

MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING HELD NOVEMBER 7, 2022

Face coverings were optional for the November 7, 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.

SPECIAL MEETING The Granite Falls Town Council held a Special Meeting on November 7, 2022, at 5:00 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, Larry Knight, Jim Mackie, Mike Mackie, Martin Townsend, and Tracy Townsend.

ABSENT The following member of the governing body was absent: None

STAFF PRESENT The following staff members attended the meeting: Town Manager Jerry Church, Town Attorney Bruce Cannon, Town Clerk Paula Kirby, Finance Officer Ashley Presnell, Assistant Police Chief Brine Branham.

VISITORS Brandi C. Fesperman, CPA, Senior Accountant with Martin Starnes & Associates, CPAs, P.A., Dr. Mark Poarch, President of Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute, Dr. Don Phipps, Superintendent of the Caldwell County Schools, and Alison Adams, Regional and Community Planning Director of the Western Piedmont Council of Governments (WPCOG).

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 Martin Townsend led in prayer.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE Councilmember Larry Knight led the Pledge of Allegiance.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT Councilmember Mike 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 PRESENTATIONS

Brandi C. Fesperman, CPA, Senior Accountant with Martin Starnes & Associates, CPAs, P.A., presented the Council with the Town of Granite Falls Annual Report and audit results for the year ended June 30, 2022. Ms. Fesperman stated that the Town finances are in excellent shape. The audit went well with an unmodified opinion, no red flags, stable property tax valuation and collection percent, and was approved by the LGC. She thanked Town staff for their cooperation and timely audit submission. A copy of the audit report is attached and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

Dr. Mark Poarch, President of Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute, presented an update on the college. Dr. Poarch informed the Council that the Fall 2022 enrollment increased by 40 curriculum students, 89 new students, and 64 adult learners. In 2021-22, 1,176 Caldwell County high school students took at least one college course at CCC&TI. 13,422 credits were earned and \$1,020,072 in tuition was saved. The college is responding to workforce needs with courses in Biopharmaceutical Technology, Emergency Medical Science, Diesel and Heavy Equipment, and Welding. The college offers apprenticeships, work-based learning, internships, and learning opportunities for adult learners. Dr. Poarch was pleased to announce several upcoming additions to the CCC&TI campuses, such as a new Health Science building and a new athletic field at the Hudson campus and a new building at the Watauga campus. A copy of the presentation is attached and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

Dr. Don Phipps, Superintendent of the Caldwell County Schools, presented an update on the school system. Dr. Phipps thanked the Council for their patience with the completion of Granite Falls Middle School. Permanent cafeteria lights still need to be installed. There are 10,800 students enrolled in 24 Caldwell County schools with 1800 staff members. This year's budget is approximately \$155 million, including COVID money. A \$594,000 Safety Grant was received. The monies will be used for additional School Resource Officers, cameras, etc. Also received was a \$600,000 Bus Grant to purchase an electric school activity bus and charging station. A \$95K Lego Literacy Grant was received for three years. 175 students are in the Virtual Academy with hopes to cap out with 250 students. Caldwell County Schools have a ratio of 1:1 technology devices per student. Dr. Phipps announced that Caldwell County School Board Chairman Darrell Pennell will be installed as NCSBA President on November 16th, and Dr. Phipps has been nominated for Superintendent of the Year. Announcements of the winner will be November 15th. Dr. Phipps thanked the Council for their continued support and involvement with the school system.

Alison Adams, Regional and Community Planning Director of the Western Piedmont Council of Governments (WPCOG), presented an overview of the updated WPCOG Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The WPCOG serves as an Economic Development District (EDD) for the region. The CEDS is completed every 5 years. The document guides and identifies economic opportunities, challenges, and goals which includes six subject areas: Economic Development, Workforce, Infrastructure, Housing, Marketing, and Community Life. A copy of the CEDS is attached and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

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, OCTOBER 17, 2022 Tracy Townsend made a motion the Council approve the minutes from the regular meeting held Monday, Monday October 17, 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 HEARINGS

PUBLIC HEARING CALLED TO ORDER ON AN AMENDMENT TO THE TOWN CODE OF ORDINANCES, TITLE III: ADMINISTRATION, CHAPTER 30. TOWN COUNCIL, GENERAL PROVISIONS, SECTION 30.01 REGULAR MEETINGS

Mayor Dr. Caryl B. Burns called to order a public hearing on an amendment to the Town Code of Ordinances TITLE III: ADMINISTRATION, Chapter 30. Town Council, General Provisions, Section 30.01 REGULAR MEETINGS. The amendment would change the starting time of regular Town Council meetings from 6:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. and change the reference in the ordinance referring to the location of Council meetings from Town Hall to Town Offices.

The current ordinance states “The Council shall hold a regular meeting on the first and third Monday of each month, unless that day is a legal holiday, in which case the meeting may be held on the next business day or canceled by the majority vote of the Council. The meeting shall be held at the Town Hall and shall begin at 6:00 p.m. unless otherwise designated by the agenda.”

