

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF GASTON
TOWN OF CRAMERTON**

June 7, 2018

The Board of Commissioners for the Town of Cramerton met in regular session on Thursday, June 7, 2018 at 7:00 p.m., in the G.M. Michael Commission Chamber at the Cramerton Town Hall.

Board Members present: Mayor Will Cauthen; Mayor Pro Tem Demetrios Koutsoupias
Commissioners Dixie Abernathy, Houston Helms, Susan Neeley, and Donald Rice were present.

Staff Present: David Pugh, Town Manager; Attorney Karen Wolter; Neill Jones, Police Captain;
Joel Lineberger, Finance Director; Lance Foulk, Fire Chief, Eric Smallwood, Parks and Recreation
Director, and Wilene Cunningham, Town Clerk.

Call to Order and Determination of Quorum: Mayor Cauthen called the 7:00 p.m. meeting to
order and determined there was a quorum.

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance: Commissioner Neeley gave the invocation and the pledge
of allegiance was given by all.

Adoption of Agenda for this meeting: The Town Manager asked that the agenda be amended to
add discussion and possible approval of the Southside Constructors contract for the Veterans
Memorial and Bike Repair Station project. Attorney Wolter stated a motion will be needed
authorizing the Town Manager to approve three documents related to the VCM project. Mr.
Lineberger asked that the contract from Collis and Associates for audit services be added for
discussion. A motion was made by Commissioner Neeley to approve the amended agenda with
the proposed changes. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupias and approved
by all.

Public Comment: No one signed up to speak.

**Recognition: A proclamation recognizing Cramerton Middle School Athletics for seasons of
excellence in team and individual sports and events.** Mayor Cauthen read the proclamation
recognizing the Cramerton Middle School athletic teams. Signed copies of the proclamation were
presented to the teams and the Board recognized the coaches and athletes. A signed copy of the
proclamation will be placed in the minute book for recordkeeping.

AGENDA ITEMS REQUIRING A PUBLIC HEARING:

- **A public hearing for the Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Cramerton Town Budget.**
 - **Open Public Hearing:** A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupias to open the
public hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Neeley and approved by all.
 - **Staff Comments/Board of Commissioners Questions and Answers:** The Town
Manager stated the proposed Fiscal Year 2018-2019 budget has been presented in
accordance with the timeline per state statute. The budget message indicates no change to
the current tax rate of 0.475 cents. The proposed budget is \$4.6 million. The Finance
Director stated that any proposed changes or amendments made to the budget ordinance
amendment can be reflected prior to distribution of the budget. Discussion was held
regarding the status of the Cramer Mountain Sidewalk Project. The Town Manager stated
no meeting has been held with the affected property owners and no engineering drawings
have been completed. Mayor Cauthen asked if the monies from the Cramer Mountain
Sidewalk Project could be allocated to the Lakewood Pedestrian Bridge.

Discussion was held regarding capital projects. The Town Manager stated the funding for
the Cramer Mountain Sidewalk Project could be identified as being discontinued. This
will not affect the proposed budget or the Fund Balance. Commissioner Helms asked if
the discontinuation of the Cramer Mountain Sidewalk Project would possibly increase the
chances of the paving of Cramer Mountain Road being expedited and the Town Manager

said yes. The Board asked if a bike lane stripe could be requested from NCDOT. The Town Manager stated he would make that inquiry.

Commissioner Helms stated he was not a proponent of the tag and tax fee. The Board discussed that the property revaluation is also scheduled for next year. Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas asked about the stormwater fee increased based on ERU's. He voiced his concern about the tax burden with the recent school bond and the upcoming property revaluation for the county. Commissioner Rice stated he also was not a proponent of the proposed tax and tag fee as a property revaluation is occurring soon which will increase property taxes. Commissioners Abernathy and Neeley stated they were not proponents of the tag and tax fee. Mayor Cauthen said originally the discussion regarding utilization of this tag and tax fee would be to reduce the Park Sterling bank loan from a seven-year term and apply monies towards paving. Commissioner Helms stated he was agreeable to using monies out of General Fund for paving. The Board stated they would consider in the future possible early payoff of the bank loan.

Attorney Wolter stated the playground pillars had a one-year warranty. Mr. Smallwood stated gray locust has been discussed as the replacement wood. It is resistant to rot and insects and is used on farms as fence posts. Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas stated discussion was held at the recent Parks and Recreation Advisory Board meeting to place the playground pillars on a concrete slab, no mulch near poles, and remedy the moisture entering from the top of the pillar with a sealant. Attorney Wolter stated the vendor would provide a yearly inspection for \$650.00.

Discussion was held regarding a possible increase of department head salaries. The Board agreed to a salary increase for the Public Works Director. Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas, Commissioner Abernathy, and Commissioner Helms recommended no other salary increases for department heads at this time except for the Public Works Director.

Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas asked about the repairs to the Town Hall structure. The Finance Director stated an additional \$188,000.00 is budgeted to offer an opportunity to repair the outside of the building including replacement of windows along with moisture abatement. This amount was based on the engineering study.

