

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING HELD SEPTEMBER 19, 2022

Face coverings were optional for the September 19, 2022, Council meeting but all attendees were encouraged to wear face coverings, and to social distance from other attendees who are not members of the same household, regardless of vaccination status. Individuals in high-risk groups, individuals who are completing isolation or were recently exposed, and residents at risk of infection should continue to wear face coverings in all public indoor settings.

REGULAR MEETING The Granite Falls Town Council held a Regular Meeting on September 19, 2022, at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Administrative Building.

PRESENT The following members of the governing body were present: Mayor Dr. Caryl B. Burns and Council Members Ritch Bolick, Jim Mackie, Mike Mackie, Martin Townsend, and Tracy Townsend.

ABSENT The following member of the governing body was absent: Larry Knight

STAFF PRESENT The following staff members attended the meeting: Town Attorney Bruce Cannon, Town Clerk Paula Kirby, Finance Officer Ashley Presnell, and Town Planner Greg Wilson. Town Manager Jerry Church participated by telephone.

VISITORS Jon Younce

NEWS MEDIA No news media attended the meeting.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER Mayor Dr. Caryl B. Burns called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone present.

INVOCATION Councilmember Mike Macke led in prayer.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE Mayor Pro Tem Tracy Townsend led the Pledge of Allegiance.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT Councilmember Jim Mackie read the Conflict-of-Interest Statement.

In accordance with the State Government Ethics Act, it is the duty of every Council member to avoid both conflicts of interest and appearance of conflicts. Does any Council member have any known conflict of interest or appearance of conflicts with respect to any matters coming before the Council today? If so, please identify the conflict or appearance of conflict and refrain from any undue participation in the particular matters involved.

(N.C.G.S. 14-234, N.C.G.S. 160A-479.11, & N.C.G.S. 160D-109)

SPECIAL INTRODUCTIONS RESCHEDULED Electric Services Director Rick Sisk was scheduled to introduce Electric Department Senior Electric Linemen Ethan Webb & Joshua Greene to the Council at tonight's meeting. Director Sisk will be introducing the Linemen at the October 17th meeting.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA Martin Townsend made a motion the Council approve the agenda as presented. Jim Mackie seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD MONDAY, AUGUST 15, 2022 Tracy Townsend made a motion the Council approve the minutes from the regular meeting held Monday, August 15, 2022 as presented. Ritch Bolick seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2022 Martin Townsend made a motion the Council approve the minutes from the special meeting held Tuesday, September 6, 2022 as presented. Ritch Bolick seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote.

TOWN ATTORNEY REPORT Town Attorney Bruce Cannon did not have a report.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD No one attended the meeting to speak during the Public Comment period.

PUBLIC HEARING

PUBLIC (LEGISLATIVE) HEARING CALLED TO ORDER ON REZONING PETITION #1-2022 – 30 FALLS AVENUE Mayor Dr. Caryl B. Burns called to order a public (legislative) hearing on Rezoning Petition #1-2022. Jon Younce submitted a Zoning Map Amendment for .093 acres he purchased from Lee and Betty Brittain at 32 Falls Avenue. Mr. Younce has added the .093 acres he purchased to his 30 Falls Avenue property which would allow room for an addition to his building at 30 Falls Avenue (First Impressions Dental Lab). The request was to rezone the .093 acres from R-15, Single Family Residential to H-B, Highway Business so that the zoning will be consistent with the balance of the 30 Falls Avenue Property. The Council called for the public hearing at the August 15, 2022 Council meeting following the presentation by Town Planner Greg Wilson. At the public hearing, all residents of the Town and other interested parties were allowed to speak. The rezoning will become effective immediately.

The public hearing was duly noticed by posting a sign on the subject property, publishing a notice in the News Topic and by direct mail to adjacent property owners per the requirements set forth in G.S. §160D-602.

PUBLIC (LEGISLATIVE) HEARING ON REZONING PETITION #1-2022 – 30 FALLS AVENUE CLOSED Mayor Burns closed the public (legislative) hearing on Rezoning Petition #1-2022 – 30 Falls Avenue.

NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

REZONING PETITION #1-2022 – 30 FALLS AVENUE APPROVED The Council considered Rezoning Petition #1-2022 for approximately 0.93 acres of property located at 30 Falls Avenue. The property is currently zoned R-15, Single Family Residential and the request is to rezone the property to H-B, Highway Business.

Tracy Townsend made a motion the Council approve Rezoning Petition #1-2022, Rezoning Ordinance #369, and approve the corresponding Statement of Consistency & Reasonableness contained in the agenda packet. Martin Townsend seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote. Copies of the petition and ordinance are attached and are hereby made a part of these minutes.

