

RANLO BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS REGULAR SEPTEMBER 2020 MEETING
RANLO TOWN HALL
1624 SPENCER MOUNTAIN ROAD, RANLO, NORTH CAROLINA 28054
Thursday, September 24, 2020
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

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Mayor Black called the meeting to order and Town Manager Jonathan Blanton conducted the roll call. Mayor Black offered the invocation.

II. Adoption of the Agenda

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

III. Approval of the August 13, 2020 Board of Commissioners' Regular Meeting Minutes

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

IV. Comments from Attendees

Pastor C.L. Simmons of the Ranlo Church of God shared words of encouragement to the Board and offered a prayer.

V. Public Hearing for a Variance for North Second Street Properties

Commissioner Locklear motioned to open the public hearing to discuss a variance for 1323, 1327, 1331, and 1335 North Second Street and Commissioner Fowler seconded the motion. Mr. Blanton explained that the property owner, Jessica McCaskill, was requesting to subdivide her two parcels with four homes into four parcels with one home on each parcel, but that the lots did not currently meet setbacks required in the Town's ordinance. No citizen wished to comment on the matter. Mayor Black noted that the deviation was only slight and Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell noted that the setback was relating to the footage from the home to the roadway. Commissioner Locklear motioned to close the public hearing and Commissioner Moore provided the second.

VI. Deliberation of Variance and Consistency Statement for North 2nd Street Properties

Mayor Pro Tem Cordell motioned to adopt the consistency statement for the North 2nd Street properties and Commissioner Moore provided the second. The vote was 5-0.

Commissioner Moore then made the motion to accept the variance for the North 2nd Street properties and Commissioner Conner provided the second. The vote was 5-0.

Mr. Blanton commented that the consistency statement would provide that in the interest of uniformity and consistency, the variance is appropriate for the public good. Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell expressed her desire to see a revised grandfathered-in clause be provided for in the Town ordinances and Mr. Blanton stated he would confer with the Town Attorney to research the issue.

VII. First Quarter Financial Review

Mr. Blanton provided the Board with a year-to-date actual report for the first quarter of the fiscal year and explained certain line items that were a matter of interest and concern. Mr. Blanton explained that the budget continues to move forward and that budget amendments would be provided later in the fiscal year.

Mayor Black commented that the funds in the budget may need to vary from time-to-time and that budget amendments will be addressed when needed. Mayor Pro-Tem inquired as to whether the quarterly financial report could be posted on the Town's website and the Town Manager stated he would make the necessary arrangements to provide for the posting.

VIII. Presentation of Revised Utility Billing Procedures

Mr. Blanton presented the Board with a proposal to provide for utility customers to have a bank draft option for utility payments and a portal for customers to login in to view their utility bill. He explained that this proposal will provide for updated equipment, software, and a migration of e-mails to one central secure platform. Mr. Blanton noted that Ms. Janseen did an excellent job coordinating and leading the efforts to make this project possible.

Commissioner Moore commented that this effort will bring the Town up-to-times and the Mayor agreed. Commissioner Fowler inquired as to current IT costs and Mr. Blanton explained that it is difficult to decipher overall costs given the overlap between departments, but that this proposal would more clearly demonstrate actual costs in the future.

The Board gave consensus to move forward with the proposal.

IX. Discussion of Revised Fee Schedule for Bulk and Excess Garbage

Mr. Blanton explained that there are numerous issues across the Town with excess garbage and bulk being inappropriately disposed of. He explained that the City of Gastonia provides bulk pick-up twice a year and that the City of Lowell is exploring the option of quarterly pick-up of large bulk items. Mr. Blanton inquired as to how the Board would like to move forward to address the issue in Ranlo.

Mayor Black inquired and confirmed that if the Town moved to a quarterly pick-up schedule that residents would only be receiving pick-up once per quarter with no additional fee and that the Town could monitor who is inappropriately disposing of garbage in the interim. Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell

stated that monthly pick-up would be an easier initial transition as opposed to quarterly and voiced her support for a fee for inappropriate disposal of garbage. Commissioner Moore agreed and stated that a fee should be explored for items that are not sanctioned by ordinance to be disposed of. Commissioner Fowler also expressed concerns about the possibility of bulk being brought into the Town and illegally dumped.

Mr. Blanton stated that he agreed with Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell's suggestion that a monthly pick-up for bulk garbage would be an appropriate transition beginning in January and that a fee could be explored at a similar date. The Mayor expressed concerns that monthly pick-up may not adequately address the problem and Commissioner Moore commented that the Town does have the trailer available for residents to reserve for large amounts of bulk. Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell suggested including a reminder of this policy on future announcements and Commissioner Fowler suggested that a list of prohibited items of disposal again be circulated to the residents.

X. Consideration of a Rear-Loader for Public Works

Mr. Blanton explained the need for a new rear-loader for Public Works. He stated that the current Par-Kan, small garbage truck, is in poor condition, no longer functioning properly, and has been taken out of service. The Town Manager lobbied the Board to approve a financing agreement with BB&T to purchase a new rear-loader with no payment being due until October 2021. Mr. Blanton recommended this proposal in order to show credit stability and to address a matter of public safety.

The Mayor inquired as to the cost of this piece of equipment and the Town Manager stated that he had reviewed informal quotes in the \$100,000.00 to \$115,000.00 range. Mr. Blanton also stated that the equipment would not need a CDL driver and would be primarily used in back-alleys and dead-end streets throughout the Town.