Commissioner Abernathy asked about the funding for the bike repair station and water fountain installation. She thought the amount seemed high as she remembered gifts from citizens towards this project. The Town Manager stated the full expenditure for this project has to be shown and no grant funds or the \$7,500.00 received from Travel and Tourism is shown. Commissioner Abernathy asked how much is coming from Fund Balance. The Town Manager said the full amount is \$42,000.00 and net cost to the Town would be about \$35,000.00. Additional monies are expected from a grant from Caromont Health. Construction mobilization costs for this project is being shared with the Veterans Memorial and the water fountain at the Goat Island bathroom area.

Commissioner Rice asked about a future fleet list for all Town owned vehicles. He stated the ladder truck is a 1987 model. Commissioner Abernathy asked if this is built in the budget. The Town Manager stated no. She recommended that this procedure be implemented into future budgets for allocation of funds for fleet vehicles. The Town Manager stated the police department already has this built into their budget. The Town Manager advised the Board that this information would be presented at the first meeting in August for their review and discussion.

Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas asked about the increase of cost for janitorial supplies for Parks and Recreation. Mr. Smallwood stated there has been an increase of traffic along with additional maintenance downstairs in the gym room with the use of fans, sanitizing wipes, and dehumidifiers. Due to increased usage of the treadmills in the cardio room, three new treadmills are being requested.

The Board discussed implementation of a contract for code enforcement. Captain Jones stated that the police department would still be involved for some code issues and minimum housing. Commissioner Neeley asked if the Town of McAdenville is part of the contract. Mayor Cauthen stated this item would be addressed at the time of the contract renewal.

Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas asked about the request for an intern. The Town Manager stated it has been several years since the Town utilized an intern. Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas, Commissioner Abernathy, and Commissioner Helms stated they were not in favor of using a summer intern.

Public Comments: No one signed up to speak.

Close Public Hearing: A motion was made by Commissioner Rice to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Neeley and approved by all.

Consider Adoption of FY 2018-2019 Cramerton Town Budget. The Board consented to the approval of the \$20,000.00 for the replacement of the playground pillars; contractual code enforcement officer for \$25,000.00; purchase of a vehicle for the fire department; and \$8,500.00 pay increase for the Public Works Director. The tag and tax fee will not be implemented. A discussion regarding possibly hiring an intern will be presented at a later time. A motion was made by Commissioner Abernathy to amend the proposed budget with approval of the \$20,000.00 for the replacement of the playground pillars; contractual code enforcement officer for \$25,000.00; purchase of a vehicle for the fire department; removal of the tag and tax fee from the proposed budget for \$63,000.00 and this will be removed from debt service, remove the \$4,000.00 line item for an intern, and adjust the proposed department head pay increases from \$17,250.00 to \$8,500.00. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Helms. The motion passed with a vote of 3 to 2. Commissioner Neeley and Commissioner Rice voted nay.

Mayor Cauthen called for a five-minute recess. The Finance Director will prepare the budget ordinance with the proposed budget changes and provide it to the Board later in the meeting.

Approval of Budget Ordinance: A motion was made by Commissioner Helms to approve the proposed budget ordinance. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Abernathy and approved by all. A copy of the signed budget ordinance will be placed in the minute book.

AGENDA ITEMS NOT REQUIRING A PUBLIC HEARING:

BOC Meeting Minutes

- **Consider Approval of the April 19, 2018 meeting minutes.** A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas to approve the April 19, 2018 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Neeley and approved by all.

Planning and Zoning

- **Rezoning from May 29, 2018 Special Meeting. Consider ratifying the “approval” action taken at the May 29, 2018 BOC meeting regarding Gaston County parcel number 202233 consisting of approximately 2.27 acres located at North Main Street Extension and Seventh Street Extension.** A motion was made by Commissioner Neeley to ratify the approval action taken at the May 29, 2018 BOC meeting regarding Gaston County parcel number 202233 consisting of approximately 2.27 acres located at North Main Street Extension and Seventh Street Extension. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Helms and approved by all.
- **Code Enforcement: Discuss part time Code Enforcement Officer proposals and consider approval and/or further staff direction (continued discussion from May 29 BOC meeting).** The Town Manager stated information bid proposals have been received from N-Focus and Benchmark Planning for the Board to consider. Commissioner Abernathy asked who this person would provide their findings to. The Town Manager stated this person would work with the new Planning and Zoning Director. Attorney Wolter stated the Board would need to review contracts prior to authorizing execution by the Town Manager.

Public Works

Landscaping Maintenance Contractor. Discuss landscaping bids and consider approving a landscaping service contract. A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas to approve a three-year landscaping contract with Choice Landscape. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rice and approved by all.

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Veterans Memorial Update. Commissioner Helms advised that fundraising has went very well and a team has been formed to begin the process for the dedication event. Mayor Cauthen stated information needs to be sent immediately to the sculptor.

