



Town of HOLLY RIDGE

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HOLLY RIDGE TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING August 29th, 2023 5:30 P.M.

Mayor Jeff Wenzel called the Regular Meeting of the Holly Ridge Town Council to order at 5:35 p.m. at the Holly Ridge Town Hall. Council members present were Councilman Sholar, Mayor Pro-Tem Hall, Councilman Hines, Councilwoman Stanley, and Councilwoman Bragg. Also present were the Town Manager, Heather Reynolds, Deputy Clerk, Tracy Martin.

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 Bragg** and seconded by **Mayor Pro-Tem Hall** to adopt the agenda as presented. *All Agreed.*

Discussion and Possible Adoption of the Town of Surf City Facilities Use Agreement with the Town of Holly Ridge for Adult Softball.

Manager Reynolds said at the last Town Council meeting, the Town Council discussed the Facilities Use Agreement with the Town of Surf City, and it was originally presented with a discount with the Town of Surf City. The Town Council elected at the last meeting to send it back to the Town of Surf City but charge the full price. At that time, the Town of Surf City decided to terminate the facilities use agreement.

Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said she is the one that called for this special meeting, to find out how exactly how much money the Town will lose if we charge them half the price for using the park, and will it keep us from making the expenses we need to run the park while they are in it.

Finance Director Chuck Strickland said the difference in the five dollars was roughly fifty dollars a week in revenue, over about eight weeks. That is a total of four hundred dollars. Mayor Pro-Tem Hall asked what it cost the Town to use the park for those eight weeks. Mr. Strickland said electricity for the field averages around eighty-two dollars a month.

Councilman Hines asked if this was the only expense. Mr. Strickland said we drag the field anyway and that is an expense we already had. The new agreement was no staff in the field, so that would be our only expense.

Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said for a profit of \$238.00 we said no to the Town of Surf City for those eight weeks. Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said we have new bleachers with no one in them. Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said she does not believe there is anyone in Holly Ridge that would like to create an adult softball team but if there was an adult softball league in the field, which may spark some interest here. Otherwise, the ballfield is empty.

Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said she would like to propose a motion to reconsider the Facilities Use Agreement with Surf City and Holly Ridge, offering Surf City a cut. Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said hopefully the Town staff will be able to re-create the relationship that they have been working on for quite some time to have Surf City in our park. Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said she does not think the Town Council considers how much effort the Town staff puts into creating these relationships and for Town Council to just blow them off for a profit of \$238.00 just because we do not want to give Surf City a break.

A motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Hall and seconded by Councilwoman Stanley.

Derick Sholar asked while in the audience if the public got to speak before items are voted on. Mayor Wenzel said there is not a Public Comment on the agenda. Manager Reynolds said if the Town Council would like to amend the agenda to allow for public comment, they should do so.

Mayor Pro-Tem Hall and Councilwoman Stanley withdrew their motion to allow for public comment.

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

Persons Wishing to Address the Council

Derick Sholar – 417 S. Hines Street asked how many Town Council members read and understand what the Facilities Use Agreement says. Mr. Sholar said he understands what Mayor Pro-Tem Hall is saying about the \$238.00 but this is a business. When the day is done, you are here for a reason. It must be run like a business. You cannot lose money, or it will go under. Mr. Sholar asked what Surf City is giving our taxpayers citizens. Mr. Sholar said we want to give them a break and most of the people playing ball do not even live in Holly Ridge. Mr. Sholar said Surf City has gyms etc. and are they giving us a discount on anything? Mr. Sholar said Surf City is not willing to help us. They want to take it because they are a business and they do not want to see negative because if there is negative, it goes back on the Town Manager. Mr. Sholar said he did not believe two hundred dollars would make or break the deal.

Mr. Sholar said the remodeling of the Town Hall, will accompany only the people that are employed now. If the Town hires any more personnel, we will be out of the room. Mr. Sholar said the Town does not need to throw \$125,000.00 out the door. Mr. Sholar said we need to be looking ten years from now.

Mr. Sholar stated the Town is proposing to pay \$40,000.00 for a crew to oversee the resurfacing and fixing of the roads. Mr. Sholar said Public Works could pick the worse roads around Town and put them out for bid. Mr. Sholar said the \$40,000.00 could fix a few more roads.

Mr. Sholar said other communities are already complaining the taxes are too high, but our taxes have to increase if we keep spending money and if there were a community that would like to de-annex where is that money going to come from. Mr. Sholar said having this special meeting tonight is an expense such as turning on lights and paying employees to be here for this meeting. Mr. Sholar said we must start thinking like a business.

