

TOWN OF TRYON
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TOWN HALL – MCCOWN ROOM

APRIL 18, 2023 7:00 PM

Present: Mayor J. Alan Peoples Mayor Pro Tem Chrelle Booker

Commissioners: Crys Armbrust, Bill Crowell, Bill Ingham

Staff Present: Jim Fatland, Town Manager Susan Bell, Town Clerk
 Tim Daniels, Planning Director Randall Hodge, Police Chief
 Greg McCool, Public Works Director Josh Walton, Fire Chief
 Travis Aldred, Harmon Field Supervisor William Morgan, Town Attorney

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Peoples called the meeting to order and asked for a moment of silence. Mayor Pro Tem Booker led the invocation.

AGENDA ADOPTION

Mayor Peoples would like to add item 6b discussion of sewer problem and move item 14 to number 7. There are a lot of people here to speak and he will have restrictions because there are a lot of people that want to speak.

Mayor Peoples entertained a motion to adopt. Commissioner Armbrust so moved. The motion carried unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA ADOPTION

Mayor Peoples asked for additions, deletions or corrections. Being none, he entertained a motion to adopt the Consent Agenda, which includes February 21, 2023 Board of Commissioner minutes, Tryon Tourism Development Authority minutes, Harmon Field Board of Supervisor minutes, Board of Planning & Adjustment minutes and the Financial Report. Commissioner Armbrust so moved. The motion carried unanimously.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION TO TRYON GARDEN CLUB

Mayor Peoples presented a resolution of appreciation to the Tryon Garden Club. Beth Rounds, President of Tryon Garden Club introduced herself, along with Treasurer John James. Ms. Rounds reported that is their pleasure for them to be involved with the Town of Tryon and certainly in the area of beautification. They have established grants for education and beautification as their founders had wanted.

CUSTOMER PROBLEMS WITH SEWER

Richard Norton of 27 Markham Road, reported a lot of you know of the problems that they have had with the sewer. He would like for them to table the sewer and bring it up as the new town manager can get grant money to make repairs that is prioritized. Basically, the things he is going through with his

house is intolerable. He can't sale his house, because of the sewer problems. He asked that you prioritize this. He understands we need grants, money. Be activist for the town. You have to do the right thing and help us out. He presented his bills to the board. Manager Fatland reported there have been a number of backups on Markham. When you start a process to get a loan or grant, you have to do an application and turn it into the state. If they approve it, you start the design, then construction. It will take a while to get started. He thanked the council because in February, you hired three engineers. He asked council for their support to add this to the list for the State Senator and house member. He is adding Hidden Hill and Oak Street and would like to add Markham to the project list. If we get special funding from the legislature, we could start as early as August 1st. Also, the invoice that Mr. Norton dropped off, our insurance is processing the claim. He feels the town should pay for the invoice and the insurance company will pay for roto-rooter.

Mayor Peoples entertained a motion to adopt adding this to the list that goes to the State Legislature in order to get more funds. Commissioner Crowell so moved. The motion carried unanimously.

CITIZEN COMMENTS & RESPONSES/LAKE LANIER

Mayor Peoples reported that he came in and asked a few questions. He didn't like the answer, so, he directed the manager to take the kayak dock out. He went and looked at several things. It didn't meet the requirements. It wasn't approved by this board. It didn't meet the requirement of the number of feet away. This doesn't mean that he wants to walk away from this. He thinks it will never be put back in that location. We have a relationship with you. When the storm came through, who responded, our fire department. We are four small towns and we have to live together or we have to die together. There have been sewer issues. When you find toilet paper in the lake, you know there is a problem. That is where you swim. We provide fire service for you. We have 8 EMT & 5 paramedics that can stabilize you and save your life. That is a valuable thing. You get water from us. He always hears, we pay dearly for it. Electricity cost over \$2,000 a month. The dam check, he told people before they checked it, they would not find a whole lot of problems with it. The first dam that was built was broken. The second one was overbuilt. They called a guy that built the Hoover Dam to look at it and he said it was a good dam and it will last and he feels like it will last a whole lot longer than others do. All that being said, he is going to call on people to speak. Three minutes allowed for each speaker. There will be no ranting and raving. He wants whatever is best for everyone. He wants to find a common ground. You don't have to agree with him.

