

**MOUNT AIRY, NORTH CAROLINA
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
January 7, 2021**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Pro Tempore Ron Niland, Commissioners Jon Cawley, Tom Koch, Marie Wood, and Steve Yokeley

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Commissioner Wood made a motion to approve the agenda, which passed unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA: On motion by Commissioner Koch and approved unanimously, the following items were approved by way of the consent agenda:

- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**
 - **December 17, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes**
- **RESOLUTION 2021-036: RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING TAX RELEASES:**

RESOLUTION NUMBER 2021-036

**A RESOLUTION
Approval of Tax Releases**

WHEREAS, a list of taxes to be released has been submitted by the Revenue Collections Supervisor in her capacity of Tax Collector for the City of Mount Airy Finance Department; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina General Statute 105-373 provides for settlement of such taxes; and

WHEREAS North Carolina General Statute 105-381 provides for release or refund of taxes; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY OF MOUNT AIRY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING IN OPEN SESSION THAT:

Section 1. Said taxes be released or refunded in accordance with said statutes for the reasons stated on the attached list.

Section 2. This Resolution shall become effective upon approval by the Board of Commissioners of the City of Mount Airy.

Adopted this 7th day of January, 2021.

Date: 1.7.2021
To: Board of Commissioner of City of Mount Airy
From: Shannon Phipps, Revenue Collections Supervisor

Re.: Release and Refund of City Property Taxes

| <u>Account</u> | <u>Taxpayer</u> | <u>Value</u> | <u>TAX AMOUNT</u> | | | | <u>Total</u> | <u>Reason</u> |
|----------------------------|------------------|---------------|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------|---------------------|--------------|----------------------------------|
| | | | <u>Real</u> | <u>Advertising</u> | <u>Personal</u> | <u>Late Listing</u> | | |
| 2020 - General Fund | | | | | | | | Postmark date -County removed LL |
| 33813 | Wells Fargo Bank | 37,558 | | | | 18.03 | 18.03 | |
| Total | | <u>37,558</u> | <u>0.00</u> | <u>0.00</u> | <u>0.00</u> | <u>18.03</u> | <u>18.03</u> | |
| Grand Total | | <u>37,558</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0.00</u> | <u>18.03</u> | <u>18.03</u> | |

- **RESOLUTION #2021-037: RESOLUTION MAKING TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY REAPPOINTMENTS:**

RESOLUTION NUMBER 2021-037

RESOLUTION MAKING TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY REAPPOINTMENTS

WHEREAS, Dawn Wallace’s appointment to the TDA will expire on January 15, 2021 and she has expressed interest in being reappointed; and

WHEREAS, Julie Perkins’ appointment to the TDA will expire on January 15, 2021 and she has expressed interest in being reappointed; and

WHEREAS, it is recommended that Dawn Wallace be reappointed to the Tourism Development Authority (Category #2-Individual with Experience in the Promotion of Travel and Tourism) for a three-year term; and

WHEREAS, it is recommended that Julie Perkins be reappointed to the Tourism Development Authority (Category #3-Member of the Mount Airy Chamber of Commerce) for a three-year term; and

WHEREAS, it is recommended that Commissioner Steve Yokeley be reappointed to the Tourism Development Authority (Category #4-Member of the Board of Commissioners) for a one-year term; and

WHEREAS, it is recommended that Pam Stone be reappointed to the Tourism Development Authority (Category #5-City Finance Officer) for a one-year term:

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING IN OPEN SESSION THAT:

- Section 1. Dawn Wallace is hereby reappointed to Category #2 of the Tourism Development Authority for a three-year term expiring January 15, 2024.
- Section 2. Julie Perkins is hereby reappointed to Category #3 of the Tourism Development Authority for a three-year term expiring January 15, 2024.
- Section 3. Commissioner Steve Yokeley is hereby reappointed to Category #4 of the Tourism Development Authority for a one-year term expiring January 15, 2022.
- Section 4. Pam Stone is hereby reappointed to Category #5 of the Tourism Development Authority for a one-year term expiring January 15, 2022.
- Section 5. This resolution shall become effective upon approval.

Approved and adopted this the 7th day of January, 2021.