Councilman Hines said he has read the contracts and whether he understands it all such as the legal stuff, but he wonders if the rest of the Town Council can answer or read everything. Councilwoman Stanley stated she read all the contract as well.

Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said she would make a motion to reconsider and approve the Facilities Use Agreement with the Town of Surf City as it is written.

Councilman Sholar said if we reconsider and approve it, then we are approving it like it is without discussing a thing.

Councilwoman Stanley said for the Town Council to discuss everything and then make a motion.

Mayor Wenzel said the motion has died so now we need discussion.

Councilman Sholar said Surf City charges for their teams and if they receive anything close to what we get for an adult team, they make \$425.00 to \$500.00. Councilman Sholar said our taxpayer pays \$425.00 to play and if you are a non-taxpayer, they pay \$500.00. Councilman Sholar said for our taxpayers to use our field we charge them \$10.00 an hour. Non taxpayers pay \$15.00 an hour. Councilman Sholar said we are going to charge a non-resident that should be charged \$15.00 an hour \$5.00 an hour which is \$5.00 an hour less than what our taxpayer's pay, and they pay to buy the fence, maintain the field, and pay for the lights. Councilman Sholar asked how this is fair to our taxpayers to pay more than an outside entity.

Mayor Pro-Tem Hall asked if our taxpayers could join the teams. Councilman Sholar said he did not know and if so, did they pay the and did they pay the non-taxpayer fee to play on that team.

Chuck Strickland said Surf City did not charge them the non-taxpayer rate because of the agreement we had with Surf City before they could get the citizen rate. Mr. Strickland said Surf City was putting our town logo on all banners and other advertisements because it was a collaborative partnership, and this is why they split the sixty-forty revenue with us.

Councilman Sholar asked what the final profit amount was. Mr. Strickland said it was over nine hundred dollars. Councilman Sholar asked if this is the final figure after all expenses were taken out. Mr. Strickland said no, roughly \$120.00 for two months of electricity would be subtracted from the \$120.00 amount.

Councilman Sholar said he has a hard time with Surf City paying less than our citizens pay and Holly Ridge maintains the ballfield.

Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said she understands that but to get the use in the ballpark you must make an agreement like that, and it is not a loss for the community, and we are putting people in the field. Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said the new bleachers are going to be empty unless there is a softball league that is going to be created in Holly Ridge.

Councilman Sholar stated the reason he feels like Holly Ridge does not have a softball team is because there has not been any advertising for one. Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said the park has been there forever. Councilman Sholar said there has been no one in the Town to do so and we just have hired a Parks and Recreation person. Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said anyone who is interested in doing so would know to come to the town to inquire. Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said is seeking us out because they do not have the facilities for it, or they would use their own.

Councilman Hines stated no one wants to play on theirs because their fields stink and there are no lights. Councilman Hines said if Surf City ever gets a field with lights, so long Holly Ridge.

Councilman Sholar said he would be okay with doing the taxpayer rate, but other than that it is a no for me.

Councilman Hines said a motion was made to go into this discussion and it was denied. It should not have gone any further. If you check the point of order, you will find that is the way it should have been. Councilman Hines said if we vote on something and it is brought up for reconsideration, one of those people that voted in favor of it should have been the one to bring it up. Councilman Hines said it use to be if the motion was made and we wanted to change it, then one of the people that voted in favor had to be the one to bring it up to change. Mayor Wenzel asked if that is a Holly Ridge Town Council or a Roberts Rule of Order thing.

Manager Reynolds said she would call the attorney and then she would look at the Town Council procedures and then the Roberts Rule of Order.

Mayor Wenzel said as far as motions are, in the past we have had motions brought up and denied and then another motion done on the same subject. Councilman Hines said the motion was denied and there was nothing else said about it, so the motion was gone.

Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said she would make a motion to reconsider this but Town Council wanted to discuss it so Mayor Pro-Tem Hall withdrew the motion so the discussion could happen and then Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said she would make a motion to reconsider it.

Councilman Hines asked if one of the three of us ask that this item be brought up again. Manager Reynolds said one did. Councilman Hines said then there is no need to investigate this any further.