Rodney Dofort, President of the LLCA thanked the mayor for his words. He spoke on this issue a couple of years ago. He wants a beneficial legal agreement to come out of this. He has the petition the lake residents put together. He asked that all follow the procedures and laws. They have a great relationship with the town. He has worked with Tim Daniels, Zach Ollis and Jim Fatland to ensure the lake stays good. The only thing he hope is that they agree that at the end of all of this, their sense of community is unaffected. The board here is being strung along by an agreement that was done forty years ago. You face issues with the dam that are much more important than the kayak. He offered to work with the board maybe with representations. He hopes to speak last.

Mayor Peoples moved this to the front, because he believes if you can diffuse the situation, then everybody wins. Mr. Doffer believes there is no conflict that goes forward from this and they will work with you and talk with you. At the end of the day, it comes down to proper procedures. The same rules

for you as for us. Secondly, let us not affect our community spirit over something as trivial as this. He thanked the board.

David Edgar, 160 Caledonia Road, only became aware of this issue this morning. Apparently, it has been percolating for a while. There are 20 residential properties on his road that are in the Lake Lanier Subdivision, that contain those rights to access the lake. The civic association does a great job managing the boat ramp. That is there if you have a boat house and own property on the lake. Many of them don't, but still have the right. He was excited about this project, until he found out there wasn't a way to get to the dock. He feels there should be a way they can use their right to access the lake without depending on the kindness of neighbors to give them access.

Mayor Peoples called a five-minute recess to allow for those that wanted to leave to exit.

CODE ENFORCEMENT AGREEMENT WITH FOOTHILLS REGIONAL COMMISSION

Manager Fatland reported Planning Director Daniels recommends in order to get the curve on code enforcement, there is an opportunity to join with other communities for \$9,000 cost starting July 1, 2023 and going through the next twelve months. He feels it will be worthwhile to see if it works out for the betterment of the town. Tim will be seeking your input as we go through code enforcement, to see if this will work better. Mayor Peoples likes that, because the one delivering the news comes from somewhere else.

Mayor Peoples entertained a motion to adopt the Code Enforcement Agreement with Foothills Regional Commission. Commissioner Armbrust so moved. The motion carried unanimously.

LETTER FROM HARMON FIELD BOARD ON FY24 BUDGET

Manager Fatland reported he went to the Harmon Field Board meeting. They approved their budget without a tax increase. They haven't had an increase in years. He met with County Manager Pittman and he expressed that getting a tax increase will be tough. Mayor Peoples interrupted and explained we have been told that many times. Only a half cent increase in twenty-two years. Fatland reported the dilemma we have at Harmon Field, the board out there, partially appointed by the county, struggles with the basic maintenance. So, their budget is the same, no tax increase and no capital projects. However, when you go out to Harmon Field, one of the first things you notice, when you turn in, the two access roads have potholes everywhere. The recommendation the Harmon Field Board, the county board and this board has if you want to wait on a re-evaluation, he would like for the two boards to pay for all the paving. PWD McCool received estimates, with Darrell Price being the lowest at \$190,650. The allocation is the township pays for operation of the budget. 64% is in the Township and 36% is from the Town. The recommendation is the cost be shared \$122,000 paid by the County and \$68,650 paid from the Town.

The road width will be 16 feet wide and include it in July with the Powell Bill fund. It's an embarrassment to the community. If you take action tonight you are taking strong action supporting Harmon Field. If you approve, he will meet with the ones on the board to discuss to share firsthand their difficulties. The YMCA wanted a lucrative agreement with Harmon Field. We were straightforward with them. Harmon Field has a tight budget. Have asked the YMCA to do some of the things. They are going to provide their own soccer equipment. Harmon Field will do the striping and they are going to help with the mowing cost. They understand the tight budget we have. Going to send a huge positive to the

community. He and PWD will be doing a walk through with Travis to make a list of needs. He is trying to be pro-active instead of re-active.

Commissioner Ingham made a motion to commit to the paving cost \$68,650. The motion carried unanimously. Manager Fatland responded beside the paving, the Harmon Field budget needs approval. Mayor Peoples entertained a motion to approve the Harmon Field budget. Commissioner Armbrust so moved. The motion carried unanimously.

