

The regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners was held Monday, January 4, 2021 at 6:00pm via Zoom.

The following members were in attendance: Mayor Larry Ward, Mayor Pro Tem Deanna Grubb, Commissioners: David Askew, Barbara Hogan, Julie Loflin, and Scott Morris. Town Attorney, Paul Mitchell; Town Manager, Ken Gamble; Town Clerk, Angel Jenkins
Department Heads: Police Chief Mark Hicks, Fire Chief Travis Morris, Public Works Director Michael High, Water Plant ORC Heather Hicks, Wastewater Treatment Plant ORC Troy Branch.

1. Call to Order - Mayor Ward called the meeting to order at 6pm.
2. Pledge of Allegiance - Mayor Ward led the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Approval of December 7 Minutes – Commissioner Morris made a motion to adopt the December 7, 2020 minutes. Commissioner Loflin seconded. Motion passed unanimously. (5-0)
4. Public Comment -*Citizens may speak on items not listed on the printed agenda. Please state your name and address and observe the three-minute time limit. Comments can be submitted via email: townofdentonnc@gmail.com*

Email was received from David Raymond, 40 School Street requesting recycle to be a weekly pickup. A copy of the email is attached to the minutes.

Mayor Ward stated that the Board would take the remarks under consideration.

5. Adoption of Agenda - Commissioner Grubb stated that we need to remove item 12 from the agenda. Commissioner Hogan made a motion to adopt the agenda with the deletion of item 12. Commissioner Grubb seconded. Motion passed unanimously. (5-0)
6. Resolution Honoring 50th Anniversary of Denton Farm Park – R-2021-01 – Mayor Ward read the resolution honoring the Denton Farm Park.
7. June 30, 2020 Audit – Eddie Carrick - Mr. Carrick thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve as the audit for the Town of Denton. Mr. Carrick stated that pages 3-12 of the audit is the Management Discussion and Analysis. This provides a synopsis of where the Town has been, where they are now and a little bit of where it is going. The audit report is a public document, anyone can request a copy of the audit. Anyone that does request the audit, point them to this section, it is in more layman's terms about the finances of the Town. The Town did receive an unqualified or a clean opinion, which is what the Audit is supposed to provide. This means that the audit report based on their audit proceeds, did fairly represent the books and records of the Town of Denton for the year ending 2020.
General Funds had a really good year, 47-48 of the audit reports. Total revenues up \$900,000. Ad Valorem taxes were up \$18,000, Local Sales Tax up \$20,000 which is a good indication that the economy is still doing well. The other Grants, was pass-through grant and Loan proceeds for the Fire Truck, Police car and Skid Steer for Public Works. Expenditures - Administration expenses were up due to the grants that were paid. FY' 18/19 had \$104,000 and this year \$274,000.

Police Department expenses were up due to purchase of the Police Car.
Fire Department expenses were up due to the purchase of the Fire Truck and outfitting the Truck.

Both of which were paid for by the USDA loan and grants.

Transportation was down \$110,000 due to the increase in expenses in FY 18-19.

Bottom line, Revenue over expenditures by \$115,000 compared to a deficit of \$120,000 in FY 18/19, due to the increase in road improvements.

Fund Balance is at 51%, which was an increase. Not to be considered due to the Grant pass-throughs this past year. Without those, we are at 60%-70%. This should go back up next year. Ad Valorem alum collections rate is 96.5%.

Enterprise Fund- pages 49-52 of the audit report. Total revenues are up to \$28,000. Expenditures are down \$51,000 from FY 18/19.

Water Fund expenditures were actually down in the chemicals and supplies. Waste Water supplies expense was down primarily due to the timing of purchasing chemicals through the year. Budgetary basis, principal paid on loans were about the same. Capital Outlay, the Water Plant replaced some equipment this year. The Wastewater Plant did not do as much with their CIP.

Water and Sewer revenues exceed expenditures by \$204,000.

