

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
March 11, 2024
MINUTES

The Rural Hall Town Council held their regular council meeting on March 11, 2024, at 7:00 PM in Town Hall Council Chambers. The following members were present: Mayor Terry M. Bennett - presiding; Mayor Pro Tem Eddie Horn; Councilman Mark Lane; Councilman Michael Woodcock; Councilwoman Anita Ring; Interim Town Manager Homer Dearmin; Town Clerk Lynette E. Hendrick; Finance Clerk Donna Watson; LPA Supervisor Dawn Tysor; PIO Alston Brown; Public Works Director Jason Hill; and Fire Chief Mike Simone.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the flag was led by the Town Clerk Lynette Hendrick

A moment of silence was held.

Announcements and Meeting Updates:

- 50th Anniversary Committee Meeting – March 18, 6:00 PM
- Easter Egg Hunt – March 29, 2024
- Town Mulch Program – April 15-20, 2024; Sign up by April 11, 2024
- Med & Shred/Community Health Fair - May 4, 2024, 9 am – 12 pm
- Town of Rural Hall 50th Anniversary Celebration - May 31 – June 2, 2024
- National Day of Prayer – May 2, 8:00 am

Adoption of Agenda

Mayor Pro Tem Eddie Horn made the motion, seconded by Councilman Mark Lane to adopt the agenda. Motion passed unanimously.

Mayor's Comments

Mayor Terry Bennett mentioned last month the Council voted to eliminate the agenda briefing meeting and move to one meeting a month. He has had one call about the change in the meeting schedule but no calls in opposition to that vote. Staff posted the agenda seven days before the meeting so the public would be informed about what was being discussed and voted on by the Council. He mentioned the Council values the opinion of all our citizens and welcomes their call.

Proclamation for Senior Services Month

Mayor Terry Bennett read a proclamation designating March as March for Meals Month.

Introduction of New Employee

Public Works Director Jason Hill introduced Ross Banner, who recently was hired as a Maintenance Technician for the Public Works Department.

Public Comment Period

Sebastian Jimenez 672 Angus St. Rural Hall signed up to speak with his topic being animal ordinance.

Consent Agenda

Councilman Mark Lane made the motion, seconded by Councilman Michael Woodcock to approve the consent agenda. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Forum for New Fire Department Design

Mayor Terry Bennett opened the public forum for the new Fire Department Design. Mayor Terry Bennett mentioned Chad Danforth and Brian Griffith with Bobbitt Construction are with us tonight to answer any questions anyone may have.

June Koehn spoke up and asked the question what about the study the Fire Department had in 2019 that said a new fire station was not needed. Fire Chief Mike Simone stated they have outgrown the existing station.

Scotty Speas asked does the new design allow for growth over the next few years? Fire Chief said yes and referred to the design posters throughout the room.

June Koehn expressed opposition to the existing Fire Station being demolished.

Brian McGlamery stated trucks are parked in opposite directions to be able to exit both sides of the station.

Brian with Bobbitt Construction stated the existing Fire station will be fully operational during the building of the new station.

Mayor Terry Bennett closed the public forum at 7:46 pm because there were no further comments.

Public Forum for Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Mayor Terry Bennett opened the public forum for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. PIO Alston Brown showed the study slides created by Withers and Ravenel.

Sebastian Jimenez stated he would like to see a skateboard section added to the park plans.

Chon Russell Gonzales asked about the dog park on the plans, she wanted to know if there would be water stations throughout the dog park.

Alston Brown mentioned at the next council meeting April 8 there would be a public hearing for the PARTF Grant.

New Business

ABC Permit for Public Events – PIO Alston Brown stated if the Town was not selling alcoholic beverages no permits were needed. Alston stated they would schedule a beer and wine truck to sell the beverages and they are the ones that would carry the permit. Councilwoman Anita Ring made the motion, seconded by Councilman Mark Lane to approve the sales of alcoholic beverages at town events. Motion passed unanimously.

FY 2023-2024 Budget Amendment- Mayor Pro Tem Eddie Horn made the motion, seconded by Councilman Michael Woodcock to approve the recommended budget amendments. Motion passed unanimously.

Financing for New Fire Station – Interim Manager Homer Dearmin recommended that up to \$800,000 be borrowed from the fund balance and that the Town finance 1.5 million of project cost. The RFP will be posted Tuesday on the Town's website and Homer will be emailing the financial institutions approved by the LGC. Councilmember Mark Lane made the motion, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Eddie Horn to proceed with the Interim Managers recommendations for financing the new fire station. Motion passed unanimously.

FY 2024-25 Budget Calendar – Councilman Michael Woodcock made the motion, seconded by Councilwoman Anita Ring to adopt the FY 2024-25 Budget Calendar. Motion passed unanimously.

Department Reports

Interim Town Manager Homer Dearmin stated the department reports are included in the agenda for Council to review.

Council Members Comments

Mayor Pro Tem Eddie Horn, Councilman Michael Woodcock and Councilwoman Anita Ring thanked staff for a great job preparing the agenda packages and getting it out to the public, and to everyone who attended the meeting. Councilman Mark Lane thanked those citizens and employees who were there in favor of the New Fire Station being built. He also thanked staff for the new agenda package. Mayor Terry Bennett thanked staff for preparing for the Council meeting, thanked all those in attendance. He also mentioned he thinks the Town of Rural Hall staff is “TOP NOTCH”. He also mentioned he would like to see ground broken for the new Fire Station by June 1, 2024.

Mayor Pro Tem Eddie Horn made the motion at 8:17 pm, seconded by Councilman Mark Lane to recess the meeting until April 1, 7:00 pm. Council members signified their agreement, and the meeting was recessed accordingly.

On April 1, 2024 7:00 PM Mayor Terry Bennett called to order the meeting recessed from March 11.

Mayor Pro Tem Eddie Horn made the motion seconded by Councilwoman Anita Ring to add to the agenda an update on the 50th Anniversary Rural Fest and an executive session in reference to NCGS 143-318.11(a) 3 attorney client privilege and NCGS 143-318.11 (a) 6 personnel matters. Motion passed unanimously.

Alston Brown, PIO gave the council an update on all that is scheduled for the Rural Fest/Town of Rural Hall’s 50th Anniversary Celebration. Alston requested guidance from the council on law enforcement and shuttle services. Mayor Terry Bennett recommended a Council member help Alston continue to plan the event. Councilman Mark Lane stated he would be willing to help where he is needed. The next meeting has not yet been planned; Mayor Bennett recommended Alston get it on the calendar soon.

Mayor Pro Tem Eddie Horn made the motion seconded by Councilwoman Anita Ring to move into executive session at 7:20 pm.

Mayor Terry Bennett called the meeting back to order after the closed session at 9:53 pm, and stated no action was taken in closed session.

Councilman Michael Woodcock made the motion seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Eddie Horn to adopt the agreement for employment of legal services for resolution of claims and authorize the Mayor to sign the agreement. Motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Pro Tem Eddie Horn made the motion seconded by Councilwoman Anita Ring to adjourn the meeting at 9:54 PM. Motion passed unanimously.

Lynette E. Hendrick
Town Clerk