

**TOWN OF RANLO BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MONTHLY NOVEMBER 2022
MEETING
RANLO TOWN HALL
1624 SPENCER MOUNTAIN ROAD, RANLO, NORTH CAROLINA 28054
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10TH, 2022 7:00 PM**

MINUTES

Governing Body Present

Commissioner Wade Morton
Commissioner Robin Conner
Commissioner Fowler
Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell
Mayor Black

Staff Present

Town Manager Jonathan Blanton
Town Clerk Sarah Rowan

I. Call to Order

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

II. Adoption of the Agenda

Commissioner Fowler motioned to adopt the agenda for the regular November meeting. Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell seconded the motion. The vote was 4-0.

III. Comments from Attendees

Mr. Wilson of 19 Maple Avenue approached the Board concerning maintenance of his right-of-way.

The Town Manager informed the Board that he and the Public Works director had discussed concreting over the right-of-way. Mr. Wilson responded that he was concerned about potential for flooding.

Commissioner Fowler noted that most residents in Town maintain the right-of-way.

Mr. Wilson commented that the Town cut the grass twice, but never trimmed it. The Town Manager noted that the Town is willing to maintain the right-of-way area.

Commissioner Conner asked Mr. Wilson his preferred outcome of the situation. Mr. Wilson responded that he would prefer the Town to maintain it. Mr. Wilson noted that the Town had come out to mow it, but did not trim.

Mr. Wilson informed the Board that he feels back pay is necessary for his maintenance of the right of way. He indicated that the back pay would be \$4,800 for twelve years of work.

Mayor Black noted that Mr. Wilson volunteered to maintain the right-of-way, the Town did not ask him to maintain it himself.

Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell asked if the Town maintains all right-of-ways. The Town Manager responded that most homeowners do it themselves, but the Town will respond to complaints.

Commissioner Fowler noted the potential precedent of paying the requested backpay. Commissioner Conner agreed, and added that there would be a domino effect from other homeowners.

The Town Manager noted that it may be advantageous to adopt a formal policy for right-of-way maintenance. Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell agreed.

The Town Manager informed the Board that he can write up a policy and that there are no issues with having the Town maintain right-of-ways. He noted that the reimbursement would be the Board's decision.

Commissioner Conner told Mr. Wilson that the Town will not be reimbursing him, but a policy will be made to address the situation.

Mr. Wilson responded that he appreciates the policy being made.

IV. Approval of the October Regular Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Conner motioned to approve the October Regular Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Fowler seconded the motion. The vote was 4-0.

V. Discussion of Amendment to the Town's Hunting Ordinance

The Town Manager reminded the Board that at the October regular meeting, the Board reached consensus to move forward with looking at a draft amendment to the Town's

hunting ordinance. The Town Manager presented the Board with a draft amendment. He added that the options for the Board are to add to or change the amendment, adopt as is, call for a public hearing, or disregard the amendment.

Mayor Pro-Tem noted that her preference is to adopt the amendment. She added that allowing bow and arrow hunting in the Town would add nothing to the Town.

Commissioner Morton noted that he would prefer to have a public hearing.

Commissioner Fowler mentioned that the ordinance is a matter of public safety.

Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell motioned to adopt the ordinance as-is. Commissioner Conner seconded the motion. The vote was 4-0.

VI. Consideration of Back-Flow Ordinance

The Town Manager explained that an area of improvement from the routine water audit was to adopt a formal back-flow ordinance.

Commissioner Fowler motioned to adopt the Back-Flow Ordinance. Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell seconded the motion. The vote was 4-0.

VII. Review of Proposals for Grant Administration for Asset Inventory and Assessment Projects

Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell motioned to accept the proposal for Grant Administration for Asset Inventory and Assessment Projects from the Wooten Company. Commissioner Conner seconded the motion. The vote was 4-0.

VIII. Discussion of Holiday Activities and Employee Christmas Gratuities

The Town Manager informed the Board that staff is moving forward with the Christmas Parade on December 17th. He noted that he has secured sponsors for floats.

The Town Manager announced that the Town will be doing Light Up Ranlo, the yard decorating competition.

The Town Manager announced that the Senior Thanksgiving Meal is November 19th at noon.

He added that the Town Hall will be closed on the 24th and 25th of November for Thanksgiving.

Commissioner Conner inquired about how much money is allocated for the Thanksgiving dinner and how it will be advertised.

The Town Manager responded that he hopes to find a sponsor for the event. He got a proposal from Jackson's Cafeteria for \$1,500 for 125 plates. He added that the money would come from the special events budget. The Town Manager noted that the Potter's House agreed to volunteer to hand out meals.

