

**RANLO BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS AUGUST 2020 REGULAR MONTHLY  
MEETING  
RANLO TOWN HALL  
1624 SPENCER MOUNTAIN ROAD, RANLO, NORTH CAROLINA 28054  
THURSDAY, AUGUST 13, 2020  
7:00 PM**

**MINUTES**

**Governing Body Present:**

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

**Staff Present:**

Town Manager	Jonathan Blanton
Town Attorney	Jim Windham
Finance Director	Lieke Janssen
Parks Director	Corey Correll
Intern	Grant McMillan

**I. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Mayor Black called the meeting to order and Town Manager Jonathan Blanton conducted the roll call. Commissioner Locklear was not present. Mayor Black offered the invocation.

**II. Adoption of the Agenda**

Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell motioned to adopt the agenda and Commissioner Moore provided the second. The vote was 4-0.

**III. Approval of the July 9, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes**

Commissioner Fowler motioned to approve the July 9, 2020 regular meeting minutes and Commissioner Connor provided the second. The vote was 4-0.

**IV. Comments from Attendees**

No person registered to call-in during the comments from attendees' portion of the meeting.

**V. Presentation and Approval of the Personnel Policy**

Mr. Blanton presented the Board with three items to be added to the Town's personnel policy that were discussed in last month's meeting. The first addition was that employees shall receive

a 2.5% pay increase after the successful conclusion of a six-month probationary period for regular employees and one-year probationary period for police officers. The second item was that employees and supervisors shall make all attempts to keep compensatory balances below 200 hours. Employees may request to have forty (40) hours of previously earned compensatory time redeemed twice per calendar year. All requests shall be made in writing and will require the approval of the Department Head and the Town Manager. The third addition was that longevity pay is to be provided in a lump sum payment to full-time employees in recognition of their service to the Town. Longevity pay will normally be issued in November on the regular pay period coinciding with Thanksgiving. Appropriate federal state, retirement, etc. deductions will be made. Employees that have worked with the Town 5-10 years will receive \$500 in Longevity Pay. Employees that have been with the Town for 10-15 years will receive \$750 in Longevity Pay. Employees that have been with the Town for 15 years or more will receive \$1,000 in Longevity Pay.

Commissioner Moore motioned to approve the additions to the Personnel Policy and Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell provided the second. The vote was 4-0.

#### **VI. Ratification of Response Letter for the Local Government Finance Division**

Mr. Blanton informed the Board that on July 9<sup>th</sup>, the North Carolina Local Government Finance Division sent a letter to the Mayor, all Commissioners, and to Town Hall inquiring about the untimely submission of the FY 2017 Audit. Since the letter was received, the Town has submitted all outstanding audits to the Local Government Commission. The Local Government Commission has received all of the submitted audits, making the Town current, with the exception of the Fiscal Year that just ended. Mr. Blanton informed the Board that he has drafted a response letter to send back to the Local Government Commission with signatures from all members of the Board.

Commissioner Fowler made a motion to ratify the response letter and Commissioner Moore provided the second. The vote was 4-0.

#### **VII. Discussion of Variance for 1323 North Second Street**

Mr. Blanton informed the Board that Ms. Jessica McCaskill owns the property at 1323 North Second Street and would like to subdivide the property for sale. The property does not meet the setbacks that are detailed in the Town Ordinance. Mr. Blanton informed the Board that a public hearing needs to be held so affected property owners can be notified and can speak before the board.

Commissioner Moore inquired as to how much of a setback there was on the property. Mr. Blanton stated he could have all pertinent information at the public hearing, if the Board decided to go that route.

Commissioner Moore motioned to go forward with the public hearing and Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell provided the second. The vote was 4-0.

### **VIII. Petitioning of the Board to Advertise the Sale of 2313 A Sunset Drive**

Mr. Blanton informed the Board that the owner of the property surrounding 2313 A Sunset Drive asked the Town if they would be interested advertising the sale of that parcel of property. The parcel is landlocked and was formerly used as a lift station.

Mayor Black asked if the parcel still a road right-of-way and Mr. Blanton had confirmed that. Commissioner Cordell asked Mr. Blanton if there is a possibility that we could bring the lift station back into service. Mr. Blanton said that it is a possibility if the Town annexes additional property in the area.

Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell and Commissioner Moore expressed concern that they would have to buy the property back or purchase other property if the town grows or if people want to voluntarily be annexed by the Town.

Commissioner Fowler inquired if the property owner was willing to lease the property instead of selling it. Mr. Blanton said that the property owner only mentioned purchasing the property. Mr. Blanton added that he told the property owner that there are several statutory requirements that regulate the sale of Town property.

Commissioner Moore added that the Town has two large water lines that run through the parcel in question to the residences on Strawberry Lane and Duke Power has a right-of-way through the property as well. Commissioner Fowler asked how it will affect the Town if the property owner has the parcel in question blocked off and we need to gain access to it.

The Board decided to table the discussion until the September meeting and Mr. Blanton would inquire if the property owner would be willing to lease the property.

### **IX. Presentation and Approval of the Public Records Request Form**

Mr. Blanton presented the Board with a proposed form for the public to request public records from the Town. He stated that this form will be available shortly online, and the Town is working to implement an option to submit the requests online.

Commissioner Moore motioned to approve the Public Records Request Form and Commissioner Fowler provided the second. The vote was 4-0.

### **X. Presentation and Approval of the Budget Billing Policy**

Mr. Blanton brought a new utility payment program before the Board, entitled Budget Billing. Budget Billing is when an average usage is calculated over the last 12 months and the customer is billed at that number for 11 months. On the 12<sup>th</sup> month, the customer would reconcile with the Town and either pay the balance or be issued a credit to their account. Mr. Blanton stated that this program is used by the City of Gastonia and the City of Shelby.