This is the highlights of the audit report. This report gives the Board a good sense of where the Town is and where it is headed.

Mr. Carrick thanked Mr. Gamble and Mrs. Jenkins for working with them during the audit and getting the items they need.

Mayor Ward thanked Mr. Carrick for his work on the audit and providing the Board a report.

8. Flooding Issue – Meadowdale Drive – Kenny Small Mr. Gamble stated that Kenny Small could not attend the meeting tonight. Mr. Small would like to see the Town enlarge the culvert under Meadowdale Drive. Mr. Gamble reviewed the flooding concerns in the Meadowdale Drive area. Mr. Gamble presented a PowerPoint showing the most recent flooding issues. The area of concern is 102 Meadowdale Drive. The pictures represent 4 inches of rain over 30 hours. This is about the amount of rain we received normally in a month.
A copy of the PowerPoint presentation is attached to the minutes.

-Commissioner Morris asked if the flood waters got into any of the houses.

-Mr. Gamble stated he was not aware of water in any homes. At Mr. Small property, it has been up to the foundation and under the house in past flooding events. The property at 62 Meadowdale possibly has had water in the house.

-Commissioner Morris stated there use to be a pond in the area of 62 Meadowdale. He also asked if cleaning out the ditches would help with the flooding?

-Mr. Gamble stated he did not know. The property flattens out beside 94 Tamworth. The issue is the 24-inch culvert that goes under Tamworth. If

the Board wants to explore the issues, an Engineer can be consulted. Mr. Gamble stated that he usually takes a stand not to go onto private property to do work.

-Commissioner Hogan asked if the issue of the stream where it comes out of the woods could be corrected by the homeowners.

-Mr. Gamble stated that is an issue but it has a lot to do with the amount of rain in a short amount of time.

-Commissioner Hogan stated that if it would help, it would be a good idea to correct the problem, but the area upstream would have to be addressed too.

-Mayor Ward asked Commissioner Morris how long it has flooded.

Commissioner Morris stated that it has always flooded but has gotten worse over the last few years. Mayor Ward also stated that we had 72 inches of rain verse 49 inches the year before.

-Commissioner Morris asked Mr. High if he has any input on the matter.

Mr. High stated that the Sewer lines would limit the size pipes that could be installed. The culvert pipes were placed just above the sewer lines.

-Commissioner Morris stated he felt the Town should continue to monitor the situation.

9. Water Plant Operations – Heather Hicks - Mayor Ward asked Ms. Hicks to go through the weekly processes of the Water Plant.

Ms. Hicks stated that the Water Plant works first and third shift. The hours are Midnight to 8am and 8am to 4pm as long as the levels are good and nothing major is going on. There is no one at the plant from 4pm to midnight. They take samples daily and weekly. Some samples have to be outsourced and taken to Town Hall to be picked up by Meritech. The bacteria testing is done at night. They take 3-4 hours to perform and sit in an incubator for 24 hours before they are read. Maintenance around the plant, order chemicals, somethings are done daily and some are weekly.

-Mayor Ward stated he goes by quite a bit. He asked why there are 2 people there on Monday.

-Ms. Hicks stated that they only work one person per shift unless there is something major going on. When they are changing out caustic, it is best to have someone to assist with this. They test the generators, take samples at the lake, wash filters, mow the area once a week in the summer. There has been a lot of issues with the finished water pumps. The rain has hurt them this year and they are having to wash filters more frequently. When the water is cold, it is hard to treat because they have to slow the water plant down. The muddy water makes it worse. If they had summer temperatures it would help with the mud.

Mayor Ward asked if the big pump motor is being utilized.

-Ms. Hicks stated that it has not been used a long time. Russell Underwood is wanting to make changes to the wiring so that it could be used.

-Mayor Ward asked what they needed in equipment. He mentioned items that Handy Sanitary District mentioned during their study that they would need to do to the plant.