FY23 BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 5

Manager Fatland reported in budget amendment no. 5 we are amending the Fire Department budget for \$125 to cover the principal and interest. The equestrian unit has raised \$19,000 to upgrade the equestrian area and we have taken over the horse shows. We are collecting the fees and paying their bills. Any money made will go back into that area. We are increasing the budget \$34,330. This all comes from the equestrian people, not the tax payers. Last item is the Powell Bill fund. He is appropriating money for some paving that needs to be done. If you don't get pavers lined up early on, you won't get them in. He wanted to pave Chestnut and water and sewer lines go under the road. Any work done could cause the lines underneath to break. This would affect Lyncourt, Galax and Melrose. An engineer will be coming out Thursday to take a look at the problems. Throughout the town there are some serious potholes that need to be repaired. Hiring a contractor to come in and take care of those.

Commissioner Ingham responded he thought the engineering work had already been done. Commissioner Crowell responded he thought we were waiting on grant money to come in. Fatland talked with WithersRavenel and they told him the application they turned in was turned down.

The Town is receiving \$2.6 million for Braewick Sewer. We received notification today that the Asset & Inventory grant for water was approved for \$264,000 and the sewer was approved for \$254,000 to do a complete inventory of the water and sewer system.

The support from council to get the four engineers on the payroll is much appreciated. Finding the right engineer to give their undivided attention helps to get grant funding. Mayor Peoples responded we have gotten more grant money for water and sewer in the last two to two and a half years than we have since he has been here. The support from our State Senator Moffitt and House Member Jake Johnson will help. Jake Johnson called him when he worked in Brevard and told him he needed some projects to put in the budget. He gave him three projects and late in July, Johnson called him and told him they had gotten funded. He called here and he gave him two projects and going to add a third project now. That goes quicker, the money will be available this summer.

Mayor Peoples entertained a motion to approve the FY23 Budget Amendment No. 5. Commissioner Ingham so moved. The motion carried unanimously.

TOWN MANAGER AGREEMENT

Mayor Peoples asked if everybody had a chance to look over the Town Manager Agreement. It's basically what was talked about. The salary, the mileage, the matching, and everything that they had talked about. The savings is roughly \$80,000 over the next two years.

Mayor Peoples entertained a motion to adopt. Commissioner Armbrust so moved. The motion carried unanimously.

TDDA UPDATE & ROAD CLOSURE FOR AIR STREAM RALLY

TDDA Director Newman reported they are coming up on the year end closing and are making final arrangements with NC Main Street. The Board retreat is May 10. June 26 is their public TDDA meeting. They are working on their budget. The Air Stream Rally is returning on the 20th. They will be parking at Harmon Field and then coming downtown. She would like to request a street closure for Friday morning the 23rd from 9:15/9:30. They will be coming through about 10:00.

Mayor Peoples entertained a motion to approve to close the street. Commissioner Ingham so moved. The motion carried unanimously.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Manager Fatland reported that he had appointed Greg McCool as Interim Public Works Director. It has been three months and he would like to appoint him as the Public Works Director. A lot of people in town have noticed the morale of employees is going up and things are getting done. He has noticed in the last three months. The town has been reactive on a lot of things. We need to get ahead of the curve and not let things fall behind, because it can cost you a lot more. Need to look at the budget this year in a different light. Not just look as doing enough to get by. Some of the small stuff people see. A lady came into the office and told him we needed to get the streets striped and before she got back home the streets were already striped. The crews were already working on the striping. A citizen had called an animal had gotten into the trash and it was everywhere. The trash crew helped pick it all up and put back into the can. A private company would not have done that. He feels Greg McCool will be an outstanding Public Works Director for this community for a long time and that is his report.

Mayor Peoples passed along a list from Karandall of things that need to be done on the eastside. Commissioner Ingham reported Karandall makes excellent proposals.

COUNCIL/MAYOR REPORT

Commissioner Armbrust thanked the Town of Tryon and thank you to the citizens who are here tonight. FYI, the National Trust team is here this week doing the final planning on the childhood home. On Friday is the 20th anniversary of Nina's death. They are going to have activities down at the Plaza, so if you see people, stop by.

