

RANLO BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS SPECIAL MARCH 25TH 2021 MEETING
RANLO TOWN HALL
1624 SPENCER MOUNTAIN ROAD, RANLO, NORTH CAROLINA 28054
Thursday, March 25th 2021
6:00 PM

MINUTES

Governing Body Present:

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

Staff Present:

Town Manager	Jonathan Blanton
Finance Director	Lieke Janssen-Castro

Others Present:

Mitch Brigulio – Senior Vice President, Davenport Public Finance
Jeremy Martin – Account Executive, Enterprise Fleet Management

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Mayor Black called the meeting to order and Town Manager Jonathan Blanton conducted the roll call. All members were present.

Mayor Black offered the invocation.

II. Adoption of the Agenda

Commissioner Locklear motioned to adopt the agenda and Commissioner Moore provided the second. The vote was 5-0.

III. Approval of the March 4th 2021 Board of Commissioners' Special Meeting Minutes

Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell motioned to adopt the March 4th 2021 Board of Commissioners' Special Meeting Minutes and Commissioner Conner provided the second. The vote was 5-0.

IV. Comments from Attendees

The Town Manager reported that there were no comments from attendees wishing to address the Board.

V. Presentation of the Town of Ranlo's Financial Assessment from Davenport Public Finance

Mitch Brigulio of Davenport Public Finance presented the Board with a presentation on the state of the Town's finances, as well as a debt capacity analysis and an overview of long-term funding options for the Town. The presentation is enclosed in its entirety.

The presentation included an overview of the last four years of the Town's audits, a peer comparison to the finances of other municipalities in Gaston County, and the effect of generating revenue by tax increases.

Mr. Brigulio made several recommendations in order to address concerns from the Local Government Commission, to remedy decreases in the Town's fund balance, and to implement practices and procedures for financial stability. No official action was taken.

VI. Presentation of Enterprise Public Vehicle Rental Program

Jeremy Martin with Enterprise gave the Board a presentation and proposal regarding the company's public vehicle rental program and the potential benefits for the Town. The presentation is enclosed in its entirety.

The presentation included an option for the Town to rent police and public works vehicles through Enterprise, a buy-out proposal for current vehicles owned by the Town, and long-term options for contracting with Enterprise.

The Board discussed various aspects of the proposal with Mr. Martin, as well as several points of clarification. Several issues of concern were discussed, including public perception, lack of ownership in assets of the Town, and potential contractual issues.

VII. Five Minute Recess of the Board

The Board took a five-minute recess.

VIII. Consideration of the Proposal from Enterprise Public Vehicle Rental Program

The Town Manager confirmed that the Board was in consensus with not proceeding with Enterprise's proposal. The Mayor affirmed and the Board agreed.

IX. Resolution Authorizing the Application for the Financing of the Boulder Court Project

The Town Manager presented the Board with a resolution to solicit proposals for the reconstruction of Boulder Court. Commissioner Locklear made the motion to approve the resolution and Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell provided the second. The vote was 5-0.

X. Resolution Requesting Congressional Aid for Community Funded Ranlo Projects

The Town Manager explained that the United States Congress recently reinstated congressional aid for community funded projects. Mr. Blanton stated that there are ten projects that are included in the resolution and requested that the Board adopt the resolution to send to the Town's congressional representatives in Washington, D.C. and local representative in Raleigh.

Commissioner Fowler moved to adopt the resolutions and Commissioner Moore provided the second. The vote was 5-0.

XI. Overview and Discussion of the First Draft of the Fiscal Year 2022 Budget

The Town Manager requested that the Board permit him to read a prepared statement to begin the overview of the first draft of the fiscal year 2022 budget. Mr. Blanton overviewed his first year as the

Town's first town manager, he noted the difficult financial position that Town and Board currently are in, and underscored the importance of a tax-increase and utility rate increase.

Mr. Blanton noted that given the difficult sacrifices departments are being asked to make and the large amount of recommended fee increases to the residents, that he would like the Board to consider an addendum to section eight of his employment agreement that would decrease his salaried benefits allowance by 25%.

Commissioner Locklear noted that she was not in favor of Mr. Blanton's request. Mr. Blanton noted that it was important to him to be able to demonstrate to the Town that he is also making sacrifices in order to make a show of support in favor of the utility rate adjustments and tax increases. Commissioner Locklear stated she wanted to decrease her salary as well.

Commissioner Conner stated she would like to recommend the Board also decrease their salary to the amount that was provided for in the fiscal year 2020 budget. The Board reached consensus to decrease the salary of the governing board for the fiscal year 2022 budget.

The Town Manager presented the first draft of the fiscal year 2022 budget to the Board. The Board reviewed each department with general discussion in reference to the Town's revenues in the general fund and utility fund.

