

**TOWN OF RANLO BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MONTHLY APRIL 2024
MEETING**

**RANLO TOWN HALL
1624 SPENCER MOUNTAIN ROAD, RANLO, NORTH CAROLINA 28054**

THURSDAY, APRIL 11TH, 2024 7:00 PM

MINUTES

Governing Body Present

Mayor Lynn Black
Commissioner Jamie Fowler
Commissioner Ronnie Laws
Commissioner Wade Morton
Commissioner Robin Conner

Staff Present

Town Manager	Charlie Hansen
Police Chief	Jimmy Lunsford
LFNC Fellow	Antonia Christou

I. Call to Order

Mayor Black called the meeting to order, and the Town Manager conducted the roll call.

II. Adoption of the April 11th, 2024, Agenda

Mayor Black called for a motion to adopt the agenda for the regular April meeting.
Commissioner Fowler motioned to adopt the agenda for the regular April meeting.
Commissioner Laws seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous 4-0 vote.

III. Comments from Attendees

Troy Traversie, representing the Lewis family, introduced himself and clarified his role in overseeing the sale of the Lewis family's property. The Town Manager acknowledged Troy and the Lewis family's dedication to the Town of Ranlo, particularly in relation to the listing of the Lewis Farm property. The Town Manager, praising their proactive approach, highlighted how the family has played a crucial role in arranging meetings

between the town and potential buyers. The Town Manager said their willingness to facilitate these discussions is commendable and underscores their commitment to fostering constructive dialogue within the community.

Mr. Traversie said he would like to thank the Board of Commissioners for listening to him and indicated his role as a representative for the Lewis family. Mr. Traversie said that the handout before the Board includes parcel numbers of the Lewis Farm property and that it reflects one hundred and three continuous acres. Mr. Traversie said that although the posting is publicly available online, he aims to facilitate conversation between the Town and potential buyers early on. Mr. Traversie said that he has the perspective of being from a small town, which helps him understand the gravity of the sale.

Mayor Black said that the Lewis Farm has always been an asset to the Town of Ranlo. Mr. and Mrs. Lewis said they would not move if they did not have to. Mrs. Lewis said that grain and other key operating materials are becoming increasingly difficult to reach in this area. Mr. Lewis said the traffic is terrible to drive in. Mr. Traversie said the growth in the area is only increasing. Mr. Lewis said Ranlo is a great place to live but not to farm. Mr. Lewis said he would like to offer a bit of advice to the Town of Ranlo. Mr. Lewis said that when development comes in, it must be inspected by the Town of Ranlo or by Gaston County to prevent issues from falling through the cracks and costing the Town money in the long run.

Mrs. Roselyn Smith said she has concerns about the measurements from the street to her property. She said she believes the distance is supposed to be ten feet, but her observations do not match that. Mrs. Smith said she had an issue with a leakage, noting that she was informed the Town of Ranlo cannot fully assist with leaks originating from the homeowner's side. Mrs. Smith said she had tremendously large water bills as a result and asked for help in taking care of the overall bill.

Commissioner Fowler asked Mrs. Smith if she had received a water bill since the leak was fixed. Mrs. Smith said yes, and that it was \$77.00 and \$140.00 prior to that. Commissioner Fowler asked Mrs. Smith if the leak was currently fixed. Mrs. Smith said yes.

Mayor Black asked the Town Manager if he had a list of Mrs. Smith's bills. The Town Manager said they can absolutely be pulled up. The Town Manager said he also visited the property and discussed the issue with Mrs. Smith earlier this week. Mayor Black said that, in the past, the Town had a policy that a singular water bill could be aided by the Town of Ranlo, but not a group of high water bills. The Town Manager said yes, that is

correct. The Town Manager said the bill must also be over a certain threshold to qualify for one-time forgiveness along with an additional route to do payment installments on individual bills.

Mrs. Smith asked if there were any other courses of action. Commissioner Fowler asked Mrs. Smith when this began. Mrs. Smith said this began in August. Mrs. Smith said that she called and was told she still had to pay, considering there were only two people using water in her household. Commissioner Fowler said that, in the past, the town has averaged water bills and provided forgiveness, which he would be willing to do this time. Commissioner Laws asked if there are any programs that could help elderly people with their water bills. Commissioner Fowler said there is a program offered throughout the county.

The Town Manager said that Mrs. Smith has already signed up for the installments.