Councilman Hines said Surf City denied a five-dollar increase which could have been passed on to the ball players. Councilman Hines said he thinks that is cheap on Surf City's part. Councilman Hines said the Town just put over \$45,000 into the fence and all of taxpayer's money. Councilman Hines asked how we recoup taxpayers' money if we are barely making expenses. Councilman Hines said when he played in Jacksonville, he had to pay ten extra dollars because he did not live in Jacksonville. Councilman Hines said Surf City needs us more than we need them pertaining to the ballfield because they have no where to play. Councilman Hines said he wants things brought into the town, but he wants to look after the taxpayers' dollars. Councilman Hines said we get a small seal on the banners and that is it which makes people think this is Surf City's organization. Councilman Hines said he does not see how we answer to the taxpayers that we just spent \$45,000.00 putting in a new fence so that everyone else in Pender and Onslow County can come out to Holly Ridge and play on our ballfield. Councilman Hines said he does not believe this is the way it was presented to their Town Council. Councilman Hines said he thinks it is wrong for the citizens and taxpayers and he is not in favor of this, we raised the rates and that is the way it ought to be. Councilman Hines said everything goes up and we have had the same rates for two years to let them play there. Councilman Hines said isn't it time to increase the rate for them to play on our fields.

Mr. Strickland said the playing rate did increase. They started charging more money for softball because the first year we had softball, it was just shy of being a loss. They did raise the rates for a sixty forty split.

Councilman Hines said with a little bit of effort we could put Surf City's softball out of business and run the program ourselves.

Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said that effort is not there and maybe between now and then there will be some activity and that will spark some one's interest in creating a ball team that is all Holly Ridge.

Councilman Sholar said our effort comes from our staff and we as Town Council direct them. If we want them to do ball, then we need to direct them to do so. Councilman Hines said that is what our Parks and Recreation person does.

Mr. Strickland asked if the Town Council is saying for staff to advertise for someone else in the community or for staff to start a league. Councilman Sholar said he is saying for someone to do it. Councilman Sholar said one person can not do it. Councilman Hines said it can be arranged to where we could contract for somebody to run the league for us.

Mayor Pro-Tem asked Councilman Hines why we have not done that then. Mr. Strickland said he thought that is what we were doing with Surf City. Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said she thought the same thing. Councilman Hines said he would like for us to be the one's collecting all the money instead of Surf City.

Councilman Hines said we are spending money to change the town seal so that we can be more independent and get rid of the "Gateway to Topsail Island" which makes us look like we are dependent on them, but we still must cater to Surf City. Councilman Hines said he is getting tired of let's do it the way Surf City does. Councilman Hines said we do not need anybody else; we can do it ourselves. We do not receive any reduced rates from Surf City on anything. We asked about getting reduced rates for parking and they said no. We get nothing from Surf City. Councilman Hines said if we fail, it is because we failed, and we did not have to depend on anyone else.

Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said we told the town staff to pursue this agreement and figure out a way to get a ball team on that field and now it's not that way. Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said when she needs to have work done, she creates a relationship with a contractor so they can do the work and present something better. Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said you don't always get an equal amount out of what you get, and Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said she feels like Councilman Hines distain from Surf City is keeping him from thinking about what it was going to provide for Holly Ridge. There are people who will go sit in the park so they can watch a ball game. Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said it is not all about making sure Surf City pays us. It is about putting people in our park.

Councilman Hines said he thinks it is a matter of greed that five dollars stopped them from playing ball. Councilman Hines said Surf City will be coming back to Holly Ridge because they will not be able to put players on our field.

Mr. Strickland said Surf City canceled the fall season. Councilman Hines said Surf City will lose money and it is because of their greed. Councilman Hines said it is the taxpayers of Holly Ridge that he cares about and not the people that live in Wilmington, Jacksonville, Swansboro or anywhere else. Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said Holly Ridge will lose too. Councilman Hines said not if we strive to get our own program going. Councilman Hines said if the Town Council directs that we want a ball team started down here, then that is what needs to be done. Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said we did that already.

Derick Sholar said if Surf City canceled then the door is wide open, then right now is the time to run with it.

Mayor Pro-Tem asked who is going to pursue a contract ball team. The staff did this already and we turned that one down. Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said she does not know how long it took you to negotiate and create this and get this relationship started, was it a year.

Councilman Hines asked how much Surf City put in to improve the ballfield. Did they spend a dime to help us on the ballfield? Mr. Strickland said no sir.

Mr. Strickland said they brought the programs, referees, signs, and the teams. They cut everything else such as the uniforms, banners. Mr. Strickland said the only thing we provided was a field. Councilman Hines said and banners with Holly Ridge barely mentioned on them.

