

**TOWN OF LONG VIEW
BOARD OF ALDERMEN
MEETING MINUTES
MAY 11, 2020**

The Town of Long View Board of Aldermen met in the Council Chambers of Long View Town Hall on Monday, May 11, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. Due to social distancing guidelines regarding COVID-19, the meeting was held over Zoom software and attendees were both physically present and electronically present.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT (Physically): The following members of the Board were present: Mayor Marla Thompson, Mayor Pro Tempore/ Alderman Randall Mays, Alderman Gary Lingerfelt, Alderman Dallas Tester, and Alderman Thurman VanHorn.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT (Electronically): The following member of the Board participated electronically: Aldermen David Elder.

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT (Physically): The following members of staff were present throughout the entire meeting: Town Administrator David Draughn and Town Clerk Stephanie Watson.

In order to maintain social distancing due to COVID-19, other staff members physically joined the meeting only when called to speak. They were as follows: Finance Director James Cozart, Town Planner Charles Mullis, Police Chief TJ Bates, Public Works Chris Eckard, and Deputy Fire Chief Tyler Keener.

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT (Electronically): The following members of staff participated electronically: Town Attorney Jimmy Summerlin, Jr. and Fire Chief James Brinkley.

OTHERS PRESENT (Electronically): No others were present.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: Mayor Marla Thompson called the meeting to order and Alderman Dallas Tester gave the invocation.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion was made by Alderman Thurman VanHorn, seconded by Alderman Dallas Tester to approve the March 9, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes and March 23, 2020 Special Meeting Minutes. The vote to approve was unanimous.

AYES: Mayor Pro Tempore / Alderman Randall Mays
Alderman David Elder
Alderman Gary Lingerfelt
Alderman Dallas Tester
Alderman Thurman VanHorn

NOES: None

CALL FOR A PUBLIC HEARING DURING THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN MEETING ON MONDAY, JUNE 8, 2020 TO DISCUSS AN AMENDMENT TO THE ZONING ORDINANCE – TOWN PLANNER CHARLES MULLIS

Town Planner Charles Mullis informed the Board that the Planning Department has received a request to amend the Long View Zoning Ordinance. The request is to permit the use of an indoor flea market in the Economic Development (ED) Zoning District. The Town of Long View Planning Board will have a

recommendation on this potential amendment to the Board of Aldermen next month. The Planning Board will be meeting next Thursday.

He asked that the Board of Aldermen call for a public hearing for next month's regularly scheduled meeting, to be held on Monday, June 8, 2020, in order to receive public input concerning the proposed amendment to the Long View Zoning Ordinance regarding an indoor flea market in the Economic Development Zoning District.

When Alderman Thurman VanHorn asked where the requested rezoning was, Mr. Mullis stated that the property was located at 343 23rd St SW. The gentleman requesting the rezoning has not yet purchased the property but is waiting for rezoning approval. The property has been vacant for quite a few years.

Alderman Gary Lingerfelt stated that the building was previously used as a warehouse for Synthetics. Before that it was used by a furniture company.

Motion was made by Alderman Thurman VanHorn, seconded by Alderman Randall Mays to call for a public hearing on during the regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, June 8, 2020 to discuss the amendment to the Town of Long View Zoning Ordinance. The vote to approve was unanimous.

AYES: Mayor Pro Tempore / Alderman Randall Mays
Alderman David Elder
Alderman Gary Lingerfelt
Alderman Dallas Tester
Alderman Thurman VanHorn

NOES: None

FIRST BUDGET READING FOR THE PROPOSED 2020-2021 BUDGET – TOWN ADMINISTRATOR DAVID DRAUGHN

Town Administrator David Draughn informed the Board that the 2020-2021 Budget is available for review and adoption. The budget has been prepared consistent with the Board of Aldermen's direction. It is balanced and prepared in accordance with the North Carolina Local Budget Fiscal Control Act.

The General Fund recommended budget for Fiscal Year 2020-2021 is \$3,578,299.00. The tax rate is set at \$0.57 per 100 valuation with no tax increase recommended. It also sets a 5% increase in sanitation fees due to an increase from our provider: Republic Services.

The Utility Fund proposes a spending program of \$2,050,600. It also proposes a 3% increase in water and sewer rates to pass on the increase from the Town's provider: City of Hickory.

The Federal and State Shared Proceeds Fund has a spending program of \$7,000.

The Powell Bill Fund has a spending program of \$144,203.

The Senior Day Out Fund has a spending program of \$8,000.

