



**LUCAMA BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
MONDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2022  
LUCAMA TOWN HALL  
BOARD ROOM**

**MINUTES**

**1. Call to Order**

Mayor, Jeff Johnson, (hereinafter “Mayor Johnson”) called to order the regular meeting of the Town of Lucama Board of Commissioners (hereinafter “Board”) at 6 pm on October 3, 2022.

**2. Roll Call**

Mayor Johnson conducted roll call – by use of sign-in. The following were present:

Commissioner, Michael Best (hereinafter “Comm. Best”)  
Commissioner, David Johnson (hereinafter “Comm. Johnson”)  
Commissioner, Peggy Lamm (hereinafter “Comm. Lamm”) – via phone conference  
Commissioner, Julia Mason (hereinafter “Comm. Mason”)  
Commissioner, Keely Pate (hereinafter “Comm. Pate”)  
Town Clerk, Dena Owens (hereinafter “Clerk Owens”)  
Town Attorney, Gabe DuSablon (hereinafter “Attorney Dusablon”)

Town Administrator, Darlene Newsome, was unable to attend.

**3. Approval of Minutes from Last Meeting**

Mayor Johnson gave the Board opportunity to review the proposed minutes from the September 12, 2022, meeting and monthly financial report.

*MOTION: Comm. Best made motion to approve the September 12, 2022, meeting minutes and financial report; seconded by Comm. Lamm. Motion passed by unanimous vote.*

**4. Welcoming of Guests and Public Comments**

Mayor Johnson welcomed Kevin O’Donnell with Nova Energy Consultants. He presented to the Board a need of considering a hedging program with other Towns and Kings Mountain Power Plant. The Town would agree with people that gas is brought from, that the interest is to buy gas for a five-month period, November to March, at a set price. Once the price is set in, it would be requested that half of

the natural gas supplied at this price, and the other half will flux with the market. If a hedge is entered and the price of gas falls the Town will lose because gas could have been purchased less expensively. If the price of gas goes above the set price, the Town will win because of being locked in for that portion of the gas that was hedged. Mr. O'Donnell mentioned that hedging is done often. It hasn't been done before with Kings Mountain Power Plant because the prices of gas have been low. The recent current events in other countries have caused gas prices to rise. Although prices of gas are beginning to decline, Mr. O'Donnell is concerned about the winter. If the other entities agree and decide on a good price and plan to hedge, a contact is needed from the Town as a designated person because it will happen quickly and Mr. O'Donnell won't have the time, nor will the Board have time to meet to decide to go into a hedge agreement. He requested that the Board designate one person as a representative that can be contacted and given the details of the hedge – where if the market presents the right opportunity, to be able to act. He cannot act without the representative for the Town to give the details and then the representative speaks for the Town Board to give acceptance or disapproval. Mr. O'Donnell stated that we are not out to win anything or to say, “look at all the money we made on this gas.” He mentioned that it is important to maximize our cost exposure – which is much like life insurance – you hope you never need it, but you may.

Regarding metering, Mr. O'Donnell mentioned that nearly two months ago Town administration had met with Nexgrid – a company recommended by Electric Cities for bringing a new metering system into the Town for both electric and water meters. There is another metering company, Tantalus. A meeting has not been held with Tantalus at the present time. The metering will allow Town employees to sit in the office and remotely read meters. No one will have to go out to read meters. Remote cutoffs and cut-ons can take place. From a safety standpoint, it is a safer program. It will save the Town much time and trouble. There is a learning curve with any type of software. After working in the system for a bit of time, things work out. Admin. Newsome asked Mr. O'Donnell to call references for Towns using the Nexgrid system. References that he spoke with were not favorable to the Nexgrid metering system.

Mr. O'Donnell spoke with Tantalus, who has a good track record with water and sewer meters. He understands that the Town is interested in moving forward with a system. He mentioned that it is was a \$300,000 to \$500,000 investment. It will pay for itself over time. He recommends the Town meet with Tantalus to see what they have available and then decide. Of the two companies, Tantalus comes with good recommendations.

Mr. O'Donnell will set up an appointment for Mayor Johnson and Admin. Newsome to meet with Tantalus. After comparing the two companies, a decision can be made on which company would work better for the Town.