Mayor Black asked Mrs. Smith how many high water bills she had received. Mrs. Smith said they have been increasing since August. Mayor Black asked Mrs. Smith if she had paid all her water bills. Mrs. Smith said yes, and that her water was cut off once. Mrs. Smith said she does not believe in not paying her bills, but these ones are very high. Mrs. Smith asked the board to let her know what they decide and thanked the board for their time. .

Old Business:

IV. Adoption of the March 14th, 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes of the Board

Commissioner Morton called for a motion to adopt the March 14th, 2024, regular meeting minutes as amended. Commissioner Fowler seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous 4-0 vote.

New Business:

V. Staff Presentation on Non-Profit Rate Discussion

The Town Manager said that at the direction of the board last month, staff have done some research to equip the board with information about the proposed reduced rate fee for non-profits seeking to utilize the lodge. The Town Manager said, to address the question from the board last month, no municipalities near the Town of Ranlo offer a decreased rate to nonprofits.

The Town Manager said that if the board decides to implement the reduced rate; there are two options the staff has prepared in terms of a standard operating procedure. The Town Manager said the first is a separate application form that non-profits can fill out. The Town Manager said the second is a policy that ensures equitable decision-making and guidance for the board to decide whether to grant a non-profit a reduced rate. The Town Manager said the staff is not presenting a number for what the discounted rate would be, but that could be a board decision. The Town Manager proceeded to read the rental rate reduction draft policy.

Commissioner Morton called for a motion to adopt the policy for non-profits seeking reduced rental rates. Commissioner Laws seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous 4-0 vote.

VI. Staff Update on Ranlo City Limit Sign

The Town Manager said that in last month's meeting, there was a discussion about moving the Ranlo city limit sign. The one on Spencer Mountain is a Department of Transportation sign, to whom the Town Manager reached out. The Town Manager said the sign on Monterey will be replaced, and others will be moved and taken care of. The Town Manager said that the sign on Spencer Mountain will not be moved because the Department of Transportation only puts signs in an area where the city's jurisdiction is on both ends of the street. As a result, the sign cannot be put on the bottom of the mountain because one side of the sign would not fall under the Town of Ranlo's jurisdiction.

Commissioner Fowler asked if the point where the Catholic Church is would count for the initiative. The Town Manager said yes. The Town Manager said he has sent GIS information to the engineer who is coming to replace broken, older, or unreadable signs.

VII. Staff Update on YMCA corporate membership numbers

The Town Manager said the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) offers a corporate membership to entities wishing to provide reduced rates for their employees. The Town Manager said there are a couple of different pay structures that the board can choose, should they wish to move forward with getting a corporate membership for the thirty-one staff members. The Town Manager said the handout in front of the board draws up the rates if the town covers 75% of the membership costs. The Town Manager said that the first sheet reflects what employees would see, and the second sheet shows the cost to the town. The Town Manager said this would also waive the joining fee. The Town Manager said that the YMCA structures their corporate memberships in a way so that the Town of Ranlo would only pay for what 5 members would cost the town. The

Town Manager said that the YMCA recommended that the Town of Ranlo not contribute 100%, because it promotes people to use the YMCA through a financial incentive upon themselves.

Commissioner Conner asked the Town Manager how many employees would be interested in signing up. The Town Manager said that, on two occasions, he has received vocal feedback from the police department and the public works department.

Commissioner Fowler asked the Town Manager if the Town of Ranlo's insurance allows a wellness discount for doing something wellness-related, which may offset the cost. The Town Manager said that he met with the Town of Ranlo's insurance broker to discuss this earlier today. The Town Manager said that some municipalities use similar wellness initiatives like Incent-fit. The Town Manager said some insurance companies will offer a discount if steps are being taken to reduce stress or improve wellness.

The Town Manager said the discounted 75% rate does not also apply to sports programming. The Town Manager said employees would still receive the membership rate for sports.

Commissioner Conner called for a motion to adopt the YMCA Corporate Membership Proposal for a reduced rate of 75% discount for Town of Ranlo employees. Commissioner Fowler seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous 4-0 vote.