Commissioner Crowell thanked everybody for coming.

Commissioner Ingham thanked the group that is always here. He thanked the staff. He mentioned the Harry Goodheart building down the street. Jay & Laura Geddings have done a lot of work there. The work they have done changes the entire building. We have good volunteers in this town.

Mayor Pro Tem Booker thanked everyone for coming out. Again, Jim, thank you. She wants to thank our lawyer and Susan. She appreciates everybody and so many people to talk about. She really appreciates everyone. Our attorney sits over there real quiet. We appreciate him. She also appreciates everyone on the board. She wanted to speak a little on her trip to Washington, DC. It was a congressional event for the National League of Cities. The Town has been connected to the National League since around 2005. She decided to take a chance on one of the positions. Last year she was on five of the committees. Two

of them were the Board of Directors. She chaired and commissioned the Technology and Communications Committee. This year she decided not to be on so many committees. She is president of the Women in Municipal Government. She is on the ITC committee. She is going to give information to Jim and Susan. There are some upcoming grants and she has information. The Broadband committee. They have some upcoming boot camps. What happens with her, she is going to Denver next week, the Cities Summit. There will be 35 countries there. She and Susan looked at the agenda and has been invited to six of those events. On the second day of the conference, everything she has been invited to run almost together. She will be busy. Then she is going to Wisconsin in May. Then she will go to Charlotte. She is looking for funds and invited any women in municipal government to attend. Then she will go to Atlanta and give up her presidency. While she was in Washington she met with Representative Edwards and Tillis. He was very busy that day, but he met with them. He agreed to work with NLC.

In the package is some upcoming grant opportunities. She has information from the different agencies. Eventually she will not be with NLC, but she would like someone from this board to stay connected. She is invited to the first ever VIP luncheon for women and the Celebrities of Mayors event. She is a part of the Capstone Leaders Forum. They will discuss the problems going on in America. She is also a part of Citizens for Democracy of Innovation. They are to talk about the instability in our meetings, in particular our women. She will post on her social media about the WIMG conference. She thanked Jim for his help introducing her to someone that can help her. The Board congratulated her.

Mayor Peoples thanked her for doing that. He thanked staff and the citizens that came tonight.

CITIZEN COMMENTS & RESPONSES

A citizen from the audience asked for a copy of the lake deed. On the kudzu eradication, you can make a donation at the Coffeeshop in Tryon to buy the volunteers coffee for their work. He asked if the city budget was paying for all of the expenses for Chrelle to travel to these events. Mayor Pro Tem Booker responded some of it is paid by the town. Some of it is paid by the organization, like the first of City Summit, she is a VIP guest. The man doesn't live in Tryon, might not be any of his business. Mayor Peoples responded the Town needs a presence in Raleigh and Washington. The man asked how we had benefited in the past from this. Booker responded this is the first anyone from the town has attended. The trip to Denver is half and half. The trip to Wisconsin will be paid for by NLC.

LLCA is there any reason someone can't come to the annual meeting. Manager Fatland responded he let the president know before the meeting started that he would like to attend the quarterly meetings. The Town needs your help with getting funding for the dam improvements and the bridge over the dam needs work from SCDOT. Along with Chuck Edwards the need for the Congressman in South Carolina is needed also.

Anne Day thanked Jim for the striping on New Market Road and for meeting with them this past Friday. She thanked Chief Hodge for taking care of some issues on Godshaw Hill. She congratulated Greg and thanked the crew for picking up her trash that was all over. She's the one that had the bear issue in the trash.

Joyce Kimpton asked about the leaf policy. Aren't we supposed to pick up our leaves and place them in bags after the machine has been by our place. Mayor Peoples replied that was the policy. Ms. Kimpton

asked is it not the policy anymore. Mayor Peoples responded the policy has not been changed. Ms. Kimpton replied someone needs to enforce the policy, because people are just raking them to the road. They had to bring the backhoe to get the leaves up. That's taking longer than just picking up a bag and throwing it in the truck. Mayor Peoples replied maybe the code enforcement person can help with that also.

ADJOURN

Mayor Peoples entertained a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Crowell so moved. The motion carried unanimously.

J. Alan Peoples, Mayor

Attest:

Susan B. Bell, Town Clerk