Commissioner Fowler asked if this program is something that customers could opt-in and opt-out of and Mr. Blanton confirmed that they will have to fill out an application to be included in the budget billing program.

Mayor Black asked if customers would receive a check or a credit if they have been overbilled and Ms. Janssen replied that customers would receive a credit to their bill unless they are moving out of the Town, which in that case they would be paid out.

Commissioner Cordell asked how the Town would calculate the averages for customers that opt-in to the program. Mr. Blanton replied that the averages for the program would be based on gallons used and not the cost.

Commissioner Connor made a motion to approve the Budget Billing Policy and Commissioner Fowler provided the second. The vote was 4-0.

#### **XI. Approval of the Audit Contract for FY 2019-2020**

Mr. Blanton provided the Board with a proposal to issue the FY 2019-2020 Audit Contract to Eddie Carrick, CPA. Mr. Blanton stated that the contract is the same standard contract that has been used for the previous audits.

Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell motioned to award the FY 2019-2020 Audit Contract to Eddie Carrick, CPA and Commissioner Moore provided the second. The vote was 4-0.

#### **XII. Citizen Appointments to the Citizen Advisory Master Planning Board**

Mr. Blanton brought before the Board a list of citizens that applied to be on the Citizen Advisory Master Planning Board (CAMP Board) that was approved at the July 2020 meeting. Mr. Blanton plans to meet 4 to 6 times with the 8 members of the CAMP Board.

Commissioner Connor motioned to appoint the 8 citizens to the Citizen Advisory Master Planning Board and Commissioner Moore provided the second. The vote was 4-0.

#### **XIII. Town Manager's Report**

Mr. Blanton thanked the Ranlo Police Department for their service this past month while responding to over 350 events.

Mr. Blanton provided the Board with an update on the CDGB Grant. Mr. Blanton stated that he has received around 50 surveys back from the 276 that the town sent out. Mr. Blanton said that he has submitted the preliminary application to the State, with the ancillary information gathered from the surveys being submitted at a later date. Mr. Blanton updated Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell on her question from last month's meeting, stating that it would cost over \$500,000 fund the project independently.

Mr. Blanton updated the Board on the engineering study on Boulder Court. He informed the Board that representatives from the Wooten Company, along with Public Works employees, smoked the lines and identified numerous areas of critical concern that need to be addressed. Mr. Blanton stated that the Town will be working to create a bid packet in the near future to get the lines repaired.

Mr. Blanton provided the Board with an update on a busy week for Public Works employees with seven water leaks and the lift station at Waste Management experiencing severe electrical issues and requiring several emergency backup pumps to be brought in while the issues were fixed.

Mr. Blanton informed the Board that he has cancelled the final Mill Town Night Festival due to the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic and the Governor's Executive Order keeping us in Phase 2 until September 11<sup>th</sup> 2020.

Mr. Blanton stated that the Town is resuming cut-offs and late fees, and they are working with delinquent accounts to set up payment plans.

Mr. Blanton wanted to discuss the property at 2300 Lowell Road and gauge the Board's interest in moving forward with that parcel.

Mayor Black stated that he thinks the Town should hang onto the property because the State will want to redo the intersection at Spencer Mountain Road and Ozark Road/Lowell Road eventually. Commissioner Connor inquired about tearing the building down, and Mr. Blanton stated that due to the building that sits immediately next to it, tearing the building down would be difficult and costly. Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell stated that due to the condition that the building is in, she would rather put it up for sale. Commissioner Fowler asked if the Town would be responsible for bringing the building down if the State decides to expand that intersection and Mr. Blanton replied that since both roads are State Highways, it would be a NCDOT project and they would have that responsibility. Commissioner Moore stated that NCDOT is not going to take on new projects until 2022 due to budgetary concerns. Commissioner Conner inquired if someone would be willing to rent out the building and Mr. Blanton stated that due to the condition of the building, it would be unsafe to rent out.

Mr. Blanton informed the Board that he would research the costs of demolition for the building.

#### **XIV. Comments from the Mayor**

Mayor Black stated that he did not have any comments.

#### **XV. Comments from Commissioners**

Commissioner Moore said that he has seen posts online about the possibility of a Farmer's Market behind Town Hall. He said that has spoken with Mr. Blanton about doing an application to gauge interest for the Farmer's Market. He also said that the Fire Department will be moving shortly to their new station but is unsure of an exact date. He said that the weather alert siren that is currently attached to the fire department and Town Hall is not moving to the new fire station. He proposed that the Town move the siren to the new fire station and place it on a 65-foot-tall pole so it can be heard throughout the area when a severe weather event warning (severe thunderstorm or tornado) has been issued for Ranlo or Gaston County.

Mr. Blanton stated that if the Board decided to allocate funding to move the siren it would have to come from the General Fund since it was not included in the original budget. No action was taken on the matter.

Commissioner Fowler brought up an issue with people that elected to give up their second trash can but continue to leave multiple bags of trash on the ground for Public Works employees to pick up later in the week. He stated that the Town should implement a fine for habitual offenders. Mr. Blanton stated that he would look into fees and draft a policy for the council to look over.

Commissioner Conner inquired about the status of direct deposit and insurance for Commissioners. Mr. Blanton stated that the bank is ready to begin testing the direct deposit and will be in operation in the near future. He also stated that Commissioners can join the Town's insurance policy.

**XVI. Adjournment**

Commissioner Fowler motioned to adjourn the meeting and Mayor Pro Tem Cordell provided the second. The vote was 4-0.

ATTESTED TO:

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Mayor Lynn Black

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Recorder and transcriber of the minutes for the Regular Board Meeting on August 13, 2020.