

TOWN OF JAMESVILLE
SPECIAL MEETING 02/23/2023
MINUTES

The following is an account of the minutes taken at the Special Board Meeting held between 3:00 p.m. & 4:45 p.m. on 02/23/2023 at the Jamesville Town Hall, 1211 Water Street, Jamesville, NC 27846. Virtual meeting attendance was provided for public access through Zoom meeting.

Attendees

- Craig Tucker - Mayor
- Willis Williams - Mayor Protem (Attending via Zoom)
- Rachel Craddock - Commissioner
- Mary Allen – Commissioner
- Kimberly Cockrell – Commissioner

Minutes Recorder – Kimberly Cockrell, Town Clerk/Finance Officer

I. Call to Order

Mayor Craig Tucker called the special meeting to order at 3:13 p.m., a delay due to internet issues. The mayor then offered the prayer. Also in attendance were Employees Robert Cockrell and Betty Williams.

II. Adopt Agenda

Commissioner Craddock moved to adopt the agenda. Commissioner Mary Allen seconded. Motion unanimously passed. 4 Ayes – 0 Nays.

III. Public Comment – None

IV. Capital Project Ordinance for Water Treatment Plant Improvement

Commissioner Cockrell indicated the town’s engineers need the proposed capital project ordinance approved by the board in order to move forward with the grant project. NCDEQ has had recent staff changes and the workload has been in “catch up” mode. Along with the NCDEQ delay, Municipal Engineering is waiting on clarification from NC State that funds have been released. Contractors and suppliers are anxiously standing ready to begin the grant project.

Commissioner Craddock moved to approve the capital project ordinance with a second given by Commissioner Allen. Motion unanimously passed. 4 Ayes - 0 Nays.

CAPITAL PROJECT ORDINANCE
Jamesville, NC Water Treatment Plant Improvements

BE IT ORDAINED by the Town of Jamesville, Board of Commissioners, that pursuant to Section 13.2 of Chapter 159 of the General Statutes of North Carolina; the following capital project ordinance is hereby adopted:

Section 1: The Project authorized is the Jamesville Water Treatment Plant Improvements, to be funded by NCDEQ-Division of Water Infrastructure SRP-Grant and American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) funds.

Section 2: The officers of this unit are hereby directed to proceed with the capital project within the terms of the budget contained herein. This is a project-length budget wherein the Capital Project Fund will remain operational for the term of this Project

Section 3: The following expenditure amounts are appropriated for the Project:

Enviro-Tech Unlimited Construction Services, LLC	\$2,213,650.00
Planning & Design	\$ 187,000.00
Construction Admin/Observation	\$ 255,000.00
Contingency	<u>\$ 110,682.00</u>
Total Project Costs	\$2,766,332.00

Section 4: The following financing source is anticipated to be available to complete this Project:

NCDEQ-DWI (SRP Grant)	\$ 149,291.00
NCDEQ-DWI APRA (SRP-D-ARP-0111)	<u>\$2,617,041.00</u>
Total	\$2,766,332.00

Section 5: The Finance Officer is hereby directed to maintain within the Capital Project Fund sufficient detailed accounting records to satisfy the requirements of the funding agency, the funding agreements, and the federal regulations. The terms of the bond resolution also shall be met.

Section 6: Funds may be advanced from the General Fund for the purpose of making payments as due. Reimbursement requests should be made to the funding agency in an orderly and timely manner.

Section 7: The Finance Officer is directed to report, on a quarterly basis, on the financial status of each Project element in Section 3 and on the total grant/loan revenues received or claimed.

Section 8: The Budget Officer is directed to include a detailed analysis of past and future costs and revenues related to this capital project in every budget submission made to this Board.

Section 9: Copies of this Capital Project Ordinance shall be furnished by the Clerk to the Governing Board, to the Budget Officer, and the Finance Officer for direction in carrying out this Project.

Duly adopted this 23rd day of February, 2023

Craig Allen Tucker, Mayor

Attest:

Kimberly Cockrell, Town Clerk

V. Cemetery Workshop

Mayor Tucker noted it has been a long time since the last review and update of the town's cemetery ordinance and policies.

To open discussion, accompanied by photographs, several maintenance matters were brought forward by Employee Robert Cockrell as these situations make mowing and trimming difficult and cause problems:

- A tree has been planted on top of a grave site, surrounded by a brick foundation.
- Loose landscaping rocks have been laid surrounding a headstone.
- Flowers pots have been placed at several grave sites.
- Mulch and pine straw have been laid at several plots.

The current ordinance does not allow for trees to be planted nor loose items placed at grave sites. Even if the town were to try to enforce current policies, Town Clerk/Commissioner Cockrell explained, the problem is being able to contact some of the families or heirs because their contact information on record is not up to date. Commissioner Craddock stated the adopted ordinance gives the town the authority to go ahead and clean off those cited grave sites. Commissioner Williams recommended that the town attorney provide legal-ease with a template letter the office could send which requests that the unapproved items be removed by a certain date. Commissioner Cockrell suggested that the letter be sent to all deeded sites informing what can and cannot be done, with the mayor commenting that a picture of the violation should also be included.

