



**LUCAMA BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, MAY 6, 2024
LUCAMA TOWN HALL
BOARD ROOM**

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Mayor, Matthew Creech, (hereinafter “Mayor Creech”) called to order the regular meeting of the Town of Lucama Board of Commissioners (hereinafter “Board”) at 6 pm on May 6, 2024.

2. Swearing In

Clerk Owens administered the Oath of Office for the Board of Commissioners to Dennis Ford. Mr. Ford swore in agreement to the oath. Mayor Creech welcomed Commissioner Ford, who took his seat at the Board table.

3. Roll Call

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

Commissioner, Dennis Ford (hereinafter “Comm. Ford”)
Commissioner, Kim Joyner (hereinafter “Comm. Joyner”)
Commissioner, Jody Teague (hereinafter “Comm. Teague”)
Interim Town Administrator, Ralph Clark (hereinafter “Admin. Clark”)
Town Clerk, Dena Owens (hereinafter “Clerk Owens”)
Town Attorney, Gabe DuSablou (hereinafter “Attorney DuSablou”)

4. Approval of Agenda

Mayor Creech asked for a motion to approve the agenda with changes made to move the Swearing in of Comm. Ford after the Call to Order and adding an item of the marquis sign package to New Business. Attorney Dusablou asked to make an addition to the Closed Session portion of the meeting for Legal Advice.

MOTION: Comm. Teague made motion to approve the agenda with changes and additions; seconded by Comm. Joyner. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

5. Approval of Minutes of Last Meetings

Mayor Creech gave the Board an opportunity to review the proposed minutes from the April 1, 2024, regular meeting, the April 9, 2024, special-called meeting, and monthly financial report.

MOTION: Comm. Joyner made motion to approve the April 1 and April 9, 2024, meeting minutes and financial report; seconded by Comm. Teague. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

6. Seth Laughlin – Mid-East Commission

Mayor Creech requested that Mr. Laughlin attend the meeting to share with the Board regarding the updating and codification of the Town's Code or Ordinances.

Mr. Laughlin shared with the Board that Mayor Creech had contacted and met with him regarding the Town's ordinances. He mentioned the series of standalone ordinances that the Town currently has adopted over time. The service that the Mid-East Commission is offering is called a Model Ordinance. The local community's existing ordinances are incorporated in a more modern document that meets the G.S. 160-D. The purpose of the document is to preserve the regulations of the town while combining all ordinances into a singular, all-encompassing document, that is organized efficiently and up to date with the requirements set out by NCGS. This service includes a model ordinance document, updated zoning map, up to five meetings between MEC staff and the town, and updated fee schedule and applicable forms. A template overview will include the Town's Charter (Legal provisions and overview of the Local Government Structure), general ordinances (ordinances governing safety, health, and welfare), and technical ordinances (regulations governing orderly development and construction within the Town). There will be a three-step integration process, including the initial draft, collaborative work, and the final draft. Funding for the template was covered by ARPA funds. The integration process would be paid for by the Town. There will be one flat fee for the integration process. A simple scope of work contract will be required which will include a 2024 calendar year timeline, MEC staff time and travel, updated zoning map, and updated fee schedule and forms. The cost required to be paid by the Town is \$7,500.

There was no action taken by the Board, but the information gathered would be brought up during the budget process for the next fiscal year.

7. **Andrew Pleninger – Urban & Community Forestry Program Head**

Mayor Creech requested that Mr. Pleninger be present at the Board meeting regarding the placement and addition of trees in the town. Mr. Pleninger stated that he was present to share some of the opportunities that the Forest Service has available. He suggested that there be a forest inventory and analysis of the Town's trees. He mentioned inventories and canopy cover assessments. He gave several opportunities available through the program, including financial assistance programs. Mr. Pleninger recommended that the Town have a tree maintenance and planting project and a canopy coverage assessment.

Comm. Teague asked who would provide the maintenance for the trees. Would the Town crews do the maintenance or does the Forestry Service send someone to take care of it? Mr. Pleninger stated that the Town would be responsible for maintenance. Comm. Teague questioned where the trees would be placed whether it be on a citizen's property, the right of way or Town properties? Other than the park, what Town property would be used? If speaking about the right of way, would you be placing trees on the right of way in front of houses? If so, the property owners would have to do maintenance and clean up, raking of leaves, picking up limbs, roots in their yards, etc. She asked Mr. Pleninger if that is what he was stating. She mentioned that even though you are putting it in the Town's right of way, it will still affect someone's property and they may not want a tree planted there. Mr. Pleninger stated that there are benefits and costs involved, and the Board would need to decide on what their wishes were, the Forestry Program would be there to offer possibilities.

8. **Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

9. **Old Business**

There was no old business.

10. **New Items of Business**

- Prayer Policy - Mayor Creech presented the Board with a policy regarding opening prayers for Town Board meetings. He spoke with Liberty Counsel, who specializes in creating policies. He stated that he was not asking for approval at this meeting, but for the Board to review the policy and for permission to have Attorney DuSablou to review it as well. Attorney DuSablou concurred that he would need to review the policy, but reminded

the Board that doing so would cost his hours to do so. He stated this due to the Board's wish at last meeting to not include prayer in the agendas. Comm. Ford suggested that the Board have the opportunity to review the policy for the month before sending it to counsel.

