

Town of Rich Square
Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting Minutes
Thursday, October 17, 2024 – 11:00 am
Town Administrative Building

The Rich Square Board of Commissioners held their regular meeting in the Town Annex Building at 109 North Main St, Rich Square, North Carolina. Mayor Victoria Newcombe called the meeting to order 11:00am and Commissioner Charles Eason gave the invocation.

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

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

Agenda

1. The board reviewed the minutes and Commissioner Eason moved to approve the revised September 5, 2024, regular meeting minutes. Commissioner Bryant seconded the motion, and the motion carried.
2. Next was the discussion about the appointment of another Commissioner to fill the vacant seat on the council. Commissioners Bryant, Eason, and Joyner agreed that they'd prefer to appoint someone that has the potential to oversee the Public Works Department and WWTP project, with experience as a Commissioner, and the ability to communicate easefully with Jeff Long, like Reginald White. Mayor Newcombe and Commissioner Cary agreed that someone more efficient in fulfilling the role of Commissioner, and that can protect the town's interests regarding the Special Order by Consent agreement with DEQ, would be a more suitable prospect, like Marcia Majett. Commissioner Eason insured that he'd get in contact with Reginald White to determine whether he can agree to accept and perform the duties of Commissioner and Public Works department head effectively and will communicate his response to the Mayor to be brought up at the next regular meeting.
3. Mayor Newcombe began the discussion about a Commissioner assuming the role of Mayor Pro Tempore. Commissioners Eason, Bryant, and Joyner expressed their disinterest in filling that position. Commissioner Cary shared that she could support Mayor Newcombe's way of action but highlighted that she was inexperienced as a Commissioner compared to Mr. Eason's, Mr. Bryant's, and Mr. Joyner's time as Commissioner. The topic was tabled until the next public meeting for more input from the public.
4. The board voted to confer the power to countersign checks in the Mayor's absence, attend finance related meetings, and aid administrative staff in fulfilling financial reporting requirements to Commissioner Cary. The board reviewed an edited version of Commissioner Cary's role description which incorporates these new responsibilities. Commissioner Eason moved, and Commissioner Joyner seconded to approve the amended Administration Commissioner role description. The motion passed unanimously.
5. Mayor Newcombe began discussion of the Christmas Parade Committee's request for the town's aid in purchasing a Christmas tree and holding and receiving funds on their behalf. The clerk informed the council that municipalities can not give donations and that purchasing a tree can be done with certain exceptions. Ms. Balmer recommended postponing the conversation until the town had an attorney to consult with.

6. Next was the discussion about the next town attorney. The Mayor mentioned that the town may not have the finances to hire a town attorney and that she would keep looking for potential attorneys who are a little less costly. The clerk reminded the board that the council is statutorily required to appoint an attorney, and that it should be one of the top priorities.
7. The Mayor informed the board that Pamela Slade, the wife of the town's previous longtime attorney Charles Slade, passed away earlier in the month and asked if the board would like to give a donation on behalf of the town to the family of Mrs. Slade. The clerk informed the council that the town is not permitted to make gifts of public funds but added that personal donations are always acceptable. The board decided to make avocational donations.
8. The Mayor mentioned to the board that since the town is not in good financial standing regarding audits and the overall health of the finance department, employees of the NC State Treasurer is going to be teaching a class about the roles and duties of Commissioners to provide a better understanding of what they are responsible for as well as the state of the financial office. This training will be noticed as a meeting because the council are expected to discuss town business.
9. Mayor Newcombe provided an update on the WWTP Special Order by Consent with DEQ. She mentioned that the SOC is currently being drafted and that the board will have to review and approve the draft before it can be submitted.

At 12:17pm Commissioner Bryant moved, and Commissioner Eason 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 Bryant moved to approve the vacation time owed to Jeff Long and Anthony Powell, seconded by Commissioner Eason. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Eason moved, and Commissioner Bryant seconded to adjourn the October 17 Special meeting. The motion passed unanimously, and the October regular meeting adjourned at 12:32 pm.

Victoria Newcombe, Mayor

ATTEST:

Alayna Balmer, Clerk