

**TOWN OF HOPE MILLS
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS SPECIAL MEETING
MONDAY, JANUARY 31, 2022, 5:30 P.M.
BILL LUTHER BOARD MEETING ROOM**

Mayor Jackie Warner called the special meeting of the Hope Mills Board of Commissioner to order on Monday, January 31, 2022 at 5:31 p.m.

GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Jackie Warner, Mayor Pro Tem Kenjuana McCray, Commissioners Jerry Legge, Bryan Marley, Grilley Mitchell and Joanne Scarola.

STAFF PRESENT

Town Manager Scott Meszaros, Town Clerk Jane Starling, Finance Director Drew Holland, Parks & Recreation Director Lamarco Morrison, Planning & Economic Development Director Chancer McLaughlin, Public Works Director Don Sisko, Police Chief Stephen Dollinger, Chief Building Inspector Kenny Tatum, Public Works Director Don Sisko, and Deputy Public Works Director Bruce Clark.

Also present was Town Attorney Dan Hartzog, Jr.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The invocation was led by Commissioner Grilley Mitchell, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mayor Jackie Warner.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA – ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS.

Motion made by Commissioner Mitchell, and carried unanimously, to approve the agenda as presented.

2. NEW BUSINESS:

- a. Discussion of 2021-2022 Budget and Ideas for 2022-2023 budget in preparation for March Budget Retreat.

Mayor Warner explained that the CIP (Capital Improvements Plan) is a projection of what we want to do in the future and when we anticipate having funding for those projects. Discussion ensued.

Town Manager Meszaros gave a brief explanation of the current budget, CIP, and the difference between unfunded vs funded. He continued that in budget preparation the Town staff starts with known expenses and then meets with department heads to hear their requests. Once the budget is approved by the Board of Commissioners staff instructions are based on the budgeted items. When you look at the CIP and wonder why items have

not progressed for example; the splash pad. It had zero dollars approved in this year's budget. So, when you say what are you doing on the splashpad, we have been working with our contract from last year which was \$40,000 for the design. Fortunately, the state provided funding for that item, so we have begun to move it forward. However, on that project we will have to come to you and explain that the water and sewer infrastructure there is insufficient, and the project will require additional funding. It may take a season or two or three before people are in the water. However, because it was listed in the CIP, we were able to at least get started on it. But typically, we are restricted to what is in the yearly budget. That is why it's good if we have the Board's ideas, and priorities to talk about prior to the budget retreat so staff is prepared to speak to what you wish to know about. Discussion ensued.

Mayor Warner questioned why the issues with the water and sewer were not found in the discovery phase of the project and she went on, that prices have also increased in the Johnson Street Sidewalk project, and she doesn't understand why we didn't know about this in advance.

Finance Director Drew Holland explained that right now in the CIP there are about 14 funded projects. The other items listed there are things the Town wishes to do in the future. After the FY21-22 budget was approved the splashpad was funded by the state at what we anticipated it would cost, however there was no way to know until it was actually designed how much water flow and sewer line would be needed. That is where the discrepancy comes from.

Director Holland continued, if a project isn't funded, it isn't a current project. When something was envisioned five years ago but there was not funding to go with it, it was listed in the CIP as something we want to do but it has not risen to the level of need. If grant funding or special earmarks are available from the State, we must have the CIP to justify our requests. He went on to state that when the board meets for the budget retreat on March 11, we will present a format for reporting on projects for the Board's approval. Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Jerry Legge asked Parks and Recreation Director Lamarco Morrison if the Rockfish Road widening project would cause the Town to lose a ballfield at Bauer Park. Director Morrison responded that there is an easement, but it is undetermined at the time if the park will be lost. We will not be able to put a fence up. He agreed that the Town sign and perhaps other items will have to be relocated. He went on to state that when he began working for the Town, he noticed the lack of as-built documents which he defined as plans that show you where things are. We are now in a position of having to have a surveyor come out and locate things like water and sewer pipes which adds to project costs. This is affecting the splashpad and heritage park projects. Commissioner Mitchell questioned why we don't have those produced for all town properties. Town Manager Meszaros replied that all current projects get those produced for retention.

Chief Building Inspector Kenny Tatum stated that for any commercial project completed whether for the Town or a private entity it is required they submit as-built documents before

a certificate of occupancy is provided. Commissioner Mitchell repeated his question about paying for plans for all town property. Mr. Tatum stated in his opinion you take it one project at a time. A master plan would be very expensive and future projects are unknown. Any projects in the last four years have as-builts, we can't help what happened before. The public safety building, bathrooms and any other projects will have as-built plans stored in his department for inspection. "Cosmetic projects don't have them, but any construction projects do. What may work in one spot for a master plan may not somewhere else, that's why I recommend doing them one at a time."

Public Works Director Don Sisko added comments about as-built plans. As an example of how those work and the lack of them; we completed the Big T's project last year. There were no as-built drawings for the building. Before we could start the project, we had to hire an engineer to reverse-engineer and survey the building to come up with an as-built drawing. When Inspector Tatum says coming up with a comprehensive as-built plan for the Town would not be feasible; as an example, we had to tear out walls and dig up concrete flooring in order to locate the infrastructure portions of that facility. Discussion ensued.

Mayor Pro Tem McCray requested that staff continue to include the transportation plan in the CIP and have Mr. Hume there for the budget retreat. Also, during the retreat consider repurposing the Trade Street building and perhaps change the Chapel to the museum, with input from the Historic Preservation Committee.

Mayor Warner stated that County Commissioner Adams informed her there will be grant funding available from the County. Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Jerry Legge requested the budget retreat discussion include increasing parking behind the Parks and Recreation Center. Finance Director Holland stated that increased parking is part of the master plan for the Municipal Park. Discussion ensued.

Mayor Warner called for a recess at 6:49 p.m.

Mayor Warner called the meeting back to order at 7:00 p.m. and informed department heads that they can leave if they would like as the discussion from this point on will not be about budget questions.

Mayor Warner continued; the Board would now discuss clarification of the Commissioners Roles. She explained that the Board of Commissioners hire two people and everything else with personnel is the responsibility of the Town Manager. At one time the Commissioners hired the Town Clerk. That practice changed around 2010 or 2011 so that the position would be more consistent and less influenced by politics. Discussion ensued.

Town Attorney Hartzog invited the Board to call him at any time with any questions about roles.

Mayor Warner stated her role is to facilitate and make sure we follow Roberts Rules of Order and our Town procedural rules and run meeting, appoint liaisons, and is an

ambassador for the Town. She continued that the strategic planning session is coming up and encouraged everyone to participate. Discussion ensued.

3. ADJOURNMENT.

Motion made by Commissioner Legge, and carried unanimously, to adjourn at 7:26 p.m.