

Invocation: Commissioner Johnson gave the invocation.

**Minutes
Town of Benson
Regular Meeting
Thursday, March 28, 2019
7:00 PM**

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Benson met at the Conference Center at 7:00 PM on Thursday, March 28, 2019. Mayor Jerry M. Medlin presiding. In addition, present at the meeting were:

Mayor Pro Tem Casandra Stack

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| Commissioner Maxine Holley | Commissioner Jim Johnson |
| Commissioner Dean McLamb | Commissioner Max Raynor |
| Finance Director Kimberly Pickett | Commissioner William Neighbors |
| Town Clerk Terry Hobgood | Town Manager Matt Zapp |
| Parks and Rec Director Matt Smith | Town Attorney R. Isaac Parker |
| Terri Sessoms, JCPS Board of Education | Takicey Dunston, BES Principal |

I. Call Meeting to Order (*Mayor Medlin*)

Mayor Medlin called the meeting to order at 7 PM.

II. Pledge of Allegiance (*Mayor Medlin*)

Mayor Medlin led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Approval of the Agenda (*Mayor Medlin*)

ACTION

Motion: Commissioner Holley made a motion to approve the consent agenda.

Vote: Approved 6-0

IV. Consent Agenda (*Mayor Medlin*)

A. Consider February 22, 2019 BOC Retreat Minutes

B. Consider February 23, 2019 BOC Retreat Minutes

ACTION

Motion: Commissioner Holley made a motion to approve the consent agenda: February 22, 2019 BOC Minutes, and February 23, 2019 BOC Minutes.

Vote: Approved 6-0

V. Public Comment

A. Individuals wishing to address the Board are asked to provide their name and address for the record.

With no one coming forward, Mayor Medlin closed the Public Comment period.

B. Update from the Johnston County Board of Education (*Terri Sessoms*)

Terri Sessoms introduced herself to the Board of Commissioners. Her district covers South Johnston High School, and all of its feeder schools. Sessoms reported that the 2019-2020 school year calendar is set. All of the South Johnston feeder schools will be on the same schedule. Additionally, Board of Education has changed meeting times to allow more members of the public to attend. Sessoms also reported that the school system is in budget mode, and her priorities are spending money in the classroom. Sessoms also gave the Board of Commissioners an overview of major capital improvements recently completed or in process at South Johnston High School.

Sessoms then introduced Takicey Dunston, principal of Benson Elementary school. Dunston spoke about how teaching and learning styles have changed. Benson Elementary is evolving with these changes, and working to engage students effectively. Benson Elementary is a STEAM school (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math). These are their main focal points to prepare students as they move on to Benson Middle School.

VI. Department Reports

A. Parks and Recreation PARTF Grant Project Update (*Matt Smith*)

Matt Smith gave an update on the PARTF Grant related work in progress at the Lee Street Complex. Smith gave an overview of fieldhouse designs, and the proposed layout of new baseball and multi-use fields.

Mayor Medlin and Matt Smith discussed funds raised by the South Johnston Optimist Club. The Optimist Club is interested in receiving naming rights for the funds they have contributed. Smith stated that he would have to take this request to his advisory board, and then bring it back for approval by the Town Board.

Commissioner Johnson and Matt Smith discussed what the fields at the Civic Center and Mitchell Nance Park would be used for once the new fields are constructed at the Lee Street complex. Johnson stated that the Parks and Rec Department should consider expanding some fields to accommodate American Legion travelling team requirements.

VII. New Business (*Mayor Medlin*)

A. Consider advisory board appointments. (*Mayor Medlin*)

- 1. Museum Board**
 - a. Marshall Jones**
 - b. Gordon McLamb**
- 2. Remaining Vacancies**
 - a. Museum -- 4**
 - b. Adjustments -- 2 alternates**
 - c. Parks and Rec -- 1 non-resident and 1 resident**
 - d. Historic Preservation -- 2 resident and 2 ETJ**
 - e. Library -- 1 resident**
 - f. Planning -- 1 ETJ**
 - g. Police -- 2 (District I and District III)**

ACTION

Motion: Commissioner Neighbors made a motion to appoint Marshall Jones and Gordon McLamb to the Museum Board for terms ending in December 2020.

Vote: Approved 6-0

B. Consider contract with Davis, Martin, and Powell to serve as utility engineer during NCDOT I-95 construction at a cost of \$36,647.20 for Town of Benson funded improvements *(Tim Robbins)*

Tim Robbins presented the proposed contract, which would cover engineering/design costs for utilities during the I-95 construction process. This would include expansion of the water line across I-95 at Market Street, and various storm water system improvements.

Matt Zapp stated that the \$36,647 cost would only cover design/engineering. Installation would be another significant cost for which there is currently no funding mechanism.

Commissioner Johnson and Tim Robbins discussed the cost breakdown of the design work. There will be some utility work funded by NCDOT, but everything outlined in this contract would be completely the Town's responsibility.

ACTION

Motion: Commissioner Raynor made a motion to approve the Contract with Davis, Martin, and Powell to provide utility engineering services during the I-95 construction at a cost of \$36,647.20.

