

**TOWN OF MAXTON, NORTH CAROLINA
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS TOWN MEETING
August 22, 2023, 7:00 p.m.
Minutes**

The Board of Commissioners of Maxton, North Carolina met in formal session in the meeting chambers of the Town of Maxton Town Hall located at 201 McCaskill Avenue Maxton, North Carolina at 7:00 p.m.

Attendees: Mayor Paul Davis (absent), Mayor Pro Tem Virgil Hutchinson, Commissioner Toni Bethea, Commissioner Elizabeth Gilmore, Commissioner Paul McDowell, and Commissioner Victor Womack (absent).

Staff Present: Town Manager Angela Pitchford, Town Attorney Timothy Snead, Town Clerk Michael Cousar, Finance Ursula Goins, Police Chief Johnson, Accounts Payable Jasmin Mason, Public Works Director Preston McKenzie, and Water and Wastewater Director Dennis Freeman.

Call to Order- Mayor Pro Tem Virgil Hutchinson

Invocation- Commissioner Elizabeth Gilmore

Does any member have any known conflict of interest and appearances of conflict with respect to any matter coming before the board today? If so, please identify the conflict and refrain from any participation in the particular matter involved. (No known conflicts)

Approval of Consent Agenda:

- a) Minutes from Board Meeting of July 18, 2023

Mayor Pro Tem Hutchinson requested a motion to approve Consent Agenda. Commissioner McDowell made the motion, and it was seconded by Commissioner Gilmore. The vote was unanimous, and the motion carried.

Adoption of Proposed Agenda:

Mayor Pro Tem Hutchinson requested a motion to add Item b) Special Recognition to agenda and approve Proposed Agenda. Commissioner McDowell made the motion, the motion was seconded by Commissioner Gilmore. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

Recognition:

Town Manager Ms. Angela Pitchford recognized Mrs. Angela Fairley on her pending retirement on August 31, 2023. Mrs. Fairley, a Police Dispatcher is retiring after twenty-five (25) years of serve to the Town of Maxton.

Old Business:

- a) Audit Preparation – Allow the finance director to make the necessary amendments and adjustments to prepare final documentation for auditor to close FY 2022-2023.

Mayor Pro Tem Hutchinson requested a motion to approve Audit preparation. Commissioner McDowell made the motion, the motion was seconded by Commissioner Bethea. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

New Business:

- a) Approve use of insurance funds in the amount of \$19,559 to pay for two vehicles (2017 Dodge Challenger and 2019 Nissan Pathfinder) for the Maxton Police Department.

Mayor Pro Tem Hutchinson requested a motion to approve the use of insurance funds in the amount of \$19,559.00 to pay for two vehicles (2017 Dodge Challenger and 2019 Nissan Pathfinder) for the Maxton Police Department. Commissioner McDowell made the motion, the motion was seconded by Commissioner Gilmore. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

- b) Approve purchase of 2019 Chevy Tahoe in the amount of \$20,500 for the Maxton Police Department.

Mayor Pro Tem Hutchinson requested a motion to approve purchase of 2019 Chevy Tahoe in the amount of \$20,500.00 for the Maxton Police Department. Commissioner McDowell made the motion, the motion was seconded by Commissioner Bethea. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

- c) Approve budget amendments to add funds for vehicles to 2023-2024 budget.

Mayor Pro Tem Hutchinson requested a motion to approve budget amendments to add funds for vehicles to 2023-2024 budget. Commissioner Gilmore made the motion, the motion was seconded by Commissioner McDowell. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

Commissioner Womack arrived at 7:13 p.m.

PUBLIC FORUM (2 MINUTES ONLY) NOTE: Please state your full legal name, address, and phone number the board & staff will not respond to individual comments or questions during the public forum. The appropriate staff member will follow up if needed.

