

**TOWN OF RICH SQUARE
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES FROM REGULAR MEETING HELD**

December 7, 2023 at 11:00 AM in the Town Annex Building Board Room

Prepared By: Cecelia D. M. Jones

The Town of Rich Square Board of Commissioners met on Thursday, December 7, 2023 at 11:00 AM in the Town Annex Building Board Room located at 112 East Jackson Street, Rich Square, North Carolina. Mayor Reginald White called the meeting to order at 11:01 AM.

Elected officials present were: Past Mayor Reginald White, Commissioner Linwood C. Bryant, Commissioner Charles Eason, Commissioner Larry Godwin, Past Commissioner Marcia P. Majett, Commissioner Raymond Joyner, Mayor Elect Victoria Newcombe, and Commissioner Elect Peggy Cary.

Town Officials present were: Town Attorney Cecelia Jones, Maintenance Supervisor Jeffrey Long, and Police Chief William T. Smith.

Mr. White thanked the Police Chief and the Public Works Supervisor for all they do for the Town. He extended his appreciation to the Commissioners with whom he served. Marcia Majett also gave words of praise.

Swearing in Ceremony

The Honorable Robin Williams, Northampton County Register of Deeds, administered the oath of office to Mayor Victoria Newcombe.

The Honorable Robin Williams, Northampton County Register of Deeds, administered the oath of office to Commissioners Linwood Bryant, Charles Eason, Larry Godwin, Raymond Joyner, and Peggy Cary.

Public Comment

Marcia Majett requested to reserve the Town Annex Building Board Room on the 2nd Tuesdays of each month for the Senior Rockers Group.

Approval of Agenda

Town Attorney Jones requested that “Stacy Dickerson – Clock Presentation” be added under old business. Commissioner Godwin moved, and Commissioner Bryant seconded, to accept the Agenda as amended. The motion to accept the Agenda as amended passed unanimously.

Approval of Consent Agenda

1. Approval of Minutes prepared by Cecelia D. M. Jones from November 2023 Regular Meeting Held November 2, 2023 and Recessed until November 9, 2023
2. Approval of Minutes prepared by Cecelia D. M. Jones from Special Meeting held November 17, 2023
3. Approval of Minutes prepared by Cecelia D. M. Jones from Special Meeting for Public Hearing on Rezoning of 401 E. Jackson Street, Rich Square, North Carolina (held Nov. 2, 2023)

The Mayor reviewed the items on the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Godwin noted that Officer Briggs’s name was misspelled as Officer Bridge in the minutes from the November 2023 regular meeting.

Commissioner Eason moved, and Commissioner Godwin seconded, to approve the Consent Agenda with the correction in spelling of the officer's name. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business

Commissioner Bryant moved, and Commissioner Eason seconded, to appoint Larry Godwin as Mayor Pro Tempore. The motion passed unanimously.

Town Attorney Jones read the Resolution of Appreciation for Reginald White. Commissioner Godwin moved, and Commissioner Eason seconded, to adopt the Resolution of Appreciation for Reginald White. The Resolution was adopted unanimously.

Town Attorney Jones read the Resolution of Appreciation for Marcia Majett. Commissioner Godwin moved, and Commissioner Bryant seconded, to adopt the Resolution of Appreciation for Marcia Majett. The Resolution was adopted unanimously.

Mayor Newcombe posed the question as to whether a later meeting time for the regular board meetings would allow more citizen involvement while also accommodating those on the Board that work. Commissioners Joyner, Bryant, and Godwin raised safety concerns presented by later board meetings. The Mayor entertained input from the public in attendance and from the Chief of Police. Commissioner Eason moved, and Commissioner Cary seconded, to adopt the following regular meeting schedule for 2024: Regular meetings will be held the first Thursday of each month at 6:00pm except that the July 2024 regular meeting will be held July 11, 2024 at 6:00pm. The motion passed unanimously.

Tom Monte reviewed the Contract to Audit Accounts for the fiscal year ending 06/30/2022. Commissioner Godwin moved, and Commissioner Bryant seconded, to approve the Contract to Audit Accounts for the fiscal year ending 06/30/2022. The motion passed unanimously.