Southside Constructors: The Town Manager presented the contract to the Board for review. Mayor Cauthen asked about the “in kind” donation that has been offered by Southside Constructors. Attorney Wolter stated this is acceptable as long as Southside Constructors was the lowest bidder prior to any “in kind” offer. The Town Manager stated Southside Constructors was the lowest bidder without any “in kind” offer. Commissioner Abernathy asked about the water fountains. The Town Manager stated a drinking fountain is going to be placed at the Goat Island bathroom along with the donated drinking fountain at the bike repair station. A motion was made by Commissioner Neeley to approve the Southside Constructors contract and authorize the Town Manager and attorney to finalize the document. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Abernathy and approved by all.

Consider Approval of VCM closing documents on firing range property. Attorney Wolter said the original closing date was May 31, 2018 and now is scheduled for tomorrow and several documents would require signatures if this action is approved by the Board. A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas to approve the lease agreement with the lease back of the firing range for use by the police department, the consent agreement with the developer’s bank regarding the acceptance of the infrastructure agreement, and the consent agreement to extend the closing date until tomorrow. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Abernathy and approved by all.

Consider Approval of the audit contract from Collis and Associates: Mr. Lineberger presented information to the Board. A motion was made by Commissioner Neeley to approve the audit contract from Collis and Associates for \$14,930.00 with an additional fee of \$2,600.00 for Single Audit Procedures to comply with State and Federal Grant funding if that would be necessary. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rice and approved by all.

Manager’s Report: Duke Energy will be holding an open house on Tuesday, June 12th, at the Technology Center located at 1900 North Main Street in Mount Holly.

GENERAL STAFF REPORTS:

Update from Two Rivers Utilities: Mike Bynum stated he did not have anything to report to the Board.

Town Attorney: Nothing to report.

Town Clerk: She stated that the Town Manager, Commissioner Neeley, Eric Smallwood, and herself attended the recent Cramerton Middle School Arbor Day School artwork awards event. Information was presented to the Board regarding a ribbon cutting for a new business in the South Fork Village.

Police Department: Captain Jones had nothing to report.

Fire Department: Chief Foulk had nothing to report.

Planning: The Town Manager stated Josh Watkins has been hired as the new Planning and Zoning Director.

Finance: Mr. Lineberger stated notice was received of an upcoming audit Civil Rights and Discrimination audit process as the Town has three USDA loans.

Parks and Recreation: The Town Manager stated there was no update from that department.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board: Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas stated the Farmers Market has been cancelled for this year. The next Parks and Recreation Advisory Board meeting will be held the first Monday of August. The Independence Day Celebration is scheduled for Saturday, June 29th. Beginning next Wednesday food trucks will be at the pool area. The Great American Splash party will be held on the Fourth of July at the pool.

Community Committee: Commissioner Neeley said she spoke with Ms. Booker about anyone in the Baltimore neighborhood that may need assistance. She said she would advise the Community Committee once this information is received from Ms. Booker.

Cramerton Merchants Association: Mayor Cauthen stated he did not have anything to report.

CCOG: Mayor Cauthen had nothing to report.

Topics of Discussion for Each Commissioner:

Commissioner Helms stated he had nothing to report.

Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas stated an article was in the Gaston Gazette newspaper regarding future plans for the Gaston County Charlotte Airport Connected Strategy Economic positioning regarding mass transit with a station to be located on Market Street. He asked for an update on the Market Street intersection improvements and the Small Area Plan. The Town Manager stated information has been submitted regarding our choice for an engineer and scoring sheets have been presented to NCDOT. Prior to Mr. Pettine leaving he worked with the front staff to gather information for businesses in the Market Street area preparing for meetings with future stakeholders regarding the Small Area Plan. Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas asked about the lower economic areas that was discussed with the Town of McAdenville. Mayor Cauthen stated this would create a reduction in federal tax burden. Information is being gathered with the Town of McAdenville to see what opportunities are available.

Commissioner Abernathy asked about the food truck on Goat Island. The Town Manager said this truck has been removed. She thanked the Police Department for the installation of the speed sign in Lakewood. She said she has heard a lot of positive comments from the residents. She stated she will not be available at the August 2nd meeting and requested to receive information via connection via telephone to the meeting. Attorney Wolter stated a draft policy is being prepared for the Board's approval.

Commissioner Rice had nothing to report.

Commissioner Neeley stated she attended the annual Memorial Day Celebration at Gaston Memorial Park and NC Representative Kelly Hastings was the speaker. She attended the Gaston County Charlotte Airport Connected Strategy meeting that was held at Belmont Abbey College. She stated that Randi Gates was the speaker at the Business Buzz meeting and provided information including the planned widening of Interstate 85 and the replacement of the Wilkinson Boulevard Bridge over the Catawba River. She said she was in attendance at the awards ceremony at the Cramerton Middle School. She thanked Parks and Recreation staff for the success of the National Trails Day event.

Mayor Cauthen said most of the people attending the National Trails Day event were not local residents and they were very positive about the cleanliness and friendliness of the Town. He said Fonda Bryant with NAMI contacted him regarding bringing back some mental health illnesses programs and services back to Gaston County. Commissioner Neeley said she would be willing to help.

Adjournment: A motion was made by Commissioner Rice to adjourn at 10:12 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Abernathy and passed by unanimous vote.

Mayor Will Cauthen

ATTEST:

Wilene Cunningham, Town Clerk