



**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES
November 21, 2022
7:00 PM**

Mayor Little called the meeting to order.

Mayor Little welcomed everyone and asked the assistant town clerk to call the roll. Commissioner Efird, Commissioner Hathcock, Commissioner Huneycutt, Commissioner Smith and Commissioner Watkins were present. Doug Burgess, Town Administrator, and TJ Smith, Chief of Police.

Mayor Little asked everyone to stand and pledge allegiance to the flag.

Devotions were by Commissioner Hathcock. He stated that he knows everyone is excited about what this week is with it being Thanksgiving. He encouraged everyone to enjoy time with their families. He also said thank the good Lord for providing for us this whole year and led us in prayer.

Mayor Little entertained a motion to approve the agenda as printed. Commissioner Huneycutt made a motion to approve the agenda and Commissioner Smith seconded. Voted and carried unanimously.

Mayor Little entertained a motion to approve the minutes of October 17, 2022. Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve the minutes of October 17, 2022 and Commissioner Watkins seconded. Voted and carried unanimously.

Mayor Little entertained a motion to approve the accounts payable in the amount of \$503,621.29. Commissioner Efird made a motion to approve the accounts payable and a second was made by Commissioner Smith. Voted and carried unanimously.

Mayor Little then recognized Mr. Eddie Carrick for the audit report. He thanked the board for allowing him to serve as the auditor for this year. He gave the town an "unqualified or clean opinion" which means that the financial statements did represent the books of the Town of Oakboro. He briefly went over the audit report.

Mayor Little then recognized Sergeant Jason Eschert to discuss the publishing agreement offer he has received. He requested \$750 to cover the cost of the K9 Joker book that will have unlimited pages to come from the money he has raised. This book will be for sale at Amazon, Barnes and Noble, Walmart, etc. The illustrator will kick back 50% of her profit. Sergeant Eschert will also be able to buy books for \$3-\$4 and then be able to sell them at Town Hall for \$10-\$15 to raise money for the K9 program. That would be unlimited books that the town could purchase for 5 years. There was a motion made by Commissioner Huneycutt to allow the \$750 to come out of the \$16,000 raised to continue with this publication. Commissioner Hathcock seconded. Voted and carried unanimously. Mayor Little commented to Lynn Huneycutt about how her children would love K9 Joker. Mrs. Huneycutt replied that Sergeant Eschert and K9 Joker visit quite regularly and the children love it. She commented that it has been great for her kids and that if the board had not approved the \$750 she would have donated the money. Sergeant Eschert told her how much that meant for her to say all of that.

Sergeant Eschert also went on to discuss the K9 Joker Toys for Tots. He had raised around \$6,900 at this point and already surpassed last year. Everyone applauded.

Sergeant Eschert also went on to ask the board to retire K9 Joker from patrol duty and allow him to be a community K9 who will visit the schools and daycares as well as other areas around town. The reason for this was because of some health issues that K9 Joker has experienced over the past few months. Sergeant Eschert has raised over \$16,000 to care for K9 Joker, therefore there has been no cost to the Town of Oakboro. There was a motion made by Commissioner Huneycutt and a second by Commissioner Smith to allow K9 Joker to retire from patrol and become a community K9. Voted and carried unanimously. Commissioner Watkins asked if they planned to replace the dog in patrol. Chief Smith shook his head no and Sergeant Eschert stated that K9 Bane was sufficient for what the Town of Oakboro needed as a patrol K9.

Open Forum

No one signed up to speak for open forum. Mrs. Lynn Huneycutt asked Mayor Little if she could speak although she walked in late and was unable to sign up. She stated she just had one issue. Mayor Little allowed Mrs. Huneycutt to speak. She commented that there isn't a lot of light where people cross the street at Los Jacobes and there needs to be some more lighting there to avoid anyone getting hurt.

Department Updates

Budget and Finance – Commissioner Smith referred to Town Administrator Doug Burgess for an update. Mr. Burgess stated at this time, general fund is at 62% revenue and 43% expenditures, water fund is at 24% revenue and 20% expenditures, and sewer fund is at 39% revenue and 26% expenditures. Mr. Burgess stated that the contract ended with Waste Management on June 30, 2022. We did get some different quotes and Waste Management is cheaper. He went on to ask the board to renew the contract with Waste Management. Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve the contract with Waste Management and Commissioner Watkins seconded. Voted and carried unanimously.

Cemetery and Streets – Commissioner Hathcock stated he had a request from a citizen requesting an additional stop sign be placed at Dorsett and E. Third Street. There is a sight distance problem and this would slow down traffic. Commissioner Hathcock made a motion to make this intersection a 4-way stop. Commissioner Efirm seconded. Voted and carried unanimously.

Police Department – Commissioner Huneycutt referred to Chief TJ Smith. During the past month, there were 684 field contacts all together, 3 case supplements, 7 arrests, 109 citations and 134 incident reports were done. Currently, there is one in the hiring process and Chief Smith is looking to interview another one this week. He then referred to the information at their seats. This is about digital signs for speed. They also give reports regarding the peak times. Again, this is information for the future. Mayor Little stated that the commissioners would need to take home the information and look it over. Mayor Little also thanked Chief Smith and Captain Richards for being at the park for the Larry Branch Drive presentation and reception.