- **ORDINANCE #2021-017-PROJECT ORDINANCE AMENDMENT #1 FOR ARARAT RIVER RESTORATION GRANT PROJECT:**

ORDINANCE # 2021-017

**PROJECT ORDINANCE AMENDMENT #1
FOR
ARARAT RIVER PHASE VII GRANT PROJECT**

WHEREAS the City of Mount Airy received notice of a funding award from the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, NC Parks and Recreation Trust Fund for the Ararat River Phase VII Grant Project:

BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Commissioners of the City of Mount Airy, North Carolina, that this award is hereby accepted and that, pursuant to Section 13.2 of Chapter 159 of the General Statutes of North Carolina, the following project ordinance is hereby adopted:

Section 1

The project authorized is for the expenditure of funds awarded by the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources projects as follows:

Project Number: 2021-934
Amount: \$350,000 award

Section 2

The officers of this unit are hereby directed to proceed with the project within the terms of the award documents and the budget contained herein.

Section 3

The following amounts are appropriated for the project:

Public works/transportation \$ 350,000

Section 4

The following revenues are anticipated to be available to complete this project:

Grant Proceeds \$ 350,000

Section 5

The Finance Officer is hereby directed to maintain within the Project Fund sufficient specific detailed accounting records to satisfy the requirements of the grantor agency, the grant agreements, and federal regulations.

Section 6

Funds may be advanced from the General Fund for the purpose of making payments as due. Reimbursement requests should be made to the grantor agency in an orderly and timely manner.

Section 7

Copies of this project ordinance shall be furnished to the Clerk to the Governing Board, and to the Budget Officer and the Finance Officer for direction in carrying out this project.

Adopted this 7th day of January, 2021.

(end of consent agenda)

PUBLIC FORUM:

Mayor Pro Tempore Niland declared the public forum open.

Deputy Clerk Carolyn Hegler read comment(s) on behalf of:

Joseph Zalescik, 1541 West Devon Drive: Wrote in support of purchase of a new Class A fire apparatus for Mount Airy this year. Pointed out the lease purchase program run by the Houston Galveston Area Council, and federal funds under the Safer Grant program. Pointed out that a change from our current ISO rating of 3 to an ISO rating of 6 would result in an increase in insurance rates of 8-10 percent. Believes our current truck is well beyond end of life and needs to be replaced. (end of submitted comments)

Amanda Sparks, Surry County resident, member of Concerned Citizens of Surry County: Expressed her concerns with the mask mandate and lockdown. Stated that some places with

restrictions have still seen a rise in cases while other places without restrictions have not seen an increase. Stated that death rates are on the rise in nursing homes and assisted living locations due to failure to thrive/loneliness. She is concerned about the effect this is having on children. She feels that everyone understands the risk of COVID and that people should be given the freedom to choose to live their lives.

Durenda Wilson, 125 West Church Street: Moved here four years ago from Washington State. Members of Concerned Citizens of Surry County. Concerns with lockdowns and executive orders from the Governor. Stated that the virus has a 95-99% recovery rate. Small businesses have had to close. Suicide rates, domestic abuse, and addiction have spiked. Millions of children are not getting the education they deserve. Anxiety and depression are rising in children and teens. Citizens are being criminalized for not wearing masks. Accurate data is not being collected and reported. Mental, emotional, and spiritual health matters as much as health. We need to broaden our concern to include and meet the needs of the community as a whole.

Misty O'Donnell, outside city limits: Member of Concerned Citizens of Surry County, relocated to Mount Airy outside the city limits from Canada. Concerned with effect of lockdowns on children and our local businesses. Believes we have been lied to regarding the use of masks and herd immunity. Elected officials and law enforcement need to allow the businesses the choice to decide whether to enforce any mandate. States that the deaths are greatly overestimated and case numbers are inaccurate. Asked that hearts not be hardened or minds closed to obvious truths due to hyped up fear. We have a constitution that declares our freedoms and asked officials to uphold it and resist political pressures from above for our freedoms.

Ashlene O'Donnell, outside city limits: Noted how she and many other children are not able to see their grandparents due to the lockdown. Asked that children not be forced to wear masks. Stated that the decisions made here will affect her future and that of others later.

