

**TOWN OF BETHANIA COMMISSIONERS MEETING
MINUTES
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2020**

On February 20, 2020, the Board of Commissioners meeting for the Town of Bethania was called to order at 7:00 P.M. by Mayor Brent S. Rockett. In attendance at the Alpha Chapel, 5385 Ham Horton Lane, were Mayor Brent S. Rockett, Mayor Pro Tem Michelle Leonard and Commissioners Tom Beroth, Randy Rogers and John Rogers.

Mayor Rockett gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA: Mayor Rockett asked for a motion to adopt the Agenda of the February 20th meeting. Commissioner Beroth made a motion to adopt the Agenda. Motion passed unanimously (Attachment A).

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Mayor Rockett updated the Board on the 2020 Census, noting the census banner has been put up on the VC fence, and adding that it is important to encourage participation and get an accurate count.

Commissioner John Rogers updated the Board on arrangements for his father's (former Bethania Commissioner and Finance Officer Jerry Rogers) memorial service. It will be held on Friday, February 28 at 2:00 PM at the Bethania Moravian Church, with a gathering in the Fellowship Hall to follow. He further thanked everyone for their kind words about his father.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Mayor Rockett asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the January 9, 2020 Board Meeting. Commissioner Leonard made a motion to approve the minutes. Motion passed unanimously. The Board signed the minutes.

FINANCIAL REPORTS: Commissioner Beroth presented the financial reports as of January 31, 2020 (Attachment B), noting fund and bank balances. We are on track with income and expenditures. He added that a checking account for the Town has been opened at First Citizens Bank, and we will transition all our transactions to them from Wells Fargo over the next few months.

RESOLUTION ¼ CENT SALES TAX FOR TEACHER PAY: Mayor Rockett recognized former WS/FCS superintendent Don Martin. Dr. Martin talked about the current teacher salary schedule and that Forsyth County has one of the lowest rates of compensation and is below the state average with regard to teacher supplement. The ¼ cent tax will roll back 1 cent of sales tax and allow Forsyth County to post above the state average on teacher compensation (an average of \$2,500, based on degree and experience). This proposed ¼ cent sales tax is on the March 3, 2020 ballot.

Discussion followed with regard to possible sales tax decrease (due to an unforeseen recession) and referendum scenarios. Commissioner Randy Rogers added that although he is in favor of the resolution, he feels salary is not the only issue. Bureaucratic red tape as well as working conditions may be contributing to teachers leaving the FC school system.

Ms. Stephanie with the NC Association of Educators spoke about the issue of student debt for new graduates. They are more likely to want a higher paying teaching job in an effort to pay down their student loans, which means they are not considering Forsyth County. She feels the increase in salary would be an incentive to attract good recruits.

Mayor Rockett thanked Dr. Martin and Ms. Stephanie for their comments. Commissioner Randy Rogers made a motion to adopt the *Resolution Supporting 1/4 Cent Sales Tax for Teacher Pay* as written (Attachment C). Motion passed unanimously.

VISITOR CENTER UPDATE: Town Clerk, Karen Keller, briefed the Commissioners on upcoming events as well as Preservation Month events. She asked for feedback on music for the Black Walnut Festival, as Michele Williams was contacted directly by Jack Steelman, with the band Raincheck, about playing this year. She currently has a verbal agreement with Bill Heath to provide music and she will follow up with him. To date, about 40% of the vendor spaces are reserved.

WASTE COLLECTION CONTRACT 2020-2025: Mayor Rockett stated that our current contract is up for renewal this year. Attorney Fus has looked at the contract and the recommended changes have been incorporated. Commissioner Beroth is in agreement with the changes and Commissioner John Rogers has gotten positive feedback from residents about the service provided by Foothill Waste Solutions. Commissioner Beroth made a motion to approve the contract. Motion passed unanimously.

PTRC UPDATE: Commissioner Randy Rogers attended his first meeting, which was the annual PTRC (Piedmont Triad Regional Council) award ceremony. The second meeting was canceled. He distributed a handout to the Commissioners detailing the benefits of membership.

LITTER CLEANUP: Commissioner Randy Rogers contacted Forsyth County Department of Highways expressing an interest in more frequent litter pickups in Bethania. They suggested either a “Litter Sweep” event or “Adopt-A-Highway”, which would entail training videos for the volunteers, and a commitment to clean the highway once a quarter. With either option, trash bags will be supplied and picked up. Discussion followed. Commissioner Leonard suggested enlisting the help of the boy scouts and getting a sign made “*Trash Pickup this Saturday at 9:00 AM*” that can be posted outside the Visitor Center prior to an event. Mayor Rockett suggested we get a waiver for volunteers. Commissioner Leonard proposed Saturday, April 4, 2020 at 9:00 AM, the week before Easter, as a Litter Clean Up day. Commissioner Randy Rogers will get trash bags and provide coffee and donuts for the volunteers.

TRANSPORTATION UPDATE: Mayor Rockett gave an update on the Northern Beltway interchange meeting that was held on January 30 (Commissioners John Rogers, Randy Rogers and Tom Beroth were also in attendance at this meeting.) The DOT expects ROW (right of way) acquisition by January of 2021 and a let date for construction sometime in October of 2022. Mayor Rockett obtained a copy of the proposed interchange map; he will leave it in the Town Office.

Mayor Rockett added that he will be attending the March 12, 2020 DOT meeting with NC State Parks regarding the MST along with Mike Leonard; the MST will eventually require access over the Northern Beltway. Commissioner Randy Rogers added that at some point, he will request a representative from the DOT to attend a Bethania Board of Commissioners meeting to make a presentation about the interchange.

CONTRACT TO AUDIT ACCOUNTS FYE 6/30/20: Mayor Rockett received the Audit Contract and Engagement Letter from Gibson and Company. He spoke with Attorney Fus about requirements to bid the contract; Attorney Fus said that if we are satisfied with Gibson and Company, there is no need to bid the contract. Commissioner John Rogers made a motion to approve the Contract to Audit Accounts for FYE 6/30/20 with Gibson and Company. Motion passed unanimously.

ADMINISTRATIVE: Town Clerk, Karen Keller, presented the January Traffic Report. A total of 11 tickets were written, with 10 of those being speeding tickets. The average MPH over was 19.20. There were also numerous security and neighborhood patrols.

She informed the Commissioners that a new computer is needed for the Visitor Center office. Michele Williams estimated this cost at approximately \$1,200 - to be expensed out of the current year's budget.

Ms. Keller asked the Commissioners to start thinking about the 2020-2021 budget; she would like to schedule date for a Special Meeting, Budget Working Session, at the March Board meeting. Trail maintenance, trail bridges and pot hole repair on Ham Horton Lane were discussed.

She further announced that the catering kitchen in the Alpha Chapel is now complete. Many thanks to Bethania resident Dan Bersch for all his hard work on this project.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Vee Wolff asked the Commissioners to consider a bulky item pickup during the upcoming budget working session.

ADJOURNMENT: Commissioner Beroth made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:23 PM. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted for approval, the Minutes of the Board of Commissioners Meeting of February 20, 2020, consisting of four pages.

**Submitted by Karen Keller
Town Clerk**

APPROVED BY:

**Brent S. Rockett
Mayor, Town of Bethania**

**Michelle Leonard
Mayor, Pro Tem**

Randy J. Rogers

John Rogers

**Tom Beroth
Finance Officer**