Discussion addressed putting information on the town's website and social media page that explains the town will be dealing with some maintenance issues at the cemetery and having to enforce current ordinance guidelines. How the town approaches this sensitive issue with public relations will make a difference in how enforcement is accepted. The public needs to understand that the cleanup maintenance is necessary in order for town staff to properly care for the cemetery and its appearance.

Commissioner Williams said the board needs to get clarification from the town attorney if the town would be at risk if staff clears cemetery plots of obstacles without notification to family.

When discussion dealt with the letter including that if the items are not removed by family members by a certain date that the town will be removing whatever is in violation, comment was made that a cleanup fee could be imposed.

Mayor Tucker posed if Commissioner Williams wanted to make his recommendations in the form of a motion, and Williams replied, "that's a motion." Commissioner Craddock seconded. Upon call for the vote, the motion unanimously passed. 4 Ayes - 0 Nays.

Employee Cockrell then directed attention to a bench (at E-14) that has no memorial identification attached to it. The bench is unsafe for sitting as one of the legs is not secure. Recommendation was made by Williams that the owner of the deed be contacted before any action of removing the unsafe bench is done. Whatever is done for any corrective measure needs to be done with dignity and respect.

Another bench is located in the side road of the cemetery. Policy needs to be updated to address benches. The bench near the flag pole was approved by the board and is recorded in the town minutes.

It was pointed out by Craddock that the template letter should include that the town is not responsible for the maintenance of any bench placed as a memorial or sentiment for visitors, with the exception being if it is damaged by town staff while in the duty of lawn maintenance.

Employee Cockrell stated another problem deals with solar night lights which are fragile and easily damaged when trimming. Solar lights are not approved by the ordinance.

Overall, a consensus by the board was given if a sentiment is placed by a family member at a loved one's grave site, it should be attached to the headstone in such a way it does not impede lawn maintenance.

If sentiments such as potted plants or solar lights, for example, were to be permitted by ordinance, then if they are damaged because of lawn maintenance, the replacement or repair becomes the responsibility of the town. Ordinance policy needs to clearly specify they are not permitted.

Later discussion concerning solar lights gave the consensus that family members need to be informed by letter the town will not be responsible to any damage caused to them.

Another similar concern deals with flags that are placed at grave sites.

Employee Cockrell stated he created a chart mapping each plot as to what is denoted on the headstones that can be cross-referenced with the deeded names. Each grave site has been photographed for a digital record being created.

Another situation is a headstone for an infant which has been located in the center of two plots. Mention was made the headstone was placed as a memorial but there are no remains buried. Craddock indicated she knows the family and would make contact to verify what has occurred.

Employee Robert Cockrell continued to bring to the board's attention situations he identified as the chart was being created. In addition to getting up-to-date contact information, Town Clerk Cockrell indicated she will be developing a spreadsheet that will have the deeded information as well as the actual names listed on memorials.

Another single plot had a headstone with two names on it, needing verification what has been done with said plot.

One site of four plots were marked with five headstones. Another has three stones on two plots. More examples were given that tend to be obscure of what has occurred with a plot.

For all these situations, Commissioner Williams stated, determination of documentation needs to be made as best as possible and be grandfathered.

Commissioner Cockrell said she would contact the town attorney for advice as to how the board should proceed in addressing the cemetery problems identified during this workshop.

Employee Robert Cockrell cited another grave where marker had sunk down into the ground almost a foot deep and grass was growing over it. He explained he lifted the marker as best he could and supported it with dirt so that the sinkhole it was becoming would not become a trip hazard. There are other similar problems and many need to be lifted.

Commissioner Williams said the town has no choice but to stabilize some maintenance problems from being hazardous and make some respectful judgment calls in such a way as to being mindful of not disturbing the dead. Town staff needs to be able to do proper maintenance but remove any liability issues.

Commissioner Kimberly Cockrell noted the board received a copy of the current cemetery ordinance and asked everyone to review it and make recommendations to anything that needs to be fine-tuned.

As another way to expand the town cemetery without increasing land mass, Commissioner Cockrell presented options for the board's consideration, including the concept of several remains placed in one plot and the addition of a granite wall where urns could be contained.

Cockrell explained she called all the local cemeteries to get information as to their policies and ordinances. If the board is interested in proceeding to expand Jamesville's cemetery, copies of local ordinances would be pulled together and provided for review.

For one plot to be used for multiple remains, one traditional burial could be done and later an urn placed. State laws must be followed for both interments. A fee charged for the second burial, which is a common rate, is one-half the cost of the original plot fee.

Commissioner Williams indicated he is in favor of doing anything that would be within the state statutes to allow the town to expand its cemetery and increase its revenue. Commissioner Craddock gave support to increasing the cemetery capacity however possible without having to buy more land. Commissioner Williams then moved that his statement be made in the form of a motion and Craddock gave the second. Upon call for the vote, the motion unanimously passed. 4 Ayes - 0 Nays. [See motion below for amendment added to this motion.]