Councilwoman Bragg said at the regular meeting as Mayor Pro-Tem Hall was saying, we directed the town to make something happen at the park. Councilwoman Bragg said she was not really calling Councilman Hines out, but you were right in the front of us when we were all in agreement that something needs to happen at the park because we wanted to bring money into the Town.

Councilwoman Bragg said all this is ridiculous because we could have already started working on a ball tournament long before now and we and we would not have to be here having this discussion tonight. Councilwoman Bragg said we would not have to be saying something we are taking back from the taxpayers, when we all agreed that we wanted some things to be going at the park and community center to bring money into the Town. Councilwoman Bragg said we are not saying we are making us do this, but at least we were getting something out of the deal until we put something in place.

Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said she would like to make a motion to accept it as is. Again, even though I don't think pursuing it, we're going to get it because it sounds like Surf City has canceled it. Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said she thinks it warrants going back to Surf City.

A motion was made by *Mayor Pro-Tem Hall* and seconded by *Councilwoman Bragg* to Adopt the Surf City Facilities Use Agreement with the Town of Holly Ridge for Adult Softball.

Voting was as follows:

Councilman Hines – No
Mayor Pro-Tem Hall – Yes
Councilman Sholar – No
Councilwoman Stanley – Yes
Councilwoman Bragg – Yes

Motion Passes

Discussion and Possible Approval of a Proposal with Estimates for Renovations to the Town Hall

Manager Reynolds said this has been an ongoing topic and we received four quotes total. One being the most expensive option that we had discussed which was a complete remodel. After several months we went back to the Town Council, and it was determined to use the space that we had to reallocate some of the employees and add in some controlled access. Manager Reynolds asked the Town Council if this was something they would like to pursue and if so at what level.

Councilman Hines said a month or so ago he asked about the discrepancy between option one for \$25,000.00 from Ten Nails and Custom Craft and the second option Ten Nails was \$125,500.00 and Custom Craft was \$105,000.00.

Manager Reynolds said the reason for the delay in responding to Councilman Hines question was the Community Development Director Nate Rhue was managing the two quotes and he has since left us for another position in another town. Manager Reynolds reassigned this to Public Works Director Mike McFann and the lead building inspector Greg Lawrence. Both parties have compared the quotes against one another and based on what is in the paperwork the difference between Custom Craft and Ten Nails on the smaller renovation is Custom Craft was replacing all the flooring and Ten Nails was going to piece mill the joints back together and attempt to use what we have on site versus going in and replacing all the flooring.

Councilman Hines said we could have gone to Custom Craft and said eliminate that part and it could have been more apples to apples. Manager Reynolds said that is a great question and it is also something that the attorney asked about. Manager Reynolds said she has requested itemized quotes, but she has not received any. Manager Reynolds said she suggested putting out RFP's if the Town Council wants to move forward. Staff can take the RFP's back to the businesses but historically we go to contractors for bids, and they provide the bids, but we do not act on any of the bids which causes bridges to be burnt with the contractors.

Councilman Hines said in the contract it says there are other items not included but no list of other items was provided in the contract, and we do not know how many of the items not included will be needed for the project. Councilman Hines said he believes Ten Nails is undercutting and will then turn around and add stuff to the quote. Councilman Hines said he does not believe there is enough facts, and he believes we need to make sure everything is in comparison.

Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said what is the big outcome of the smaller price one and the big outcome of the higher dollar one. The outcome for the smaller project is more customer friendly with a planning department entry way instead of the glass where you cannot talk through. Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said she agrees with Derick that the larger project does not give us so much more than that and that we cannot wait until we do the big building. Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said we need to hold a workshop and really plan it.

Mayor Pro-Tem Hall asked for a more serious estimate on the smaller project. Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said she thinks we would benefit from the smaller project.

Councilman Hines said he thinks in the future we build onto the Town Hall and have the meeting part expand behind the Town Council Chambers and have offices on either side of the existing hallway into what is now the Town Council Chambers. The smaller project can do just that.

Councilman Hines said we have offices at the community building and if we are so crowded in the Town Hall, why can't we send some of our staff over there to work. Councilman Hines said if you can't trust your staff to do their job, then maybe we don't need that staff.

Manager Reynolds said it is not a trust issue, she knows historically it has not worked in the past when the employees are separated from administration. Councilman Hines said the grant writer needs to be by herself somewhere so she can concentrate on what she is doing.

