for a ground's maintenance department and a street maintenance department. Mr. McFann said the town is growing and we just took over the Preserve's at Morris Landing, so Mr. McFann is trying to prepare for what is coming down the road.

GARAGE IMPROVEMENTS

Mr. McFann said last year he asked for money for garage improvements, and it is still ongoing. Mr. McFann said he had the sewage pump installed from the garage to the main sewer and that took about half of the money that was requested.

Mr. McFann said he is looking to get the garage door cut, toilets ran, sinks ran and shower ran but with prices increases over the last year the \$10,000 dollar request is not going to be enough to complete this project.

ASPHALT TOWN HALL LOT

Mr. McFann said we have 54x72 lot that has never had asphalt. Mr. McFann said it is inconvenient when people are trying to pay their ONWASA bill at the ONWASA drop box and parking is becoming scarcer because of the town's growth. Mr. McFann said it would also make the parking lot look complete.

BLOWER/HEDGER

Mr. McFann said he is requesting a backpack blower which will be a replacement and Mr. McFann is also requesting a new shrub hedger which has an articulating arm for height.

Mr. McFann has also requested a concrete vibrator, and this is something that we have rented frequently. When the two new signs were installed, we had to make sure the concrete pads were clear of any air pockets and in doing so we have learned the value of this piece of equipment.

Mr. McFann said in the garage there is a refrigerator that was giving to their department by a lady from Sneads Ferry and Mr. McFann would like to replace this refrigerator with a new one because sometimes it works and sometimes it does not.

Mr. McFann said the big-ticket items are the PTO turbine blower which would attach to the back of the tractor. This would be used mostly for highways to blow all the edging and debris back into the grass.

Mr. McFann said the next big-ticket item is the asphalt hot box. Asphalt is readily available but not close to us. Mr. McFann said he can get four tons of asphalt and by the time it gets back to the Town Hall he has lost a ton. With this asphalt hot box, it will also give us the capability to repurpose the millings we collect.

RESEAL TOWN OWNED PARKING LOTS

Mr. McFann said this includes Town Hall, Police, and the Community Center. Mr. McFann said just for preventative maintenance.

Councilman Hines said he did not have any numbers for all these items, and he would like Mr. McFann to prioritize his wish list.

- New Employee's
- Asphalt hot box

Manager Reynolds asked about a re-sealer. Mr. McFann said he did not think it would be a great move right now.

Councilman Hines said we are going to need something soon because Summerhouse, the Neighborhoods of Holly Ridge and the Preserves streets will need repairs soon. Councilman Hines said we have got to get a preventative plan. Mr. McFann said we are going to have to get a rejuvenator or some type of seal to keep the bonding agents inside the asphalt.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Chuck Strickland said we have reached the point where we need a full-time Parks and Recreation person. Mr. Strickland said a full-time person would do a better job than himself trying to juggle between Parks and Recreation and Finance.

Mr. Strickland said there is a lot of work coming up with Parks and Recreation especially with listening to the citizens regarding the Master Park Plan and researching grants for funds.

Mr. Strickland said the concession and bathrooms at the park need to be torn down. Based on the Master Park Plan

Mr. McFann said the restrooms could still be used until the Town Council comes up with a plan, but the concession stands in since it is not being used could go ahead and be torn down.

Mr. Strickland said the sidewalks around the park in front of the gravel parking lot are broken up and they are a hazard waiting to happen. Mr. Strickland stated the swing sets in the park

also need to be replaced. If we are going to look at replacing the swing sets, we could look at the inclusive playground equipment per the Master Park Plan.

Mr. Strickland said based off the Master Park Plan, we are waiting to get pricing until the Town Council gives some type of direction for the staff to do.

Councilman Hines said he thinks it would make more sense to tear down the buildings at the park than having the parking lot paved behind the Liberty Fountain right now Mr. Strickland said this would be a decision for the Town Council to decide.

Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said when there are events the people who are in wheelchairs are out of luck. They must park at the Community Center and come all the way to the park. Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said there is no ADA at all in the park and very limited at the Community Center.

Mayor Pro-Tem Hall asked if the Town Council needs a workshop to identify what the plans are for the park.