PUBLIC HEARING CALLED ON REDUCING THE SPEED LIMIT ON GRANDVIEW STREET FROM 35 MILES PER HOUR TO 25 MILES PER HOUR

The Town of Granite Falls Street Committee met on Tuesday, September 6, 2022 at 4:30 p.m. where Town Police Chief Chris Jenkins presented a proposal to reduce the speed limit on Grandview Street from 35 to 25 miles per hour. Grandview Street is partially owned by the Town and partially owned by the NCDOT. The NC DOT has no issue reducing the speed limit on their portion of Grandview Street. Chairman Martin Townsend discussed the committee's recommendation that the Council approve the request as presented.

Ritch Bolick made a motion the Council approve the recommendation of the Street Committee and call for a public hearing to amend the Town Code of Ordinances at the October 17, 2022 Council meeting. Tracy Townsend seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote.

PUBLIC HEARING CALLED ON REDUCING THE SPEED LIMIT ON HILL STREET FROM 35 MILES PER HOUR TO 25 MILES PER HOUR

The Town of Granite Falls Street Committee met on Tuesday, September 6, 2022 at 4:30 p.m. where Town Police Chief Chris Jenkins presented a proposal to reduce the speed limit on Hill Street from 35 to 25 miles per hour. Hill Street is a Town street. Chairman Martin Townsend discussed the committee's recommendation that the Council approve the request as presented.

Martin Townsend made a motion the Council approve the recommendation of the Street Committee and call for a public hearing to amend the Town Code of Ordinances at the October 17, 2022 Council meeting. Mike Mackie seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote.

SELECTION OF THE WOOTEN COMPANY TO PROVIDE ENGINEERING SERVICES FOR THE WATER DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM ASSET INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT GRANT APPROVED

On September 20, 2021, the Town Council approved the application for an Asset Inventory and Assessment Grant (AIA) for the Town's water distribution system. On August 17, 2022 the Town received notice that the project has been approved for a \$150,000 grant from the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality

(NC DEQ). The grant does not require a Town match. The next steps in this process are as follows:

A) Advertise and select a qualified engineering firm to perform the services outlined on the Town Request for Proposal (RFP). As required under North Carolina General Statute 143-64.31 (AKA the “Mini-Brooks Act”), Town staff issued the (RFP) for Engineering Services for the Water System Asset Inventory and Assessment Project on August 24, 2022. The responses to the RFP were due September 7, 2022 and the “Mini-Brooks Act” required the Town staff to evaluate proposals using a Qualifications-Based Selection (QBS) process before entering into contract negotiations with responders to the RFP. Town staff has completed the QBS process and recommends that the Town approve entering into a Professional Services Agreement with The Wooten Company for the Water System Asset Inventory and Assessment Project, contingent upon NC DEQ review and acceptance of the Town’s preliminary project scope, cost estimate, and budget. The preliminary project scope, cost estimate, and budget includes \$128,000 to update and calibrate the Town water system hydraulic model, \$14,000 to update and edit the Town Asset Management Plan and Capital Improvement Plan, and \$8,000 for report preparation, Council presentation, and project closeout. When the NC DEQ completes a satisfactory review of the preliminary project scope, cost estimate, and budget, Town staff recommends that the Town enter into a formal agreement with The Wooten Company to provide the engineering services for this project.

B) Approve the preliminary project scope, cost estimate, and budget as presented.

C) Approve the Resolution by Governing Body of Recipient Town of Granite Falls to accept the AIA grant contingent upon the satisfactory review of the preliminary project scope, cost estimate, and budget by NC DEQ.

Martin Townsend made a motion the Council A) approve the selection of The Wooten Company to provide the engineering services for the Water System Asset Inventory and Assessment Project and approve the Town Manger negotiating and entering into a Professional Services Agreement with The Wooten Company to provide the engineering services contingent upon NC DEQ review and acceptance of the Town’s preliminary project scope, cost estimate, and budget, B) approve the preliminary project scope, cost estimate, and budget as presented, and C) approve the Resolution by Governing Body of Recipient Town of Granite Falls to accept the AIA grant contingent upon the satisfactory review of the preliminary project scope, cost estimate, and budget by NC DEQ. Mike Mackie seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote. Copies of the preliminary project scope, cost estimate, budget, and resolution are attached and are hereby made a part of these minutes.

MONTHLY BUDGET REPORT – FINANCE OFFICER ASHLEY PRESNELL The Financial Dashboard for the period ended August 31, 2022 was presented for Council review and comments. This report represents 17% of the 2022–2023 fiscal year budget. Also presented for Council review was an analysis of 2022-2023 sales tax revenue versus prior year and budgeted revenue. Copies of the budget report and analysis are attached and are hereby made a part of these minutes.

