

RANLO BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS REGULAR JANUARY 2021 MEETING
RANLO TOWN HALL
1624 SPENCER MOUNTAIN ROAD, RANLO, NORTH CAROLINA 28054
Tuesday January 14, 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

Guests Present:

Eddie Carrick, CPA
Slade Harbin, The Wooten Company
Brett Green, Creech and Associates
Natalie Stegner, Creech and Associates

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 Fowler motioned to adopt the agenda and Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell provided the second. The vote was 5-0.

III. Approval of the November 12, 2020 Board of Commissioners' Regular Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Moore motioned to approve the November 12, 2020 Board of Commissioners' Regular Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Locklear 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 Fiscal Year 2020 Audit by Mr. Eddie Carrick

Mr. Eddie Carrick addressed the Board regarding the fiscal year 2020 audit that his firm conducted on behalf of the Town. Mr. Carrick reported that the audit received an unmodified opinion from the Local Government Commission.

Mr. Carrick reported that there was a \$641,000 deficient in the General Fund for the 2020 fiscal year. He also stated that adv valorem taxes and local option sales tax both increased during the audit period. Mr. Carrick noted that two garbage trucks were purchased, which accounted for a large portion of the deficient in the General Fund.

Mr. Carrick noted that the Town currently has a 21% fund balance based on expenditures and revenues. He projected that in the coming years that number would likely increase to 40% of total expenditures to revenues in the fund balance.

Mr. Carrick noted that revenues were down in the utility fund and noted that system development fees were less than in prior years. He stated that actual expenditures increased due to the rising cost of purchasing water and treating wastewater from Two Rivers. Mr. Carrick noted that adjustments of rates would need to be reviewed in the upcoming years.

Mayor Black inquired as to the reason for the large deficient in the General Fund and Mr. Carrick responded that large capital expenditures, such as garbage trucks, accounted for a bulk of the deficient. Commissioner Moore noted that new radios were purchased for the Police Department during the fiscal year 2020 budget.

Mayor Black thanked Mr. Carrick for his work on the audits.

VI. The Wooten Company's Summarization and Report Findings for Boulder Court Assessment

Slade Harbin with The Wooten Company addressed the Board regarding the firm's assessment of Boulder Court. Mr. Harbin provided information slides to the Board that are attached to these minutes.

Mr. Harbin gave an overview of the sink holes, alligator cracking on the pavement, and infrastructure analysis of the road. Mr. Harbin noted that the road is approximately five years old and that numerous issues are of concern for the road. Smoke testing and closed-circuit video review were conducted on the to form the basis of the analysis.

Separated culvert joints and lateral cracking of the infrastructure pipes were referenced as being culprit for the extensive damage of the road. Mr. Harbin also gave a review of the the geotechnical investigation that was undertaken which revealed problems with the soil underneath the road, which was contributed to poor compaction.

Mr. Harbin explained that the stormwater piping would need to be replaced, as well as sealing junction boxes and repairing sidewalks and subgrating the street. Mr. Harbin noted that the street would need to be completely replaced.

Commissioner Conner confirmed that the current infrastructure is only five years old and inquired as to the average life expectancy of these types of roads. Mr. Harbin responded that, when properly done, the life expectancy is approximately twenty-to-thirty years.

The Town Manager stated that due to the unusual circumstances and the uniqueness of the situation, The Wooten Company was contacted in order to assist with the project and recommended next steps forward.

Mr. Harbin gave an overview of numerous options and factors to consider when moving forward with a solution to the problem.

Commissioner Moore inquired as to what types of funds could be utilized for this project and the Town Manager responded that the costs could be potentially split amongst the Powell Bill Fund, the Stormwater Fund, and the General Fund. Commissioner Fowler inquired as to revolving funds that may be available for the project and Mr. Blanton responded that the Town receives approximately \$96,000.

Commissioner Moore noted safety issues and his support of moving forward with the project. Commissioner Conner verified that the proposed repairs would be sound for at least twenty years. Mr. Harbin confirmed.

The Mayor inquired as to the piping size and the footage of the lines to be replaced. Mr. Harbin referenced the report and stated approximately 1000 feet of piping would be replaced. Mayor Pro Tem Cordell asked a timetable for this type of project and sought clarification on the responsibilities of the contractors with regards to traffic control patterns. Mr. Harbin stated that communication would be provided to the residents as the project progressed in reference to specific details.

The Mayor asked if only certain hot spots could be replaced and Mr. Harbin responded that all pipes are damaged in the specified area of Boulder Court. Commissioner Fowler inquired as to whether this problem is exclusive to Boulder Court and Mr. Harbin responded that he believed no other issues are visible elsewhere to the extent of the problems on Boulder Court. Mayor Pro Tem Cordell verified that the project would essentially include all of Boulder Court.

Commissioner Conner inquired as to a timetable for the project and Mr. Harbin responded that the initial steps could be taken within the next months. Mr. Harbin described the bidding process and Commissioner Moore inquired as to whether The Wooten Company would be available to monitor and oversee the project. Mr. Harbin confirmed that The Wooden Company would be interested in providing a proposal for the project.

The Town Manager thanked Mr. Harbin for The Wooten Company's efforts on this projects and other recent projects that they assisted the Town with.

