

TOWN OF AURORA, NC
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MINUTES
March 7, 2022 Meeting

A regular meeting of the Aurora Town Board of Commissioners was held at 7:00 P.M. on Monday, March 7, 2022, at the Town Hall. Mayor Williams called the meeting to order with the following present:

Officials Present: [X] Clif Williams, Mayor

Commissioners Present:
[X] Omar Bahhur
[X] Coley Jordan
[X] Jeff Peed
[X] Tina Taylor

Attendance:
[X] Judi Lannon – Town Clerk/Finance Officer
[X] Chuck Bonner – Public Works Director
[X] Scott Davis – Town Attorney
[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 approve the proposed Agenda was made by Commissioner Jordan and seconded by Commissioner Taylor with a 4 to 0 vote.

Public Comment

Vernice Whitaker gave an update to council regarding the upcoming 2022 Fossil Festival. The Fossil Museum Festival Committee will be “rebranding” their festival this year and had many new ideas under way but would still feature the parade and the Memorial Day Veteran’s Breakfast.

Joy Dunn reported that the Aurora/Richland Township Chamber of Commerce’s new officers had met and were getting organized and reviewing their bylaws. She invited interested individuals to contact them regarding membership or if they have any questions or ideas.

Consideration of Minutes

The proposed minutes of the September 7, 2021 meeting were approved on a motion made by Commissioner Jordan and seconded by Commissioner Taylor, with a 3 to 0 vote.

Guest Speakers

Fire Chief Kevin Bonner and Rescue Squad Captain Brenda Jones came before council to present the proposed 2022-2023 Richland Township Fire and Rescue Tax Budget. They first reported and also requested the approval of the change in RTF&R Tax Board members as both Hiram Paul and Robert Cayton had stepped down. The fire tax board approved the following: Steve Mayo would be replacing Hiram Paul and Marvin Sartin would replace Robert Cayton. The motion to approve the new fire tax board members was made by Commissioner Peed and seconded by Commissioner Jordan. The motion passed with a 4 to 0 vote.

After a discussion regarding the outstanding service provided by both the Fire Department and Rescue Squad, a motion to approve the proposed 2022-2023 Richland Township Fire and Rescue Tax Budget (attached) was made by Commissioner Peed and seconded by Commissioner Jordan. The motion passed with a 4 to 0 vote.

Webster Walker gave a presentation to council of the cartography of the Town's storm water drainage layout. This illustrated the findings of the Resilient Coastal Communities Program and the challenges the town faces regarding water drainage. Mr. Walker prepared several color maps illustrating the drainage areas which included tributaries, creeks, covert tubes, ditches and drain fields and where improvements were needed.

After conversation surrounding the issues the Town faced regarding drainage, Mayor Williams introduced Jamie Heath, Planner with the Mid-East Commission, who gave a presentation on the outcomes of the recently conducted Resilient Coastal Communities Program. The presentation consisted of a seven-point program addressing vulnerability assessment, community engagement, seeking funding for resiliency planning. The highlight of the presentation was the request for council's approval to apply for resiliency funding for the following six prioritized project:

1. Wetland Restoration at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Clean out sludge and reline ponds. Elevate sides of WWTP for storm surge protection.
2. Develop Town Master Flood Mitigation Plan.
3. Map and design a maintenance plan to clean out drainage ditches and tributaries. Identify proposed areas for future bioswales for treatment of runoff.
4. Develop easements to maintain drainage ditches and tributaries. Once easements are obtained, identify locations where Stormwater Control Measures (SCM) can be implemented to provide capacity to treat water.
5. Improve Bailey's Creek Tributary.
6. Develop a community retreat parking lot with cameras located outside the flood hazard area where residents can relocate vehicles during storms.

Phase 3 of the Resilient Coastal Communities Program is the planning and engineering study to conduct the Wetland Restoration at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. The motion to have Mid-East Commission apply to NCDEQ on behalf of the Town for the planning/engineering study was made by Commissioner Jordan and seconded by Commissioner Peed. The motion past with a 4 to 0 vote

Old Business

Under Old Business, the Clerk introduced the proposed 2021 municipal audit contract with Austin Eubanks, CPA, CFE Audit Manager with Thompson, Price, Scott and Adams, PA out of Wilmington, NC. If approved, the audit would begin in April. After a short discussion, the motion to enter into contract to conduct the municipal audit the firm was made by Commissioner Taylor and seconded by Commissioner Bahhur. The motion passed with a 4 to 0 vote.

New Business

Under New Business, the Town was to consider applying for and participating in the Golden Leaf Flood Mitigation and Recovery Grant. As covered by Jamie Heath earlier in her presentation, GLF Flood Mitigation funding would be used for prioritized projects numbers 3 and 4 and would become the "Town of Aurora Drainage Ditch and Tributary Maintenance and Easement Plan." The motion was made by Commissioner Peed and seconded by Commissioner Jordan. The motion passed with a 4 to 0 vote.

Also under New Business, council considered the Real Property Reservation Agreement and Purchase and Sale Agreement with Beaufort County Community College. Both Sandy Acton and Allen Paul were made available for questions via conference call. After some discussion and overview of the agreement by the Town Attorney, a motion was made by Commissioner Peed to set the cost of the purchase of the real property at \$33,000.00 per acre. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jordan and the motion passed with a 4 to 0 vote.

A motion was then made by Commissioner Peed and seconded by Commissioner Jordan to approve the Real Property Reservation Agreement and Purchase and Sale Agreement with Beaufort County Community College for lots #18 and #19 in the Aurora Industrial Park. The motion passed with a 4 to 0 vote.

A lengthy discussion took place regarding the Fire Department and their inclusion in the AIP. No agreement has yet been made. It was noted that their situation was unique as a non-prophet and as of present they should not show, in any way, as a "sold" contract under the AIP.

Allen Paul gave a remote overview of the AIP Progress Report which is attached.

Aurora Leadership Chairman Kurt Ryan gave an update on their activities and provided a March to September 2022 Committee Schedule which is attached.

Staff Reports

Both the Public Works Director Chuck Bonner and the Recreation Coordinator Curt Hendrix submitted written reports that are also attached.

Mayor and Board Comments

The Mayor thanked his fellow board members for their diligence and input.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Commissioner Peed, seconded by Commissioner Bahhur and passed with a 4 to 0 vote.

Clif Williams, Mayor

Judith S. Lannon, Town Clerk