

MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING HELD JANUARY 10, 2022

Per Center for Disease Control guidance, attendees at the Council meeting who have not been vaccinated should continue to wear face coverings and social distance from others in attendance.

SPECIAL MEETING The Granite Falls Town Council held a Special Meeting on January 10, 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 Larry Knight, Jim Mackie, Mike Mackie, Martin Townsend, and Tracy Townsend.

ABSENT The following member of the governing body was absent: Ritch Bolick

STAFF PRESENT The following staff members attended the meeting: Town Manager Jerry Church, Town Attorney Bruce Cannon, Town Clerk Paula Kirby, Finance Officer Jana Williams, and Police Chief Chris Jenkins.

VISITORS None

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 Mayor Pro Tem Tracy Townsend led in prayer.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE Mayor Dr. Caryl B. Burns led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA Larry Knight 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 ORGANIZATIONAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD MONDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2021 Tracy Townsend made a motion the Council approve the minutes from the Organizational Town Council meeting held Monday, December 6, 2021 as presented. Mike Mackie 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.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

PUBLIC (LEGISLATIVE) HEARING CALLED TO ORDER ON PROPOSED SALE OF THE NEW FARM ROAD PROPERTY BY CALDWELL EDC PROPERTIES, LLC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PURPOSES

Mayor Dr. Caryl B. Burns called to order a public (legislative) hearing on the proposed sale of the New Farm Road property owned by Caldwell EDC Properties, LLC. The 66.68-acre tract is a portion of the tract that was previously conveyed to Caldwell EDC Properties, LLC. Caldwell County and the Town of Granite Falls are the members of Caldwell EDC Properties, LLC. The purpose of the public hearing was to receive public comment on the proposed sale of the fee simple interest in the property for economic development purposes, to MDI Management, LLC, for the sum of \$1,200,000.00 (One-million, two hundred thousand US dollars) which is believed to be the value of the property.

The Council called for the public hearing at the December 6, 2021 Council meeting following the presentation by Town Manager Jerry Church. At the public hearing, all residents of the Town and other interested parties were allowed to speak. The terms of sale will be finalized after a 119-day due diligence period during which the parties will negotiate an economic development agreement and restrictions for the use of the property through certain deed restrictions and/or the conditional zoning process, etc. The sale is also contingent upon the approval by the Caldwell County Commissioners.

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

PUBLIC (LEGISLATIVE) HEARING ON PROPOSED SALE OF THE NEW FARM ROAD PROPERTY BY CALDWELL EDC PROPERTIES, LLC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PURPOSES CLOSED

Mayor Dr. Caryl B. Burns closed the public (legislative) hearing on the proposed sale of the New Farm Road property by Caldwell EDC Properties, LLC for economic development purposes.

NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

PROPOSED SALE OF THE NEW FARM ROAD PROPERTY BY CALDWELL EDC PROPERTIES, LLC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PURPOSES APPROVED

The Council considered the sale of the 66.68-acre New Farm Road property from Caldwell EDC Properties, LLC to MDI Management, LLC for economic development purposes for \$1,200,000.00. The terms of sale will be finalized after a 119-day due diligence period during which the parties will negotiate an economic development agreement and restrictions for the use of the property through certain deed restrictions and/or the conditional zoning process, etc. The sale is also contingent upon the approval by the Caldwell County Commissioners.

Tracy Townsend made a motion the Council approve the sale of the New Farm Road Property from Caldwell EDC, LLC to MDI Management, LLC for \$1,200,000 for economic

development purposes. The terms of the sale would be finalized during a 119-day due diligence period during which the parties would negotiate an economic development agreement and restrictions for the use of the property through certain deed restrictions and/or the conditional zoning process, etc. It is anticipated that the sale of the property will close in 120 days. The sale of this property is also contingent upon the approval of the Caldwell County Commissioners. Mike Mackie seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote. A summary of the Economic Development Expansion Project, including a GIS map of the property, is attached and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

PROGRESSIVE ENGINEERING CONTRACT APPROVED The Council was requested to approve the Engineering Services Contract with Progressive Engineering Consultants, Inc. for calendar 2022 and to authorize the Town Manager to execute the contract on behalf of the Town. The contract establishes compensation, obligations, and insurance requirements, etc. The 2022 rates reflect no increase from the previous year's rates which brings the average rate increase for the past 11 years to 1.76%.

Larry Knight made a motion the Council approve the contract and authorize the Town Manager to execute the contract on behalf of the Town as requested. Martin Townsend seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote. A copy of the engineering contract is attached and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

FINANCIAL REPORT The Revenue and Expenditure report for the period ended December 31, 2021 was presented for the Council's review. This report represents 50% of the current 2021 – 2022 fiscal year budget. Also presented for Council review was the financial dashboard and an analysis of current year sales tax revenue versus prior year and budgeted revenues. Copies of these reports are attached and are hereby made part of these minutes.

BUDGET AMENDMENT #2 – 2021-2022 APPROVED The Council was requested to approve Budget Amendment #2 – 2021-2022 for a North Carolina Department of Commerce (NC DOC) Rural Economic Development Division (REDD) Building Reuse Grant for SERVPRO for renovations to the former CCON Metals building at 121 Falls Avenue. SERVPRO plans to spend approximately \$750,000 to renovate the existing building. The Town SERVPRO project was awarded a grant of up to \$200,000 based on SERVPRO creating 25 new jobs. The grant award requires that the annualized average weekly wages paid to SERVPRO employees must exceed the Caldwell County private sector wage of \$41,157 and that SERVPRO must pay at least 50% of the cost of employee health insurance. The Caldwell County Economic Development Commission will administer the grant. The Town has funds set aside for the local government required 5% match. The Town would be protected from having to repay the grants funds by a Deed of Trust against the property.

