

Town of Rich Square
Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting Minutes
Thursday, October 3, 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 6:00pm and Commissioner Raymond Joyner gave the invocation.

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

Town officials in attendance were Clerk Alayna Balmer, and Finance Officer Chiquita Howard.

Maintenance Supervisor Jeff Long, Public Works Employee Anthony Powell, and Deputy Jerome Johnson were also present.

Public Comment

Charles Neal made two points concerning the town drainage system's effectiveness and suggested that the maintenance department provide a monthly report on what has been done and what can be done in town, like the Fire Department's monthly report.

Michael Vick queried whether Commissioner Eason and Commissioner Bryant were aware the lift station electric bill hadn't been and, in the case that they were aware, if they could explain why the bill wasn't paid.

Eddice Askew brought to the board's attention the upcoming Christmas Parade occurring December 7th, 2024, asking for permission to use the Annex Building for the Christmas Parade Committee meetings, asking the board to invest in traffic barricades for the parade, and to join up with the Concerned Citizens of Rich Square with the intention to purchase an outdoor Christmas Tree.

Approval of Agenda

Mayor Newcombe requested to amend the consent agenda by moving the approval of minutes from Regular Meeting September 5, 2024, under old business to discuss further review. Commissioner Cary moved, and Commissioner Eason seconded the motion to approve the agenda as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

Consent Agenda

1. Approval of Minutes from Regular Meeting – Closed Session
2. Approval of Minutes from 11am Emergency Meeting September 5, 2024

The board reviewed the items on the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Eason moved, and Commissioner Joyner seconded to approve the minutes on the Consent Agenda with corrections if any. Commissioner Godwin voted to oppose the motion. Commissioner Cary and Commissioner Bryant voted to accept the motion. The motion carried.

New Business

The first item on the agenda was the Asset Inventory Assessment (AIA) Procurement Proposal. James W. Luster, previously with Engineering Services, submitted the proposal for the council's review. Commissioner Cary moved, and Commissioner Godwin seconded to accept the proposal. The motion passed unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was the Cauley Pridgen P.A. legal services proposal. Private Attorney J. Brian Pridgen and Associate Attorney Michael Franchi introduced themselves to the board and provided some background information about their work and personal life.

Next, Mayor Newcombe introduced Family Consumer Science Agent, EB Odom, and Intern, Rosie Flores, with Northampton County Cooperative Extension to present the Community Walk Audit which is meant to increase physical activity. Rich Square Senior Rockers are to host this Community Walk Audit taking place October 16, 2024, at 1pm beginning at the Town Annex Building.

Following the Community Walk Audit presentation was a second legal services proposal from Attorney Kris Gardner with Tharrington Smith L.L.P. Mr. Gardner introduced himself and provided some background information about himself and communicated his boundaries concerning his work-life balance.

Rich Square Volunteer Fire Chief Mark Vick was not available at this meeting to provide a monthly report for the Fire Department.

Commissioner Eason shared a few points he was asked to bring to the board. The first point being requests for the town to purchase roughly ten "No parking" signs on Roberts Road and Smallwood St, ten "No littering" signs to be placed where needed, and a few "High water" signs to be placed where the water levels get extremely high due to rainstorms and barricades for limiting traffic where the high-water levels persist. Lastly, there was an inquiry about whether the town could provide support to Hurricane Helene victims by donating or receiving donations from residents. Mayor Newcombe noted the first four requests and commented that donations can be brought to Town Hall to be distributed to other volunteer facilities. She also added that there are many local businesses collecting donations on behalf of Hurricane Helene victims that those interested in donating can ally with.

Old Business

The first topic under old business was the Futrell Pharmacy Water Leak Bill and a potential Water Leak Policy. The board agreed that if a customer experiences a water leak, they should pay their regular monthly bill, 10% of the overage to cover chemical costs used to treat the water and provide proof of repair if applicable. Commissioner Eason moved, and Commissioner Bryant seconded to approve the above terms as the newly implemented water leak policy.

The second topic was the Juvenile Curfew Ordinance Amendment to Chapter 5 General Offenses (Sect.5-7). Commissioner Eason made a motion to adopt this ordinance as amended and Commissioner Joyner seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The discussion of the minutes from the last regular meeting was moved to be discussed in Closed Session due to personnel reasons.

Commissioner Bryant reported that he spoke with Chief Smith about the electronic speed sign that residents were wanting to be placed in town. The town owns it, but it's currently on rotation and

in the possession of the Town of Seaboard until the end of the year. The town will have the sign from January to April and it will be passed on to Conway, Jackson, and Gaston.

Commissioner Eason shared that as of October 2, 2024, there's one streetlight out that needs to be fixed. He added that he will put together a list of the sidewalks that need to be repaired and aims to use the Powell Bill funds to get the repairs done after getting an estimate of its costs.

Commissioner Larry Godwin gave a few updates on the WWTP project and let everyone know that a lot of the primary work has been done. Commissioner Godwin also read and submitted his resignation letter as Commissioner, Mayor Pro Tempore, and all other related duties effective immediately.

Commissioner Joyner had no report.

Commissioner Cary announced that town staff members attended training to get a better understanding of local government finance and asked that they share a summary of what was learned. The Finance Officer and Clerk both shared that while the training was introductory and not as in-depth as expected it was a great learning experience, nevertheless.

At 7:44pm Commissioner Eason moved, and Commissioner Bryant seconded to go into Closed Session for personnel purposes. The motion passed unanimously.

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

Resumption of Open Meeting/Adjournment

Upon resumption of the open meeting, Commissioner Eason moved, and Commissioner Bryant seconded to accept the resignation of Mr. Godwin from his role as Commissioner and Mayor Pro Tem. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Eason moved, and Commissioner Bryant seconded, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously, and the October regular meeting adjourned at 8:12 pm.

Victoria Newcombe, Mayor

ATTEST:

Alayna Balmer, Clerk