

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

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

THURSDAY, MARCH 14th, 2024 7:00 PM

MINUTES

Governing Body Present

Mayor Lynn Black
Mayor Pro-Tem Doug Moore
Commissioner Jamie Fowler
Commissioner Ronnie Laws
Commissioner Wade Morton
Commissioner Robin Conner

Staff Present

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| Town Manager | Charlie Hansen |
| Public Works Director | Jason Green |
| Police Chief | Jimmy Lunsford |
| Finance Director | Reagan Day |
| Billing Administrator | Beth Price |
| Public Works Employee | Zach Robinson |
| Public Works Employee | Luciano Osorio |
| Police Officer | Tinoco |
| Police Officer | K-9 |

I. Call to Order

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

II. Adoption of the March 14th, 2024 Agenda

Mayor Black called for a motion to adopt the agenda for the regular March meeting.
Commissioner Fowler motioned to adopt the agenda for the regular March meeting.
Commissioner Laws seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous 5-0 vote.

III. Awards and Employee Years of Service Recognition

a. Zac Robinson – 5 Years of Service – June 2023

- b. Leo Osorio – 5 Years of Service – March 2024**
- c. Jason Green – 5 Years of Service – December 2023**
- d. Beth Price – 10 Years of Service – September 2023**
- e. Recognition of Sgt. Springs for Exemplary Service**

The Town Manager unveiled a new agenda item aimed at honoring the dedicated individuals who have devoted their time and efforts to the prosperity of Ranlo. During regular meetings, employees reaching significant milestones of five, ten, fifteen, and twenty years of service will be publicly acknowledged for their unwavering commitment to the town's growth and success. The Town Manager clarified that employees will be recognized during the monthly meeting falling on the month when the employee reaches the said milestone going forwards.

The Town Manager announced that this month's agenda will be full, as the Town of Ranlo has reached parity with the number of employees who have earned milestones in the past eight months. The Town Manager invited Jason Green, the Public Works Director, to introduce the employees of the Public Works Department who are receiving this recognition.

Public Works Director Jason Green expressed his distinct privilege in recognizing Zach Robinson for five years of service with the Town of Ranlo. Public Works Director Green noted that Mr. Robinson has contributed significantly across various departments within Public Works, including trash collection, parks and recreation, and his current roles in the stormwater and Powell Bill departments. Public Works Director Green highlighted Mr. Robinson's dedication to key town events such as the Christmas Celebration and Easter events, and his involvement in hanging Christmas lights across the town. Additionally, Public Works Director Green emphasized Mr. Robinson's status as a native of Ranlo, which affords him an intrinsic and extensive knowledge of the town, coupled with an utmost commitment to its care.

Public Works Director Green expressed his distinct privilege in recognizing Leo Osorio for five years of service with the Town of Ranlo. Public Works Director Green highlighted Mr. Osorio's role as a CDL driver for the sanitation department, noting that he is one of the most recognizable figures in Public Works. Public Works Director Green emphasized Mr. Osorio's exceptional customer service, noting his willingness to go above and beyond for customers and his valuable Spanish speaking skills, which greatly aid the Public Works department. Additionally, Public Works Director Green commended Mr. Osorio for his pride in his work and encouragement to "make Ranlo beautiful."

The Town Manager expressed his distinct privilege in recognizing Public Works Director Jason Green for five years of service for the Town of Ranlo. The Town Manager noted that Mr. Green has served as Interim Town Manager on multiple occasions and is widely appreciated by nearly everyone in Gaston County. The Town Manager emphasized Mr. Green's crucial impact, which includes problem-solving and collaboration with neighboring jurisdictions. Furthermore, the Town Manager highlighted a significant improvement in water loss, citing that in 2020, the Town of Ranlo experienced a loss of 34% of its water, whereas now, under Mr. Green's leadership and the hard work of the Public Works Department, the loss has reduced to 12-16% as of this year, marking a monumental change. Additionally, the Town Manager underscored Mr. Green's reputation for effective collaboration with contractors, employees, and citizens, stating it as paramount, rare, and worthy of recognition.