TAX LEVY FOR 2022 CHARGED Finance Officer Ashley Presnell requested the Council charge Tax Collector Kim Eckard with collecting the 2022 ad valorem taxes in the amount of \$2,135,440.36 under NC General Statute §159-13. The 2022 levy represents an increase of \$57,597.27 or 2.78% from the 2021 tax levy. The breakdown of the tax assessments is shown below.

Real Property	\$427,574,750
Personal Property	<u>\$48,554,507</u>
Total Assessed Valuation	<u>\$476,129,257</u>

Ritch Bolick made a motion the Council charge Tax Collector Kim Eckard with collecting the 2022 ad valorem taxes as requested. Tracy Townsend seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote. Copies of the 2022 Tax Levy, and a 5-year analysis of the Tax Levy are attached and are hereby made a part of these minutes.

PRINCIPALS' DISTRIBUTION APPROVED The local principals submitted the ABC distribution percentages based on school enrollment on the 10th day of school for the school year 2022-2023. Finance Officer Ashley Presnell requested the Council to approve the distribution percentages for the 2022-2023 school year.

Martin Townsend made a motion the Council approve the distribution percentages as presented. Jim Mackie seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote. Copies of the enrollments and percentages, and ABC audit are attached and are hereby made a part of these minutes.

BUDGET AMENDMENT #4 – 2022-2023 APPROVED Finance Officer Ashley Presnell requested the Council approve increases in the salary and benefits budgets for the Police and Fire Departments to make the pay more competitive in an extremely difficult employment market and approve Budget Amendment #4 – 2022-2023. Budget amendment #4 – 2022-2023 includes the cost of pay increases for all employees in both departments, the cost of paying out Holiday Pay to the shift employees in these departments as the holidays actually occur instead of accruing paid time off to be taken at later dates, and the cost of related variable benefits. This amendment requires the use of \$93,500 in General Fund Balance.

Tracy Townsend made a motion the Council approve Budget Amendment #4 2022-2023 as requested. Martin Townsend seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote. A copy of Budget Amendment #4 2022-2023 is attached and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

BUDGET AMENDMENT #5 – 2022-2023 APPROVED Finance Officer Ashley Presnell requested the Council approve a one-time retention bonus payment of \$500 for each full-time employee and \$200 for each full-time, part-time employee in early November, 2022, when the annual Longevity payment is paid, and to approve Budget Amendment #5 – 2022-2023. Budget amendment #5 – 2022-2023 includes the cost of the retention bonus payments and the cost of related variable benefits. This amendment requires the use of \$27,550 in General Fund Balance, \$8,650 in Water/Sewer Fund Balance, and \$5,600 in Electric Fund Balance.

Tracy Townsend made a motion the Council approve Budget Amendment #5 20/22-2023 as requested. Ritch Bolick seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote. A copy of Budget Amendment #5 2022-2023 is attached and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

ABC AUDIT RECEIVED Finance Officer Ashley Presnell presented the Granite Falls ABC Board audited financial statements for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2022 for the Council's review.

Jim Mackie made a motion the Council receive the financial statements as presented. Mike Mackie seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote. Copies of the statements are attached and are hereby made a part of these minutes.

POLICIES FOR AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN/CORONAVIRUS STATE AND LOCAL FISCAL RECOVERY FUNDS (ARP/CSLFRF FUNDS) APPROVED Sherry Long, Assistant Executive Director of the Western Piedmont Council of Governments, informed Town staff that there are three additional policies that the Town Council needs to approve related to ARP/CSLFRF funds. Ms. Long assisted Town staff in writing these three policies specifically for these funds. These policies are as follows:

- A) Records Retention Policy: Documents Created or Maintained Pursuant to the ARP/CSLFRF Award.
- B) American Rescue Plan of 2021 Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Eligibility Determination Policy.
- C) Nondiscrimination Policy: Pursuant to the ARP/CSLFRF Award.

Mike Mackie made a motion the Council approve the ARP/CSLFRF Policies as presented. Tracy Townsend seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote. Copies of the policies are attached and are hereby made a part of these minutes.

REPORT ON GRANITE FALLS MERCHANTS' ASSOCIATION FESTIVAL ON MAIN Councilmember Mike Mackie, President of the Granite Falls Merchants' Association (GFMA), reported on the 12th annual Festival on Main that was held Saturday, September 17, 2022. Councilmember Mackie stated that it was a great event. There was a constant flow of people enjoying good music, good food, and good quality vendor items to purchase. Town Manager Jerry Church thanked the GFMA committee members, Town staff, Police and Fire Departments for their hard work and dedication which made the festival a great success.

