

Edenton Town Council Minutes
June 8, 2021

The Edenton Town Council met in regular session on Tuesday, June 8, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers. The following members were present: Mayor Jimmy Stallings, Councilman Elton Bond, Councilman Roger Coleman, Councilman Hackney High, Councilman Craig Miller and Councilman Roscoe Poole. Absent was Councilman Samuel Dixon.

Mayor Jimmy Stallings called the meeting to order.

All present stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Councilman Roscoe Poole gave the invocation.

The minutes from the regular meeting of April 13, 2021 and special meeting of April 26, 2021 were presented for approval.

Councilman Bond made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Councilman Miller seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

2020 Employee Service Awards were presented by Mayor Stallings. The following service awards were presented:

POLICE

New Employee
Deidre Sessoms
Andre Lopez

10 Years
Stephen Skinner

30 Years
Brenda Parks

AIRPORT

5 Years
William Chappell

ELECTRIC

15 Years
Steven Nixon

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Mayor Stallings rescinded the COVID-19 State of Emergency that was adopted in March of 2020.

A public hearing was held on the proposed FY 2021/22 budget.

Ms. Knighton gave a summary of the proposed budget which includes a two cent tax increase.

There was no one present from the public to speak at the public hearing on the proposed budget.

Next on the agenda was committee reports.

The Administrative Committee had one item on the agenda.

Councilman High stated that it was recommended that Council amend the covenant regarding craft beer brewery at 119 West Water Street (Conger Building) as presented.

Joe Wach, owner of the property, gave the Town Council a summary of the business plan for the restaurant.

Councilman High made a motion to amend the covenant for 119 West Water Street. Councilman Bond seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Next on the agenda was the Finance Committee with three items for approval.

Councilman Coleman stated that the first item was a recommendation that Council approve the General Fund budget amendment for Fire Department hail storm damage insurance proceeds as presented.

Councilman Coleman made a motion to approve the budget amendment as presented. Councilman High seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Councilman Coleman stated that the second item was a recommendation that Council approve the Electric Fund budget amendment for hail storm damage insurance proceeds as presented.

Councilman Coleman made a motion to approve the budget amendment as presented. Councilman High seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Councilman Coleman stated that the third item was a recommendation that Council approve the Electronic Funds Transfer Policy as presented.

Councilman Coleman made a motion to approve the policy as presented. Councilman High seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

The Public Works Committee was next on the agenda with one item.

Councilman Miller stated that it was recommended that Council award bid for maintenance of cemeteries to Jim R. Hedgepeth, Jr. dba Jimmy Jack's Lawn Care as presented.

Councilman Miller made a motion to approve the bid award for the maintenance of cemeteries as presented. Councilman Bond seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Next on the agenda was new business.

Ms. Knighton stated that the first item was the Proposal: Gun Shot Detection, Alert, and Analysis Services System to Reduce and Prevent Gun Violence.

Ms. Knighton stated that Council previously authorized staff to solicit proposals from banks to lease finance over a five-year period a \$200,000 vehicle tag reader system to help deter crime in the community. She stated that there were delays in the solicitation until the FY 2019/20 Audit was formally approved by the NC Local Government Commission and received by the Town Council (April 14, 2021). Once the solicitation process began, there was an increase in gun violence. In late April, after several different shots fired incidents in the area of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, Chief King recommended that she reconsider the vehicle tag reader system and consider the gun shot detection system. After the series of gun shooting incidents the week of May 17th that resulted in the serious injuries to two victims. Chief King made his case for the gun shot detection system. The Town would lease acoustic sensors in basically a one-mile area where the majority of gun shots are being fired. The technology detects and locates the gun shots.

Ms. Knighton stated that they have concluded recently that the shot spotter is the better investment at this time – the technology pinpoints where the gun shots are fired – we won't have to rely on someone calling 911 or an officer hearing shots fired and trying to determine where shots came from. Officers respond based on where the caller thinks the shots were fired. There are often huge discrepancies in locations. The technology will help us determine if really a gun shot or fireworks. The technology also helps with evidence that builds case to create probable cause to seek warrants. This investment is an approximate \$60,000 annual lease. Ms. Knighton stated that the Town can try it for a year and see if it is an effective tool. If Council decides after a year of utilizing the technology it is not effective enough to warrant the investment, the lease does not have to be renewed. The vehicle tag reader system is a \$200,000 investment over five years, and the Town would own the system. Ms. Knighton stated that funds have been identified (\$25,000) in the Police Department 2020/21 budget that can be used to pay for the first half of the lease agreement. The second half of the payment will have to be funded in the FY 2021/22 budget.