Pastor Billy Pridgen informed the Board that he was opening a church in Rich Square and requested information about meeting in a building owned by the Town but presently rented by RCCC.

Commissioner Eason provided an update from the County Commissioners meeting. He shared that \$21,000,000 was awarded to towns in Northampton County and Northampton County and reported what portion of that award will be made to Rich Square Fire Department and to the Town for downtown flooding mitigation projects.

Old Business

Police Chief Smith informed the Commissioners about a proposed Equipment Use Agreement involving the Rocky Mount Police Department's equipment that analyzes spent shell casings. Chief Smith explained the benefits of the Agreement and requested Board approval. Commissioner Eason moved, and Commissioner Godwin seconded, to enter into the Equipment Use Agreement with the Rocky Mount Police Department. The motion passed unanimously.

The Retail Installment Form involving US Cellular was provided to the Board by the Town Attorney. Commissioner Godwin moved, and Commissioner Eason seconded, to table consideration of the proposal from US Cellular. The motion passed unanimously.

Stacy Dickerson with the Verdin Company presented the cost and process of installing a clock in downtown Rich Square. The quote was for \$13,635.00.

Staff & Council Reports

The Police Chief informed the Board and the public that there would be extra traffic in town for a balloon release.

Commissioner Eason provided a list of the lights that needed to be replaced. Jeff Long indicated that work on some of the lights (i.e., running wires) was scheduled to be completed on 12/8/23. Commissioner Eason also reported that a job done by Trinity Paving was not done to the satisfaction of past Mayor White or Commissioner Eason and that, through the efforts of Commissioner Eason and Mayor White, the work was redone at no charge to the town.

Commissioner Godwin noted that Fybe had hit a water line.

Commissioner Joyner recapped the Christmas parade.

The Mayor expressed a desire to schedule and conduct a Community Forum.

Closed Session – N.C.G.S. Section 143-318.11(a)(6) – Personnel

Commissioner Eason moved, and Commissioner Godwin seconded, to enter into Closed Session pursuant to N.C.G.S. Section 143-318.11(a)(6) to discuss personnel matters. The motion passed unanimously, and the closed session began at approximately 12:32 pm.

Chief Smith and Jeff Long were present for the closed session. The first personnel matter discussed was Christmas Bonuses for current town employees. The second personnel matter discussed was the Town Attorney reiterating the need for a new clerk. The Mayor agreed to draft a job description for the position. The final personnel matter discussed was the location of employees and elected official offices.

Commissioner Godwin moved, and Commissioner Eason seconded, to leave closed session and resume the regular meeting at approximately 1:21 pm. The motion passed unanimously, the closed session ended, and the open meeting resumed at 1:21 pm.

Resumption of the Regular Meeting

Upon resumption of the regular meeting at 1:21pm, Commissioner Godwin moved, and Commissioner Eason seconded, to give Christmas Bonuses as follows: all current employees who were employed with the town in 2022 would receive the same Christmas bonuses in 2023 as they had received in 2022 with the exception of (a) Chiquita Monroe-Howard, who is to receive \$200, (b) Alayna Balmer, who is to receive \$50, and (c) “Junior” (public works employee), who is to receive \$50. The motion passed unanimously.


It was requested to add “2024 Christmas Bonuses” to the January 2024 meeting agenda.

Commissioner Godwin moved, and Commissioner Eason seconded, to allow the Senior Rockers Group to use the Town Annex Building Board Room on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 11am. The motion passed unanimously.

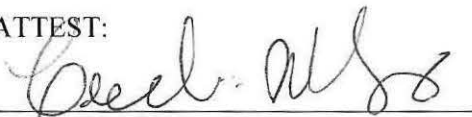
Commissioner Eason moved, and Commissioner Bryant seconded, to continue to allow the Chief of Police to occupy the office he is presently using. The motion passed unanimously.

Adjourn

Commissioner Godwin moved, and Commissioner Bryant seconded, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously, and the December regular meeting adjourned at approximately 1:31 pm.


Victoria Newcombe, Mayor

ATTEST:


Cecelia D. M. Jones, Town Attorney