The total recommended operating budget is \$5,788,102 which is about a quarter of million dollars less than fiscal year 2019-2020.

Alderman Mays stated that in his 21 years as a Board member, this is the most inconsistent way to do a budget. This is due to the circumstances of the pandemic. He has never seen anything that is so unpredictable. It is very difficult, and the Board has to applaud staff for their work on creating the budget based on the things that are not known.

CALL FOR A PUBLIC HEARING DURING THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN MEETING ON MONDAY, JUNE 8, 2020 TO DISCUSS THE PROPOSED 2020-2021 BUDGET

Town Administrator David Draughn requested that the Board of Aldermen call for a public hearing on Monday, June 8, 2020 to discuss and receive public comment on the proposed 2020-2021 budget. The Board of Aldermen would adopt the budget during the June 22, 2020 Board of Aldermen meeting.

Motion was made by Alderman Randall Mays, seconded by Alderman Gary Lingerfelt to call for a public hearing on Monday, June 8, 2020 to discuss and receive public comments on the proposed 2020-2021 budget. The vote to approve was unanimous.

AYES: Mayor Pro Tempore / Alderman Randall Mays
Alderman David Elder
Alderman Gary Lingerfelt
Alderman Dallas Tester
Alderman Thurman VanHorn

NOES: None

FINANCE REPORT – FINANCE DIRECTOR JAMES COZART

General Fund Report

Finance Director James Cozart informed the Board that in the General Fund with 83% of the budget year complete, revenues totaled \$3,962,822.44 or 85.64% of the budgeted revenues.

Expenditures totaled \$3,482,220.51 or 75.25% of budgeted expenses.

Revenues exceeded expenditures by \$480,601.93. The projected fund balance in the General Fund is \$3,170,696.93.

Alderman Randall Mays asked about restricted revenues being three times more than projected.

Mr. Cozart explained that the Town had the BB&T proceeds for the brush truck that the Town purchased. That is also where the Century funds and the OneH2 funds passed through.

Utility Fund Report

In the Utility Fund, revenues totaled \$1,724,918.76 or 86.9% of the budgeted revenue.

Expenditures totaled \$1,512,308.65 or 76.19% of budgeted expenses.

Revenues exceeded expenses by \$212,610.11.

Finance/Payment Software

Finance Director James Cozart informed the Board that the Town is in the process of establishing an alternate payment method for Long View citizens. The software is through Invoice Cloud and the company has partnered with the Town's current Utility Software company: Southern Software. This service will be at no additional cost to the Town. Once established, customers will be able to make payments through a link on the Town's website or through an app they can load on their phone. Taking payments over the phone will be an option as well. If a customer wishes to make a payment over the phone, the Town will give them a phone number to call and enter their information.

With this software, the Town will be able to know in real time if someone makes a payment to their account. There would be a website set up for the Town that the Town can log in to. Not knowing when payments are made in real time has been an issue in the past and the reason the Town has not gone to online payments.

There is no start up fees for this software as it is covered through the Southern Software contract.

There is a process for getting this software installed and the Town should hopefully begin testing and training by the end of this week. The Town may be able to implement the software by early June. The fees that the Town will have with this new setup will be no greater than the fees the Town has with the current credit card setup.

With the current COVID-19 situation as it is, this will give residents alternative ways to make utility payments.

Alderman Elder stated that he felt that getting this new setup would be a no-brainer for the Town as it would add no extra costs to the Town.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT – TOWN ADMINISTRATOR DAVID DRAUGHN

Department Reports

Fire Department – Fire Chief James Brinkley

Town Administrator David Draughn called Fire Chief James Brinkley to speak.

Fire Chief Brinkley informed the Board that the department is still falling under the County's guidelines as far as medical response. The department is not responding to medical calls except for cardiac arrest or traumatic injuries. The lobby is still closed. He asked the Board to consider that although they are not running the full medical calls, they are still being exposed to the public for other calls. The idea is to limit exposure as much as possible due to social distancing. The county has provided the Town with PPE and currently the department is in good shape.

He briefly described what his department is doing in cases where there is a suspected COVID-19 case. He described what protective gear is worn.

The county is supposed to reevaluate what it plans to do with medical first response soon.

Burke County is still running everything. The Town is running using the Catawba County guidelines for both Burke County and Catawba County.

Public Works – Public Works Director Chris Eckard

Town Administrator David Draughn called Public Works Director Chris Eckard to speak.

Mr. Eckard informed the Board that Public Works is pretty much business as usual. The building is closed. Social distancing is done as much as possible but practically all services are still being provided: cut-offs, cut-ons, etc.

