

**TOWN OF RANLO BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS REGULAR MONTHLY
DECEMBER 2021 MEETING
RANLO TOWN HALL
1624 SPENCER MOUNTAIN ROAD, RANLO, NORTH CAROLINA 28054
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 7TH, 2021 6:00 PM**

MINUTES

Governing Body Present:

Mayor Lynn Black
Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell
Commissioner Robin Conner
Commissioner Jamie Fowler
Commissioner Doug Moore

Staff Present:

Town Manager Jonathan Blanton
Town Clerk Sarah Rowan

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Mayor Black called the meeting to order and Town Clerk Sarah Rowan conducted the roll call. Commissioner Locklear was not present.

Mayor Black offered the invocation.

II. Adoption of the Agenda

The Town Manager proposed a revision to approve the Closed Session minutes from the October 14th Monthly Meeting.

Commissioner Fowler motioned to adopt the amended agenda for the regular December meeting. Commissioner Conner seconded the motion. The vote was 4-0.

III. Comments from Attendees

Evelyn Clary of 1337 N. Second Street approached the board regarding the no livestock ordinance. She noted that she had been living at the residence for 60 years and does not want to get rid of the chickens. Mrs. Clary inquired about a grandfather clause and

claimed that she had chickens prior to the charter of the Town of Ranlo. She inquired about what the issue is.

Mayor Black noted that the chickens run wild. Mrs. Clary agreed with the statement and added that the chickens do jump over the fence. Mayor Black noted that new ordinances would be adopted in the future and any action should be tabled until further adoption. He added that in the meantime, an approved cage should be used to address the roaming issue.

The Town Manager asked the Board if they would like to grant an extension for the no livestock ordinance until the regular January meeting.

Mayor Black noted that several towns allow chickens and livestock. The Town Manager suggested an in-depth study and proposing ordinances for reasonable livestock. He noted that a public hearing would be required before an adoption of a changed ordinance.

Commissioner Fowler inquired about what brought the issue up. The Town Manager responded that it was a citizen complaint.

The Town Manager noted that former owners have complied with the ordinance and have gotten rid of their livestock. He added that with consensus, the Board can table enforcement until the regular January meeting.

Commissioner Fowler asked that the neighboring homeowners be notified and kept in the loop in regards to the progress on the situation. Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell responded that the Board's decision needs to address the nuisance problem.

The Board reached a consensus to table livestock enforcement until the regular January meeting.

IV. Approval of the October 14th 2021 Board of Commissioners Monthly Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Moore motioned to approve the October 14th 2021 Board of Commissioners Monthly Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Conner provided the second. The vote was 4-0.

V. Approval of the Closed Session October 14th 2021 Board of Commissioners Monthly Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Fowler motioned to approve the Closed Session October 14th 2021 Board of Commissioners Monthly Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Moore provided the second. The vote was 4-0.

VI. Swearing in of Newly Elected Officials

Commissioner Conner thanked the Town of Ranlo for the opportunity to serve as a Commissioner for six years. She noted the amount of kindness and respect she received as a Commissioner and hoped that the community feels reciprocation. Commissioner Conner expressed thanks for the honor to serve.

Town Clerk Sarah Rowan administered the Oath of Office to Mayor Lynn Black.

Town Clerk Sarah Rowan administered the Oath of Office to Commissioner Wade Morton.

Town Clerk Sarah Rowan administered the Oath of Office to Commissioner Trevor Hay.

VII. Appointments to Various Positions

Commissioner Moore motioned to keep Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell as Mayor Pro-Tem. Commissioner Fowler seconded the motion. The vote was 5-0.

Commissioner Fowler motioned to make Commissioner Hay the representative to the Centralina Council of Governments and Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell as an alternate. Commissioner Moore seconded the motion. The vote was 5-0.

Commissioner Moore motioned to keep Mayor Black as the representative to the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and have Commissioner Fowler as an alternate. Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell seconded the motion. The vote was 5-0.

The Town Manager explained that for the Planning Board, there would need to be 4 members from inside town limits and one representative from the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction. The Town Manager elaborated that the first meeting would be in January and the former Commissioners Locklear and Conner expressed their interest in serving on the Planning Board.

Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell inquired about the possibility of having terms picked at random at the first meeting. The Town Manager responded that it is possible to do a staggered system with members picking their terms.

