TOWN OF AURORA, NC
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MINUTES
Monday, April 7, 2025, Meeting

A regular meeting of the Aurora Town Board of Commissioners was held at 7:00 P.M. on Monday, April 7, 2025, at the Town Hall. Mayor Williams called the meeting to order with the following present:

Officials Present:	[X] Clif Williams, Mayor
Commissioners Present:	[ ] Omar Bahhur
	[X] Coley Jordan
	[X] Steve McCormack
	[X] Jeff Peed
Attendance:	[X] Judi Lannon – Town Clerk/Finance Officer
	[X] Ashley Barnes – Public Works Director
	[X] Rhonda Stallings – Administrative Assistant/Utility Billing
	[X] Various members of the public were in attendance

Commissioner Bahhur was unable to attend the meeting.

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

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Jordan and seconded by Commissioner Peed. The motion passed with a 3 to 0 vote.

Public Comment
Carolyn Hendricks, Vice President of Community Engagement with Goodwill Industries of Eastern North Carolina, Inc. introduced herself and spoke to council regarding her company's plans for the vacant retail space on NC 33 East and 5th Street. They plan to open a Neighborhood Pantry store that will sell non-perishable foods as well as basic produce. They also plan to carry freeze dried basic produce that will be sourced regionally and freeze dried and packaged on site. This information was well received by all in attendance.

Next under Public Comment Debbie Guthrie addressed council regarding the cost of water and sewer in the Town of Aurora. She was advised that due to the cost of chemicals for treating the water and treating the wastewater as well as the required laboratory analysis, the Town had no choice but to raise the utility rates. It was confirmed that the utility rate had been raised in February 2024 and again in January 2025.

Consideration of Minutes
The proposed minutes of the January 13, 2025 special meeting were approved on a motion made by Commissioner McCormack and seconded by Commissioner Jordan and passed with a 3 to 0 vote.

The proposed minutes of the February 3, 2025, regular meeting were approved on a motion made by Commissioner Peed and seconded by Commissioner McCormack and passed with a 3 to 0 vote.

Presentation to Council
Fire Chief Kevin Bonner presented the proposed 2025-2026 Richland Township Fire and Rescue Tax Budget. Mr. Bonner walked the Board through each departments separate (attached) budgets. A motion to receive the 2025-2026 RTF&R Tax budget was made by Commissioner Jordan and seconded by Commissioner McCormack. The motion passed with a 3 to 0 vote. The Fire and Rescue budget will now move forward for consideration by the Beaufort County Board of commissioners.

Old Business
Under Old Business the Board had a follow up discussion regarding the recent Beaufort County property tax revaluation. Beaufort County Tax Assessor Lloyd Salter conducted a public forum for the citizens of Aurora to ask questions and receive information regarding the tax revaluation and appeal process on March 14th, 2025. A short discussion surrounding documentation that would be necessary in order for a successful appeal was discussed.

Next Under Old Business, Council considered the offer from Southern Bank to donate their building located at 298 North 5th Street to the Town. After much consideration it was the consensus of the Board to decline the offer for several reasons. Primarily the lack of tax revenue that the Town would generate if the building were turned over to us, coupled with the unknown liabilities associated with maintaining a building that houses an ATM. The additional utility costs and maintenance of the building were also a factor. A motion to reject the offer from Southern Bank was made by Commissioner McCormack and seconded by Commissioner Jordan. The motion passed with a 3 to 0.

New Business
Under New Business the Board considered the Resolution by Governing Body of Applicant for the DEQ Division of Water Infrastructure Sewer Force Main Replacement as prepared by our Planner with the Mid-East Commission, Jamie Heath. The motion to approve the resolution and have Ms. Heath complete the application for funding through DEQ/DWI for the project was made by Commissioner Peed and seconded by Commissioner Jordan and passed with a 3 to 0 vote.

Next under New Business the Board considered the Resolution by Governing Body of Applicant for the DEQ Division of Water Infrastructure for the 3rd Street Water Distribution Line Replacement as prepared by our Planner with the Mid-East Commission, Jamie Heath. The motion to approve the resolution and have Ms. Heath complete the application for funding through DEQ/DWI for the project was made by Commissioner Jordan and seconded by Commissioner McCormack and passed with a 3 to 0 vote.

Finally, under New Business the Board reviewed and discussed the letter from Mayor Williams to the Chairman of the Beaufort County School Board of Education regarding the proposed impending closure of the S. W. Snowden School in Aurora. The letter outlined the Town of Aurora 2022-24 Strategic Plan and the inclusion of the Elementary School as well as the new satellite campus of the Beaufort County Community College Workforce Development Center. The letter requested full transparency and participation for the citizens of Aurora. The letter closed with 24 questions for the Beaufort County School leadership to consider. The Board commended the Mayor for the letter and attending the County Commissioners meeting and presenting it in person.

Staff Reports
Public Works Director Ashley Barnes reported on the storage shed that needs to be removed from the Public Works yard. The Public Works Department has the shed almost completely dismantled and has received a quote to have it removed from the A-Wall Construction for $1500.00. A motion was made to

accept the quote by Commissioner Peed. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jordan and passed with a 3 to 0 vote.

Mr. Barnes also reported that the old Police Department Building needed a new roof as we are losing shingles whenever there is high wind. Also the roof of the Public Works Building leaks in several places and also needs to be replaced. He will see about requesting quotes.

The Clerk reported that budget preparation had begun and noted the roof repairs. She also advised the Board that the deadline for the grant applications that Jamie Heath was completing for DEQ is April 30th. The Board may need to reconvene this evenings meeting to later in the month if any questions or issues arise on the projects and also possibly conduct a budget workshop. The Board agreed to conduct the budget workshop on April 22nd.

Mayor and Board Comments
The Mayor advised that the Dr. Mathew Cheeseman, Superintendent of Beaufort County Schools, will be conducting a Public Forum at our S.W. Snowden School on April 16th. Please plan to attend.

Adjournment/Recess
There being no further business, the Mayor asked for a motion to recess the meeting until Tuesday, April 22 at 6: PM. The motion to recess the meeting was made by Commissioner Peed. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McCormack and passed with a 3 to 0 vote.

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Clif Williams, Mayor Judith S. Lannon, Town Clerk