

**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING HELD JULY 20, 2020**

**Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), this special meeting of the Granite Falls Town Council was held in the Council Room and allowed for remote participation by members of the media, citizens and members of the general public, and all other interested parties.**

**REGULAR MEETING** The Granite Falls Town Council held a Regular Meeting on July 20, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Administrative Building.

**PRESENT** The following members of the governing body were physically present: Mayor Barry Hayes, and Council Members Dr. Caryl B. Burns, Larry Knight, Jim Mackie, Mike Mackie, Martin Townsend, and Tracy Townsend. Mayor Hayes did a roll call of all members present.

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

**STAFF PRESENT** The following staff members physically attended the meeting: Town Manager Jerry Church, Town Clerk Paula Kirby, Town Attorney Bruce Cannon, Finance Director Jana Williams, and Administrative Assistant Kara Calloway.

**VISITORS** Wiley Moore attended the meeting by remote participation.

**NEWS MEDIA** Garrett Stell, representing *The News-Topic*, attended the meeting by remote participation.

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER** Mayor Barry Hayes called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone present.

**INVOCATION** Councilmember Dr. Caryl B. Burns led in prayer.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** Mayor Barry Hayes led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**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 determined by the Mayor individually polling each Councilmember.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD JUNE 22, 2020** Larry Knight made a motion the Council approve the minutes from the

Special Council meeting held June 22, 2020 as presented. Tracy Townsend seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote determined by the Mayor individually polling each Councilmember.

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

**PUBLIC HEARINGS** None

**PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD** No public comments were submitted and no one from the public attended the meeting remotely.

**NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS**

**APPLICATION FOR MASSAGE BUSINESS OPERATOR LICENSE APPROVED**

The Town Council considered an application from Massage By Kim to operate a massage business at 75 Woodlane Street in Granite Falls. The Town of Granite Falls Code of Ordinances § 111.03 Licensing of Massage Business Operators (D) states that an application in proper form accompanied by all reports required by this section shall be submitted to the Town Council, which shall approve the application if the Town Council determines that the application meets all criteria outlined in § 111.03.

Tracy Townsend made a motion the Council approve the application as submitted, which allows Town staff to issue required licenses and permits. Martin Townsend seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote determined by the Mayor individually polling each Councilmember. A copy of the application is attached and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

**APPLICATION FOR MASSAGE LICENSE APPROVED** The Town Council considered an application from Kimberly Seaver to engage in the business or profession of massage at 75 Woodlane Street in Granite Falls. The Town of Granite Falls Code of Ordinances § 111.04 Licensing of Massagists (E) states that an application in proper form shall be submitted to the Town Council together with all reports required by this section. The Town Council shall approve the application if the Town Council determines that the application meets all criteria outlined in § 111.04.

Mike Mackie made a motion the Council approve the application as submitted, which allows Town staff to issue required permits and licenses. Dr. Caryl B. Burns seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote determined by the Mayor individually polling each Councilmember. A copy of the application is attached and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

**REPORT ON UNPAID TAXES AND SETTLEMENT FOR 2019-2020 TAXES ACCEPTED** After July 1 and before being charged with 2020-2021 taxes, the Tax Collector must make a sworn report to the governing board showing a list of unpaid taxes constituting liens on real property, a list of unpaid taxes on personal property not constituting liens on real property and make settlement for 2019-2020 taxes per North Carolina General

Statute 105-373(a). The Council was requested to accept the report as submitted by Tax Collector Kim Anderson.

Tracy Townsend made a motion the Council accept the report as submitted. Mike Mackie seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote determined by the Mayor individually polling each member. A copy of the report is attached and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

**MONTHLY BUDGET REPORT** The preliminary Revenue and Expenditure Report for the period ended June 30, 2020 was presented for the Council's review and comments. This report represents 100% of the 2019–2020 fiscal year budget. Also presented for the Council's review were the financial dashboard and an analysis of 2019-2020 sales tax revenue and property tax revenue versus prior year and budgeted revenues. Copies of the reports are attached and are hereby made a part of these minutes.