Town staff recommends that the reference to the Town Hall be changed to Town Offices and that the starting time of the meetings be changed from 6:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. The revised ordinance would state “The Council shall hold a regular meeting on the first and third Monday of each month, unless that day is a legal holiday, in which case the meeting may be held on the next business day or canceled by the majority vote of the Council. The meeting shall be held at the Town Offices and shall begin at 5:30 p.m. unless otherwise designated by the agenda.” The change to the ordinance would go into effect for meetings held after January 1, 2022.

The public hearing was duly noticed by publishing a notice in the News Topic as required under NC General Statutes.

PUBLIC HEARING ON AN AMENDMENT TO THE TOWN CODE OF ORDINANCES, TITLE III: ADMINISTRATION, CHAPTER 30. TOWN COUNCIL, GENERAL PROVISIONS, SECTION 30.01 REGULAR MEETINGS CLOSED

Mayor Burns closed the public hearing on an amendment to the Town Code of Ordinances TITLE III:

ADMINISTRATION, Chapter 30. Town Council, General Provisions, Section 30.01
REGULAR MEETINGS.

NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

ORDINANCE #372 CHANGING THE STARTING TIME OF REGULAR COUNCIL MEETINGS FROM 6:00 P.M. TO 5:30 P.M. AND THE LOCATION OF REGULAR COUNCIL MEETINGS FROM TOWN HALL TO TOWN OFFICES APPROVED

Mike Mackie made a motion the Council approve Ordinance #372 which changes the starting time and location of regular Council meetings. Ritch Bolick seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote. A copy of Ordinance #372 is attached and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

CHANGE TO THE COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE APPROVED Martin Townsend made a motion the Council call for a special Council meeting on Monday, January 23, 2023, at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Room located in the Town Offices. The special meeting is necessary since the 1st and 3rd Mondays in January 2023 are both Town holidays. Ritch Bolick seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote.

RESOLUTIONS DESIGNATING MEETING DATES FOR 2023 ADOPTED Larry Knight made a motion the Council adopt resolutions designating meeting dates for the Granite Falls Town Council, the Granite Falls Planning Board, the Granite Falls Board of Adjustment, and the Granite Falls Recreation Advisory Board. Mike Mackie seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote. Copies of the resolutions are attached and are hereby made a part of these minutes.

PUBLIC HEARING CALLED ON REDUCING THE SPEED LIMIT ON ALL TOWN MAINTAINED STREETS THAT DO NOT HAVE ESTABLISHED SPEED LIMITS FROM 35 MILES PER HOUR TO 25 MILES PER HOUR (MPH)

Town of Granite Falls Police Chief Chris Jenkins has been reviewing established speed limits on all Town maintained streets and has recommended that the Council approve a change to the Town Code of Ordinances to reduce the speed limit on streets that do not have established speed limits from 35 MPH to 25 MPH. Reducing the speed limit on the aforementioned streets requires a change to the Town Code of Ordinances Title VII: Traffic Code, Chapter 72. Traffic Schedule IV, Speed Limits. (A) and (C) (3).

Tracy Townsend made a motion the Council approve this recommendation and call for a public hearing to amend the Town Code of Ordinances at the December 12, 2022, special Council meeting. Martin Townsend seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote. Copies of the current and revised ordinances are attached and are hereby made a part of these minutes.

FINANCIAL REPORT The financial dashboard for the four months ended October 31, 2022, was presented for the Council's review. This report represents 33% of the current 2022 - 2023 fiscal year budget. Also presented for Council review was an analysis of the current year sales tax revenue and current property tax revenue versus prior year and budgeted revenues. Copies of these reports are attached and are hereby made a part of these minutes.

ABC FINANCIAL STATEMENT The Granite Falls ABC Board submitted the financial statement for the three-month period ended September 30, 2022, for Council review and comments. Martin Townsend made a motion the Council receive the statement as information. Jim Mackie seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote. A copy of the statement is attached and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

ABC DISTRIBUTION Town Finance Officer Ashley Presnell requested the Council to authorize the distribution of ABC funds in the amount of \$13,057.55 to the local schools as follows:

Granite Falls Elementary School	36%	\$4,700.72
Granite Falls Middle School	36%	\$4,700.72
Dudley Shoals Elementary School	<u>28%</u>	<u>\$3,656.11</u>
Total Distribution	<u>100%</u>	<u>\$13,057.55</u>

These funds represent the portion of the ABC Store profit distribution for the first quarter ended 9/30/2022.

Mike Mackie made a motion the Council authorize the distribution as requested. Larry Knight seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote.

BUDGET AMENDMENT #8 2022-2023 APPROVED – FINANCE OFFICER ASHLEY PRESNELL The Council was requested to approve Budget Amendment #2023-8 for the purchase of 3 parcels of property from Larry and Jo Ann Huffman. The Council previously approved the purchase of the property and the closing date for the property will be before the end of December 2022.