Martin Townsend made a motion the Council approve Budget Amendment #2 – 2021-2022 as requested. Jim Mackie seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote. A copy of the budget amendment is attached and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

BUDGET AMENDMENT #3 – 2021-2022 APPROVED The Council was requested to approve Budget Amendment #3 – 2021-2022 for additional Powell Bill Funds received from the state. This amendment will allow these funds to be spent on Council approved projects.

Tracy Townsend made a motion the Council approve Budget Amendment #3- 2021-2022 as requested. Larry Knight seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote. A copy of the budget amendment is attached and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

UPDATE ON STATE CAPITAL AND INFRASTRUCTURE FUND DIRECTED GRANTS The Town received confirmation for two State Capital and Infrastructure Fund Directed Grants (SCIF) totaling \$330,000. The first SCIF grant is for \$150,000 (CIP #R40) for the addition of ADA compliant sidewalk to the walking path at the Recreation Center from the pool area/multipurpose field #3 to the back parking lot and to the sidewalk at the ADA playgrounds. The second SCIF grant is for \$180,000 (CIP #R51) for the construction of a new parking lot at the Recreation Center in the area between the former civic building and the water tank. These grant funds can't be used for any other purpose and must be spent within the next two 2 years. The Town will receive contracts in the near future for these grants which will be followed by hiring an engineering firm to put together bid specifications.

Mike Mackie made a motion the Council authorize the Town Manager and/or the Assistant Town Manager to sign all documents required for the SCIF Grants. Jim Mackie seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote. Copies of the CIP requests are attached and are hereby made a part of these minutes.

APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STAFFING FOR ADEQUATE SAFETY AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE (SAFER) GRANT FOR THE TOWN OF GRANITE FALLS FIRE DEPARTMENT APPROVED Volunteerism numbers are dropping nationwide including the number of volunteer firefighters at the Town of Granite Falls Fire Department (GFFD). The GFFD has unsuccessfully advertised for additional volunteer firefighters on the Town website, the Town newsletter, the Town social media, and by word-of-mouth. The GFFD is currently down to 12 volunteer firefighters and 5 of those volunteers are now eligible to retire. Because of the amount of training required for firefighters and first responders, the GFFD should not wait for additional volunteers to come forward to assist in meeting the public safety needs in the Town limits and in the South Caldwell Fire District.

The Council was requested to approve Town staff to apply for a Staffing For Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant – Hiring of Firefighters Program. SAFER Grants are issued through FEMA and provide \$40,000 annually per employee for 3 years to supplement the cost of salary and benefits. After the 3-year period of performance has expired, the Town is not legally required to keep these positions. If approved, Town staff would work with JMCM Consulting, Five Points Alabama, that previously assisted the Town with successful Assistance to Firefighters Grant applications. The grant application fee is a \$1,500 non-refundable fee plus the Town would owe JMCM an additional \$5,000 if the grant is awarded.

Tracy Townsend made a motion the Council authorize Town staff applying for a SAFER – Hiring of Firefighters Grant for \$360,000 for 3 additional firefighters and to authorize the Town Manager and/or Assistant Town Manager to execute the grant application and grant documents for the SAFER grant. Larry Knight seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote. Copies of the Town of Granite Falls Fire Department staffing levels, Responder Statistics, and the SAFER Grant cost analysis are attached and are hereby made a part of these minutes.

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 holiday:

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Monday, January 17, 2022

The Police and Fire Departments and 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 February 2023. Revisions since the last calendar were highlighted in yellow.
2. **COVID-19 Update** Town Manager Church informed the Council that the Town is experiencing new challenges each day with either new COVID-19 cases or exposures in every department. Masks are being worn and gathering sizes have been limited. Employees are not eating or riding in vehicles together except for certain times when Police and Fire employees have to ride together. Town staff is doing a great job of covering for each other when shorthanded. We are below 100 full-time and part-time employees, so vaccines and testing are not mandatory at this time.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. WPCOG Policy Board – Will meet January 25, 2022 at the Broyhill Civic Center
2. Caldwell County Railroad Policy Board – Will meet January 14, 2022
3. Sales Tax Reinvestment Committee – Met January 6, 2022 by Zoom. Discussed 3 projects: MDI, Grand Manor Building Reuse Grant, and Harmony Timber Works.
4. Catawba River Study Committee has not met recently.
5. Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Technical Coordinating – Normally meets the 4th Wednesday of each month but the January 2022 meeting has been moved up one week. Martin Townsend stated that no new highway projects will be added to the NC DOT plan until 2040 due to lack of money.
6. Caldwell County Economic Development Commission (EDC) - Will meet January 11, 2022.

7. Corporate Circle – sponsored by Caldwell Chamber of Commerce has not met recently.
8. NC Municipal Power Agency # 1 Board of Commissioners – Will meet January 25, 2022.
9. Caldwell County Manager’s – Met January 10, 2022. The main discussion was COVID-19 protocols.
10. ElectriCities Grassroots Committee does not have formal meetings but involves Town staff communicating with members of the state Legislature concerning public power.
11. Caldwell County’s Green Commission has not met recently.

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