Mayor Wenzel asked if Councilman Hines is in favor of the larger, smaller project or none as far as giving direction. Councilman Hines said if he had to decided tonight, it would be the smaller project.

Councilwoman Stanley said she knows the employees need their own space to do their work and if need be, be able to have a confidential conversation if they need to. Councilwoman Stanley said she is in favor of the smaller project to begin with.

Councilwoman Bragg said the smaller project is okay, but we need to be looking further out than that because the town is growing and eventually, we will need even more additional staff.

Joshua Patti asked if any of the Town Council has considered working from home remotely. Manager Reynolds said that is an option, but it is up to the Town Council

Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said the grant writer is new and needs to be with everyone for now. Mr. Patti said it sounds like the town is building something extra for a couple of people. Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said the smaller project makes more room for the Planning Department which is the issue.

Discussion and Possible Adoption of a Contract for Street Pavement Project Management by Withers Ravenel.

Manager Reynolds said during the budget sessions the Town Council had discussed taking the ARP funds which were approximately \$970,000.00 and we moved that into the General Fund and budgeted that for street repairs. It was estimated that we would have street repairs roughly in the amount of two million dollars, so we talked about pulling our other funds from the Powell Bill and the money that has accumulated from putting up the pennies from years past where we were about \$465,000.000 shy of having the two million. Manager Reynolds said Mr. Strickland has talked to lenders about bonds or loans for that portion. Manager Reynolds said in speaking with Withers Ravenel, they presented an idea to phase the streets that need to be rejuvenated and if they could have slurry seal placed on them, this could preserve them for another ten years.

Manager Reynolds said they would manage the RFP process; bidding and they would oversee the project to make sure everything is up to standard. Manager Reynolds said Withers and Ravenel suggested splitting up all the things that need to be done in the pavement condition survey.

- Complete rebuilding of the streets, especially the ones that do not have a subbase.
- Streets that need re-paving.
- Streets that could be preserved with a slurry seal.

Withers and Ravenel could split them into three categories and take the two million and get as far as we can with re-building, re-surfacing, and re-construction. If we have any remaining funds from the two million, we could begin the slurry seal. This is where we may have to take some of the additional funds to help with the slurry seal.

Manager Reynolds said Withers and Ravenel would take about a week to do the project street selections which is determining the streets that need to be re-constructed and dividing up the three levels of repair. The pavement repair survey will be around two weeks. This is where they use ground penetrating radar. This is where they take a core sample, which tells them what to use for a sub-base and the asphalt itself. The advertisement of the project takes about four weeks. Withers and Ravenel would run the bid evaluation, manage the contractor selection, execution, council award and the pre-construction conference. Withers and Ravenel would handle the active construction time and close out the project.

Mayor Wenzel asked why he remembers 1.5 million would get us to where we need to be. Manager Reynolds said the two million was when we were talking about adding the Smith Street project into the equation.

Councilman Hines said we really have no idea what this will cost the Town. Councilman Hines said he would like to have representation from Withers and Ravenel at this meeting so he could discuss this project.

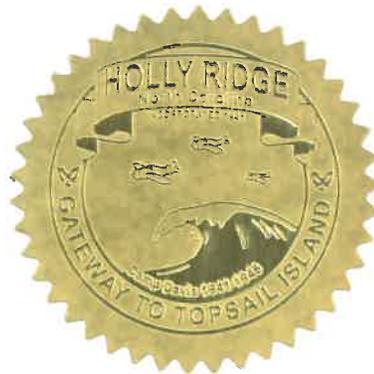
Councilman Hines said there is not a single thing that we have discussed at tonight's meeting that could not have been discussed in a regular meeting. Councilman Hines said if we are going to get in the practice of calling a Special meeting just because someone could not come, he does not think this is a good practice to have.

Manager Reynolds suggested that this item be tabled until a representative from Withers and Ravenel could attend our meeting to answer questions and concerns.

Adjournment

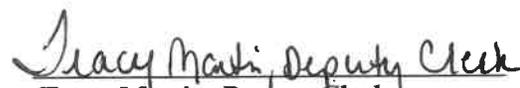
A motion was made by *Councilman Hines* and seconded by *Councilman Sholar* to adjourn at 6:45 p.m. *All Agreed.*

Attest:





Jeff Wenzel, Mayor



Tracy Martin, Deputy Clerk

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