Anthony Raynor, 419 Croom Road, Maxton, NC, 631-320-9168. Mr. Raynor said he was respectfully waiting on a special meeting to address the resignations of the Police Chief and the Town Clerk in training. He mentioned during his public forum speak at last month's meeting that he was rudely interrupted and heckled by Commissioner Bethea. I witnessed several verbal attacks from Commissioner Bethea. She once threatened him by saying she was going to disband the Community Watch because I asked for communication and pointed out there is none. Last month the Council had an epiphany about addressing concerns by the public and to respond to them at the next meeting to avoid conflict. Unwarranted conflict is happening on behalf of the Council while speaking during the two (2) minute Public Forum. The Council has been made aware of suspicious activity at 104 Railroad Street at multiple town meetings and no communication has been provided. I meet with the Town Manager a couple of months ago and asked who is using the building? She responded that she did not know. In pervious email

communications I asked the same question. She replied we are negotiating with Mr. Jenson and Mrs. Bert Hutchinson. I asked who authorized the use of the building. She replied while the lease is in waiting it was explained that they were allowing some events at no charge, however at this time they are not allowing anyone to rent the building. This was not news at the time. I asked who has access to the building and she said Commissioner Bethea has the key and provides access to the building. As I understand Commissioner Bethea is related to the Hutchinson's. A local legal business was denied access to the building in a vote in August 2022, by unanimous vote and no lease money has been collected since. \$10,000.00 of tax money was set aside to make repairs to improve the building. My time is up and I await the special meeting and remember to vote in November's election.

Sandra McCallum, 421 Croom Road Maxton, NC, (910) 318-2740. Mrs. McCallum said she would like the Town to look into not using or asking for personal information in the Public Forum. She also said that she does not know the candidates running in the upcoming election and suggested the Town provide a public forum for the candidates so they could introduce themselves.

Mayor Pro Tem Hutchinson closed the Public Forum.

Reports:

Recreation Report

Mrs. Report on the Recreation Committee September activities.

- Back to School Bash will be on September 9, 2023, not sure if the event will be a drive-through because of COVID.
- Cancer Awareness Walk will be on September 16, 2023, at 9 a.m. There will be two (2) parts. First part will be at Beachum Park and the Second part will be at Elizabeth Cole Park at 8 p.m.
- Remember the Times Senior Prom will be on September 23, 2023, at the renaissance Event Center 107 W. Central Street, Maxton, NC, from 6-10 p.m. Individual cost will be \$30.00 and \$50.00 for couples.

Manager Report

Town Manager Ms. Angela Pitchford introduced the Interim Chief of Police for the Town of Maxton Mr. Schirra Johnson from Fayetteville, North Carolina who was hired on 15 August, 2023.

Police Department Report

Interim Chief Johnson introduce himself, a law enforcement officer with 34 years of experience by way of Washington D.C. and said he was looking forward to being an asset and serving the Town of Maxton.

Commissioner's Report

Commissioner Bethea recognized the Maxton Little League baseball champions.

Town Manager Ms. Angela Pitchford addressed the responses to concerns at last month's Public Forum posed by Mr. Anthony Raynor and Shante Quick.

Mr. Raynor asked why the Town Commissioners did not meet with Mr. Chad Deese with the Robeson County E-911 emergency services. Ms. Pitchford stated that the Town had already meet with Mr. Deese and the County Manager about the E-911 services and there was no need for a repeat meeting.

Mrs. Shante Quick asked what the procedure are for Animal Control. Ms. Pitchford said that if there is an issue with animal control contact the Police Department and they will dispatch animal control if he can't be reached, then they will contact Dennis Freeman for response.


Mrs. Rita McEachin asked what the requirements were to run for Mayor and Town Commissioner. Ms. Pitchford said Mrs. McEachin was contacted by the Town Clerk who told her all requirements to run for Town office were in the Town's Charter. She also mentioned Mr. Raynor was contacted by the Town Clerk.

ADJOURN

Mayor Pro Tem Hutchinson requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner McDowell made the motion and it was seconded by Commissioner Gilmore. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.



Paul Davis, Mayor



Michael D. Cousar, MBA