*MOTION: Comm. Pate made motion that Mayor Johnson be the contact person for hedging purposes; seconded by Comm. Mason.*

*Attorney DuSablou questioned Mr. O'Donnell during the motion for clarification purposes, that the Board should vest into the contact person the discretion to either chose to move forward with the hedge or not. Mr. O'Donnell concurred. By being nominated, the motion would also be to give that person the discretion to move forward with the hedge or not, depending on the recommendation.*

*Mayor Johnson asked what the timeframe would be. Mr. O'Donnell mentioned it could be within a couple of weeks. The hedge will have to be in place before November.*

*Above motion passed by unanimous vote.*

John Evans, of 206 West Oak Street, was back to meet about the information gathered regarding Wilbur – the pot belly pig. Mr. Evans met with two separate breeders who agreed that Wilbur is a Vietnamese pot belly pig, which are allowed in the Town limits. He asked if there was anything further needed to let him know. Mayor Johnson asked for a copy of the letter from the breeder. He mentioned that Attorney DuSablou will look further into the matter and the Board would get back with him.

Mayor Johnson presented the pole attachment agreement between the Town and Greenlight. Attorney DuSablou recommended approval. This agreement is for internet services that will be provided in Town by Greenlight soon. The amount will be \$5 per pole. Attorney Dusablou mentioned that his firm represents the City of Wilson, and he was the drafter of the agreement. Because the firm has a dual representation – Lucama and the City of Wilson, a waiver was signed that he could provide representation to the Town and City, and the City signed a waiver as well. Attorney Dusablou drafted what he feels is a fair agreement, and he recommends approval.

Attorney Dusablou mentioned that the pole attachment agreement would allow the City of Wilson to come in and install the infrastructure to provide services in the Town. The technology used to deliver their product is fiber optic.

*MOTION: Comm. Best made motion that the pole attachment agreement between the Town and Greenlight be accepted; seconded by Comm. Mason. Motion passed by unanimous vote.*

Mayor Johnson mentioned that he contacted Moye Fence Company and an updated listing for fencing around the various infrastructures in town was sent.

Pricing had not changed from the first information that was sent. One fence was added to the list. The information was tabled from the previous month's meeting between Moye and Fairfield Fence Company. The areas of fencing include the Water Tower, Stations 1, 2, 4 and 5. Two fences were damaged during the storm that took place in May and the other areas need fencing for security purposes.

After discussion, Mayor Johnson mentioned that the fencing for Station 2 would be done through grant funding. Therefore, it would not be an expense the Town would need to incur.

The areas of fencing include:

Water Tower  
Cabin Branch Lift Station (storm damage)  
Oak St.  
Lucas St.

*MOTION: Comm. Best made motion that the Town hire Moye Fence Company with payment of cost after insurance information is secured for damage; seconded by Comm. Mason. Motion passed by unanimous vote.*

Mayor Johnson brought before the Board an email regarding Electric Cities between Admin. Newsome and Mr. O'Donnell about membership with the company / co-op. Clerk Owens stated that Admin. Newsome mentioned the Town's interest would be an associate membership, which will allow the Town to get help when needed. Public works director, Thom Goff, felt the Town would be best suited to have an associate membership.

Comm. Johnson questioned if the Town would be furnished training by Electric Cities. Clerk Owens mentioned that there would be training available for the Town. Comm. Johnson asked what full membership would consist of. Because Clerk Owens did not have educated information over the matter, she was unable to answer. There is a cost factor involved, but Owens could not give much information between the difference of an associate member versus a full membership. An understanding that Clerk Owens did have was that a full member gets help with storm damage more quickly than an associate. Associate members are last on the list should a storm arise.

After discussion, the Board decided to table any type of decision until more information could be gathered regarding the differences in memberships and cost.

Commissioner Johnson presented the Budget Amendment provided by Jim Overton, the Town's accountant. Clerk Owens mentioned that the amendment was just basic 'housekeeping' for the Town's budget, bringing account items that

may be overbudgeted to be corrected, i.e. East Coast Power and Lighting, the contractor who helped the Town with electric needs.

*Comm. Johnson made motion to approve the Budget Amendment #2; seconded by Comm. Mason. Motion passed by unanimous vote.*

## **5. Departmental Reports**

Comm. Mason reported that the Fire Department responded to nine first responder calls, one automobile accident, and one fire alarm. Other than the storm that came through recently it has been a quiet month.

Comm. Mason did not have any information to share regarding the Electric Department. Clerk Owens mentioned that there had been ordering of Electric items needed. The electric crew has been working to get inventory back where needed. Some items have been received but others will take some time to receive because of the backlog in company's orders, i.e., transformers taking two years to receive.

Comm. Johnson questioned if the water permits were sent to the State in June as was required. Mayor Johnson mentioned that samples were taken to Greenville in the past week. There was some confusion over whether items were sent to the State. Mayor Johnson felt the work had been done, but the company that the Town had been using was behind.