With no one else wishing to speak, Mayor Pro Tempore Niland declared the public forum closed.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION #2021-038 ADOPTING A TEMPORARY PERSONNEL POLICY FOR EXTENSION OF EMERGENCY PAID SICK LEAVE FOR CITY EMPLOYEES:

On motion by Commissioner Cawley, and passed unanimously, the following resolution was adopted:

RESOLUTION NUMBER 2021-038

RESOLUTION APPROVING TEMPORARY PERSONNEL POLICY-EXTENSION OF EMERGENCY PAID SICK LEAVE FOR CITY EMPLOYEES

WHEREAS, in April 2020, President Trump signed the Families First Coronavirus Response Act into law; and

WHEREAS, the Act provides employees with up to eighty (80) hours of emergency paid sick leave if they are seeking testing, have tested positive, or have been instructed to quarantine at home following a Covid-19 exposure; and

WHEREAS, these Federal benefits expired December 31, 2020; and

WHEREAS, it is recommended for the City to adopt a temporary Personnel Policy to allow City employees to qualify for continued emergency paid sick leave benefits through March 31, 2021 in which employees would only be eligible for a maximum of eighty (80) hours of emergency paid sick leave; and

WHEREAS, those employees who have already received some benefits under the Act would have the total number of hours available under the City’s policy reduced by the number of hours they have been granted:

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY OF MOUNT AIRY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING IN OPEN SESSION THAT:

- Section 1. The Board of Commissioners does hereby adopt a temporary Personnel Policy to extend emergency paid sick leave benefits for City employees through March 31, 2021.
- Section 2. The Board of Commissioners does hereby authorize the Mayor Pro Tempore to execute any documents relating to said temporary Personnel Policy.
- Section 3. This resolution shall become effective upon approval.

Approved and adopted this the 7th day of January, 2021.

RESOLUTION 2021-039 SUPPORTING STAFF TO MAKE APPLICATION FOR BUILDING REUSE GRANT FOR “PROJECT SEW”:

Todd Tucker, President, Surry County Economic Development Partnership, explained that this project is a local company looking to expand an existing facility that they are already operating in. This would be an investment of \$15 million in upfits of new machinery and equipment, with the hiring of 35 additional employees. Salaries will be over the Surry County average wage of \$37,836. The City would be applying for a building reuse grant and this resolution would allow us to make the application.

On motion by Commissioner Yokeley, and passed unanimously, the following resolution was approved:

RESOLUTION NUMBER 2021-039

RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR STAFF TO MAKE APPLICATION FOR A NCDOC BUILDING REUSE GRANT FOR “PROJECT SEW”

WHEREAS, “Project Sew” is a small business located in Mount Airy and has outgrown their current space; and

WHEREAS, “Project Sew” plans to expand by making repairs to an existing building, adding two additions, and making renovations to accommodate the expansion and new job creation; and

WHEREAS, “Project Sew” has asked the City to apply for a North Carolina Department of Commerce Building Reuse Grant for said expansion; and

WHEREAS, the proposed grant application will request \$210,000 with a 5% local match to pay a portion of the cost of expanding and renovating their existing facility; and

WHEREAS, if the grant is awarded, all of the funds will be used to improve the building and “Project Sew” will expand and create thirty-five (35) additional jobs; and

WHEREAS, the NCDOC now requests that a Resolution of Support for the grant application be included with the grant application documents; and

WHEREAS, should the City be approved for said grant, a public hearing shall be held for public comments regarding the grant funding:

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY OF MOUNT AIRY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING IN OPEN SESSION THAT:

Section 1. The Board of Commissioners does hereby support and authorize staff to make application for a NCDOC Building Reuse Grant for “Project Sew”.

Section 2. This resolution shall become effective upon approval.

Approved and adopted this the 7th day of January, 2021.