Commissioner Conner asked if there would be a Winter Wonderland at the Lodge this year. The Town Manager responded that he would love to have the event, but the Lodge will still be under renovations.

Mayor Black inquired about the manger scene. The Town Manager noted that it had been damaged, but he will check on it. He added that the Town might be able to donate it.

Commissioner Conner asked when the lights will be hung up around Town. The Town Manager responded that they will be up after Thanksgiving.

Commissioner Conner asked if the rental prices for the Lodge will change after the renovations. Right now, it is \$125 for residents and \$225 for non-residents. Commissioner Fowler noted that the discussion would most likely take place during budget talks. The Town Manager added that is a conversation that needs to be had after the completion of the project. Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell requested proposals for rental increases.

The Town Manager asked for the Board's input and feedback for Christmas bonuses. He noted that for the past two years, they have been \$775 for everyone.

Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell asked if other municipalities have set their Christmas bonuses. The Town Manager responded that Stanley is giving \$3,500 in bonuses from ARPA funds.

Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell inquired about employee morale. The Town Manager responded that there is difficulty with retention in the Police Department and Public Works is working incredibly hard with water breaks, long hours, and extra projects. He noted that a lot of the department employees are going above and beyond. Several Public Works employees have inquired about taking part time jobs during the holiday season. He added

that everyone is appreciative of their job and he has not gotten any complaints about coworkers or the work environment.

Commissioner Fowler added that no matter what is asked of the Public Works Department, they do top-notch work. The Town Manager agreed and responded that he would like to compensate them for that.

Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell inquired about the budget. The Town Manager responded that it is looking good as well as last year's audit. He noted that the State Treasurer's Office will be very pleased with the Town.

Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell proposed increasing the bonus since morale is somewhat low and the budget is very good.

Commissioner Conner asked how many employees the Town has. The Town Manager responded that there are 29 with pending resignations and one vacant position in Public Works. He noted that the actual number of employees is most likely 26 or 27.

Mayor Black proposed a bonus of \$1,000. Commissioner Conner responded that it is too low. Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell proposed \$2,000.

Commissioner Fowler asked how much money is available in the ARPA funds. The Town Manager responded that the Town has not used any, so around \$1 million.

Commissioner Fowler asked if bonuses would be the same across the board. He noted that he would like to reward department heads and the manager. Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell agreed. It was noted that increased bonuses are not setting a precedent and it is an exception.

Commissioner Conner suggested doubling the bonuses for department heads. The Town Manager asked who that includes. The Board agreed that The Town Manager, Finance Director, Public Works Director, Assistant Public Works Director, Police Chief, and Assistant Police Chief would receive \$4,000.

The Town Manager asked if part-time employees would receive half. The Board agreed with \$1,000 for part-time employees.

Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell motioned to approve bonuses for Town employees of \$2,000, \$4,000 for department heads, and \$1,000 for part-time employees after tax. Commissioner Fowler seconded the motion. The vote was 3-1 with Commissioner Morton opposed.

The Town Manager thanked the Board for the generous decision. He noted that employees will be beyond grateful.

IX. Town Manager's Report

The Town Manager announced that Town Hall will be closed November 11th for Veterans Day as well as November 24th and 25th for Thanksgiving. There will be no delays in garbage collection.

The Town Manager thanked the community for being patient during leaf pickup due to machinery delays.

Commissioner Fowler suggested informing the community about avoiding raking leaves into the storm drains. Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell suggested that the Town be more proactive with leaf pickup next Fall.

X. Comments from the Mayor

Mayor Black noted that he would like to see code enforcement act on the lot at the old bank on Spencer Mountain and Lowell Road.

XI. Comments from the Board of Commissioners

Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell extended a happy birthday to the Marine Corps and wishes all veterans a very happy Veterans Day.

Commissioner Conner thanked Commissioner Fowler and Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell for their service.

Commissioner Fowler wished a happy birthday to all the Marines in Ranlo.

XII. Closed Session Pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 143-318.11(a)(3)(6)

Commissioner Fowler motioned to open the closed session. Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell seconded the motion. The vote was 4-0.

XIII. Return to Open Session and Consideration of Closed Session Action

Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell motioned to return to open session. Commissioner Fowler seconded the motion. The vote was 4-0.

There was no action taken.

XIV. Adjournment

Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell motioned to adjourn the regular November meeting. Commissioner Fowler seconded the motion. The vote was 4-0.

ATTESTED TO:

Mayor Lynn Black

Recorder and transcriber of the minutes for the Monthly November 2022 Meeting