

**TOWN OF AURORA, NC
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MINUTES
February 1, 2021 Meeting**

A regular meeting of the Aurora Town Board of Commissioners was held at 7:00 P.M. on Monday, February 1, 2021, at the Town Hall. Mayor Williams called the meeting to order with the following present:

Officials Present: [X] Clif Williams, Mayor

Commissioners Present:
[X] Coley Jordan
[] Brad Lee
[X] Jeff Peed
[X] Tina Taylor

Attendance:
[X] Judi Lannon – Town Clerk/Finance Officer
[X] Chuck Bonner – Public Works Director
[X] Curt Hendrix – Recreation Coordinator
[X] Various members of the public were in attendance

Mayor Williams led the Pledge of Allegiance and Commissioner Peed led in prayer.

A motion to amend the proposed Agenda to add “County Cares Act Funding and the Fossil Museum” and the “Resolution to Authorize the Execution of the Agreement and Memorandum of Option with PCS Phosphate” under new business was made by Commissioner Jordan and seconded by Commissioner Taylor with a 3 to 0 vote.

Under Public Comment Vernice Whitaker stated that the Aurora Fossil Museum would not be able to conduct the annual Fossil Festival for a second year due to COVID-19. The Museum Board has decided instead to hold two special “Fossil Day Events”. The first Fossil Day will occur on Saturday, May 29th, Memorial weekend and the second would be held on the actual National Fossil Day on Wednesday, October 13, 2021. Each of these events will be conducted on Museum property where health regulations regarding the pandemic can be more easily followed and monitored.

The proposed minutes for the regular December 7, 2020 meeting were approved on a motion made by Commissioner Jordan and seconded by Commissioner Taylor, with a 3 to 0 vote.

Under Old Business, the Clerk provided the Board with a Resolution to approve and authorize the execution of the December 2020 Bailey’s Creek Option Agreement and Memorandum of Option with PCS Phosphate Company, Inc. The Resolution passed on a motion made by Commissioner Taylor, seconded by Commissioner Jordan and a 3 to 0 vote.

Under Old Business, Public Works Director Chuck Bonner reported that work on the upgrade to the Water Plant had come to a standstill while the contracting companies waited for Duke Energy to complete their power connection. He also reported that the security light has been replaced with a new pole and the wiring for that had been rerouted.

Also under Old Business, the Clerk reported that, unfortunately, she and the Public Works Director had not been able to move forward on the surplus property issue. She also reminded the Board that they had initially asked the Board to assign a steering committee to help facilitate this project. The Clerk and the Public Works Director will move forward on the sale of surplus property as soon as scheduling allows.

Under New Business the Clerk recapped for the Board that she was still filling in on the Mid-East Commission quarterly Board meeting. She explained to the Board that a locally elected official representing the Town should be serving on the Mid-East Commission COG or Congress of Government Board. She also advised that the meetings were much easier to attend now that they were conducted via "Zoom" and not being held in person in Williamston. The topic was tabled for further consideration.

Also under New Business the Clerk informed the Board that Cares Act Funding through North Carolina Emergency Management was not available for municipalities who did not conduct Police Departments or Fire and Rescue service. Beaufort County has stepped in and allocated the funding that Aurora and one other municipality in the county would have received if they could have met the stringent criteria. The Fossil Museum had requested Cares Act Funding through the Town back on August 31, 2020 in the amount of \$7,462.00 as a sub-signer. Based on population, the Town received \$18,583.07 from Beaufort County. The Clerk asked the Board to allocate the original requested amount to the Museum. She also explained that, unlike actual Cares Act Funds, the remainder could be used to offset revenue losses due to COVID such as not being able to rent the Community Center. After some discussion, a motion was made to allocate the requested amount to the Fossil Museum by Commissioner Taylor. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jordan, with a vote of 3 to 0.

Under Staff Reports the Public Works Director Chuck Bonner gave a written report which included the following:

- Water leaks at Middle St. between 3rd and 4th St. were repaired as well as another leak at 7th St. and John Drive.
- We have detected a new leak at Main and 4th St. that is slated for repair
- The John Deer S420 tractor caught on fire due to a hydraulic fluid leak under the cab. James Ham extinguished the fire. There was no visible damage and the hydraulic leak is being repaired at the Aurora Body Shop.
- We are having a problem with muskrats and nutria at the lagoon. I would like to hire Royce Hamm to trap them. He will not go over the \$600 limit.
- 22 tons of salt was loaded by hand into the new brine tank with the assistance of a crane and hopper and 2 employees of CMF
- The old sewer line in the rear of the Fossil Museum building was replaced. It was old orange-berg pipe and had collapsed.
- NCDOT is aware of the ditching needing to be done on 33 at the intersection of 5th St. and they are also going to look into the collapsing tile on South 5th St. between John and Helen Drives at the entrance to Hooker house.
- I met with Dwight Lancaster with NC Rural Water Association to get his opinion on a silting problem at the lagoon and how to best correct the situation
- We will be cleaning sewer lines in the area of the Dollar General Shopping Center

The Recreation Coordinator Curt Hendrix gave an oral report which included the following:

- Continuing the maintenance of the community garden area and the softball fields
- As discussed the Fossil Museum will not fully open until the weekend of May 29th

- Also we are planning in 2022 the NC Fossil Festival that will be an expanded version of years past with a focus on local residents, the Town and outdoor recreation
- I have been in discussion with the Snowden Elementary Principal regarding programs for the Community Garden as well as the Nature Trail
- Still working on a coed soccer program with Demarquis Howel at Snowden

Under Board Comments the Mayor gave an update on the Aurora Industrial Park project. In following up to the last report and the findings of the ACOE and DEQ, the Project Engineer has submitted new plans allowing for the almost seven acres of wetlands difference. Once the new plan is approved by ACOE and DEQ and a new agreement for the land purchase is complete we can move forward with sales. The Board commended the Mayor for his efforts. Commissioner Peed stated that he would like to see some grant money become available for drainage. All were in agreement.

There being no further business, the February 1, 2021, regular meeting adjourned on a motion made by Commissioner Peed, seconded by Commissioner Taylor and approved with a 3 to 0 vote.

Clif Williams, Mayor

Judith S. Lannon, Town Clerk