VII. Creech and Associates' Presentation of Ranlo Corridor Study and Master Plan

Brent Green and Natalie Stegner with Creech and Associates presented the attached slideshow to the Board.

Mr. Green explained that the goals of the presentation were to (i) determine space needs for Town Hall and the Police Department and develop blueprints to reflect those needs; (ii) provide renovation designs for the Lodge; (iii) evaluate the Town's zoning to prevent predatory development that would be harmful to our residents; (iv) recommend pedestrian paths for new sidewalks and accessibility for families to be able to safely walk through the Town; and (v) proactively plan and tailor short-term and long-term growth options with properties that are currently on the market.

Commissioner Moore commented that the Town would be responsible for building the Town Hall/Police Department under this proposal with the remaining land being leased for development.

The Mayor commented that the proposal was bold.

Commissioner Conner inquired as to the economic viability and incentives of the project. Mr. Green and Ms. Stegner commented that the traffic flow through Ranlo may entice businesses and new residents. Commissioner Conner followed up that this may increase the values of homes, but expressed concerns around jeopardizing the small-town atmosphere.

Mayor Pro Tem Cordell followed up that that zoning changes and amendments could help protect residents and the small-town atmosphere.

The Town Manager underscored that the study provides for numerous positive benefits in its totality including zoning recommendations, pedestrian parkways, space needs assessments for future growth, and renovation ideas for The Lodge. Mr. Blanton spoke to long-term master planning with the findings and the value of the project.

The Mayor noted that more highway would be needed for pedestrian paths. Mr. Green noted that the North Carolina Department of Transportation does not currently have Spencer Mountain Road listed as a potential widening project. Mr. Green stated that the designing of sidewalks could be tailored to leave enough room for future expansion. The Mayor noted the Town's ownership of the building at the corner of Spencer Mountain Road and Highway 7 and voiced concerns with traffic congestion.

The Mayor thanked Creech and Associates for sharing the information with the Board.

VIII. Finalization of the Revised Fee and Schedule for Bulk and Excess Garbage

The Town Manager addressed the Board regarding issues surround bulk and excess garbage across the Town. Mr. Blanton asked the Board if they had a preference on fees, or scheduling for bulk garbage items. The item was originally discussed in the fall, but the Town Manager wanted to follow-up with a discussion with the Board.

The Mayor confirmed pick-up would be free once a month and then a fee assessed for other pick-ups outside of the monthly schedule. Commissioner Fowler commented that he has noticed issues across the Town with large items being left and that there should be a fee assessed based on what is being left to be disposed of.

The Town Manager noted that he would bring options to the Board for a revised fee schedule in February. Commissioner Locklear noted that she would like to see a clean-up month to coincide with revisions to the pick-up schedule. Mr. Blanton noted he would make the necessary arrangements.

IX. Adoption of the 2021 Meeting and Holiday Schedule

Commissioner Moore motioned to adopt the 2021 meeting and holiday schedule and Commissioner Locklear provided the second. The vote was 5-0.

X. Town Manager's Report

The Town Manager reported that the Ranlo Police Department was recently awarded a body-armor grant from the North Carolina League of Municipalities. Mr. Blanton also thanked Mr. Frank Stewart with Primer Body Armor for providing new bullet-proof vests for the Town's Police Department. Mr. Blanton lastly noted the increased number of calls that the Police Department has experienced and thanks Chief Lunsford for his leadership and all of the Town's police officers.

The Town Manager reported that Town Hall would be closed in honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day on January 15, 2021 and that garbage pick-up would be delayed by one day.

Mr. Blanton noted that Kintegra would be providing a free COVID-19 testing site later in February with more details to be announced in the following days.

The Town Manager recapped the 'Deck the Yard Christmas Contest' from December and commended the Mayor and Board for the idea and direction. The Norman Family, the Harris Family, and the Guye Family were noted as the first three place winners.

Mr. Blanton reported that the painting of the Ranlo Water Tower was concluded.

The Town Manager also informed the Board that former Ranlo Commissioner Johnny M. Bradley passed away. Mr. Blanton noted that Mr. Bradley was an original member of the Ranlo Board of Commissioners and thanked him for his service.

XI. Comments from the Mayor and from the Board of Commissioners

The Mayor noted a salvage yard on Burlington Avenue that he would like to have addressed. Mr. Blanton stated that code enforcement would investigate the matter. Commissioner Moore stated that wrecked vehicles were brought in and out of the lot each day.

Commissioner Fowler inquired as to the availability of COVID-19 vaccines for employees of the Town. Mr. Blanton stated that numerous employees have taken advantage of the early availability for front-line workers and stated his hope that more vaccines would be available for other employees.

XII. Additional Request from the Town Manager

The Town Manager requested to address a final item that he inadvertently did not mention during his report and the Mayor allowed Mr. Blanton to proceed. Mr. Blanton stated that he believed the best course of action to proceed with the large capital projects that were discussed this evening was to engage with a public finance consulting group to show what type of financial position the Town is currently in. He requested consensus of the Board to proceed with contracting with Davenport Public Finance to evaluate what the Town would be able to finance short-term and long-term without raising taxes. It was the consensus of the Board to proceed.

XIII. Adjournment

Commissioner Moore 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 Board Meeting on January 14, 2021