VIII. Notification of Stormwater Management Plan Submission to NCDEQ

The Town Manager said that in February, the board heard about the NCDEQ's National Pollutant Discharge Eliminations Systems Permit, the Storm Water Management Plan from the Clean Water Act, the Phase Two Permit the Town of Ranlo has from NCDEQ, which is a requirement. The Town Manager said the permit is right on track. The Town manager said he has completed the Storm Water Management Plan and has sent it to the North Carolina Department of Water Quality, which has been approved.

IX. Adoption of the Budget Meeting and Timeline

The Town Manager said he has put together a timeline for the budget process and meetings associated with the process. The Town Manager said that speaking with the North Carolina League of Municipalities Senior Advisors, this timeline shows that Ranlo is in good shape. The Town Manager asked the Board to inform him if there are any meeting dates that anyone cannot attend. The Town Manager said the dates indicated

already fit with Commissioner Moore's schedule. The Town Manager said that he has spoken with Mrs. Day, the Town of Ranlo's Finance Director, and the initial baseline budget has been put together based on projections provided by Gaston County. The Town Manager said that conversations about the 7.5% water and 7.5% sewer rate increase must be had. The Town Manager said that he proposes April 29th to be a high-level discussion about budget prioritization to drive staff in the right direction. The Town Manager said that April 30th will be about receiving Department requests. The Town Manager said that on May 9th, before the regular board meeting, from 5:30-7:00, there will be a budget workshop. The Town Manager said that May 21st has been penciled in as a date to meet to discuss additional budget considerations if needed. The Town Manager said that June is when the budget will be passed, and June 1st will be when all town spending is stopped apart from emergency expenses. The Town Manager said June 13th will be the Budget Public Hearing and hopeful adoption.

Commissioner Fowler asked if the May 9th meeting will be with the board. The Town Manager said yes. Commissioner Fowler asked if anyone was traveling from Charlotte on that date. The board said no.

Mayor Black asked if the board is meeting on May 21st. The Town Manager said the date is earmarked in case the board decides another meeting must happen.

Commissioner Fowler called for a motion to adopt the Budget Meeting Timeline. Commissioner Conner seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous 4-0 vote.

X. Ranlo Concession Stand Discussion

Commissioner Morton said that since the YMCA is not going to operate the concessions stand during their sports programming, he proposes that the stand be open and sell hotdogs, wings, and chips during their games. Commissioner Morton said the grill and big deep fryer would not need to be used because they take a lot of oil and produce a lot of heat. Commissioner Morton said the aim would be to make a little bit of money to be contributed to the recreation department's budget. Commissioner Morton said he knows of volunteers that may be interested.

Mayor Black asked Commissioner Morton who may be available to volunteer. Commissioner Morton said Commissioner Laws and his wife can volunteer and provide the concessions stand with chili to sell. Commissioner Laws said his wife's slaw and chili have sold out at prior events.

Mayor Black asked Commissioner Laws if the chili will be made in the concessions stand. Commissioner Laws said he would make the chili at home. Mayor Black said it would not be and will be made in the concessions stand.

Mayor Black asked the Town Manager if the chili would have to be inspected. The Town Manager said he assumes food safety inspections would be needed because it is a town facility. Mayor Black said the concessions stand would probably have to get cleaned up and inspected before any plans are made. The Town Manager said he can wait to see what the board decides to best direct staff.

Commissioner Fowler asked Town Attorney Tosco what liability this would open the Town up to. Town Attorney Tosco said food handler cards would need to be secured. Town Attorney Tosco said it is one of those things where the board would need to decide how much risk it is prepared to take. Town Attorney Tosco said the board ought to consider doing everything on-site and not bringing food from outside sources.

Commissioner Morton said in the past, an inspector has overseen the concessions stand and has implemented healthy habits such as wearing gloves and cleaning supplied. Commissioner Conner said she would suggest that until the board has a clear plan, the board should play it safe initially. Commissioner Conner said the concessions stand could sell pre-packaged cookies, snacks, and drinks until the board can collect and input and see how many people will take advantage of the concessions stand.

Mayor Black asked the Town Manager if the YMCA had released a schedule of how many games and the times of the games. The Town Manager said yes, every Tuesday and Thursday for a six-week period. Mayor Black asked the Town Manager how many teams are slated to play each day. The Town Manager said it depends on the registration and that 60% of the league is filled.