- Sign Package – Clerk Owens presented the Board with the need to have a package for the marquis sign. This package is what allows the office to communicate with the sign – to make changes, etc. Included in the packages are monthly points, which allow the sign company to make special or specific signs to display. Clerk Owens mentioned that she had only used the points once in the year. She stated that she was afraid that if the Board chose to go with the Lite Package – no monthly points or cost – she could lose some of the content that she uses. She continued that she felt the Copper Package, which includes 100 monthly points and costs \$100 per month would suffice for the needs of the Town.

MOTION: Comm. Teague made motion to choose the Copper Package; seconded by Comm. Ford. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

- Budget Change – Clerk Owens shared with the Board that as the Interim Finance Officer permission was given in the FY 23/24 Budget Ordinance to allow the budget officer to transfer amounts between line-item expenditures within the department and that doing so, such transfer shall be reported to the Board at the next regular Board meeting. Admin. Clark and Clerk Owens made a change between account 30-8110-3300 (Departmental Supplies) of +\$50,000 and account 30-8110-4800 (Purchase of Electricity) of -\$50,000. It was stated that the numbers would be reflected on any Budget to Actual dates 5/3/24 and to follow. Admin. Clark stated that some of the items paid for in Departmental Supplies are for large line repairs. He mentioned that next fiscal year's budget would better spell out what the true expenses are due to creating more accounts where the expenses can be better noted.
- Local Water Supply Plan / Water Shortage Plan – Admin. Clark mentioned that NC Rural Water helps the Town in going through many reports and items required by the State that we don't have the ability or staffing to do. During their last visit, they identified two resolutions that the Town needs to adopt for the Local Water Supply Plan and the Water Shortage Response Plan. To be in compliance, Admin. Clark requested that the Board approve the resolutions for the plans.

MOTION: Comm. Joyner made a motion to approve and accept the resolution for both the Local Water Supply Plan and the Water Shortage Plan; seconded by Comm. Teague. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

- Audit Contract – Admin. Clark stated that the contract will cover the FY 22 audit between the Town and Nunn, Brashear, and Uzzell. The cost for the audit fee is \$14,850 and the contracting out of the writing of financial statements is \$4,900 bringing the total to \$19,750.

MOTION: Comm. Ford made a motion to approve the contract with Nunn, Brashear, and Uzzell for auditing the FY 22 at a total cost of \$19,750; seconded by Comm. Teague. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

- Use of Building / Wilson County Sheriff's Department Request – Admin. Clark mentioned that he had sent an email to Chief Samuels regarding what the Town could expect on June 30th as there will be no renewal of the contract for coverage. She replied and the email was included in the packet for Board review. One of the items that was talked about all along was the continual use of the substation in Town. Admin. Clark stated that he had spoken with the Public Safety Committee, Comm. J. Johnson (although not both members as Comm. D. Johnson was dealing with health concerns) and they feel that it would be a positive point is having the presence and the space is available in the building. Admin. Clark requested that the Board concur with the Chief's request to allow usage of the office space.

MOTION: Comm. Teague made motion to allow the Wilson County Sheriff's Department continual use of the Deputy's Substation located in the building; seconded by Comm. Joyner. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

- Approval for Budget Calendar – Admin. Clark presented the Board with a FY 24/25 Budget Calendar for meetings and actions for the adoption of the budget. Statute states that the proposed budget be presented to the Board by June 1st and for public inspection. The budget must be adopted prior to the new fiscal year, which begins on July 1st. The proposed schedule will meet the requirements.

MOTION: Comm. Ford made motion to approve the budget calendar; seconded by Comm. Teague. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

11. Town Administrator's Report

Admin. Clark stated that he had met with the Manager of Stantonsburg and the utility director for Black Creek. They discussed the area of "togetherness" that

needed to be worked on. One of the things that was discussed during the meeting was the notice requirement in the power supply contract, which is where the power is purchased from, that has a date of Dec. 31, 2025. They also discussed whether the group currently contracted is where the three towns need to stay or are there better options. He stated that there would be another meeting between the three managers to talk about having someone help the towns through the process of choosing the best option for power purchasing. One area that was spoken of was the action that Admin. Clark took with UTEC, and once explaining his decision to the others, they fully understood what was being said. It was decided that engineering for the individual systems could be chosen by each Town.

Admin. Clark mentioned that roof of Town Hall, where insurance had paid for damage caused by storms. He is working to get all the pieces together before the end of the fiscal year. He has plans to share his findings at the June 10th meeting.

Admin. Clark stated that he had the proposal for the pole attachment inventory that was authorized at last month's meeting. The agreement is with Osmose. He mentioned that they would begin the process within the next 30 days. Contact has already been made with some of the companies that are attached to the Town's poles.

Admin. Clark made the Board aware that he would not be in the office the following Thursday due to traveling out of town to West Virginia.

12. Closed Session

Mayor Creech requested that the Board go into closed session pursuant to NCGS §143-318.11 regarding personnel matters and legal advice.

MOTION: Comm. Teague made motion to move into closed session; seconded by Comm. Ford. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

13. Re-opening of Open Session

MOTION: Comm. Ford made motion to adjourn the closed session and move back to open session; seconded by Comm. Teague. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

14. Adjournment

Mayor Creech adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:00 pm, May 6, 2024, upon motion of Board.

MOTION: Motion was made to adjourn by Comm. Ford; seconded by Comm. Teague. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

Respectfully Submitted: Dena Owens, Town Clerk