The Town Manager expressed his distinct privilege in recognizing Ms. Beth Price for ten years of service to the Town of Ranlo, noting that this tenure does not include the additional two years Ms. Price served the Town as a part-time employee. The Town Manager shared a quote from Ms. Price, stating, "I truly love my job," which he had heard from her just the previous week. The Town Manager remarked that this quote reflects Ms. Price's positive outlook on life, authenticity, and commitment to the Town of Ranlo. Additionally, the Town Manager highlighted Ms. Price's role as the Billing Administrator, noting that it is often an under-appreciated and thankless job. However, he praised Ms. Price for her consistent smile and warm demeanor towards every person who visits Town Hall.

The Town Manager expressed his desire to recognize Sergeant Springs for going above and beyond with exemplary service. The Town Manager mentioned that the Town had received a thankful email from a person in Gaston County who had interacted with Sergeant Springs and granted permission for the email to be read into the minutes. The email recounted an incident on March 10th where Sergeant Springs had intervened when the person's daughter was found unconscious in her vehicle. The email praised Sergeant Springs' quick response, compassion, and professionalism throughout the event. The Town Manager emphasized that Sergeant Springs had saved someone's life and had also provided support and reassurance to the mother during the incident. He called for a round of applause and presented Sergeant Springs with a certificate of exemplary service as a Ranlo police officer.

Sergeant Springs stated that it was not just him who dedicated time and effort to the event in question and thanked the police officers who accompanied him, including Captain and Officer Tinoco.

The Town Manager thanked the family members and friends who attended the recognition ceremony and invited them to stay for the entire meeting if they wished to do so.

IV. Comments from Attendees

There were no comments from attendees.

Old Business:

V. Adoption of the February 8th, 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes of the Board

Commissioner Fowler called for a motion to adopt the February 8th, 2024, regular meeting minutes as amended. Commissioner Laws seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous 5-0 vote.

New Business:

VI. Presentation of the 2024 Calendar of Events and Gaston Business Association Partnership

The Town Manager announced that the initial draft proposal for the Town of Ranlo's calendar of events is currently under review by the board this evening. The Town Manager emphasized that any proposed changes or additional events from the board members are welcome to be discussed. The Town Manager said the primary objective is to publish the calendar on the website and collaborate with the Gaston Business Association to enhance publicity for these events.

Furthermore, the Town Manager noted that during this month's Gaston Business Association meeting, he observed that while many surrounding jurisdictions have pages on the Go Gaston Website, the Town of Ranlo does not. The Town Manager expressed the intention to rectify this by actively pursuing inclusion on these pages, aiming to showcase Ranlo's events effectively.

VII. Notification of Congressman Jeff Jackson's financial update

The Town Manager announced that Congressman Jeff Jackson contacted the Town of Ranlo last Friday to confirm the securing of the requested \$1 million for the second water interconnect. Expressing appreciation, the Town Manager conveyed the town's gratitude to Congressman Jackson during the meeting.

VIII. Rental Rates for Non-Profit & Charitable Organizations Discussion

The Town Manager said that he turns over discussion pertaining to this agenda item to Commissioner Conner. Commissioner Conner said that, following the upfitting of the Lodge, individuals, companies, and third parties have expressed interest in using it to hold their events. Commissioner Conner said nonprofits, specifically, have asked the Town of Ranlo to consider lowering the rental rates for their organizations. Commissioner Conner asked the Town Manager what the current rental rate schema looks like.

The Town Manager deferred discussion on this agenda item to Commissioner Conner, who noted increased interest from non-profits in using the Lodge for their events. Commissioner Conner relayed that these non-profits urged consideration for reduced rental rates for their organizations. Commissioner Conner asked the Town Manager what the current rental rate structure for the Lodge is.

The Town Manager said that the current structure is based on residency. The Town Manager said that Ranlo Residents are charged \$250.00 and non-Ranlo Residents are charged \$400.00, \$100.00 of which is a deposit in both cases.

Commissioner Conner said that the commissioners ought to discuss whether to change the rate for non-profits, and, additionally, consider purchasing a smart-board for the Lodge to draw in more business from organizations that may wish to hold meetings at the building.