Manager Reynolds asked the Town Council if it would be okay to demo the concession stand because it is a liability issue, and they really are needed as much any more due to the popularity of food trucks.

Councilman Hines asked if we had considered obtaining students from North Carolina State or East Carolina University to see if any of their Parks and Recreation interim students would be interested in helping in our Parks and Recreation.

Manager Reynolds stated the Parks and Recreation person would also be the Public Information Officer for the town.

ADMINISTRATION

Manager Reynolds said she has spoken with Mark Sutherland in length about the RFP's for the engineered services contract. Manager Reynolds said this if just for consideration, but she feels like the town needs to have an engineer on a retainer for the town with all the projects that are going on or will be going on.

Manager Reynolds said she was thinking of moving back to iPads for the Town Council.

Councilman Hines asked how much we spent on the last one's for Town Council. Manager Reynolds said around \$3000.00.

Town Council was not in favor of new iPads for them.

Manager Reynolds asked about a pay increase for the Mayor and Town Council. Manager Reynolds said a pay increase for the whole board has not been done in a long time.

Mayor Wenzel stated he thinks it is due.

Councilman Hines asked why the Town Council needs a pay increase. Councilman Hines stated they are public servants, and this is not an occupation for them. Councilman Hines said if it came between the Town Council or employees getting a pay increase, he would vote for the employees to receive the increase.

Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said she is fine either way.

Councilwoman Stanley stated she feels the same way.

Councilman Hines said he still has a problem with the town paying for everyone's meals when there are meetings to attend.

Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said not all the Town Council members are in attendance and she would like to wait until everyone is in attendance before deciding on Town Council pay increases.

TRANSCRIBING SOFTWARE

Manager Reynolds said this is within the normal spending limits for the manager and department heads. Manager Reynolds said this item will be one of our requests.

Manager Reynolds said she was looking into different options for a photo id system. Manager Reynolds said we have not done updated photos in a while. The technology we were using has now become obsolete. This would be used for entries and identification purposes.

BUILDING AND GROUNDS

Manager Reynolds said staff met with Weston Lyall about renovating the town hall to have additional offices here and potentially moving the meetings over to the community center.

Councilman Hines said the Town Council needs to get a plan and then we can renovate Town Hall.

Mr. Strickland agreed with Councilman Hines however do we want to take on that expense because of the cost associated with this. Councilman Hines said we have got to have a plan even if it takes a couple of years. Mr. Strickland asked if Town Council approves the additional head count that has been requested, where will we put these new employees. Councilman Hines said he did not know but if something happens in the town and the revenue drops, we will lose those employees. Councilman Hines said there are things that can happen that could make our revenues drop and then what do we do. Councilman Hines said spending money and spending money, there is a pay day somewhere down the road and who's going to pay for it. Councilman Hines stated it will be the taxpayers. Councilman Hines said this was also his concern about the industrial park if we don't come up with the grant money to complete the work. Who will pay for it, the taxpayers?

Manager Reynolds said she and Mr. Strickland are looking for direction from the Town Council so we know how to start planning for the upcoming budget.

Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said we have a short term to house new employees and a long term need of building a Town Hall. Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said to go back to the drawing board and figure out something different to house the new employees in the building, so it does not affect the long-term need.

Mr. Strickland asked the Town Council if the staff should be making plans for the Town Hall expansion. Councilman Hines said thinks the Town Council should put it on the record they want to do that and then a discussion will take place at another time what the design will be. Councilman Hines said we need a temporary fix for when we hire the new employees.

Councilman Sholar arrived at 3:40 p.m.

Councilman Hines said he is not opposed to any of this there just needs to be a plan in place. Mr. Strickland said he understands but staff is looking for a timeline for these projects. Mr. Strickland said for two budget seasons, Town Hall expansion has been the discussed.

Mayor Wenzel asked what we would need to start the grant process. Manager Reynolds said a design.

Councilman Hines asked if all the stimulus money the town is supposed to receive can go towards remodeling.

Manager Reynolds said the first 10 million of the ARP funds can be used for revenue replacement, but the town only received over \$900 thousand. Manager Reynolds said these funds are sitting in a separate account and it may have to be tapped to close the gap on the Industrial Park.

Mr. Strickland said as far as being able to afford the design services, we could use those funds.