-Ms. Hicks stated they wanted to use the variable speed drives on everything. Ms. Hicks stated they would work in the winter but not the summer. The demand is higher in the summer and is almost double. If the demand were that high in the winter, the plant would have to operate 24 hours a day. The summer demand is higher due to the lake homes. Commissioner Morris asked if the big pump wasn't a variable speed already.

-Ms. Hicks stated it was and they were consistently adjusting it because it is ramping up to quick. It hasn't been operated in a while and probably has rust in it. Ms. Hicks stated that if they can't get the pump to work correctly, they should just replace it.

-Commissioner Morris asked how much water was being pumped to Town.

-Ms. Hicks stated that today it was 1.2 million and they are having to wash the filters every 30 hours. Rural Water stated that other plants are only getting 8-10 hours.

-Commissioner Morris asked Mrs. Jenkins how much water the Town is selling.

-Mrs. Jenkins stated that the figures for December was 21 million gallons and the Town sold 4.1 million to the Town residents. This amount Commissioner Morris stated that was approximately 25 million gallons per month.

-Mr. Gamble stated there is an additional 800,000 gallons in non-revenue water.

-Ms. Hicks stated it will vary depending on Handy's usage. Today they had both pumps on filling the tanks.

-Commissioner Morris asked if they have any suggestions on where to cut cost.

-Ms. Hicks stated they are looking at adjusting the schedule in regards to the power study that Rural Water did. She and Mr. Gamble are looking at how they can make the adjustments. Other than that, everything just keeps increasing.

-Mayor Ward asked if there was anything that is needed to make the work easier.

-Ms. Hicks said she would have to get back to them on that.

-Commissioner Hogan asked how the plant was over the weekend due to all the rain.

-Ms. Hicks stated they usually see the worst 3 days later.

-Mayor Ward asked when Thomas Rawls would be ready for his B Certification.

-Ms. Hicks stated he is ready now; they are just trying to find him a class to attend.

-Mayor Ward thanked Ms. Hicks for the information.

10. Clark Acres Sanitary Sewer I&I – Troy Branch - Mr. Branch stated that Envirolink stated the study started December 2, 2020 to camera the sewer lines. They were going to do 13,000 linear feet of lines, again going back to the area of Meadowdale Drive. A summary of what was found: 70 leaky

taps, 60 are in Clark Acres; 6 in passable root blockages; 5 slip-line failures (work was done 5 years ago); 3 complete line breaks and multiple highwater areas that the camera could not pass. They ended up recording 8,354 feet, 2,509 was under water and they do not know what was causing the water in the lines. Mr. Branch asked if there were any questions. Mayor Ward asked how they fix the issues.

Mr. Branch stated the easiest way is money. They are going to start point repairs through the Public Works. This is where it gets tricky, it runs on private property. Mayor Ward asked if the issues in Clark Acres were fixed, how would that help. Mr. Branch stated it could reduce the I/I by 40%. Mr. Branch stated all systems have I&I, that is why you camera the lines. He is requesting a camera in the next budget to get a better idea in house as to what they are dealing with. Commissioner Morris asked if they prioritize could the work be done in house.

Mr. Branch stated with the Public Works worker shortage, it would be up to Mr. High. With more help in Public Works, it could be done. This would be up to Public Works. This would be point repairs.

Commissioner Morris stated it may be worth hiring more people to help take care of these areas of concern. The Town already has a blanket easement for the lines. Mayor Ward asked if the study gave a list of what needs more attention. Mr. Branch stated it does.

11. Budget Amendment 2 – General Fund – Ken Gamble – Mr. Gamble reviewed the Budget Amendment to bring the COVID Relief funds into the current budget. This amount is being posted to the Police Department Salary The amount is \$44281.

