

**Town of Rich Square**  
**Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, February 1, 2024 – 6:00 pm**  
**Town Administrative Offices**

The Rich Square Board of Commissioners held their regular meeting in the Town Annex Building Board Room at 112 E Jackson St, Rich Square, North Carolina. Mayor Victoria Newcombe called the meeting to order 6:01pm and Commissioner Raymond Joyner gave the invocation.

Elected officials in attendance were Mayor Victoria Newcombe, Commissioner Peggy Cary, Commissioner Raymond Joyner, Commissioner Larry Godwin, and Commissioner Linwood Bryant. Commissioner Charles Eason joined the meeting after the Approval of the Agenda.

Town officials in attendance were Town Attorney Cecelia Jones, Clerk Alayna Balmer, Finance Officer Chiquita Howard, Maintenance Supervisor Jeff Long, Police Chief William Smith.

**Public Comment**

Gwen Futrell informed the Commissioners and Mayor that early voting for Super Tuesday will begin from February 15, 2024, to March 2, 2024, from 7am-11:30am. Regular voting will begin from March 2, 2024, until March 5, 2024, from 8am-3pm. Voting will be held at Creecy School Gym located at 210 Roberts Road, Rich Square, North Carolina. Ms. Futrell also requested information on the plans for abandoned houses in Rich Square.

**Approval of Agenda**

Mayor Victoria Newcombe requested that a sign for the Annex Building and the cleaning of Public Works awnings be added to the Agenda. Commissioner Larry Godwin moved, and Commissioner Linwood Bryant seconded, to accept the agenda with the addition of Mayor Newcombe's requests. The motion passed unanimously.

**Consent Agenda**

Upon review of the minutes from January 2024 Regular Meeting Held January 4, 2024, Commissioner Larry Godwin moved, and Commissioner Charles Eason seconded, that the pump motor mentioned in the Staff & Council Reports should be replaced by Electric Motors instead of repaired for \$7,525.88 such that there would be significantly less money spent. The motion passed unanimously.

Minutes from January 22, 2024, Special Meeting were reviewed by the Mayor. Commissioner Larry Godwin moved to approve the minutes and Commissioner Linwood Bryant seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**New Business**

Mayor Newcombe informed the Board that the current seat for Mayor on the Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments record is occupied by previous Mayor Reginald White and introduced the formal letter of notification of a newly elected Mayor prepared by the Clerk to be sent to Kelly Skinner, Executive Assistant of UCPCOG. Commissioner Charles Eason made a motion to approve the letter and Commissioner Raymond Joyner seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The town's Finance Officer, Chiquita Howard, will be receiving additional training in Harris Cloud. Ms. Howard informed the Board that she wouldn't be given a final quote until after the training was completed. The Mayor and Board of Commissioners agreed that the discussion would be postponed until Ms. Howard provided a final price upon completion of the training. No motion was made.

Town Attorney Cecelia Jones communicated that she has drafted a description of Commissioner Peggy Cary's role as Administration Commissioner and would leave the topic open for discussion in the next meeting so that it can be reviewed by the Council. Commissioner Charles Eason moved that the topic be deferred until the next meeting, and Commissioner Raymond Joyner seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Newcombe proposed the idea of advertising for a Grants Coordinator as there are multiple grants in need of undivided attention from someone who is well versed in federal law and funding as well as being generally experienced in the grants processing field. The Mayor pointed out that she previously worked as the Grants Coordinator for the town, however she wouldn't have time to do her due diligence as Mayor and take on the role of Grants Coordinator. Police Chief William Smith questioned whether the employee could be paid from the grant. Commissioner Charles Eason moved that the topic be tabled for the next meeting so that the Mayor could receive more information on the matter, Commissioner Linwood Bryant seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Newcombe led the discussion regarding the town's annual monetary contribution of \$500 to the Northampton County Chamber of Commerce's "2024 Fire Works" 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration. Commissioner Larry Godwin commented that if the town has helped in the past, he would see no problem with helping in the future. Commissioner Charles Eason queried if the monetary contribution was the same as last year and Finance Officer Chiquita Howard confirmed that it was in fact the same. Commissioner Larry Godwin moved to approve the contribution to the celebration, Commissioner Eason seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Old Business**

Commissioner Charles Eason asked for an update on the hiring of a housekeeper for town buildings. Commissioner Peggy Cary explained that she was taking inventory of what work needs to be done. Commissioner Cary added that she is currently in the process of drafting a job description for that position and will provide a pay rate quote once the description is completed. Commissioner Charles Eason also wanted to clarify whether the Mayor had been authorized to sign checks as discussed previously and The Mayor assured him that she now has that authorization.

### **Staff & Council Reports**

Chief Smith alerted the Board that there have been reported scam calls in Jackson, NC from individuals posing as representatives of U.S. Marshals, convincing citizens that they have unpaid fines in order to collect sensitive information. Chief Smith also added that there were counterfeit bills being passed around.

Commissioner Charles Eason provided a list of street lights that were out to be submitted to Dominion Energy and added that the previous list of pole outages had been fixed.

Commissioner Larry Godwin gave notice of a meeting between he, Mayor Newcombe, Maintenance Supervisor Jeff Long, Engineer Michael Ray, and DEQ regarding the town's lagoon charges scheduled for the 14<sup>th</sup> day of February. Commissioner Larry Godwin commented that the meeting is necessary to reassure DEQ that a plan has been put into place to put an end to the pertaining issue.

Mayor Victoria Newcombe reported that the town's website is being updated and shared information about current projects, including meeting with Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments regarding grants for Rich Square revitalization, training, and the town being put on the unit assistance list.

Commissioner Raymond Joyner reported that the date for the next Fun Day is August 17<sup>th</sup>. Commissioner Joyner expressed that there was a need for new vendors in addition to those we already have and that more information would be given in the next meeting.


Commissioner Peggy Cary reported that she met with the town employees, and discovered that there was a need for reorganization of the supply closet. Commissioner Cary explained that she took the liberty of resorting the closet and added that a job description for a janitorial custodian was in progress.

Commissioner Bryant had no report.

**CLOSED SESSION – N.C.G.S. Section 143-318.11(a)(6) – Personnel**

**ADJOURN**

Upon resumption of the regular meeting, Commissioner Linwood Bryant moved, and Commissioner Charles Eason seconded, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously, and the February regular meeting adjourned at 7:03pm.

  
Victoria Newcombe, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
Alayna Balmer, Clerk