Mayor Wenzel said he agrees with Councilman Hines that as a Town Council we vote and say we want to pursue for a new or expanded town hall which should start the process for us to apply for grants to help assist with these items.

Mayor Pro-Tem Hall stated if it is worded to the public that we want to build a new building, but we are not spending money now to build a new town hall. Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said this is not the time for us to build a new building. Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said we are coming off a rough spot and we have allocated resources to the Industrial Park as a Hugh focus.

Mr. Strickland stated staff still needs direction on what you would have us working on. Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said finding additional space inside the town hall for possible new employees.

Manager Reynolds said the sound system is still needed for the community center for when meetings are held there. Mayor Pro-Tem Hall asked if there was any money available for us to improve the inside of the community center.

Manager Reynolds said she has spoken with staff about another electronic sign to match the one at the community center to place on Highway 50 where the new smaller sign is located. The sign on Highway 50 would move to town hall.

Manager Reynolds stated the Christmas light pole decorations need to be updated. They have not been updated since 2006. The community center needs to also have updated wreaths and garland for the Hometown Christmas event. Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said we need to budget for two new Christmas light poles every year.

Consensus from the Town Council is to have a variety of Christmas lights and not uniform. Councilman Hines said we could contact the businesses in town, and they may want to sponsor a light in front of their business.

Manager Reynolds asked about to consider looking at professional funding at the Liberty Fountain so that the Public Works Department can look at decorating for the Liberty Festival.

Manager Reynolds said her additional considerations are that we have the Master Park Plan, and the Capital Improvement Plan. Manager Reynolds said we would like to look at grants for the upcoming year. Manager Reynolds said we have the ARP funds that we have touched on and the North Carolina Department of Commerce just announced the new transformation grant.

Manager Reynolds said the only other consideration is what the Town Council would like to consider for a COLA and Merit for the employees.

Councilman Hines said we are going to have to have an idea once the Re-Branding committee decides on the town logo and everything that will need to be changed as well.

Councilman Hines asked where we are at on the budget. Mr. Strickland said we are fine. The only line item that he is concerned about is the fuel.

Manager Reynolds said Councilwoman Stanley had mentioned a welcome center for the town. Mayor Pro-Tem said she did not think staff should work at all in the welcome center. Councilwoman Stanley said volunteers could staff the welcome center.

Councilman Hines said he remembers when the discussion about the Liberty Fountain was going on and it was not going to cost the town anything but, it is a continuous expense for the town. Councilman Hines stated he thinks we need to sell the piece of property that was donated to the town and find another piece of property that is more visible if we do the welcome center.

Councilman Hines said he would like to see some figures. Councilman Hines stated he can not say anything will be okay until he knows what the numbers look like.

Mr. Strickland said he will put everything into the budget and then whatever the Town Council would like to remove they can do so.

Councilman Hines suggested speaking with Mike McFann about three cents going towards repairing some of the roads in town. Mr. Strickland said as far as Revenue Neutral we can roll that over to streets.

Mayor Pro-Tem Hall asked if we are going to do a one cent tax reduction. Mr. Strickland said that has been requested from Town Council. Councilman Hines said anytime we can reduce taxes for our citizens, we need to.

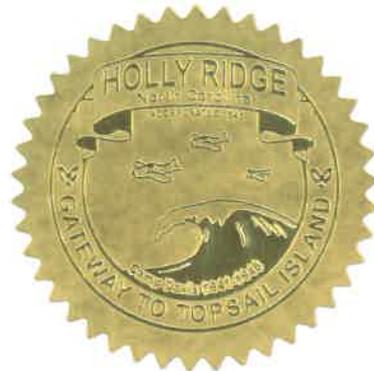
Town Council consensus was to put a plan in place for the expansion of the town hall and the streets within the town.

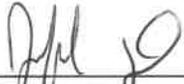
Persons wishing to Address the Council

Adjournment

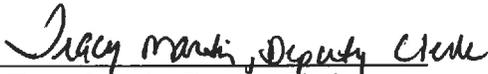
A motion was made by *Mayor Pro-Tem Hall* and seconded by *Councilwoman Stanley* to adjourn at 4:50p.m. *All Agreed.*

ATTEST:





Jeff Wenzel, Mayor



Tracy Martin, Deputy Clerk