Police Department – Police Chief TJ Bates

Town Administrator David Draughn called Police Chief TJ Bates to speak.

Chief Bates stated that he was grateful that none of the Town's staff has come down with COVID-19. The Town has been extremely fortunate and that is partially due to the Town putting stuff in place to limit exposure to employees.

The local Police Chiefs and Sheriff have a Zoom conference call every 72 hours. This makes sure all the departments are on the same page with executive orders, compliance, and staffing issues.

The department has limited EMS response. It is only done now if requested.

If possible, non-emergency reports are done by telephone. If responding to a residence is necessary, the officer asks the resident to come outside so that there is more space.

The entrance and exit to the police department have changed to limit exposure.

Command staff for the other agencies in the county have been working from home. Long View's command staff has not. As such, the department has had to tighten down on the entrances and exits to the building.

The department is following CDC guidelines on hand washing. Deep cleanings of the station occur twice a week. Cars are cleaned at least twice a shift and after anyone is transported.

Officers have at least two N95 masks and a few homemade face coverings. There is at least some type of eye protection in every car.

The department has only had one person miss work. This officer self-quarantined because the officer had a child that was tested for COVID-19.

Other than that, things are business as usual. Traffic enforcement shall now continue at 100 percent.

The department is trying to stay safe while still trying to keep a distance from people. Calls have not slowed down. Domestic response has tripled. Suspicious people calls have increased but have somewhat evened out. Larceny calls for motor vehicles have somewhat increased. This mostly occurs at businesses where people have been leaving their keys in their cars and the cars have been stolen.

Aldermen Tester asked if the department will continue to take reports over the phone after the COVID-19 issue.

Chief Bates stated that he was a fan of that as it is easier for the public. Any time that a officer can take a report over the phone, he would like to continue to allow that. This would only be for non-emergency items. Officers will still need to go out and collect evidence as needed.

Town Administrator's Comments

Mr. Draughn stated that he appreciates everyone's work. It has been different, but the Town is adapting.

Firefighter's Relief Fund

Mr. Draughn stated that the Fire Department Relief Fund Board has recently lost a member. The member was the treasurer of the Relief Fund. The insurance commission has one appointment to that Board and they suggested that Finance Director James Cozart be appointed to that position. Mr. Cozart accepted that position.

Chief Brinkley stated that the Relief Fund Board would officially meet to accept Mr. Cozart's appointment soon.

OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

ADJOURNMENT

Comments by Alderman Dallas Tester

Alderman Tester thanked his lord and savior for the opportunity to be able to represent the Town. He thanked staff for their work, thanked Mr. Draughn and Mr. Cozart for their work on the Budget, and thanked Ms. Watson for her work handling the new meeting setup. He is sure everyone has been overwhelmed at times, but the staff of Long View has been great.

Comments by Alderman Randall Mays

Aldermen Mays congratulated Long View officers for Police Week.

Alderman Mays stated that he appointment to the Hickory Regional Planning Commission expires in June. The Board needs to handle the appointment or re-appointment during the June meeting.

When asked if he would like to stay on as the delegate, Aldermen Mays stated that he would like to.

Mr. Draughn stated that he would have it placed on the next meeting agenda.

Comments by Alderman Thurman VanHorn

Alderman VanHorn stated that he would like to reiterate what Alderman Tester and Alderman Mays stated. Congrats on Police Week. He also appreciates what everyone has done during these extreme times. He hopes the Town could get back to normalcy soon. He applauds every department head and employee. He appreciates everyone's understanding of the situation.

Comments by Alderman David Elder

Alderman Elder stated that he wished to thank everyone for their prayers and thoughts during his treatments. He commends everyone on their work on the budget. He stated, "This is a situation that is not in our control, but we will roll with it. As the saying goes, 'This too shall pass'. Another could be, 'That which does not kill you, makes you stronger'."

Comments by Mayor Marla Thompson

Mayor Marla Thompson thanked everyone for what they have done. It is very much appreciated. She thanked Ms. Watson for doing a fantastic job with handling the new meeting setup.

Motion was made by Alderman Thurman VanHorn seconded by Alderman David Elder to adjourn the meeting at 7:00 p.m. The vote to approve was unanimous.

AYES: Mayor Pro Tempore / Alderman Randall Mays
Alderman David Elder
Alderman Gary Lingerfelt
Alderman Dallas Tester
Alderman Thurman VanHorn

NOES: None

Stephanie C. Watson
Town Clerk, CMC, NCCMC

Marla Thompson
Mayor