A consensus was given that review of the cemetery ordinance be scheduled for a board meeting agenda item.

Commissioner Cockrell then displayed several samples of urn walls, suggesting that the area along the roadside near the Ruritan Club would be an idea location. The pine trees in that area are a liability issue and should be removed to avoid potential damage to headstones should they fall.

A consensus was given by the board that the cited trees need to be removed. Clerk Cockrell indicated she would get some estimates.

A consensus was also given for estimates to be obtained for the cost of an urn wall. The urn wall would pay for itself by the fees charged for interment. Engraving would be the responsibility of the purchaser, not the town.

Commissioner Williams amended his last motion to include that the town consider installing an urn wall as a way to expand the cemetery. Williams also reiterated the town has the responsibility to the trees within the cemetery and any damage to headstones that would occur should they fall. A second was given by Commissioner Craddock. Upon call for the vote, the motion unanimously passed. 4 Ayes - 0 Nays.

As to the cost per plot, Commissioner Cockrell indicated the Town of Jamesville is hurting itself with its low rates when compared to the cost of plots in other local cemeteries. Speaking also as the town's finance officer, Cockrell said rates need to be increased in order to help fund perpetual care of the cemetery once plots are sold out. Out-of-area persons are purchasing plots in Jamesville because they are cheap, not because they have strong ties to Jamesville. Commissioner Craddock offered she believes anyone buying a plot in the Jamesville cemetery needs to be a resident and not just a property owner. Cockrell then explained the current rates were set as they are to recognize property owners are the ones paying the taxes, whereas Jamesville renters do not. The current rates are:

- \$300 – in town residents
- \$600 – out of town but a resident within Martin County
- \$900 – resident outside of Martin County

Commissioner Williams moved that the board study the feasibility of plot rates and how to change the town's current cemetery policy to reflect the rising tide. Commissioner Craddock stated the town needs to go ahead and get the new rates set because of out-of-area interest in purchasing at such a low cost, with Finance Officer Cockrell recommending the board take up the matter at its next board meeting. The board can change its ordinance the same night it is presented as long as there is 75% of the board members in attendance. Craddock then gave the second to the motion, and upon call for the vote, the motion passed unanimously. 4 Ayes - 0 Nays.

Mayor Tucker stated he would talk with Arrants Logging about the tree removal.

Commissioner Cockrell next addressed the trees in the back of the cemetery where there are piles of dirt against the tree line. There are plots which have been surveyed in that section but the trees need to be removed. It would be cheaper for the town to go ahead and remove those trees now while there is empty land adjacent without headstones to make the job easier. Discussion noted the trees of different heights have probably grown in that area since years ago when the cemetery was first surveyed and maintenance was not done to keep the brush back off the surveyed section. As to the dirt piles, Employee Robert Cockrell commented they consist mostly of clay, which could be sold. The mix of dirt is not suitable for filling in grassed areas of the cemetery.

Commissioner Williams commended Commissioner Cockrell for bringing these matters to the board's attention, adding the town needs to develop proper planning for growth. These plans need to deal with foresight as a one-year plan, a five-year plan and up to a twenty-year plan. Jamesville is a beautiful community and an idea location near many attractions. It is common now that out-of-

area people living in large cities are considering moves to smaller towns. Discussion noted developers buying large tracts of land and putting in developments both commercial and residential and how it changes the features of a local community as well as causing some negative impact.

Commissioner Cockrell summarized she will have a price proposal ready for the next board meeting and will do further research on the other items to be presented as able.

VI. Board Comments

LGC – Natalie Roundtree. Commissioner Cockrell reported that with the Town of Jamesville being on the distressed unit list, the LGC has assigned a person to oversee the town. Ms. Natalie Roundtree will be meeting with the town clerk and the mayor on April 6 at 2:00 p.m. to discuss the structure of the town and how it operates.

Also, Roundtree had emailed the town about a recent newspaper article regarding the ballpark and water usage given at a discounted rate. Discussion by the board noted the town owns the land and has the legal ability to give the discount.

City Vision – April 25-27, Concord, NC. Early bird registration is \$375 per person, \$425 afterwards. Mayor Tucker indicated he wants to attend and was encouraged to do so by Williams & Craddock. Commissioner Cockrell moved to approve \$1,000 in expenses for Mayor Tucker to attend City Vision, with said expense to cover mileage, hotel and meals in addition to the registration fee. Commissioner Allen gave the second. Upon call for the vote, the motion passed unanimously. 4 Ayes - 0 Nays.

As the meeting closed, board members wished well to Commissioner Williams regarding his health, for which he said he much appreciated the prayers and concern.

VII. Adjourn

Commissioner Allen moved to adjourn at 4:45 p.m., with a second by Commissioner Craddock. The motion unanimously passed. 4 Ayes – 0 Nays.

Respectfully submitted by:
Kimberly Cockrell,
Town Clerk/Finance Officer