Commissioner Moore commented that this purchase would eliminate litter that sometimes occurs from an uncovered truck collecting garbage and that the garbage can be compacted and taken directly to Waste Management for disposal. Commissioner Fowler also commented that the purchase would prevent dangerous situations of garbage-trucks inappropriately backing down dead-end streets. The Town Manager concurred and explained that he would not ordinarily recommend large purchases be made mid-fiscal year, but that the exigent circumstances and favorable financing terms required immediate attention.

The Mayor inquired as to whether the Town Manager would prefer to finance the project or to purchase directly from fund-balance. Mr. Blanton confirmed he would prefer to finance the project due to the fact that the Town has no outstanding debt and that no large-scale capital project has been financed by the Town in recent history. He stated that establishing a consistent credit history will be advantageous when applying for grants and loans in the future.

Commissioner Moore made a motion to approve the financing agreement and designate the Town Manager to award the bid to the lowest responsible bidder. Commissioner Locklear provided the second. The vote was 5-0.

XI. Adoption of Stormwater Resolution

The Town Manager explained the need for the Town to adopt a resolution affirming the Town's support regarding implementation of a compliant NPDES MS4 Stormwater Permit after an August 4, 2020 audit from the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality noted several deficiencies

within the Town's stormwater system. Mr. Blanton explained that changes are currently underway and that the Town will soon be in compliance.

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

XII. Adoption of Citizen Participation Plan for Community Development Block Grant

The Town Manager presented a proposed Citizen Participation Plan for upcoming Community Development Block Grant programs. Mr. Blanton explained that this is the initial step in applying for these block grants to improve infrastructure and also to assist funding for residents impacted by COVID-19. The Town Manager explained that numerous public hearings will be held in the upcoming weeks for these CDBG grants.

Commissioner Moore motioned to adopt the Citizen Participation Plan and Commissioner Conner provided the second. The vote was 5-0.

XIII. Discussion of a Donation of Football Equipment to the Gastonia Knights

The Town Manager requested that the Board consider donating the remainder of the football equipment that was purchased in 2017 to the Gastonia Knights, a subset of the Great Charlotte Youth Football and Cheer Conference, a non-profit 501(c)3 organization. Mr. Blanton explained that the president of the organization recently purchased twenty-five sets of equipment for the Team from the Town, but due to financial limitations of the organization were not in a position to purchase the rest of the equipment. He then presented a resolution to convey to the Board.

The Mayor noted that this would free up space in the community building and Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell expressed her desire to see the Town listed as a sponsor for the team. Commissioner Moore also verified that this donation would include all of the remaining the football equipment and the Town Manager stated that the Town would present this as a blanket donation of all equipment. Commissioner Fowler stated that there are players on the team from Ranlo and the Town Manager confirmed.

Commissioner Moore motioned to adopt the resolution and Mayor Pro Tem Cordell provided the second. The vote was 5-0.

XIV. Town Manager's Report

The Town Manager reported that the Town submitted an Asset Inventory and Assessment Grant this week with the hopes of being awarded \$150,000.00 for water assessment and \$150,000.00 for waste-water assessment.

Mr. Blanton noted that the Potter's House would be utilizing the Town Park for part of their annual Scavenger Hunt and commended the organization for their work in the community.

Mr. Blanton also updated the Board on the demolition of 2300 Lowell Road. He reported that rough approximations show that the project will cost in excess of \$50,000.00 and that formal proposals for demolition will be made available to the Board at a later time. Commissioner Moore inquired as to whether electricity was still active on the site and the Town Manager confirmed that there was not.

The Town Manager also informed the Board that the Lodge would be available for rentals again in October, with social distancing guidelines being followed. He then inquired as to whether the Board would be agreeable to resume renting the Community Building and what fees would be appropriate. The Board discussed various factors surrounding the rental of the facility, including cleaning and cost effectiveness, and gave consensus to proceed with \$60.00 for residents and a higher proportion for outside residents.

Mr. Blanton then thanked the Ranlo Police Department for their efforts in patrolling the community given the increased level of calls.

Lastly, the Town Manager reported that Mr. Chris Kelley was not interested in leasing the former lift station, as was discussed at the August meeting.

XV. Comments from the Mayor

Mayor Black thanked the Town for the gifts and support during the recent loss of his wife. He commended the police and fire departments' efforts and gave his appreciation to all during his time of loss.

XVI. Comments from the Board of Commissioners

Commissioner Conner stated that she was unable to attend the MPO meeting due to a scheduling conflict with the Board Meeting.

Commissioner Locklear inquired as to how the Board felt about proceeding with the Christmas Parade and Senior Thanksgiving Luncheon. Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell suggested a delivery-based approach and Commissioner Locklear expressed concern about the amount of time a delivery-based approach would take. Commissioner Conner stated concerns about the current pandemic and the Mayor noted that those who attend would likely feel comfortable attending. Both Commissioner Conner and the Town Manager suggested a drive-thru option and the Mayor stated the Town could monitor the situation and reevaluate at a later date. The Town Manager also stated that the Town's staff would monitor the situation surrounding the feasibility of a Christmas Parade and Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell suggested the possibility of coordinating with the Ranlo Fire Department.

Commissioner Moore indicated that the Fire Department would likely be conducting a trunk-or-treat for Halloween and Mayor Black asked if Mountain View would be scaling back on their festivities. Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell stated that Mountain View would be proceeding with their planned activities.

Mayor Pro-Tem Cordell stated that a citizen expressed concerns to her regarding billing practices. The Town Manager responded that one of the goals of the proposed upgrades to the utility software and hardware would be to provide for more flexibility and options for billing within the upcoming months.

XVII. Adjournment

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

ATTESTED TO:

Mayor Lynn Black

Recorder and transcriber of the minutes for the Regular Board Meeting on June 11, 2020