

MINUTES

The Rural Hall Town Council held an agenda briefing on January 3, 2022 at 3:00 PM in the Town Hall Council Chambers. The following members were present: Mayor Timothy M. Flinchum - presiding; Councilwoman Susan H. Gordon; Councilman Norman E. Horn; Councilman Terry M. Bennett; Town Manager Misty A. Meadows; and Interim Town Attorney Randolph M. James.

Pledge of allegiance to the flag was led by Manager Meadows.

A moment of silence was held.

Councilwoman Susan H. Gordon made a motion to adopt the agenda as written. Councilman Norman E. Horn seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Flinchum announced that Town Offices will be closed Monday, January 17, 2022 in observance of Martin Luther King Junior Day.

Public comment period was offered, however no one signed up.

New business discussed:

- Manager Meadows stated that the Town needs to address hiring a town clerk as soon as possible, and that the job could be posted on the League's site for a fee, as well as on the Town's website and the clerks and managers listservs. Council agreed to post the job as soon as possible, including on the League's site, and Mayor Flinchum recommended posting on the NC Association of County Commissioners job board. Manager gave council members a copy of the current town clerk job description and encouraged them to look over it and give any feedback.
- Manager Meadows discussed the appointing of Mike Simone as the permanent fire chief and inquired about the interim time frame and restructuring of the fire department personnel based on the appointment. Councilman Horn expressed his approval of the job Mike Simone has done so far and making his position permanent. All other council members expressed the same approval. Manager Meadows agreed and said she would move forward with making the appointment official.
- Mike Simone gave a fire department update, including personnel items, fire station improvements, truck repairs, and additional needs for the department. He reported that in addition to truck and station repairs/needs, some equipment and gear are out of date and some purchases will have to be made quickly and he will have to spend some funds to get the department where it needs to be. Council suggested coming up with a replacement schedule/rotation for future budgeting purposes, particularly for items that expire. Mike Simone stated that overall, the attitude and morale at the fire department has greatly improved and participation and response have increased.
- Mike Simone explained that Forsyth County is still offering the option to contract with the county for fire suppression and prevention services. This would eliminate the need for a fire marshal and doing our own inspections. The options presented by the county were briefly discussed: Option 1 – Providing service by extending overlay district into the Town of Rural Hall, Option 2 – Paying contract outright for services. Either option will save the Town money and provide more manpower to the Town of Rural Hall.
- Deputy Chief Eddie Bottoms spoke about the county options and the potential benefits of going back to the county for suppression and prevention services, as well as his support and approval of Mike Simone as fire chief.
- Mike Simone will set up a meeting with the county representatives to verify the details of the options and move forward.

- Further fire department staffing was discussed. If the fire marshal position is no longer reclassified as a regular firefighter position with a decreased salary, this would allow for the possibility of going to three firemen on a shift. This would allow for more consistent coverage, a decreased need for part-time coverage, make the chief's job more manageable, and improve our insurance rating.
- Transportation Advisory Committee and Technical Coordinating Committee members need to be determined and submitted to the WSDOT. TCC: Misty Meadows will be the member and Jason Hill the alternate. TAC members will be discussed by council.

Councilwoman Susan H. Gordon made a motion, seconded by Councilman Norman E. Horn, to enter into closed session per NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3), NCGS 143-318.11(a)(5), and NCGS 143-318.11(a)(6) at 4:25 PM. Motion passed unanimously.

Councilwoman Susan H. Gordon made a motion to return to regular session at 6:57 PM. Councilman Norman E. Horn seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

There being no further business, Councilwoman Susan H. Gordon made a motion to adjourn at 6:59 PM.

Misty A. Meadows
Town Manager