Commissioner Morris made a motion to approve the Budget Amendment 2 for the General Fund. Commissioner Hogan seconded. Motion passed unanimously. (5-0)

12. Budget Amendment 2A – Enterprise Fund – Ken Gamble - Item deleted from the agenda.

13. Update to DPD Use of Force Policy – Chief Hicks – Chief Hicks stated he received a notice from the NC Department of Justice in regards to the President’s Executive Order 13929 which is Safe Policing for Safe Communities. This is for the Police Department to review their Use of Force Policy to make sure there was “No Choke Hold” in the Officer Intervention Section. This is required in order to receive grants for the Department. Chief Hicks has sent the policy to Attorney Mitchell and he signed off on the policy.

14. VOIP Phone System Update – Angel Jenkins - Mrs. Jenkins stated that they had just received information from Windstream today. She and Mr. Gamble will review this information and present it to the Board at the next meeting.

15. Closure of Town Hall to Public – Ken Gamble - Mr. Gamble reviewed information with the Board in regards to the COVID-19 cases in Davidson County and Denton. Just in the month of December the total cases went up 60%. The number of active cases went up by 168%, deaths went up 57%, and positive test went up 52%. The county is over the current State average. Due to this increase Mr. Gamble is recommending to close Town Hall to in-office traffic

to reduce the chances of Administrative Staff coming in contact with the virus. If the Administrative staff is exposed, the entire office will have to quarantine until results come back or longer if they test positive. Town Hall software is not setup to be accessed remotely. This would mean that no one would be able to do the work for the office.

Commissioner Morris asked is they are requiring mask to be worn when entering the office and there is plexiglass between staff and the resident.

Mr. Gamble stated that we are requiring mask, staff is wearing mask when assisting residents and there is plexiglass. However, it is not an enclosed environment.

There was a lot of discussion on how the payments would be processed for the residents.

-Commissioner Loflin asked if we would still be able to process the Davidson County Tax payments.

-Mrs. Jenkins stated that residents could make the tax payments through the drop box and they would be processed the same day. Mrs. Jenkins stated is has been busy during the last two weeks due to tax payments. Mrs. Jenkins stated that they will work with residents in order to make this a rest

Mr. Gamble stated that he is suggesting closing Town Hall after January 5th which is the tax deadline.

-Attorney Mitchell stated that the employees could also take the virus home to their family and love ones.

Commissioner Morris made a motion to not close Town Hall to the public. The Motion died for a lack of a second.

Commissioner Askew made a motion to close Town Hall after January 8, 2021 to the public until the COVID-19 cases level out. Commissioner Hogan seconded. Motion passed 4(Askew, Hogan, Grubb, Loflin)-1(Morris).

16. Banner Selection for Sponsor Banner Program – Ken Gamble – Mr. Gamble presented the options for the sponsored banners to be place around town. The Board decided to go with a burgundy “Welcome to Denton” banner, with the sponsors name at the bottom. Commissioner Morris made a motion to approve the banner program using the burgundy banner, “Welcome to Denton” style. Commissioner Loflin seconded. Motion passed unanimously. (5-0)
17. Town Attorney Update – Paul Mitchell – Mr. Mitchell was in Superior Court having to do with the Police Department camera footage involving the chase on Highway 109 in 2018. Our Officers handled the process professionally. Mr. Mitchell prepared information for the emergency meeting held by the Board. Reviewed the Use of Force Policy for the Police Department. Has also been reviewing he RFQ’s for Town Attorney.
18. Town Manager’s Report – Ken Gamble – Mr. Gamble stated that he met with WastePro on December 14, 2020 for a Contract Discussion. WastePro management requested the meeting to discuss the additional costs (\$14,000) they are having to absorb due to recycling having to be disposed of since there is no market for it. The

Town ran into the same problem with the business cardboard recycling and the Board decided to end the program. WastePro asked for either a rate increase or to stop recycling service. However, the contract makes no provisions for either change and WastePro has benefitted from an inflated fuel cost calculation in the current contract. Our contract will be up for renewal in 2022 so we will bid it out late in 2021. We may have to make a tough decision regarding recycling if the market for recycling remains flat.