Commissioner Fowler asked the board who would be responsible for collecting and depositing the funds. Commissioner Morton said there could be a bank bag in the concessions stand that could be deposited at Town Hall's drop box following each game. Mayor Black said this matter should not be made to seem more complicated than it is. Mayor Black said volunteers are offering to cook hot dogs, and people want hotdogs. Mayor Black said the town would just need to follow procedures, and the town has insurance.

Commissioner Conner said that she was just at Pizza Hut the past week and witnessed a manager not utilizing proper food handling procedures. Commissioner Conner said the Town of Ranlo should be mindful that not everybody is clean when cooking. Mayor Black asked Commissioner Conner how that anecdote relates to the current matter at

hand. Commissioner Conner said food safety is important. Mayor Black said we are talking about volunteers in Ranlo, and this is not as complicated as an operation. Commissioner Morton said that last time, he personally ensured that all volunteers followed protocol. Mayor Black said the concessions stand was a hit last time it was utilized.

Town Attorney Tosco asked if there is any reason to designate the concessions stand as a town-led effort as opposed to a volunteer-led effort. Commissioner Fowler said he preferred that idea. Commissioner Morton said that a previous inspector said that no matter who is manning the stand, the town is still considered the responsible party.

Mayor Black said that in a previous effort to run the concessions stand, a volunteer cooked chili and hotdogs from home but was told that the goods needed to be inspected. Mayor Black said that, at the time, there was no running water or stainless-steel appliances, but now the concessions stand is equipped with those necessities.

Commissioner Laws said it would not take much effort to man the hotdog appliance and provide a meal with a hot dog, a cold drink, and chips for \$4.00 or \$5.00. Commissioner Black said it would be a service for the town and would probably result in breaking even. Mayor Black said he does not think the risk would be paramount. Town Attorney Tosco said we would like to clarify that when he was talking about risk, he was referring to an at-home operation as opposed to one out of the concessions stand.

Mayor Black said multiple churches in the area have potlucks, and nobody gets hurt. Commissioner Conner said she is not anticipating anybody dying. Commissioner Conner said her point is because of not running the concessions stand for a long time. Commissioner Conner said keeping the operation simple initially may allow the town to gather information on how many people would utilize the service. Mayor Black said it would be worth it to go big on opening day, and pivot if demand is not high.

Commissioner Laws called for a motion to get the concession stand inspected to sell hotdogs, a bag of chips, and drinks during recreation. Commissioner Morton seconded the motion. The motion passed with a 3-1 vote.

Commissioner Morton said he proposes that the town sell the fryer and grill currently in the concessions stand because they are not used frequently and use a lot of oil while producing a large amount of heat. Mayor Black said we should hold off on that. Commissioner Fowler asked the board what the fryer and grill would be used for if the concessions stand was only selling hotdogs, chips, and a drink. Mayor Black said we can table selling the grill and the fryer.

Commissioner Conner asked what the grill and fryer were being used for. Mayor Black said they are not currently used, but the concessions stand was part of a grant and used to be for events. Commissioner Morton mentioned a sports event he went to last week that sold sandwiches out of their concessions stand.

Mayor Black asked Commissioner Fowler if hotdogs scared him. Commissioner Fowler said hotdogs do not scare him and that he has more food experience than anyone at this table. Mayor Black asked Commissioner Fowler if that meant he was volunteering. Commissioner Fowler said he is not.

Commissioner Conner asked if the money to purchase this food was coming from Ranlo or another source. Mayor Black said volunteers from the past fronted the money themselves. Commissioner Conner asked the board if they planned to pay the cost themselves this time as well. Commissioner Laws said he would partially cover the expense this time. Commissioner Conner asked if the money had been donated to the town previously. Commissioner Laws said yes and that he did it for the kids.

Commissioner Conner asked if the operations would be dependent on donations. Mayor Black said either way. Mayor Black asked the board if they would be open to creating a line item for the concessions stand within the recreation department.

Commissioner Conner asked Commissioner Laws if he planned to donate everything to kick this initiative off. Commissioner Laws said no, he would donate the chili and the slaw.

Mayor Black asked the Town Manager if a line item could be created for this initiative. A clarification was asked about the minutes. Commissioner Conner asked the board who would initially fund the operation. Commissioner Fowler said that the funds would belong to the town.

Commissioner Conner asked the Town Manager if this should be decided in the budget meeting. The Town Manager said that it will be whatever the board decides. The Town Manager said that this initiative was not in this year's budget, but the board can decide. The Town Manager said from a staff perspective, an accounting system would need to be established. The Town Manager said that if a health inspector were to come and cite us, it would be the Town of Ranlo that would be paying for it.

