



**Town Council
Special Meeting Minutes
May 7, 2024 – 11:30 a.m.**

Mayor O’Cain called the Special Meeting to order at 11:30 a.m. on May 7, 2024, electronically through Zoom and in person.

The following members attended in person at Town Hall, 441 White Pine Drive, Laurel Park NC 28739:

- Mayor Carey O’Cain
- Mayor Pro Tem Hansen
- Commissioner George W. Banta
- Commissioner Deb Bridges
- Town Manager Alex Carmichael
- Town Clerk Tamara Amin
- Assistant to the Town Manager Cara Reeves
- Police Chief Bobbie Trotter
- Assistant Police Chief Michael Capps
- Public Works Supervisor Brandon Johnson
- Crew Leader Matthew Pearce
- Parks Technician Bryan Hensley

The following were absent:

- Commissioner Kristin Dunn

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Commissioner Bridges moved to approve the agenda. Mayor O’Cain asked for discussion; there was none. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Carmichael introduced Ms. Cara Farrell soon to be Cara Reeves.

BUDGET WORKSHOP

Town Manager Carmichael gave an overview of the draft budget. It included the following:

- \$500,000 (general fund) plus \$120,000 (Powell Bill) for roads
- \$30,000 for the Highway 64 project
- Remaining balance of stormwater funds from ARPA * (estimate) plus stormwater collection fee funds
- COLA of 2.5% (CPI currently at 3.5%)
- Merit up to 3%
- New retirement contribution rates of 13.67%
- No appropriation for the YMCA
- No changes to dependent care coverage
- No new autos
- A \$448,626 fund balance appropriation
- Council:
 - \$9,000 for new historical markers
- Administration:
 - Increased software support
 - \$50,000 for Centennial events
 - \$20,000 for Comp Plan update* (estimate, not based on actual quote)
 - Increased property and liability insurance
- Police and Fire:
 - \$30,000 for dispatch services
 - Increased software support
 - Capital outlay including AED, radios, vests, rifles, and pistols
- Public Works and Sanitation:
 - Invasive vine removal
 - Half of new employee
 - Capital outlay for Caterpillar 420 Backhoe
 - 8.8% increase in sanitation cost*(this is an estimate, we are still trying to negotiate)
- Parks:
 - Half of new employee
 - Capital outlay including backhoe attachment for Kubota, grapppler attachment for Kubota, materials for board walk repairs in RLNP
 - Full Parks and Greenways Board request

The fund balance appropriation is \$448,626. Town Manager Carmichael went through each department's budget and the capital projects like Highway 64, Town Hall, Roads and Powell Bill, American Rescue Plan Act Budget (ARPA) and the Stormwater Budget.

Mayor Pro Tem Hansen suggested adding a speed sign to the Police Budget.

Mayor O'Cain asked Council to consider putting in monies for the sewer under Daniel Drive. Council decided to table that discussion.

Council asked Staff to confirm that landscaping is done three times a year not two for the \$7500 budget in Parks.

Council asked Staff to set up a meeting with Mr. Christopher Todd about landscaping for the Ecusta Trail since it was not mentioned in the M.O.U.

Council hoped to have drawings for Highway 64 to discuss with Senator Moffitt when he attends the park reopening on May 20 in hopes of getting funding.

Town Manager Carmichael said there is no new money added to the Town Hall Budget until Council comes up with a plan. Mayor Pro Tem Hansen said the house to the east that was demolished. It would be great to clear the Town lot on the east side taking out brush, invasive species and other overgrowth. He suggested contacting OKA Landscaping to see how much they would charge to remove vines, etc. and clean up. Town Manager Carmichael said Staff is currently working on getting a Neighborhood Meeting scheduled, then taking it to the Planning Board then Town Council for a public hearing to rezone it.

In regards to the ARPA monies, Town Manager Carmichael said the Town needs to spend it by December 2024. Town Manager Carmichael said the Town can use that money to rent the machine to do the edge of the roads.

In regards to the Stormwater fund monies, the Town can use that to purchase the backhoe.

Mayor O’Cain recessed the meeting at 12:23 p.m. by motion from Commissioner Banta.

Mayor O’Cain called the meeting to order at 12:37 p.m. by motion from Commissioner Banta.

The following members attended in person at Town Hall, 441 White Pine Drive, Laurel Park NC 28739:

- Mayor Carey O’Cain
- Mayor Pro Tem Hansen
- Commissioner George W. Banta
- Commissioner Kristin Dunn
- Commissioner Deb Bridges
- Town Manager Alex Carmichael
- Town Clerk Tamara Amin
- Assistant to the Town Manager Cara Reeves
- Police Chief Bobbie Trotter
- Public Works Supervisor Brandon Johnson
- Parks Technician Bryan Hensley

The following were absent:

- Assistant Police Chief Michael Capps

Council discussed the landscaping plan for the Ecusta Trail and having to pay \$15K annually to maintain it. They also spoke about how the residents of Laurel Park and Hendersonville are going to be double taxed unlike Etowah and Horseshoe. Council suggested meeting with Mr. Todd and leaving the \$15K in budget whether they use it or not.

Council discussed the Daniel Drive sewer situation and decided to set up a meeting with Adam Stuer and the City of Hendersonville to meet with Commissioner Bridges and Mayor Pro Tem Hansen before deciding on putting \$10K towards it.

Commissioner Bridges suggested establishing a fund for the playground equipment to apply for the grant. Suggestions were made to put \$25K for the next two years but Commissioner Bridges believes the full amount needs to be in a fund before May 1, 2025 to apply for the grant. She will check on this requirement.

Council discussed COLA.

Crew Leader Matthew Pearce joined the meeting at 1:09 p.m.

Mayor Pro Tem Hansen asked Staff to get live stakes.

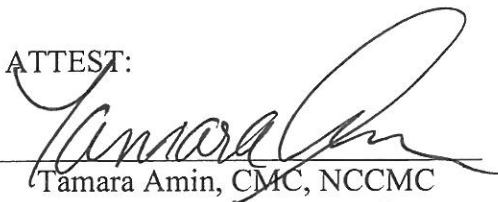
Mayor O’Cain invited the public to the reopening of Laurel Green Park on May 20 at 10:30 a.m.

Mayor Pro Tem Hansen asked Staff to check the fish population in the lake.


ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Commissioner Bridges moved to adjourn at 1:15 p.m. Mayor O’Cain asked for discussion; there was none. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

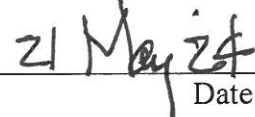
ATTEST:



Tamara Amin, CMC, NCCMC
Town Clerk/Deputy Tax Collector



J. Carey O’Cain, Mayor



Date