Tracy Townsend made a motion the Council approve Budget Amendment #8 2022-2023 as requested. Martin Townsend seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote. A copy of the amendment is attached and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

COUNCIL NOTIFIED OF TRANSFER OF BUDGET DOLLARS TO THE RECREATION DEPARTMENT FROM THE ADMINISTRATIVE DEPARTMENT FOR INCREASED PAY FOR GAME OFFICIALS AND LIFEGUARDS Per Section 5 of Town of Granite Falls Budget Ordinance #366, which was approved by the Council on June 21, 2022, the Budget Officer is hereby authorized to transfer appropriations within a fund as contained herein under the following conditions:

- b. He/she may transfer amounts up to \$5,000 between departments of the same fund with an official report on each such transfer being made at the next meeting of the Town Council.

Town Manager Jerry Church, who also serves as Town Budget Officer, reported to the Council that he has transferred \$5,000 in the previously approved 2022-2023 fiscal year budget from the Administrative Department budget to the Recreation Department budget to cover additional compensation for game officials and lifeguards.

TRANSFER OF BUDGET DOLLARS FROM THE POLICE DEPARTMENT TO THE RECREATION DEPARTMENT APPROVED

Participation in Recreation team programs has significantly increased in the past few years as additional programs, such as volleyball and indoor soccer have been added. In 2016, there were 702 participants in 4 team sports program and in 2022 there have been 1,070 participants in 6 team sports programs for an increase of 150% in participants and programs. In the next year, there will be 4 major construction projects at the Recreation Center: New Splash Pad, New ADA Restrooms, New Parking Lot, and new ADA Sidewalk/Walking Trail Addition. Parks & Recreation Director Chad Raby will be spending significant time managing these projects. Chad will also be assisting Town Manager Jerry Church in the implementation of the Town ADA Transition Plan.

Town Manager Church requested the Council to approve the transfer of \$20,000 in the previously approved 2022-2023 fiscal year budget from the Police Department to the Recreation Department to cover the additional costs of increasing the salary of the Athletic Program Specialist who will pick up additional team sport program duties and to “add back” the two part-time night and weekend building supervisor positions that were eliminated during COVID while the building was closed.

Martin Townsend made a motion the Council approve the transfer of budget funds as requested. Jim Mackie seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote.

EVENTS SCHEDULE

The Council considered the schedule of events for the balance of 2022.

Veterans Day Ceremony - 10:00 a.m. Thurs., 11/10/2022 - Rec. Center
Light Up Granite Falls Tree Decorating Contest - 3:30 p.m. Mon., 11/21/2022 - Downtown
Festival on the Square Tree Lighting Ceremony - 6:15 p.m. Mon., 11/21/2022 - Downtown
Impact by Rotary Club Granite Falls Christmas Parade - Noon, Sat., 12/03/2022 – Downtown

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:

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 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.

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 December 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) Update on CDBG infrastructure grant. The Town applied for a \$5,000,000 Community Development Block Grant to replace aging water & sewer infrastructure in low to moderate income neighborhoods. This round of the CDBG did not require a Town match or the usual series of public hearings before the application was filed.
- 3) On Tuesday, October 25, 2022, Town Manager Jerry Church did a presentation on Town services and events, the role of the Town Manager in local government, and on the importance of leadership skills, to Cub Scouts Troup #260 sponsored by First United Methodist Church, Granite Falls.
- 4) The Caldwell County Schools received grant money to add SROs at 6 additional schools including Granite Falls Elementary School. Town Manager Church informed the Council that they will see an advertisement for the GFES SRO position before the Council actually approves the addition to the Town headcount budget. The action item to add a position to the Town headcount budget could not be added to the 11.07.2022 agenda since state law only allows action to be taken on items that are advertised on the agenda for special meetings. The 11.07.2022 was a special meeting under state law since it started at 5:00 p.m. instead of the normal start time of 6:00 p.m.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. WPCOG Policy Board – Will meet November 22nd at the COG
2. Caldwell County Railroad Policy Board – No report
3. Sales Tax Reinvestment Committee – No report
4. Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Technical Coordinating – The intersection and the removal of old infrastructure at Pinewood Road was discussed.
5. Caldwell County Economic Development Commission (EDC) - No report
6. NC Municipal Power Agency # 1 Board of Commissioners – Will meet Tuesday, November 15, 2022.
7. Caldwell County Manager's bi-monthly meeting – No report

INFORMATION ITEMS/REPORTS

1. The Recreation Advisory Board will not meet in November.
2. The Merchants' Association will not meet in November.
3. The History Committee will meet Tuesday, November 15th at 2:00 p.m. at the Museum.
4. The Planning Board will meet Tuesday, November 22nd at 5:00 p.m. in the Council Room.
5. The Board of Adjustment will meet Wednesday, November 9th at 5:00 p.m. in the Council Room.
6. The WPCOG MPO/RPO will meet Wednesday, November 16th October 26th at 1:00 p.m. at the WPCOG.
7. The ABC Board will meet Monday, November 7th at 5:30 p.m. at the ABC Store.

COUNCIL GOES INTO CLOSED SESSION

Larry Knight made a motion 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. Mike Mackie seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote.

COUNCIL GOES OUT OF CLOSED SESSION Martin Townsend made a motion the Council go out of closed session. Larry Knight seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote.

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