Comm. Pate gave information that the Sheriff's Department reported calls for the month. There were 213 calls for actions reported by the sheriff. There were 172 self-initiated and 41 calls for service. The report did not show a number of tickets that had been written during the month.

Comm. Pate had nothing to report for beautification.

Comm. Best reported that the Park continued to look good and felt the employees were doing a good job keeping it clean. He questioned where the men stood with completing the sidewalk project. Mayor Johnson mentioned that Admin. Newsome had been in contact with the contractor but was unaware of the outcome.

Comm. Best asked what month the Christmas decorations would be hung on Main Street. Comm. Johnson mentioned that the decorations are usually erected after Thanksgiving.

Comm. Best mentioned that two events were planned during the month of October. The Down on Main Street Food Truck Rodeo was rescheduled because of weather. The new date for the event is Friday, October 14<sup>th</sup>. There will be a DJ

and hopefully 10 food trucks to take part in the event. He encouraged the Board to tell all friends and neighbors about the event. He also mentioned the Town sponsored Trunk or Treat event taking place on Friday, October 28<sup>th</sup> from 6 – 8 pm. He is interested in attaining 10 or more vehicles to take part in the event. There are also plans to have a food truck at the event as well. There is nothing scheduled for the month of November, but Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup> will be the Christmas tree lighting event. More information will follow.

Comm. Lamm reported that the door count for the Library in September was 204, reference questions 176, computer usage was 15, there was 323 materials checked out and nine library cards issued. Twelve children were served in person with the “Let’s Celebrate Grandparent’s Day” program. Ten students were served in person for the “Delving into Virtual Reality and STEM” program.

During the month of October 1<sup>st</sup> – November 1<sup>st</sup>, the Library will have a non-perishable food drive. Comm. Lamm mentioned that any can goods that could be brought in would be greatly appreciated. On October 10<sup>th</sup> a Cancer Awareness Program will take place and kits will be distributed to the children; on the 20<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 a.m. a story time will take place; and on October 28<sup>th</sup> at 3:30 pm Howl-O-Ween Fun. Supplies for these events can be picked up early and will be readily available while supplies last.

Comm. Lamm mentioned a concern regarding the paving of the Community Building Parking. She said that Ms. Baysinger scrubbed the floor before leaving on Friday, but that the use of the building over the weekend caused the floors to be dirty. With people walking through the water in the parking, it can’t be helped that the feet track in and make the floor look unkempt. She would like to see eventually a grant attained to help in the paving of the parking area.

Clerk Owens presented the draft Land Use Plan that had been in the works since May. She encouraged the Board to read and study the plan because of the Public Hearing that would take place at the next meeting on November 7<sup>th</sup>. Following the Public Hearing, the Board would then decide to approve or accept the plan.

## **6. Updates**

Mayor Johnson reported that the next Board meeting will take place on Monday, November 7, 2022, at 6 pm.

Admin. Newsome is currently waiting on information from the architects regarding work on the bank building, renovations, etc.

Mayor Johnson brought information to the Board about employees working on call hours. Employees working on call will be paid a flat rate of \$125 a week, Thursday

through the next Wednesday. Once coming in on the weekend, hourly rates are paid in addition to the \$125. If called back, employees will be paid a minimum of two hours, but above that employees will be paid for the number of hours worked.

*MOTION: Comm. Johnson made motion to approve the \$125 for on call time; seconded by Comm. Mason. Motion passed by unanimous vote.*

Comm. Johnson mentioned the need to have a time limit on how long it took the on call employees to arrive in the Town. Mayor Johnson suggested 30 minutes and is interested in checking with the employees to see if that time is sufficient.

Clerk Owens mentioned that Public Works Supervisor, Thom Goff, was in charge and responsible for the department. The crew works from Monday through Thursday, 10 hours per day. It is his understanding that the employee working on call on Friday will not return to the Town for "reconnection" purposes. It is not viewed as an emergency. The on-call employees can only be called in for emergency purposes, i.e., lights off because of storms, leaks, etc. If a customer pays on Friday, whose utilities have been turned off, the reconnection will not take place until the following Monday.

Much discussion was rendered regarding reconnect fees and meter tampering.

## **7. Adjournment**

Mayor Johnson adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:15 pm, October 3, 2022, upon motion of Board.

*MOTION: Motion was made to adjourn by Comm. Lamm; seconded by Comm. Johnson. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

*Respectfully Submitted: Dena Owens, Town Clerk*