

**TOWN OF HOPE MILLS
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY MARCH 25, 2019, 6:00 P.M.
BILL LUTHER BOARD MEETING ROOM**

Mayor Jackie Warner called the Special meeting of the Hope Mills Board of Commissioners to order on Monday, March 25, 2019 at 6:00 p.m.

GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor, Jackie Warner; Mayor Pro Tem, Mike Mitchell; Commissioners; Jessie Bellflowers, Pat Edwards, Meg Larson and Jerry Legge.

STAFF PRESENT

Town Manager, Melissa Adams; Town Clerk, Jane Starling; Police Chief, Joel Acciardo; Public Works Director, Don Sisko; Stormwater Administrator, Beth Brown; Deputy Fire Chief, Steve Lopez; and Human Relations Director, Latisha Daniels Black. Also present was Town Attorney Dan Hartzog, Jr.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

1. Discussion of the Art in the Park project as well as the recent media coverage of the Board related to this and other matters.

Commissioner Legge read the following statement for the record.

Whereas, the Hope Mills Town Board appreciates and supports the cultural arts within our community;

Whereas, the Hope Mills Town Board believes it is important for elected officials to act in an honest, ethical and transparent manner for the citizens we serve;

Whereas, it is important for our citizens to trust information that is shared by our town leaders;

Whereas, it is important for elected to work together and share information that is important to the smooth operation of the town;

Whereas, Hope Mills Mayor Jackie Warner had knowledge of the time-sensitive deadline of the Art in the Park agreement with a local university and did not immediately direct the matter to the Town Manager who is responsible for the daily operations of the Town;

Whereas, Mayor Jackie Warner knowingly withheld the information concerning the time-sensitive deadline of the Art in the Park agreement from the Board of Commissioners;

Whereas, Mayor Jackie Warner shared information about the Art in the Park agreement with a reporter from a local publication without ever bringing the matter before the board;

Whereas, the resulting article from the information shared by Mayor Jackie Warner cast aspersion upon on our community and board and was unsettling to a local university, a local resident and his students;

Whereas, on March 19, 2019 Mayor Jackie Warner shared the article to her official Mayor of Hope Mills Facebook page without any clarification to the readers;

Whereas, Mayor Jackie Warner has shown a pattern of withholding information from her fellow board members and knowingly sharing misinformation through both social media and in public forum;

Whereas, Mayor Jackie Warner has been counseled numerous times about such behavior as it misleads the public and is an abuse of her position;

Be it resolved: that Mayor Jackie Warner knew about the time-sensitive deadline of the Art in the Park agreement. Mayor Warner failed to immediately inform the Town Manager and never informed the board which contributed in part to the loss of Art.

Be it resolved that the Hope Mills Town Board of Commissioners casts a vote of no confidence in Mayor Jackie Warner and her ability to effectively work with the elected board to serve in the capacity as the Mayor of Hope Mills.

Commissioner Legge commented the statement was made in the form of a motion.

Mayor Warner read the following statement for the record.

Art in the Park came about because of my appreciation of art and desire to have an art presence in Hope Mills. Around June 19, 2016, I learned that a college art teacher her who resided in Hope Mills had recently partnered with the City of Laurinburg to place metal sculptures in their town. After several conversations and a discussion with our Hope Mills Town Board members—a presentation was made to our Town Board on May 15, 2017 at our regular board meeting. Commissioner Jerry Legge made the motion to partner with the art teacher and Mayor Pro Tem Bob Gorman seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously to set up a partnership and to accept responsibility for the display locations.

During this same time period while attending a meeting with the Fayetteville Arts council I received information about grant opportunities for art. I shared the information with our Town Manager and staff. The grant was written for \$2,500 to pay for concrete slabs and materials needed to display the sculptures. The Town received the grant on February 9, 2018.

I photographed the first sculpture in place and added the remainder over the next few days in 2018. The pictures were posted on social media and several comments were made which triggered an Up & Coming article on May 21, 2018 to explain how they came to be in our park and lake area. There was much discussion on social media about the sculptures to include where they were placed and their appearance---to the point that a request was made to remember these are student art works. An explanation was given to the Board about the sculptures and that they would be exchanged in approximately one year to be replaced by new ones if we continued the partnership.

Now today we are faced with a why did the Board not know about the Art? The current Board tone toward all special interests that were previously approved has been negative--- I will not list as I am concerned this water over the dam. Why when the first sculpture was removed (by Town parking lot) and then more in the next few days---did anyone not ask where they went? The question about did I know should have been asked when they started removal. In the best interest of the partnership I asked the Town Manager and staff to work with the art teacher (early on before school started this year) and also provided more information about another grant through the Art Council to continue the partnership.

On February 16, 2019 I had another opportunity to talk to the Arts Council and I shared with the Town Manager that we should write a grant proposal for the sculptures.

My lack of communication with our Board was not intended to produce this current situation---I wanted to preserve the partnership and did not want my association with it to cause a hardship for our staff or our partner.

If the Board will allow, I have worked out a solution with our partner. The remaining sculptures can be purchased for \$500 each payable to the individual student artists. There are possible donors that will pay for the four sculptures and donate the art works to the Town. The art teacher has located other sculptures that he will loan to the Town to fill in the spaces. The Town staff would approve the work as acceptable and that the art would be covered by the Town if extreme damages happen or someone is injured. The art would return to the Park while our Town staff works on the partnership with the next class of students.

Discussion ensued related to the Art in the Park and the article in the Up and Coming on March 19, 2019.

Mayor Warner called for a vote on Commissioner Legge's motion.

Motion made by Commissioner Legge, of no confidence in Mayor Jackie Warner and her ability to effectively work with the elected board to serve in the capacity as the Mayor of Hope Mills, and carried four to one with Commissioner Edwards voting against.

2. Closed session pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (6) to discuss personnel matters.

Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem Mitchell and carried unanimously, to conduct a closed session pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(6) concerning a personnel matter.

Mayor Warner instructed the Board to assemble in the front conference room at 6:54 p.m.

At 7:42 p.m. Mayor Warner called the meeting back to order.

Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem Mitchell and carried unanimously, to seal the minutes of the closed session until such time as the release of the information would no longer frustrate the purpose of the closed session and further no action was taken.

3. ADJOURNMENT.

Motion made by Commissioner Legge and carried unanimously, to adjourn the meeting.

Mayor Warner adjourned the meeting at 7:42 p.m.

Jackie Warner, Mayor

ATTEST:

Jane G. Starling, CMC, NCCMC
Town Clerk