Commissioner Fowler noted that former Commissioner Conner would be a great asset to the Planning Board. Commissioner Hay suggested Robin Conner, Effie Lockler, Todd Keppler, and Diana Palmer for the Planning Board with Sean Skidmore, Lee Adams, and Jason Berg as alternates.

Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell questioned what happens in the event of a tie with only four members. The Town Manager responded that he would have to research and that the fifth member has to be from the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction.

Commissioner Hay motioned to appoint Robin Conner, Effie Locklear, Todd Keppler, and Diana Palmer to the Planning Board with Sean Skidmore, Lee Adams, and Jason Berg as alternates. Commissioner Moore provided the second. The vote was 5-0.

VIII. Presentation from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte regarding the Town's American Rescue Act Funds

The Master of Public Administration Program at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte gave a presentation regarding the \$1.2 million dollars in funding received from the American Rescue Act. The students compiled research and an in-depth analysis of the Town to recommend projects to be funded.

Mayor Black asked when the Town could start spending the funds. The Town Manager responded that the Town has already received half and the Town is currently waiting for a final decision from the Treasurer for spending guidelines. Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell requested a list of recommendations for spending from the Town Manager after the final rule is decided.

IX. Adoption of Local Water Supply Plan

The Town Manager explained that the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality has approved the supply plan and has requested a resolution from the Board adopting the supply plan.

Commissioner Moore motioned to adopt the Local Water Supply Plan. Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell seconded the motion. The vote was 5-0.

X. Adoption of a Proclamation Recognizing Gaston County’s 175th Anniversary

The Town Manager noted that there is a celebration of the 175th anniversary of Gaston County on December 21st, 2021 at the Rotary Pavilion in Gastonia.

Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell motioned to adopt a proclamation recognizing Gaston County’s 175th Anniversary. Commissioner Hay provided the second. The vote was 5-0.

XI. Adoption of 2022 Meeting and Holiday Schedule

The Town Manager presented the Board with the 2022 Meeting and Holiday Schedule. The Board of Commissioners will meet the second Thursday of each month at 7 P.M. and the Planning Board will meet on the third Thursday of each month at 7 P.M. He added that there will be a special budget meeting on the first Thursday of March.

Commissioner Hay motioned to adopt the 2022 Meeting and Holiday Schedule. Commissioner Moore seconded the motion. The vote was 5-0.

XII. Mid-Year Financial Overview and Discussion Regarding Direct Allocations

The Town Manager reported that the Town is doing very well regarding the budget halfway through the Fiscal Year. He noted that he has discussed the Town’s progress with the State Treasurer’s Office, as the Town is on the Unit Assistance List. He explained that salaries are on track and sales and property taxes are coming in strong.

The Town Manager presented the news that the Town of Ranlo received \$6.5 million dollars from the State budget to fund all of the requested projects. He expressed his gratitude to the Board for their support in the request. The Town Manager explained that the next step in the process is to meet with engineers and create a timeline for projects. He estimated that by the end of January an engineer would be selected with projects starting in April under two phases: April 16th and August 1st.

Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell mentioned that inflation numbers have come out and requested an adjustment to employees to match. The Town Manager explained that a pay increase would be at the discretion of the Board. He mentioned that money has been saved in several departments during the first half of the Fiscal Year. Mayor Black inquired about the percentage of salary line items. The Town Manager answered that each department was at or under 50% for salaries due to open positions. Mayor Black noted that the citizens are struggling too with tax and rate increases. The Town Manager explained that the increases were at the request of the State Treasurer, and they cannot be adjusted.

Commissioner Fowler inquired about what the Treasurer would think about a cost of living adjustment. The Town Manager responded that he can draft a formal memorandum to inform the Treasurer's Office but he does not want to speak on behalf of the Treasurer. He noted that the State has been pleased with the Town's progress. Commissioner Fowler added that he is concerned about adjusting the budget after it had been approved by the State. The Town Manager explained that there will be no budget amendments, meaning that nothing will be taken from the Fund Balance.

Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell motioned to provide a cost of living adjustment of 6% to all Town employees effective January 1st. Commissioner Hay provided the second. The vote was 4-1, with Commissioner Morton opposing.

Commissioner Fowler inquired about the plan to replace water meters. The Town Manager responded that it would be beneficial to replace all the meters at once. With updated meters, they can all be read and cut off at Town Hall. He added that the life expectancy of the meters can be planned for with preventative measures and maintenance. Commissioner Fowler asked if the replacement of the meters comes from the State, and the Town Manager provided a confirmation.