**BUDGET AMENDMENT #1 – 2020-2021 APPROVED** Town Staff was not able to complete certain projects before the end of the fiscal year. Since these projects were not completed, the money designated for the projects went straight into fund balance at the end of June 2020. The Council was requested to approve this budget amendment to authorize expenditures to complete these projects in Fiscal Year 2020-2021.

Martin Townsend made a motion the Council approve Budget Amendment #1 2020-2021 as requested. Dr. Caryl B. Burns seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote determined by the Mayor individually polling each member. A copy of Budget Amendment #1 2020-2021 is attached and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

**BUDGET AMENDMENT #2 – 2020-2021 APPROVED** The Town of Granite Falls received some federal CARES Act funds that we did not know we would receive until last week. The Council was asked to approve this budget amendment to record the revenue expected in 2021 and authorize the expenditure of these funds. All transactions related to these funds must be completed by December 31, 2020.

Larry Knight made a motion the Council approve Budget Amendment #2 2020-2021 to record the revenue expected in 2021 and authorize the expenditure of these funds as requested. Jim Mackie seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote determined by the Mayor individually polling each Councilmember. A copy of Budget Amendment #2 2020-2021 is attached and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

**AMENDMENT OF FEE SCHEDULE FOR FISCAL YEAR 2020-2021 APPROVED** There were two errors on the Town of Granite Falls Fee Schedule effective July 1, 2020. The Fee Schedule for permits for accessory structures or other permits not requiring site plan review should not have changed from \$25 to \$50 and the pool discounts for Veterans and active military was inadvertently omitted from the schedule.

Mike Mackie made a motion the Council approve the amendments to the fee schedule as requested. Tracy Townsend seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote

determined by the Mayor individually polling each Councilmember. Copies of the amendments are attached and are hereby made a part of these minutes.

**SOLICITATION OF INFORMAL BIDS FOR THE REPAIR OF THE AERIAL SEWER LINE TO HIGHLAND #2 APPROVED** The Council was requested to approve the solicitation of informal bids for the repair of an aerial sewer line damaged by a tree that fell on the line late in fiscal year 2020. The Town hired a contractor to temporarily repair the line to prevent spills as a short-term solution. The informal bids will be obtained by Town staff and reviewed by the Town Water & Sewer Committee which will make a recommendation on awarding the bid to the lowest responsive, responsible bidder at a future Council meeting.

Tracy Townsend made a motion the Council approve the solicitation of informal bids as requested. Martin Townsend seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote determined by the Mayor individually polling each Councilmember.

**SOLICITATION OF FORMAL BIDS FOR THE STATE RESERVE PROGRAM LOAN TO REPLACE WATER LINE FROM THE WATER TREATMENT PLANT TO LAUREL STREET APPROVED** On August 13, 2010, Council approved accepting a \$500,000 loan from the State Reserve Program (SRP) to replace a water line from the Water Treatment Plant (WTP) to Laurel Street. The 8-inch ductile iron line was installed in 1942 and will be replaced by a 12-inch line that will increase pump rates at the WTP and finished water flow into the Town's water distribution system. On July 15, 2019, as part of the paperwork required for the loan, Council approved a resolution accepting the offer and assuring the Town's compliance with the provisions of the Standard Conditions & Assurances for the State Reserve Program. The resolution also authorizes Town Manager Jerry Church to execute all documents required for the project. The Town is currently awaiting approval of the engineering design plans for the project by NC DEQ which allows the Town to solicit bids for the project. This project was included as project WD3 in the Town of Granite Falls Capital Improvement Plan approved by the Council on May 21, 2020 and in the 2021 fiscal year budget approved by the Town Council on June 22, 2020.

The Council was requested to approve the solicitation of formal bids for the SRP water line project after the Town receives the approval of the engineering design plans by NC DEQ. The bids will be reviewed by the Town Water & Sewer Committee which will make a recommendation to the Council on awarding the bid to the lowest responsive, responsible bidder at a future Council meeting.