Vote: Approved 6-0

C. Consider Resolution 197-2019 to apply for Clean Water Act Revolving Loan Fund *(Matt Zapp)*

ACTION

Motion: Commissioner Neighbors made a motion to approve Resolution 197-2019 to apply for Clean Water Act Revolving Loan Fund.

Vote: Approved 6-0

D. Discussion related to the FY 2019/2020 Budget *(Matt Zapp)*

Matt Zapp presented the first draft of the 2019-2020 fiscal year budget. Staff is recommending no increase or decrease in the current property tax rate (\$0.54 per \$100 valuation). A revenue neutral budget would be approximately (\$0.514 per \$100 valuation) due to the higher property tax values in the 2019 Johnston County property tax revaluation process.

Staff is recommending a 3% increase in the volumetric sewer rate (currently \$5.29 per 1000 gallons; proposed \$5.45 per 1000 gallons). The average customer bill is for 3,500 gallons per month, which would increase the average bill by \$0.56 per month. Additionally, staff recommends an increase in the Electric base rate of \$1.50. This would cover the 1.2% wholesale rate increase that will take effect April 1, 2019.

Zapp reminded the Board that Benson's contract with Waste Industries expires on December 31, 2019. This contract should go out for bid in the summer of 2019.

Other major expenditures included in the draft budget are \$160,000 from General Fund balance for capital purchases (asphalt paving and two vehicles for the Police Department). In addition, there is a proposed purchase from the Water/Sewer Fund balance of \$100,000 for sludge removal at the WWTP. Staff is not recommending the addition of any full-time positions.

The total recommended budget for 2019-2020 would be \$12,119,046 (General Fund: \$4,439,132, Water/Sewer Fund: \$3,086,415, Electric Fund: \$4,593,500).

Matt Zapp stated that he hoped to bring a cost estimate for the Main Street utility replacement to this meeting, which was not ready yet. He hopes to have this estimate ready in April. Zapp stated that grant funding could potentially pay for the sewer work, but the water line replacement will have to be the responsibility of the Town. Zapp requested that Kim Pickett send a list of requested Town donations to the Board before the next meeting comparing 2018-2019 to 2019-2020. The State Annual Singing Convention has requested a larger donation for the next two fiscal years.

Zapp also discussed needed improvements for Barefoot Auditorium at Town Hall. Zapp believes we have enough insurance proceeds to repair and paint the ceilings and walls, clean the chairs, and replace the carpet. He would like the Board to consider using the remaining insurance funds to remove asbestos at the Lee Street Complex buildings scheduled to be demolished. Zapp asked the Board bring questions about the budget to him. He hopes to have a final budget ready for approval at the May meeting.

VIII. Town Manager Report (*Matt Zapp*)

A. Upcoming Town Board Meetings

1. **April 9 -- Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting 7 PM**
2. **April 25 -- Board of Commissioners Budget Focused Meeting 7 PM**

B. Upcoming Transportation Plan Steering Committee Meetings

1. **April 8 -- 7 PM**
2. **May 13 -- 7 PM**

C. Town related events and meeting reminders:

1. **April 6 -- Keep Benson Beautiful Annual Clean Up Day 8:30 AM**
2. **April 7-13 -- National Library Week**
3. **April 8 -- Pajama Story Time 6 PM**
4. **April 13 -- Easter Eggstravaganza 2 PM**
5. **April 19 -- All Non-Emergency Town Facilities Closed for Good Friday**

D. Chamber of Commerce Sponsored Events

1. **April 12-13 -- Classic Antique Farm Heritage Days**

Matt Zapp presented the staff task list from the February 2019 retreat. He also encouraged Board members to shoot videos highlighting the great things happening in their districts and around town.

IX. Town Attorney (*Isaac Parker*)

No report.

X. Board of Commissioners Report (*Commissioners*)

No reports.

XI. Mayor Report (*Mayor Medlin*)

A. Update on Jimmy Capps Celebration

B. Parking lot lease with LARC Real Estate

Mayor Medlin presented a proposed lease agreement with LARC Real Estate for the vacant lot on the corner of E. Main and S. Elm streets. This would allow the Town to use the lot for public parking. The Board can consider the lease for approval in April.

Mayor Medlin also gave an update on the May 2019 Jimmy Capps celebration. Medlin stated that he would have the Board of Commissioners approve any expenses expected to be encumbered by the Town in April.

XII. Closed Session (*Mayor Medlin*)

A. NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (6): to consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness conditions of appointment, or conditions of initial employment of an individual public officer or employee or prospective public officer or employee.

ACTION

Motion: Commissioner McLamb made a motion to enter closed session pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (6) at 8:23 PM.

Vote: Approved 6-0

ACTION

Motion: Commissioner Holley made a motion to enter open session at 9:07 PM.

Vote: Approved 6-0

XIII. Adjourn the Meeting (*Mayor Medlin*)

ACTION

Motion: Commissioner Neighbors made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:08 PM.

Vote: Approved 6-0