TOWN HOLIDAY SCHEDULE The Town of Granite Falls Administrative Office, the Recreation Center, and the Public Works and Electric Departments will be closed in observance of the following holidays:

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| Veterans Day | Friday, November 11 th |
| Thanksgiving | Thursday, November 24 th & Friday, November 25 th |
| Christmas | Friday, Monday, & Tuesday, December 23 rd , 26 th , & 27 th |
| New Year's Day | Monday, January 2 nd |

The Police and Fire Departments will be on duty as scheduled and employees that are not scheduled to get all holidays off will be paid holiday pay at their regular rate of pay for the holidays regardless of whether or not they work those days. The Water and Wastewater Facilities will be on duty as scheduled and those employees scheduled to work these holidays receive alternate time off with pay. Republic Services will pick up garbage and recycling on their regular schedule except for Christmas Day.

POPULATION ESTIMATE The NC Department of State Budget and Management has estimated the Town of Granite Falls' population at 5,000 as of July 1, 2021, which is an increase of 43 from the July 1, 2020 estimate of 4,957. As a reminder, the population estimates are published one year in arrears.

MANAGER UPDATE Town Manager Jerry Church updated the Council on the following:

- 1) Enclosed with the Council's agenda package was a calendar of events through the end of October 2023. Revisions since the last calendar were highlighted in yellow.

Note: Members of the Town Council may attend events that are, or are not, sponsored by the Town but there will be no Council business conducted at any of these events in instances where a quorum of the Council may be present.

- 2) The Granite Falls Rotary Club dissolved earlier this year after many years of dedicated service to this community. The Rotary Club members previously planned and organized the Annual Granite Falls Christmas Parade as a fundraising event to provide scholarships for local high school students. Manager Church was pleased to announce that Impact by Rotary International is going to step in and plan and organize this year's parade. Impact is also going to continue the tradition of using this as a fundraiser for local high school students. The Town will still be involved by providing street closures, security, emergency aid, trash pick-up, stage set-up and break down, tables, chairs, etc. This is a win-win for the Town and for local high school students.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. WPCOG Policy Board will meet next week.
2. Caldwell County Railroad Policy Board – No report
3. Sales Tax Reinvestment Committee – No report
4. Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Technical Coordinating - No report
5. Caldwell County Economic Development Commission (EDC) - No report
6. NC Municipal Power Agency # 1 Board of Commissioners – No report
7. Caldwell County Manager's bi-monthly meeting – Town Manager Church attended the meeting held Friday, September 16th. Many members did not attend so no business was held.

INFORMATION ITEMS/REPORTS

1. The Recreation Advisory Board will not meet in October.
2. The Merchants' Association will meet Monday, September 26th at noon in the Town Office.
3. The History Committee will meet Tuesday, September 20th at 2:00 p.m. at the Museum.
4. The Planning Board will meet Tuesday, Sept.27th at 5:00 p.m. in the Council Room. (This meeting will probably be cancelled.)
5. The Board of Adjustment will meet Wednesday, Oct.10th at 5:00 p.m. in the Council Room.
6. The WPCOG MPO/RPO will meet Wednesday, September 28th at 1:00 p.m. at the WPCOG.
7. The ABC Board will meet Monday, October 10th at 5:30 p.m. at the ABC Store.

COUNCIL GOES INTO CLOSED SESSION Mike Mackie made a motion the Council under N.C. General Statute 143-318.11 (3) the Council shall hold a closed session to consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the public body, which privilege is hereby acknowledged. Tracy Townsend seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote.

COUNCIL GOES OUT OF CLOSED SESSION Mike Mackie made a motion the Council go out of Closed Session. Ritch Bolick seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote.

PURCHASE OF HUFFMAN PROPERTY In previous closed session meetings, Town Manager Church informed the Council that he has previously been in contact with Larry Huffman about the Town purchasing the property he owns across from Granite Drug Center. The property includes 3 parcels and would be used to build a new Fire Department. The Council was in consensus for Manager Church to further discuss this with Mr. Huffman and find out the least amount he would consider. Manager Church informed the Council that Mr. Huffman reduced the selling price from \$750,000 to \$725,000 with no realtor involvement.

Mike Mackie made a motion the Council approve the Town provide Mr. Huffman \$625,000 contingent upon a responsible due diligence period for a potential title search, environmental study, document preparations, and closing, and approve Town Manager Church to spend funds up to \$25,000 for the before mentioned items and approve any other negotiation contingencies. Martin Townsend seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote.

MEETING ADJOURNED Tracy Townsend made a motion the Council adjourn the meeting. Jim Mackie seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote.