

Town of Rich Square
Board of Commissioners Special Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 21, 2024 – 4:00 pm
Town Administrative Offices

The Rich Square Board of Commissioners held a special meeting in the Town Administrative Building at 109 N Main St, Rich Square, North Carolina on February 21, 2024. Mayor Victoria Newcombe called the meeting to order 4:04pm.

Elected officials in attendance were Mayor Victoria Newcombe, Commissioner Peggy Cary, Commissioner Raymond Joyner, Commissioner Larry Godwin, Commissioner Linwood Bryant, and Commissioner Charles Eason.

Town officials in attendance were Town Attorney Cecelia Jones, Town CPA Tom Monte, Finance Officer Chiquita Howard, Clerk Alayna Balmer, and Maintenance Supervisor Jeff Long.

Consent Agenda

Mayor Victoria Newcombe led the discussion about the town's drafts of the updated Delinquent Water Account Disconnect Policy and the Delinquent Water Account Disconnect Notice. The policy states that upon the distribution of delinquent water account notices, residents have 30 days to settle the entire balance of the bill, or the water will be discontinued and will require a \$150 reconnection fee. It was noted that the Policy should be amended to include the following: "If your property is vacant and you wish to disconnect your water service, please contact Town Hall." Commissioner Linwood Bryant moved, and Commissioner Charles Eason seconded, to approve the Delinquent Water Account Disconnect Policy as amended and the Delinquent Water Account Notice as presented. The motion passed unanimously. The Commissioners came to a consensus to continue discussions regarding the establishment of a payment plan as outlined in the Notice and the Policy.

Agenda

CPA Tom Monte began the discussion about the budget workshop at 4:23pm. He recapped that Natalie Rountree visited Town Hall on Feb. 1, 2024 and that there are matters that need immediate attention. He explained that in November 2023, he came across an error in the system with how checks had been written and keyed that required redoing work. Upon further investigation, the error turned out to be a data entry problem. He explained that he and Mrs. Howard are still working to completely remedy the issue. From a budget planning perspective, he advised the Board to reevaluate the budget for salaries to reflect the hiring of a full-time clerk. He also encouraged the Board to keep ancillary expenditures, such as his services, to a minimum. Mr. Monte recommended his visits be limited to around 2-3 per year to preserve funds.

He reported that LGC 203 forms have not been filed since Dec. 2022. He indicated that these mandatory filings are due June and December of each year, so the Town is behind in two (2) filings. He indicated that it was his fault that the June '23 LGC 203 had not been filed and he and Chiquita would rectify the delinquent filings no later than Friday, February 23, 2024. He added that he and Mrs. Howard were on the same page and worked well together. Mrs. Howard indicated that her training with Harriss would be on Friday, February 23, 2024. Mrs. Howard queried where her and other town officials' training fit into the budget and he answered that it needed to be added as a budget amendment. He also added that Ms. Rountree was more concerned about June 2023 and December 2023 reports being sent and recorded with the State, so this should be priority.

He then discussed the Pre-Audits process performed by Mrs. Howard as the Finance Officer. Mayor Victoria Newcombe questioned if a change of software would be helpful for the town, and Tom explained that he believed the same issues would occur with any other software and that the Town should keep the current system for Water and Sewer even if it switches programs for other accounts. Mayor Victoria Newcombe noted that if the town wanted to switch from Harris, that she believed it required 90-days' notice to cancel.

Tom added that Mrs. Howard should designate a day for bill paying and for the town to create a policy to write checks only 3-4 times each month with Alayna keying in the invoices and Mrs. Howard writing the checks.

ADJOURN

Commissioner Larry Godwin moved, and Commissioner Linwood Bryant seconded, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously, and the February 21, 2024 special meeting adjourned at 5:57pm.



Victoria Newcombe, Mayor

ATTEST:



Alayna Balmer, Clerk