Parks and Recreation – Commissioner Watkins stated he did not have anything as Mr. Josh Almond was not present. Mayor Little asked Mr. Burgess if Mr. Almond gave him anything and Mr. Burgess stated that Mr. Almond would update and finalize things at the December meeting.

Mayor Little went on to announce that the Stanly News and Press awarded Oakboro District Park as the best park. Everyone applauded.

Water and Sewer – Commissioner Efird stated that Mr. Reggie Bowers could not be present tonight because he was with his father who is in the hospital. Mr. Bowers will catch the board up next month.

Advisory Board/Code Enforcement –

Commissioner Efird stated he has two resolutions to bring before the board and he wanted to read them to make sure everyone understood. The first resolution is asking the town to promote a 4-way stop at the Big Lick and N. Main Street/Highway 205 intersection. This would be a temporary solution until the round about would come along in a couple of years. All of this is taking place because of the increased number of wrecks at this intersection. Commissioner Efird read the resolution to the board. A motion was made by Commissioner Huneycutt to adopt this resolution. It was seconded by Commissioner Efird. Voted and carried unanimously.

The second resolution is regarding the property across from Roy Helms Shop which used to be where they had the tractor pulls/lawnmower pulls years ago. The owners of that property have asked for the lane to be closed. It was part of a 1913 original survey of the town. They are asking the town to close this lane. Commissioner Efird told the board if they would approve this resolution, it would allow him to start the process of closing the lane. A motion was made to adopt a resolution to allow Commissioner Efird to move forward with the process of closing the requested alleyway/lane by Commissioner Hathcock and a second by Commissioner Smith. Voted and carried unanimously.

Proclamation

Mayor Little read a proclamation from the Register of Deeds. Tuesday, December 6, 2022 will be recognized as “Thank You for Your Service Day” for all veterans. A reception will be held on that day at the Stanly County Commons. Veterans will be issued a photo ID card to allow them to receive incentives from local businesses.

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Watkins stated that these last four years have been a learning experience with what goes on in the town. He hopes the new board will have an open mind about what goes on in the town.

Commissioner Smith thanked Commissioner Watkins for his years of service. He told him he appreciated his years of service and that he was going to miss him. Commissioner Smith also thanked Mr. Burgess for another outstanding job managing our budget and finances. He stated he doesn't think that everyone realizes how valuable Mr. Burgess is and how important his role is to our town. He compared him to a good umpire – you don't know he's out there but make a mistake and the town pays. He went on to thank Sergeant Eschert and man's best friend who is probably the best judge of human character out there for all that they do and for the good will that is done through them. He also thanked Sergeant Eschert for taking care of your friend there. He stated that he appreciates Sergeant Eschert. He also thanked Mrs. Lynn Huneycutt for saying something about the road and it being dark....see something, say something, he stated. He also thanked her for what her and David had meant to the Town of Oakboro all of these years. Finally, he wanted to recognize Mr. Almond for the great park that we have. He stated that it wasn't a hidden gem but instead a shining star. It's the most natural park we've got and we are proud of it. Another thing we can be proud of for our Town. It's good to know that people are paying attention to our park.

Commissioner Huneycutt stated a lot of great things going on in Oakboro. He also stated that our park being recognized was one of them. That also includes the police department who raised over \$12,000 for the Toys for Tots. Commissioner Huneycutt appreciates all of those efforts. He also appreciates all of the other employees and is praying for Mr. Reggie Bowers dad. He wishes everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and for everyone to be safe.

Commissioner Hathcock wanted to piggyback on what everyone else has said. He thanked everyone for coming and asked them to come back. He also thanked Chief Smith for standing on top of the building while being sick. This was the fifth year this has been done and he appreciated everyone for raising money for this good cause. He also wishes everyone a happy Thanksgiving and do not eat too much.

Commissioner Efird wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and hopes that everyone gets to spend it with family and friends.

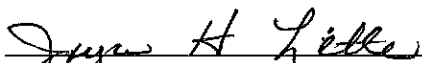
Mayor Little wished everyone a very blessed Thanksgiving.

Commissioner Huneycutt made the motion to go into closed session. Commissioner Hathcock seconded. Voted and carried unanimously.

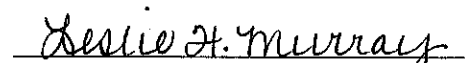
During the closed session, Mr. Burgess suggested a one-time pay increase of \$300 for full-time employees and \$100 for part time employees. Commissioner Efird recused himself from the vote. Commissioner Hathcock made a motion for the employees to receive said one-time pay increases. Commissioner Watkins seconded. Voted and carried unanimously by the four commissioners who voted.

Mr. Burgess shared with the board that Mr. Tommy Kost had resigned but will stay on as a contract employee so we can have an ORC which is needed to run our water/sewer systems. Commissioner Smith made a motion to accept Tommy's resignation and go with Mr. Burgess' suggestion to keep Mr. Kost on a contractual basis. Commissioner Hathcock seconded. Voted and carried unanimously.

Commissioner Huneycutt made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Smith seconded. Voted and carried unanimously.



Joyce H. Little, Mayor



Leslie H. Murray, Assistant Town Clerk