Chief Henry King made a presentation to the Town Council on the gun shot detection system.

Ms. Knighton stated that the second item was a budget amendment for Queen Anne Bulkhead Small Capital Projects Ordinance.

Ms. Knighton stated that the bulkhead project was partially funded through a \$111,000 grant from NC Division of Coastal Management. It took three grant applications before the funding agency approved our grant request. During the post grant award phase – when the engineering and design work was done, it was determined that the small area of existing bulkhead between Hayes Bridge and Elizabeth Vann Moore Park needed to be replaced primarily to tie in height wise with the concrete bulkhead at Elizabeth Vann Moore Park and the new bulkhead to be installed on the east side of Hayes Bridge. Ms. Knighton stated that she recently filed the close out documents for the grant, seeking grant funds, and was reminded by the NC Division of Coastal Management grants officer that only 156 feet of bulkhead was approved for funding. Based on linear footage of the entire bulkhead project, the portion of between Hayes and EVM Park equates to \$16,000. Finance Officer Virginia Smith has prepared a budget amendment that provides funding from the Water & Sewer Fund to the Queen Anne Creek Bulkhead Capital Projects Ordinance.

Councilman Miller made a motion to approve the budget amendment. Councilman Bond seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Knighton stated that the third item was the Assignment of Agreement for Professional Services, Town Manager Search.

Ms. Knighton reported that Ellis Hankins reported to Tammy Woodley shortly after his visit to Edenton that the principal of the search firm, Jim Mercer passed away. Mr. Mercer's estate will resolve the future of the company however the assignment of the Town's agreement to the Reddish Executive Search Associates will allow for Ellis to assume and continue performing the obligations and services of the Mercer agreement under the Reddish agreement seamlessly. Town Attorney Hood Ellis reviewed the proposed assignment. Hood Ellis reviewed and recommended a change that calls for Reddish to agree to indemnify and hold the Town harmless in the event of any claim by Mercer against the Town arising out of the agreement.

Councilman Bond made a motion to approve the assignment of agreement as presented. Councilman Miller seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Knighton stated that the fourth item was the Approval of Contract with Thompson, Price, Scott, Adams & Co. for FY 2020/21 Audit.

Councilman Bond made a motion to approve the contract for the FY 2020/21 Audit. Councilman Miller seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Knighton stated that the fifth item was the Amendment to Town Code of Ordinances, Chapter 130.11, Projectiles.

Ms. Knighton stated that this amendment would be consistent with State law and would allow police to issue a town ticket instead of state citation.

Councilman Miller made a motion to approve the amendment. Councilman Bond seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Knighton stated that the last item was Cemetery Street (Unimproved Paper Street) Encroachment from 716 N. Granville Street.

Ms. Knighton stated that the Town was recently notified of a possible encroachment of driveway on unimproved/undeveloped Cemetery Street. This "paper street" or planned street is fifty feet wide and runs from North Broad Street adjacent to the Red Apple property (across street from Edenton Fire Department) to Granville Street, between the residential dwelling unit located at 716 N. Granville and the Chowan County Agricultural Center property. The survey shows the driveway encroaches and 1.9 feet of the northern side of the single-family brick house. Ms. Knighton stated that Town Attorney Hood Ellis offers two ways for the Town to address the encroachment. One option would be for the Town Council to close the street, similar process followed for the paper street "Hewes Street" involved with the new CVS project. Closing would under state statute result in the north half of the property going to Chowan County and the south half going to owner of 716 N. Granville St. This would eliminate future access to the Town's transfer station. Currently we have access via the Chowan County Ag Center driveway and access through the Town's Public Works facility via W. Hicks Street.

The other option is to enter an encroachment agreement; however, Hood is not sure if this would impact the sale and marketability of the property. Encroachment is a simple approval by Town Council, closing of street involves public notice, public hearing, and findings made by Council which take time.

No action was needed for this agenda item; this item will be placed on the special meeting for June 28.

Next on the agenda was items considered timely and important.

Councilman Miller requested an update on a second grocery store. Ms. Knighton stated that she has not been able to get an update on this project.

Councilman Miller asked for update from natural gas/Brady Cartwright. Ms. Knighton stated she would check in with him.

Councilman Miller stated that a resident at Oakum and Queen Streets expressed concern of on street parking close to the stop sign. Corey Gooden stated that he would check on this area and see if no parking is already designated.

Councilman Coleman asked about the Town Council videos that are being shown on MediaCom and it seems to be the same one all the time. Ms. Knighton stated that there have been issues with staff available at the MediaCom location to play the videos, staff will follow up with MediaCom for a solution.

There was no one present for public comment.

There being no further items on the agenda, the meeting was adjourned.