Commissioner Laws asked Commissioner Morton to retract his motion. The Town Manager said a motion cannot be retracted, but a new motion can be made to reconsider.

Mayor Black asked the Town Manager if he could prepare a spreadsheet to track how much money was coming in from the concessions stand. The Town Manager said yes if that is what the board decides.

Commissioner Conner said it may be easier to invite a food truck if the board is not clear about the logistics. Mayor Black said we are clear. Commissioner Conner said some details have not been set yet.

Commissioner Fowler said we do not let volunteers handle money from the water bills and asked how the board could allow anybody to handle taxpayer money. Mayor Black said the operations were handled by the recreation department. Mayor Black asked the Town Manager if the Town of Ranlo still has a recreation department and budget. The Town Manager said yes.

Mayor Black asked the Town Manager if there is a recreation committee. The Town Manager said no. Commissioner Morton said that this discussion ought to be tabled.

Commissioner Laws made a motion to retract the previous motion, but Town Attorney Tosco said that would not be necessary as the previous motion was only to look into having a concessions stand.

Mayor Black said that, at one time, the Town of Ranlo looked into having non-profits run the concessions stand, but that did not happen. Mayor Black said Commissioner Laws and Commissioner Morton stepped up last time and ran the operation. Commissioner Conner said that if this is done, it should be done the right way.

Mayor Black asked the Town Manager when the games start. The Town Manager said that they begin in June.

XI. Town Manager's Report

Town Manager's Report

The Town Manager said that the Easter Egg Hunt had a great turnout, and there are things that staff learned that will be implemented in the future. The Town Manager said that the Town of Ranlo has now implemented a new incident management system. The Town Manager said this system will be implemented at various events. The Town Manager said that this can work across different jurisdictions and works well with EOCs, other counties, and police departments.

The Town Manager said the North Carolina League of Municipalities is working with the Town of Ranlo to roll out Black Mountain Software. The Town Manager said Autumn Lyvers came to speak in front of the board previously, and her first meeting with the town is next week. The Town Manager said this could be a matter that staff handles.

The Town Manager said in terms of the Ranlo extension project, all of the easements are ready to go, and Town Attorney Tosco has aided the process. The Town Manager said he spoke with the engineers earlier this week as well. The Town Manager said the waterline and roadway are two aspects of this project, which come from two funding sources. The Town Manager said engineers will submit their plans to the State soon.

Commissioner Conner asked the Town Manager if the intersection would be changed in any way. The Town Manager said yes, and conversations about that are happening soon. The Town Manager said the State is aware of this project.

The Town Manager said that the YMCA is already at 60% capacity for the tee-ball league. The Town Manager said Ranlo is showing up.

Police Department Report

Chief Lunsford said the Police Department responded to 623 calls last month and issued 44 citations. Chief Lunsford said the Police Department made 7 arrests. Chief Lunsford said the Police Department ran five overdoses, one shooting, and one death investigation. Chief Lunsford said the Police Department responded to 13 motor-vehicle wrecks, 6 breaking and entering, and 20 domestic calls.

Commissioner Conner asked why the report includes race in its statistics. Chief Lunsford said this is a requirement to report to the State and for some grants. Commissioner Conner asked if this information is publicly available. Chief Lunsford said yes, barring juvenile cases. Chief Lunsford said some people interested in moving into the area request this information.

Comments from the Mayor and Board

Mayor Black said the Public Works Department found his father walking around, confused. Mayor Black said he would like to thank neighbors and EMTs for looking after his family. Mayor Black said this is the kind of community that Ranlo is. Mayor Black said God is good.

Commissioner Laws asked the Town Manager what the status of the Town's light-up sign is. The Town Manager said a new part has been purchased to get the sign running again.

Commissioner Conner said she liked the ICS management system.

Mayor Black said that when speaking with a previous mayor, he told him of the great strides Ranlo is making and that the town is in good hands since Mr. Hansen has assumed the role of Town Manager.

Commissioner Laws called for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Fowler seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous 4-0 vote.

ATTESTED TO:

Mayor Lynn Black

Antonia M. Christou | LEAD FOR NORTH CAROLINA FELLOW

Recorder and transcriber of the minutes for the Monthly March 2024 Meeting.