Larry Knight made a motion the Council approve the solicitation of formal bids as requested. Dr. Caryl B. Burns seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote determined by the Mayor individually polling each Councilmember. A copy of project WD3 is attached and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

**ATTORNEY'S CONTRACT AGREEMENT APPROVED** The Council was requested to approve the General Counsel Agreement for \$4,590 with Cannon Law Firm, P.A. to serve as the Town's attorney for fiscal year 2020-2021.

Jim Mackie made a motion the Council approve the agreement as requested. Tracy Townsend seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote determined by the Mayor individually polling each Councilmember. A copy of the agreement is attached and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

**PAYMENT PLAN FOR PAST DUE RESIDENTIAL UTILITY ACCOUNTS BALANCES FOR MARCH, APRIL, MAY, JUNE, AND JULY 2020 APPROVED**

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, a vast majority of North Carolina utility providers (electric, water, sewer, natural gas, and propane), including the Town of Granite Falls, discontinued customer disconnects for non-payment and suspended late fees, and penalties for the March 2020 utility bills. On March 31, 2020, North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper signed Executive Order #124 (EO #124) which prohibited utilities from disconnecting residential utilities for non-payment and suspended late fees and penalties for the months of April and May 2020. On May 30, 2020, North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper signed Executive Order #142 (EO #142) which extended EO #124 for an additional 60 days through July 29, 2020.

EO #124 also mandated a payment plan that allows residential customers to pay their past due utility bills by December 1, 2020. EO #142 extended the payment plan by 60 days to February 1, 2021. The Town was required to give notices to customers about the deferral of April, May, June, and July residential utility payments and did so by posting on social media, the Town website, on office doors and the drive through window, in a Town newsletter, and in the Caldwell Journal. Town staff worked with Town Attorney Bruce Cannon and the UNC School of Government Staff to develop a residential payment plan agreement which would spread the residential deferred utility payments over the next six months through December 1, 2020 and have updated the dates on the plan to spread the payment plan through February 1, 2021. As was the case with the previous plan approved by the Council on May 21, 2020, residential customers will also have to pay their monthly utility bills in addition to the amounts spread over the next six months.

Dr. Caryl B. Burns made a motion the Council approve the deferral of June and July utility payments for all residential customers, the suspension of disconnects for non-payment of utility bills and the suspension of late fees and penalties for June and July for these customers, and to approve the Residential Utility Payment Plan Agreement as presented. Larry Knight seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote determined by the Mayor individually polling each Councilmember. A copy of the Residential Payment Plan is attached and is 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 holidays:

Labor Day	Monday, September 7 <sup>th</sup>
Veterans Day	Wednesday, November 11 <sup>th</sup>
Thanksgiving	Thursday, November 26 <sup>th</sup> & Friday, November 27 <sup>th</sup>
Christmas	Wednesday, Thursday, & Friday, December 23 <sup>th</sup> - 25 <sup>th</sup>
New Year's Day	Friday, January 1, 2021

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 August 2021. 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. COVID-19 Update -The Town office and facilities remain closed to the public. Employees, visitors, and vendors are required to have their temperatures taken before entering Town buildings. Town employees are required to wear masks when they are not in their dedicated work area or can't properly practice social distancing. Visitors and vendors are required to wear masks at all times. Employees are implementing the "3 W's": washing hands, wearing masks, and waiting 6 feet apart. Newsletters were sent out with the August utility bills containing COVID-19 and soccer season information. The pool opened on July 6<sup>th</sup> and is scheduled to close on August 16<sup>th</sup>. The capacity of 60 people has been met 4 days and the average attendance is 40.
3. The Town recently had a water main break on South Main Street resulting in the loss of approximately 1.6 million gallons of water from the above ground storage tanks. The main cost to repair the break will be for pumping at the site and materials which is estimated to be \$3,500. Water testing is estimated to be \$100. No insurance claims for damages have been reported to date. CodeRed was implemented to report the incident and the required Boil Water notice and CodeRed will also be used when the boil notice has been lifted.

**MEETING ADJOURNED** Tracy Townsend made a motion the Council adjourn the meeting. Martin Townsend seconded the motion, with a unanimous affirmative vote determined by the Mayor individually polling each Councilmember.