Mayor Black said the discussion concerning purchasing a smart board may need to be revisited at one of the upcoming budget meetings. Mayor Black asked the Board if there were any opinions about reducing the rental rates for non-profits. Commissioner Connor said that reducing the rate to \$100 may be best. Mayor Black asked if that would pertain to out-of-town non-profit organizations. Commissioner Conner said the non-profit in question is located in Ranlo. Commissioner Morton agreed with the reduction to \$100. Commissioner Moore said the board may have to consider a maximum number of times non-profits can book the lodge with that reduced rate.

Commissioner Fowler asked the Town Manager if different categories of non-profits should be under differing considerations. The Town Manager said that, ultimately, the decision will be whatever the board decides. The Town Manager said that from a staff and policy standpoint, the Town of Ranlo staff can create an application for non-profits that wish to petition for the reduced rate. The Town Manager said that the board could also opt to implement a policy that asks non-profits who wish to secure the reduced rate

to present their proposal in front of the board. The Town Manager said that, ideally, the Town of Ranlo could implement a vetting process so staff are aware of the uses of the facilities to the greatest degree possible.

Commissioner Morton said the Town of Ranlo can still maintain a deposit in case of normal usage concerns. The Town Manager said the board can ultimately decide the policy's nomenclature. Mayor Black said that the board will discuss more ideas when the board reconvenes next month.

IX. Town Manager's Report, Comments from the Mayor, and Comments from the Board.

Town Manager Report

The Town Manager said that the Ranlo Police Department was able to secure a grant in the amount of \$29,456.00. The Town Manager said this grant will fund police dash cameras among other items. The Town Manager said he would like to congratulate Chief Lunsford, Assistant Chief Holland, and Mrs. Pam Moore, and everyone involved for their hard work and achievement. Chief Lunsford said that the grant was derived from the North Carolina Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG grant). The Town Manager said this feat was achieved in 2023, but the Town of Ranlo was just issued the grant.

The Town Manager said K-9 Officer Tyme was sworn in this week, an incredible event. The Town Manager also thanked Gene Poovey, Tyme's trainer, for his hard work. Commissioner Fowler asked Chief Lunsford if the Town still has the previous K-9 unit in operation. Chief Lunsford said no.

The Town Manager said that since starting at the Town of Ranlo, a weekly admin and HR meeting has been implemented to discuss healthy organization practices from a staff standpoint. The Town Manager said that this includes updating the Town of Ranlo's job descriptions, revising old policy manuals, and other materials that have not been edited in a very long time. The Town Manager said it became evident that the Town of Ranlo lacked a transparent organization chart. The Town Manager said that, in his experience, this is a crucial first step to building a better organization. The Town Manager said that the document before the board was created by Mrs. Pam Moore. The Town Manager said the first page is the administration sheet and noted no changes in organizational structure. The Town Manager said that the second page reflects the organization of the police department, and the third page is the Public Works Department. The Town Manager said

the organization is fully staffed. The Town Manager said that this knowledge will aid the Town in acquiring new talent.

The Town Manager said the next document in front of the board is the budget meeting timeline. The Town Manager said it is also important to note that on March 27th, Two Rivers is meeting to discuss water and sewer rates. The Town Manager said he would be at that meeting. The Town Manager said that at the current moment, Two Rivers has a proposed 7.5% water and sewer increase, which would be effective on July 1st, 2024. The Town Manager said the meeting would have implications on the Town, hence the decision to have budget meetings following this meeting.

The Town Manager said the YMCA has worked with the Town to announce that sports are back in Ranlo. The Town manager said that on March 25th, the Town and the YMCA will begin registration for summer tee-ball, which will take place at the Ranlo ballfield. The Town Manager said residents can register online or at any YMCA Gaston County location. The Town Manager said that the registration is \$65.00 dollars for members of the YMCA and \$95.00 for non-members. The Town Manager said there is an online financial assistance program for any potential participant.

Commissioner Conner asked the Town Manager what ages can participate in the programming. The Town Manager said that there will be two age groups, a youth three to four-year-olds, and a youth five- to six-year-olds. The Town Manager said that the youth five to six year olds will be coach pitch. The Town Manager said the program will begin May 21st, and there will be four practices per team, Tuesdays and Thursdays. The Town Manager that six weeks of games will follow.