RESOLUTION #2021-040 ADOPTING THE NORTHERN PIEDMONT REGIONAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN:

On motion by Commissioner Koch, and passed unanimously, the following resolution was approved:

RESOLUTION NUMBER 2021-040

RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE NORTHERN PIEDMONT REGIONAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

WHEREAS, the City of Mount Airy is vulnerable to an array of natural hazards that can cause loss of life and damages to public and private property; and

WHEREAS, the City of Mount Airy desires to seek ways to mitigate situations that may aggravate such circumstances; and

WHEREAS, the development and implementation of a hazard mitigation plan can result in actions that reduce the long-term risk to life and property from natural hazards; and

WHEREAS, it is the intent of the City of Mount Airy to protect its citizens and property from the effects of natural hazards by preparing and maintaining a local hazard mitigation plan; and

WHEREAS, it is also the intent of the City of Mount Airy to fulfill its obligation under North Carolina General Statutes, Chapter 166A: North Carolina Emergency Management Act and Section 322: Mitigation Planning, of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to remain eligible to receive state and federal assistance in the event of a declared disaster affecting the City of Mount Airy; and

WHEREAS, the City of Mount Airy, in coordination with Caswell, Davie, Forsyth, Rockingham, Stokes, Surry, and Yadkin Counties and the participating municipalities within those Counties has prepared a multi-jurisdictional hazard mitigation plan with input from the appropriate local and state officials;

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Division of Emergency Management and the Federal Emergency Management Agency are reviewing the Northern Piedmont Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan for legislative compliance and will approve the plan pending the completion of local adoption procedures;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY OF MOUNT AIRY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING IN OPEN SESSION THAT:

Section 1. The Board of Commissioners does hereby approve and adopt the Northern Piedmont Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Section 2. The Board of Commissioners does hereby agree to take such other official action as may be reasonably necessary to carry out the proposed actions of the Plan.

Section 3. This resolution shall become effective upon approval.

Approved and adopted this the 7th day of January, 2021.

REMARKS BY OFFICIALS:

Commissioner Yokeley: Thanks to everyone that came to speak in the public forum. We are all trying to work together to keep everyone healthy. We have to follow the guidelines that are issued by the State. Happy New Year to all and thanks to City Manager and other city employees for a successful 2020, especially considering the circumstances that we faced.

Commissioner Cawley: Thanks to those speaking in the public forum. Questioned who would gain by the events at the Capitol building yesterday. Concerned regarding free speech and the words we are allowed to use. We should be able to disagree in public discourse. We cannot be irresponsible during this pandemic. Our only hope is that we can get back to being ‘others centered’. Mount Airy is good at living and let live, and we need to let others choose how they want to live.

Commissioner Koch: Thanks to those to spoke, and thanks to John Pritchard for his letter to the editor. While he did not agree with his most of his conclusions, it is important for citizens to reach out to let us know what they think. We have had many blessings during this horrible time. We added \$466,000 to the fund balance at the end of the last fiscal year; sales tax came in \$187,000 more than projected just for quarter ending September, 2020. We received Covid-relief funds of \$416,000 helped this year also. And though vacancies are unfortunate, for the first six months of this fiscal year we have probably saved more than \$300,000 in personnel costs. Additionally, Bryan Grote, Lizzie Morrison, and city staff have given us a proposal for continuing redevelopment of the Spencer’s Mill project. We need to focus on these blessings. Vaccine is being distributed. We have a bright year coming in 2021.

Commissioner Wood: Echoed the sentiments of those who spoke before her.

Mayor Pro Tem Niland: Also agrees with the comments of the Board. Mount Airy is a safe place to live thanks to Police and Fire, but also a safe place to express your opinion. Nice to see young people involved. Credits the Board with making this a safe venue for others to speak. Updated members on the 4 Vision Committees that have been assembled. These will be public meetings via WebEx, and all board members are welcome to attend any of these meetings.

Barbara Jones: Thank you all for the comments. She has also realized how many positives we had in the year 2020 despite all the issues associated with the pandemic. We have accomplished a lot as a team, and she is very hopeful for 2021.

CLARIFICATION/REBUTTAL BY MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL:

Commissioner Koch noted the \$10,000 that has recently been donated to feed the hungry in our area, and recalled the generosity of those who donated \$6,000 to pay the water bills of those who were going to be disconnected. There are so many examples of people in this community being loving, caring, and supportive, and he thanks all of them for their generosity.

ADJOURN:

On motion by Commissioner Wood and approved unanimously, the meeting was adjourned.

Approved and adopted this the 21st day of January, 2021.

Ronald M. Niland, Mayor Pro Tempore

ATTEST:

Carolyn Hegler, Deputy Clerk