

Town of Rich Square
Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting Minutes
Thursday, March 7, 2024 – 6:00 pm
Town Annex Building

The Rich Square Board of Commissioners held their regular meeting in the Town Annex Building at 112 E Jackson St, Rich Square, North Carolina. Mayor Victoria Newcombe called the meeting to order 5:59pm and Commissioner Charles Eason gave the invocation.

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, Finance Officer Chiquita Howard, Clerk Alayna Balmer, Maintenance Supervisor Jeff Long, and Chief of Police William Smith.

Public Comment

Terry Robinson asked the board to consider supporting his economic development goals for the Town and shared his hope of getting Northampton County and the State involved for their support as well. He mentioned plans to put a bowling alley for all ages, creating new jobs strictly for residents of Rich Square, revitalizing the town for beautification purposes, starting youth leagues, and offering tours of facilities.

Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Larry Godwin moved, and Commissioner Raymond Joyner seconded the motion to approve the Agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Consent Agenda

1. Approval of Minutes from February 1, 2024, Regular Meeting
2. Approval of Closed Session Minutes prepared by Cecelia D. M. Jones from February 1, 2024, Regular Meeting
3. Approval of Minutes from the February 21, 2024, Special Meeting
4. Approval of Minutes from the March 4, 2024, Special Meeting.

The Board reviewed the items on the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Godwin moved, and Commissioner Eason seconded to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business

Mayor Newcombe explained that the Town needed a Comprehensive Land Use Plan and has contacted Upper Coastal Plain Council of Government to get a quote of how much such a plan would cost. The Town doesn't have any updated zoning maps and is looking for members for a planning board.

Rich Square Volunteer Fire & Rescue Chief Mark Vick expressed that the relationship between the Fire Department and the Board is important. He presented his monthly report. Commissioner Larry Godwin commented that the Fire Department does a lot more than merely fight fires. Chief Vick continued by reporting that the department had made an offer to purchase of the Old Rich Square Gym

which sits adjacent to the current station. The offer was accepted, and they are moving forward with closing on the property. Vick added that they are still working to procure funding from USDA to purchase a new fire engine. The Fire Department has submitted (2) FEMA AFG grants, one for the purchase of a new 3,000-gallon tanker which would replace the 25-year-old tanker they currently have, and the other for new SCBA's to replace the older outdated units they have. Chief Vick expressed gratitude to the community on behalf of the entire Fire Department for supporting the two families whose homes and belongings were destroyed by fire in January. Lastly, Chief Vick made an announcement of the upcoming 17th Annual Turkey Hunting Tournament – April 12th & April 13th. He mentioned the need for sponsors and added that there is a \$45 entry fee per person.

Mayor Newcombe introduced a Check Writing Policy, which designates a cutoff date for submitting bills and invoices to the Rich Square Finance Officer. The policy sets a deadline for submitting bills and invoices, which is Wednesdays at 1:00pm with full documentation. Any bill, invoice, or timesheet received after the specified time will be paid the following week. Commissioner Eason moved, and Commissioner Cary seconded, to approve the Check Writing Policy with the addition of a provision that allows the Finance Officer to, in her discretion, deviate from the policy if an emergency arises. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Newcombe introduced a Travel Costs Reimbursement Policy. Attorney Cecelia Jones suggested removing “2024” so that nothing needed to be changed every year according to the IRS’s schedule. Commissioner Eason moved, and Commissioner Larry Godwin seconded, to approve the Travel Costs Reimbursement Policy with the suggested amendment made by the Attorney. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Peggy Cary introduced a Staff Evaluation Guideline to be used for town employee evaluations. The Board came to an agreement that the guidelines should be tabled for the Attorney and Commissioner Cary to work together on edits.

Mayor Newcombe voiced that April was Clean-Up Month and encouraged more citizens to come and help. They meet at her shop Kindred Spirits Consignment at 133 S. Main St, the 3rd Saturday of every month typically from 8am-10am but the next pickup will be April 20th from 10am-1pm. She said that there would be posters posted around town for those interested. Bulk pickup will be April 8th to April 12th. She asked Jeff Long to answer a few questions regarding what can and can't be picked up and where unauthorized items can be taken. Jeff Long answered that mattresses are acceptable but hazardous items like TVs, couldn't be picked up because of the radiological issues it can cause so they need to be taken to the county and will be handled differently than most items. Mayor Newcombe also added that there will be a DOT Litter Sweep from April 13th to April 27th and informed residents to leave trash bags at the side of the road for DOT to pick up.

The description of Administration Commissioner was discussed next and it was requested that the description be discussed in closed session for personnel.

The Mayor explained that the position of Grants Coordinator was not needed at this time. Mayor Newcombe mentioned incoming grants for the Phase 3 project concerning new waterlines, the WWTP project, and more. She echoed that it could get busy when handling grants for projects as they need separate accounts. She added that she spoke with Mark Bacon, Engineer from Engineering Services, PA, and he said that he didn't everything would be done with in-house so there's no need for a coordinator.

Chief Smith had no report.

Commissioner Bryant had no report.

Commissioner Eason shared that as of March 6, 2024, there are multiple streetlights out the need to be fixed. He explained that there was one pole he couldn't get access to because it had too much water surrounding it to see the pole number. He added that most of the sidewalks were reworked as well as some patching had been done. He expressed that the Powell Bill funds will determine what other streets can be done.

Commissioner Larry Godwin reported that Jeff Long and his crew had repaired several waterlines that were damaged by Fybe workers installing fiber optic cable. He added that Ino with Ino-Utility Construction reworked the invoice mentioned in the March 4th Special Meeting to be supplemented with more detail. Commissioner Godwin moved, and Commissioner Eason seconded, to approve the work detailed in the invoice from Ino-Utility and have it paid. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Joyner reported that he would have more information on the Rich Square Fun Day Event next month.

Commissioner Cary had the Staff Evaluation Guidelines as her report which will be postponed for next month. She added that she would like to start a conference on the revitalization of the town.

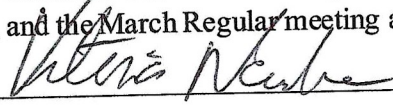
Commissioner Godwin expressed his gratitude for the Concerned Citizens of Rich Square for covering the vault in town and mentioned that it made a big difference.

Mayor Newcombe encouraged citizens to support the group by attending meetings held the 3rd Tuesday of every month at 6pm in the Town Annex Building. The Mayor reported that the reason for the policies were to mitigate the troubles with financial reporting and management.

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

ADJOURN

Commissioner Charles Eason moved, and Commissioner Linwood Bryant seconded, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously, and the March Regular meeting adjourned at 7:40pm.



Victoria Newcombe, Mayor

ATTEST:



Alayna Balmer, Clerk

Alayna Balmer, Clerk