XIII. Consideration of N-Focus Proposal

Town Manager presented the Board with a proposal from N-Focus, which includes the drafting of a required revised Land Use Plan and Unified Development Ordinance, plus two-years of technical support, and on-site coordination with the Planning Board and Board of Commissioners.

Commissioner Moore motioned to approve the N-Focus Proposal. Commissioner Hay provided the second. The vote was 5-0.

XIV. Consideration of Wooten Company Proposal

The Town Manager presented the Board with an agreement that would provide engineering reports for standard specifications and details for water, sewer, and roadways. The proposal includes engineering specifications to be provided for all new construction within the Town.

Commissioner Hay motioned to approve the Wooten Company Proposal. Commissioner Fowler seconded the motion. The vote was 5-0.

XV. Consideration of Alliance Code Enforcement Proposal

The Town Manager presented to the Board a proposal from Alliance Code Enforcement. He explained that the company specializes in nuisance abatement against property owners that do not comply with administrative demands to address ordinance violations from the Town. He added that the agreement would assign Alliance the authority to abate nuisance and assume the liability for addressing properties that refuse to cooperate with our requests to bring properties into compliance.

Commissioner Hay expressed his agreement that code enforcement is a liability for the Town and that contracting Alliance eliminates bias within the community.

Commissioner Hay motioned to approve the Alliance Code Enforcement Proposal. Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell seconded the motion. The vote was 5-0.

XVI. Consideration of an Ordinance Amending the Town’s Code of Ordinance to Provide for Revised Criminal Penalties

The Town Manager presented an ordinance amendment to the Town’s Code of Ordinances that is required under the recently passed General Assembly Session Law 2021-138, Senate Bill 300. The Town Manager explained that the Bill was aimed towards larger municipalities. The amendment ensures certain infractions are not categorized as criminal penalties under the Town’s local ordinances.

Commissioner Hay asked if the amendment was just a formality. The Town Manager responded that it is.

Commissioner Moore motioned to approve the Ordinance Amending the Town’s Code of Ordinance to Provide for Revised Criminal Penalties. Commissioner Fowler seconded the motion. The vote was 5-0.

XVII. Town Manager’s Report

Town Manager Jonathan Blanton noted that Town Hall and Public Works would be closed from December 22nd to 24th for the Christmas Holiday and December 31st for the New Year. Neither closures will result in a delay for trash pickup.

The Town Manager welcomed new Commissioners Morton and Hay. He also expressed thanks to former Commissioners Conner and Locklear for their service to the Town.

The Town Manager informed the Board and the public that the Town is engaging in a Light Up Ranlo yard contest. To enter, citizens must call Town Hall or email the Town

Clerk Sarah Rowan. The Town Manager expressed thanks to Standard Distributors for hosting the North Pole at the Lodge event the prior Friday. He thanked his wife for her time decorating the space for the event. He also thanked the Master of Public Administration Program at UNC Charlotte for their presentation on the American Rescue Act Funding. The Town Manager added special thanks to Kathy Harrington and Representative John Torbett for advocating for the Town of Ranlo and securing the \$6.5 million dollars for Town projects in the North Carolina budget.

XVIII. Comments from Mayor and the Board of Commissioners

Mayor Black inquired about having the Wooten Company give ideas to renovating and remodeling the Town Hall. He then expressed thanks to the citizens for reelecting him as Mayor. He also added that Town Manager Jonathan Blanton is doing a great job.

Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell wished to recognize the veterans in Ranlo for a belated Veterans Day. She also recognized the anniversary of Pearl Harbor.

Commissioner Fowler expressed the fun he had at the North Pole event at the Lodge. He thanked the wife of the Town Manager, Carrie Aquino, for her help in putting on the event. Commissioner Fowler recognized the success of the Ranlo Christmas Parade. He then welcomed new Commissioners Morton and Hay. He also thanked former Commissioners Conner and Locklear for their service to the Town.

XIX. Adjournment

Commissioner Moore motioned to adjourn the December 7th regular monthly meeting. Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell seconded the motion. The vote was 5-0.

ATTESTED TO:

Mayor Lynn Black

Recorder and transcriber of the minutes for the Regular December 7 2021 Meeting