Commissioner Laws asked the Town Manager if the concessions stand will be open during that time. The Town Manager said that is a discussion that can be had. The Town manager said that in the memorandum of understanding between the Town of Ranlo and the YMCA is that the Town will provide hard assets like the ballfield, trash cans, and bathrooms. The Town Manager said that the YMCA will be providing all the equipment, goal posts, and balls. The Town manager said that participants that sign up will receive communications from the YMCA about the team and schedule.

Commissioner Fowler asked the Town Manager if the Town of Ranlo could provide sponsorships for Ranlo families that may not be provided financial leniency through the YMCA's assistance program. The Town Manager said that the board could absolutely explore such arrangements when the time comes.

Mayor Black asked the Town Manager if participants must be members of the YMCA. The Town Manager said one does not need membership with the YMCA to participate but noted that members receive a \$65.00 dollar rate, while non-members are subject to a \$95.00 dollar rate. The Town Manager said that if financial obstacles are present, individuals can go to the YMCA website to seek assistance.

Commissioner Morton asked the Town Manager what the \$95.00 dollar fee is based on. The Town Manager said he would not be able to explain the YMCA fee structure. Commissioner Morton said that given the Town of Ranlo's decision to allow the YMCA to utilize assets like the ballfield, light, and concession stand, he imagined the fee would be lower. Commissioner Morton said that people may not be able to afford the fees. Commissioner Fowler said that the board discussed those considerations at a previous monthly meeting.

Commissioner Moore asked the Town Manager whether the Town of Ranlo has continued conversation with the YMCA about whether the Town will seek out a membership structure for employees. The Town Manager said while he and Mrs. Pam Moore were researching ways to incentivize health programs for employees, one apparent option was to promote wellbeing through the YMCA. The Town Manager said that after conversation with the YMCA, there are multiple programs they offer if the board chooses to embrace that option. The Town Manager said that the YMCA offers corporate memberships where the Town can elect to sign up 31 employees to be members. The Town Manager said there are differing options for the Town to pay percentages of membership fees for each employee. The Town Manager said that as the percent paid for each employee grows, the cost for the Town grows as well. The Town Manager said that further discussion can be had.

The Town Manager said that the Town of Ranlo met with Senator Brad Overcash this month, whom he would like to thank. The Town Manager said Representative Torbett will come tomorrow for a meeting to discuss various projects. The Town Manager said he also met with the Town's financial auditor, Eddie Carrick. The Town Manager said additional meeting partners include the NCDEQ of State Budget, the League of Municipalities, the president of Mountain View H.O.A., and the Gaston Business Association. The Town Manager said he and the Finance Director, Mrs. Reagan Day, visited Winston-Salem to earn a financial management certification.

Police Department Report

Chief Lunsford said the Ranlo Police Department responded to 509 events in the month of February. Chief Lunsford said the Ranlo Police Department ran three overdose calls,

five assaults, and numerous other calls. Chief Lunsford said the Ranlo Police Department issued 28 citations during the time period.

Comments from the Mayor and Board

Mayor Black said the Board had talked about moving the sign that reads as a marker for the Town of Ranlo. Mayor Black says it currently sits on Spencer Mountain Road. Mayor Black asked the Town Manager if there is a procedure for moving the sign to reflect the new boundary for the Town of Ranlo. The Town Manager said that, because it is a state sign, they would have to move it. The Town Manager said that he will reach out to the Department of Transportation to see what the procedure is.

Comments from the Board of Commissioners

Commissioner Conner said a neighbor brought a concern to her attention about the aesthetics of the fencing on Spencer Mountain Road as trucks utilize it. Commissioner Laws and Mayor Black said it is a rest stop. Chief Lunsford said the Police Department has responded to only one incident in the area.

Commissioner Morton asked for a status report on the condemnations on Ranlo Avenue. The Town Attorney said the progress can be discussed in closed session as it is active litigation.

Mayor Black called for a motion to move into closed session. Commissioner Fowler motioned to move into closed session. Commissioner Laws seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous 5-0 vote.

X. Closed Session Pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 143-318.11.

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.