Commissioner Locklear and Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell discussed the Recreation Department's budget and options for partnerships with Lowell. Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell noted that with the changes in the Town's form of government last year, that no commissioner is tasked with leading any individual departments. Mr. Blanton confirmed the changes from mayor-council to council-manager.

The Board generally discussed individual line-items, including cleaning of The Lodge, Christmas lights, and recreation committees. Commissioner Conner noted that the Mayor may be able to advise the Town on appropriate amounts to be funded towards electrical repairs for Christmas lights.

The Mayor stated that he can do business with the Town, given the Town's population. The Town Manager noted that there is a conflict between the Town's Code of Ordinances and North Carolina State Law. The Town's local ordinances state that elected officials cannot do business with the Town, but that North Carolina General Statutes do permit it. Mr. Blanton stated that the issue was brought to the Board in 2012 and that when a conflict exists like this, that it is at the Board's discretion on how to proceed.

The Board proceeded to discuss the budget for the Police Department at length and the options for additional personnel within the Department.

Commissioner Moore voiced his support of an additional officer for the Police Department and made a motion to add a position for a thirteenth officer. There was no second and the motion died.

Commissioner Moore also expressed his support of a raise for employees within the Police Department and made a motion to increase the salaries of the officers by an amount requested by the Chief of Police. There was no second and the motion died.

The Board proceeded to discuss the Public Works Department and the Utility Fund. The Board reached consensus to increase the salary line-item to potentially plan for the return of inmate labor.

Commissioner Conner noted that she and Mayor-Pro Tem Cordell had previously discussed additional holidays for the Town's employees in lieu of a pay-raise this year. The Town Manager proposed that

each employee receive an extra holiday at the Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Memorial Day, with the Police Department being granted five extra holidays to be redeemed at the Chief's discretion.

Commissioner Conner made a motion to grant the proposed five paid holidays for the upcoming fiscal year. Mayor Pro-Tem stated that she would be in support of three holidays that coincide with Christmas, Thanksgiving, and the Fourth of July, with two floating holidays to use at the employee and department head's discretion, with the Police Department being granted five floating holidays.

Commissioner Conner clarified that her motion consists of Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell's suggestion and the Mayor verified that this will only be effective for one year. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Fowler and the vote was 5-0.

Commissioner Locklear requested clarification on the Town's bank service fees. The Director of Finance confirmed that these are funds charged to the Town by the bank for maintaining an account.

Commissioner Fowler and Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell suggested additional funding for meter replacements throughout the Town. Mrs. Janssen-Castro stated that she would increase the line item accordingly and that the issue also should be taken into consideration as part of a long-term capital improvement plan. Commissioner Moore suggested the idea of a bond for capital improvement plans and the Town Manager stated that a bond referendum may be a possibility within the next two years.

Commissioner Conner inquired about the Town's policy regarding an adjustment for residents watering their yards. The Mayor and Commissioner Moore stated that the adjustment is for the sewer charge only on the bill. The Board discussed the practicability of the policy and the Town Manager stated he would research the issue.

XII. Appointment to Intergovernmental Task Force on Homelessness in Gaston County

The Town Manager explained that the Gaston County Manager's Office requested an elected official from Ranlo to serve on the newly created Intergovernmental Task Force on Homelessness in Gaston County.

Commissioner Conner stated that she would be willing to serve, if another elected official would serve on the MPO Board. The Mayor stated he would be willing to serve in the capacity and Commissioner Fowler stated he would be willing to serve as the alternate. Commissioner Moore motioned to appoint Mayor Black as the MPO appointee and Commissioner Fowler as the alternate. Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell provided the second. The vote was 5-0.

Commissioner Moore motioned to appoint Commissioner Conner to the Intergovernmental Task Force on Homelessness in Gaston County. Commissioner Fowler seconded the option. The vote was 5-0.

XIII. Discussion of Upcoming April 2021 Meeting, GarlandBurks Marketing, and Water Tower Discussion

The Town Manager stated that he would like to schedule the April 8, 2021 meeting to be held at the Ranlo Lodge beginning at 6:00 pm for a public hearing about ordinance changes and revisions. He stated that the meeting would be open to the public under guidelines from the Governor's Office.

Commissioner Moore stated he would like to make a motion to move all meetings to 6:00 pm. There was no second.

Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell inquired about the updated logo and branding efforts from GarlandBurks. The Town Manager advised that the Advisory Board was in favor of the provided designs and that they also recommended a star-decal for installation on the Ranlo Water Tower.

XIV. Adjournment

Commissioner Fowler motioned to adjourn the meeting and Commissioner Locklear provided the second. The vote was 5-0.

ATTESTED TO:

Mayor Lynn Black

Recorder and transcriber of the minutes for Special Board Meeting of March 25th 2021