-Debt Setoff is up and running. The collection letters generated almost \$500 in payments on delinquent bills. Mr. Gamble stated that he originally advised that we would update Debt Setoff quarterly. However, Mrs. Jenkins believes we can do this more effectively on a monthly basis and he is in agreement.

-Mr. High used part-time staff to cover the vacant Tech I full time hours in December and will continue to have him until January 15th. The Town will contract with a temp agency beginning January 19th to fill the position since we can't get any qualified and interested candidates through other means. Mr. High does a good job of handle the needs that have to be met to make it through.

-Thomas Marshburn and Mr. Gamble are meeting with RSS and state PART-F personnel the week of January 11th to discuss if our plans to update our grant application will put us in a competitive space for funding. We will discuss PART-F and the Town Hall project in detail during the Budget Retreat.

-The P&R Board, with the assistance of PW, really outdid themselves this year with the park decorations. We received a multitude of positive comments on social media and through Town Hall. The last load of river rock was delivered and PW staff spread it the week of Christmas. I received an update on the new park sign indicating that it should be delivered and installed by the middle of January.

-There is a two-month delay on sales tax monthly reporting. Mr. Gamble has the revenues for July - October. July is 10.9%, August is 8.8% and September is 3.1% above FY19-20. I was anticipating another decline in October revenues, but was pleasantly surprised by a 12.3% increase over FY19-20. There is still a great deal of uncertainty in the economic outlook with jobless claims rising and a Congressional aid package being passed in December without aid to state and local governments. It is unclear how much the Senate will allow a Biden Presidency to get through in the way of future aid. Mr. Gamble will include our property tax collections in next month's discussion.

- We did not receive any bids on the vacant lot on Old Camp Road. This will readvertise the notice in the January 6th edition of the Orator. If no bids are received, Mr. Gamble will come back to the Board for guidance on how to proceed with the sale.

-In looking at the daily production figures for the Water Plant, there is a variance in all totals to link back to production. The Town reads meters middle of the month to middle of the month and Handy Sanitary totals are billed the first of each month. The water loss is not calculated monthly, Mr. Branch does this report annually.

-Commissioner Morris stated that Handy does have a water loss report monthly because they bill their water and calculate purchases at the same time of the month.

-Mr. Gamble stated Handy does report their loss rates monthly, however they do not have any non-revenue usage. Mr. Gamble stated he could provide a figure for this but

it would not be accurate.

19. Closed Session – In Accordance with NC G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3) & 143-318.11(a)(6) Commissioner Hogan made a motion to go into closed session. Commissioner Grubb seconded. Motion passed unanimously. (5-0)
Mayor Ward stated the Board is now in closed session at 7:43 pm.

Commissioner Hogan made a motion to go back into Open Session. Commissioner Grubb seconded. Motion passed unanimously. (5-0)
Mayor Ward called the meeting to order at 8:00pm

Attorney Mitchell stated that the Board met in Closed Session for the discussion of three items which was appropriate under State law. No action was taken.

20. Commissioner Comments / Concerns – There were no comments or concerns.

21. New Business/Other Updates – There was no new business or other updates

22. Announcements

a. Leaf Collection – Last Day January 15th

b. Last Day Business Cardboard Pick-Up Service – January 25th

c. FY21-22 Budget Retreat – Saturday January 30th 9:00 a.m.

Commissioner Grubb asked if the Budget Retreat would be held via Zoom or in person.

Mr. Gamble stated that if the numbers for COVID-19 cases were not better, they would need to meet via Zoom. He did say that they could reschedule to February to see if the numbers come down.

All were in agreement to try to meet in person for the Budget Retreat.

23. Board of Commissioners Adjournment- Commissioner Hogan made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Grubb seconded. Motion passed unanimously. (5-0)

Meeting adjourned at 8:02pm

Larry D. Ward, Mayor

Angel Jenkins, Town Clerk