



**Town Council  
Work Session Minutes  
July 13, 2023 – 9:30 a.m.**

Mayor O’Cain called the Work Session Council Meeting to order at 9:29 a.m. on June 13, 2023, in person at Town Hall, 441 White Pine Drive, Laurel Park, NC 28739.

The following attended in person at Town Hall:

- Mayor Carey O’Cain
- Mayor Pro Tempore A. Paul Hansen
- Commissioner George W. Banta
- Commissioner Deb Bridges
- Commissioner Kristin Dunn
- Town Manager Alex Carmichael
- Town Clerk Tamara Amin
- Assistant to the Town Manager Jordan Jones
- Finance Officer Kirk Medlin
- Police Chief Bobbie Trotter
- Assistant Police Chief Michael Capps
- Public Works Director Brandon Johnson
- Crew Leader Matthew Pearce

The following were absent:

- Fire Chief Tim Garren

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

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

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Mr. Dhom-** spoke about the tree concern agenda item and his concern for trimming some of the trees and reminding the Town we are bee city and tree city because some of the trees are pollinator trees.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**WEBSITE UPGRADE**

Town Manager Carmichael said at the regularly scheduled June meeting, Summit Marketing and Activate Business Solutions presented their proposals for the website upgrade. Commissioner Dunn spoke about her concern with Summit and continuing to get invoices and added expenses. Commissioner Bridges said she has been working with Activate for over 7 years and has been extremely easy to work with. Mayor Pro Tem Hansen was concerned about security with using word press and prefers Summit because they have been working with them for many years.

Town Manager Carmichael said he has experience with Word Press and not Joomla.

Commissioner Bridges asked Mr. Bonnema, of Echo Mountain Inn what his thoughts were. Mr. Bonnema said Activate' s main presentation was about constant contact, and they are very good at that and which platform Council would choose would definitely be better than what the Town Currently has.

Commissioner Dunn asked Town Clerk Tamara Amin, since she manages the website what her preference was. Ms. Amin said she had no prior experience before coming to Laurel Park and basically just taught herself. Ms. Amin does not know what platform they currently use, and her main concern was VC3's security and how well they would be able to work with the website security.

Council discussed the website proposal presentations by Summit Marketing and Activate Business Solutions. Council discussed (Activate) word press vs. (Summit) JOOMLA, security issues, and additional costs.

Mayor Pro Tem Hansen moved to award a contract for Website Upgrades and to authorize the Town Manager to sign and execute related documents to Summit Marketing. Commissioner Dunn-Aye, Commissioner Banta- Aye, Commissioner Bridges- Nay. The motion passed with the majority of votes.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **OATH OF OFFICE- THOMAS KIRK MEDLIN**

Mayor O'Cain administered the oath of office to Finance Officer, Thomas Kirk Medlin.

### **TREE CONCERN AT JUMP OFF ROCK**

Mayor O'Cain shared a little of history about Jump Off Rock and clearing selective trees to get that 180-degree view plain. The Town does not want to do away with Hickories and Maples.

Town Manager Carmichael said Miranda Newton contacted Town Hall about trimming the trees at Jump Off Rock. She will be having a wedding there on September 30<sup>th</sup> and requests that the overgrowth near the two oak trees to the left of the Rock be trimmed. Council reviewed and discussed the overgrowth trimming at Jump Off Rock. Council does not want to do away with some trees and asked Staff to get proposals to do some selective view plain clearing with the idea of taking out trees that are choking the forest. The Town Manager said a budget amendment will

need to be brought back to Council. Council asked Staff to put this on the Agenda for a later date.

## **COLA/MERIT DISCUSSION**

Mayor O’Cain said at the June Regular Meeting, the Council asked staff to hold off on distribution of COLA and Merit to staff until after the July meeting. Council reviewed and discussed the FY24 COLA and merit.

Commissioner Banta and Commissioner Bridges are leaning more towards Merit increase than COLA. Commissioner Bridges would like it to be focused on longevity but there needs to be some measure and standard to hand out increases. Commissioner Bridges spoke about the Council establishing a personnel board that allows extra input of some standard, so employees have someone on their side. Mayor said that should be on department heads and Council should not undermine them or get into the weeds.

Commissioner Dunn favors COLA and on top of it a percentage merit increase and not is in support for longevity.

Commissioner Bridges spoke about retention issues in Police and Public Works.

Town Manager Carmichael said the police department would like to have a career path based on their performance, rather than longevity pay. This could be investigated and incorporated in next year’s budget.

Mayor Pro Tem Hansen moved to give employees 2% COLA across the board and 7.5% Merit for Police and Public Works, 5% Merit for Administration and 3% Merit for Part-Timers. Mayor O’Cain asked for discussion; there was none. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

## **AGENDA REVIEW FOR THE COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING SCHEDULED FOR JULY 18, 2023**

Mr. Carmichael said the Town Council will hold their regularly scheduled Town Council meeting on the third Tuesday of the month, July 18, 2023, at 9:30am. The Town Council reviewed the draft agenda.

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Pledge of Allegiance**
- 3. Public Comment**
- 4. Approval of the Agenda**
- 5. Consent Agenda**
  - A. June Monthly Report
  - B. Minutes for the May 11, 2023 Closed Session
  - C. Minutes for the June 15, 2023 Work Session
  - D. Minutes for the June 20, 2023 Regular Meeting
  - E. Minutes for the June 20, 2023 Closed Session

- F. Minutes for the June 27, 2023 Special Meeting
- G. Minutes for the June 27, 2023 Closed Session
- H. Tax Collector Charge Resolution
- I. Resolution for Bank Card Signature
- 6. Old Business**
- 7. New Business**
  - A. Roads Update
  - B. Legislative Update
- 8. Town Manager's Report**
- 9. Department Head's Reports**
  - A. Public Works
  - B. Fire Department
  - C. Police
  - D. Administration
- 10. Mayor and Commissioner Comments**
- 11. Adjournment**

Mayor O'Cain asked Staff to make sure Tarheel stays on schedule.

Council discussed the M.O.U. Commissioner Banta said the Town needs to revise the M.O.U. and send to Mr. Todd.

Commissioner Bridges asked about getting Finance Reports since we have appointed a Finance Officer.

Commissioner Dunn said just keep in mind Mr. Todd is working part time because they welcomed a second child.

Mayor Pro Tem Hansen said the sewer pipe is dangerous and we don't want leak into the stream while kids are playing in Laurel Green. Town Manager Alex will make sure to coordinate the effort to make sure it is done.

There is also lots of dirt, Commissioner Hansen suggested using it to create berms or put it in Rhododendron Lake Nature Park or just spread them out where it is.

Town Manager Carmichael said there is a staff meeting today about the sewer pipe with the City of Hendersonville. Mayor Pro Tem Hansen asked that Mr. Gary Jones be there.

Mayor Pro Tem Hansen said Phil Ellis wants to charge \$5k more to complete the engineering drawing. There will also be a survey needed for the easement and would rather that money go there.

Mayor Pro Tem Hansen asked to add Highway 64 improvement plan discussion in August. Council decided to wait and talk with architects and DOT first.

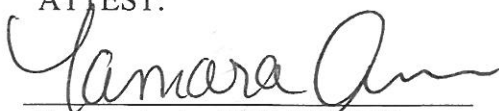
Commissioner Bridges asked about UDO amendments. Staff said that would be on the agenda in August.

Council said Ingles bought the Coats Property.

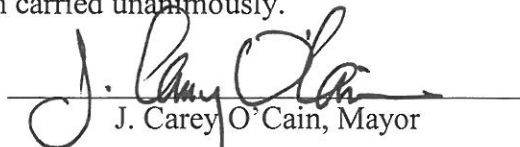
**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Mayor Pro Tem Hansen moved to adjourn at 11:58 a.m. Mayor O’Cain asked for discussion; there was none. The motion carried unanimously.

ATTEST:



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

  
J. Carey O’Cain, Mayor

8/16/23

Date

TOWN OF LAUREL PARK

Council  
W.S.

PUBLIC COMMENT SIGN-UP SHEET

MEETING DATE: 7/13/23

**NOTE: ALL INFORMATION PROVIDED ON THIS FORM IS A PUBLIC RECORD**

WE APPRECIATE OUR CITIZENS AND GUESTS EXPRESSING THEIR VIEWS ON THE FUTURE OF LAUREL PARK.

WE OFFER THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES FOR SPEAKING DURING PUBLIC COMMENT.

- COMMENTS WILL BE **LIMITED TO 3 MINUTES** IN AN EFFORT TO BE FAIR AND OFFER EVERYONE AN OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK.
- ATTENDEES ARE REQUESTED TO DESIGNATE A SPOKESMAN FOR GROUPS SUPPORTING OR OPPOSING THE SAME POSITION. IF THE NUMBER OF PERSONS WISHING TO ATTEND THE COMMENT PERIOD EXCEEDS THE CAPACITY OF THE HALL, GROUPS ARE ASKED TO SELECT DELEGATES FROM GROUPS SUPPORTING OR OPPOSING THE SAME POSITION.
- PLEASE BE RESPECTFUL AND COURTEOUS IN YOUR REMARKS.
- PLEASE REFRAIN FROM PERSONAL ATTACKS AND FROM USING PROFANITY.
- **PLEASE STATE YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS PRIOR TO SPEAKING.**

**PLEASE PRINT THE INFORMATION BELOW**

NAME

Jim Dixon

ADDRESS

4150 LPH

SUBJECT

TRAILS

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STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
COUNTY OF HENDERSON

**OATH OF OFFICE  
FINANCE OFFICER  
TOWN OF LAUREL PARK, NC**

“I, Thomas Kirk Medlin, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and maintain the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution and laws of North Carolina not inconsistent therewith, and that I will faithfully discharge the duties of my office as Finance Officer for the Town of Laurel Park, so help me God.”

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Thomas Kirk Medlin

Sworn to and subscribed before me  
this 13<sup>th</sup> day of July 2023.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor J. Carey O'Cain