

**MINUTES  
OF THE WHITE LAKE  
TOWN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR MEETING**

**April 9, 2024**

The White Lake Town Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 9, 2024 at 1879 White Lake Dr., White Lake, North Carolina. Those present were Mayor H. Goldston Womble, Jr., Mayor Pro-Tem Tim Blount, Commissioners Terri Hawley, Jake Womble, Dean Hilton, and Mike Suggs were present. Commissioner Paul Evans was absent. Police Chief Bruce Smith, Finance Director Mary Jo Lennon, Public Works Director Kevin Taylor, Fire Chief Dale Brennan were present. Pat Kennedy-Taylor served as Clerk to the Board. Town Administrator Sean Martin joined online during the regular session and via cell phone during the closed session.

Mayor H. Goldston Womble, Jr. declared a quorum and called the meeting to order.

**Invocation**

Mayor H. Goldston Womble, Jr. gave the invocation.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

Commissioner Mike Suggs led the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Before the Agenda Adoption, Mayor Womble stated the only change he has is to move the last item (5 B) Recognition of Employees to first on the agenda. It is just a matter of the order of the meeting. One of our officers is on duty tonight and needs to go back to work.**

Mayor Womble presented the certificates to Sergeant Joseph Graham, Police Officer Winfort Nichols, and Deputy Finance Officer Amber Glisson.

**Agenda Adoption**

Mayor Womble acknowledged there was not an agenda supplemental and called for a motion to adopt the April 9, 2024 Agenda as presented. Commissioner Dean Hilton moved, seconded by Commissioner Mike Suggs TO ADOPT THE APRIL 9, 2024 AGENDA AS PRESENTED WITH MOVING ITEM #5B TO FIRST ITEM. (Unanimous in favor).

**Approval of Minutes**

Mayor Womble called for any corrections and/or additions to the March 12, 2024 Regular Meeting. There being none, Commissioner Dean Hilton moved, seconded by Commissioner Mike Suggs TO ADOPT THE MARCH 12, 2024 AND MARCH 30, 2024 MINUTES AS PRESENTED (Unanimous in favor).

**March Utility Releases (\$2,792.32)**

Utility releases were presented for the Board's review and consideration. There being no discussion, Commissioner Dean Hilton moved, seconded by Commissioner Mike Suggs TO APPROVE THE MARCH UTILTIY RELEASES (\$2,792.32) AS PRESENTED (Unanimous in favor). Said Utility Releases are listed as Exhibit "A." Supporting materials are hereby incorporated by mention and are made a part of these minutes.

**Presentation – MRF STUDY**

Carter Hubbard with W. K. Dickson provided a summary of his Merger Feasibility Study report and how this project came about. NC Division of water infrastructure Grant for a merger with Elizabethtown. He provided 2 options. There are several options to apply for Grants. Mr. Hubbard state we recommend that you continue to operate your system facilities as they are now. Current cost associated with that, there's operation and maintenance which you have on going. Pursue conversations with Elizabethtown or identify other strategic partners so one component of the decision making process is presented in this report to begin to craft a future wastewater infrastructure decision.

**Administrative Matters**

**PROJECT UPDATES:**

**White Lake "Lake" Water Management Project Update**

Mayor Womble presented the reports Dr. Diane Lauritsen, Ph.D., LIMNOSCIENCES provided as the most recent update of activities for the month of February 2024.

**Water AIA Project Update**

Mayor Womble presented the project update.

**Presentation of 2023 Fiscal Year Audit**

Austin Eubanks with Thompson, Price, Scott & Adams Auditing Firm in Wilmington presented the 2023 Fiscal Year annual audit to the Town Board. After some discussion and questions the Mayor asked for a motion to adopt FY 2023 as presented. There being no discussion, Commissioner Jake Womble moved, seconded by Commissioner Paul Evans TO ADOPT FY 2023 AUDIT AS PRESENTED (Unanimous in favor). Said Audit is on file in the Clerk's office.

**Capitalization Policy**

Mayor Womble presented the Capitalization Policy. There being no discussion, Commissioner Jake Womble moved, seconded by Commissioner Paul Evans TO ADOPT THE CAPITALIZATION POLICY AS PRESENTED (Unanimous in favor).

**Disposal Policy**

Mayor Womble presented an increase of \$2,000 on the Capital (Fixed) Asset Disposal/Transfer. There being no discussion, Commissioner Jake Womble moved, seconded by Commissioner Dean Hilton TO ADOPT THE DISPOSAL POLICY AS PRESENTED (Unanimous in favor).

**Chamber Budget Request**

Mayor Womble presented the requested contribution increase from the Chamber from \$3,500 to \$5,500. The Mayor stated the Chamber is doing a lot with Tourism in the Elizabethtown, White Lake and in the Bladen County area. There was some discussion, and the Mayor addressed the questions. There being no further discussion, Commissioner Jake Womble moved, seconded by Mike Suggs TO APPROVE THE REQUESTED AS PRESENTED (Unanimous in favor).

**Finance Officer Appointment**

Mayor Womble presented the request to the Board to appoint Finance Director Mary Jo Lennon as Finance Officer, effective immediately. Sean Martin, Town Administrator, is currently appointed to this role. Staff is requesting the change in response to recommendations made by the Auditor to improve internal control. This change is consistent with GAAP and other Municipalities of our size. Mayor Pro-Tem Tim Blount stated he thinks the Mayor should be the Finance Officer. Mayor Womble stated the Town Board did decide the Town Administrator should be the Finance Officer. There being no further

discussion, Commissioner Dean Hilton moved, seconded by Terri Hawley TO APPROVED TO APPOINT THE FINANCE DIRECTOR AS THE FINANCE OFFICER AS PRESENTED (Unanimous in favor).

**RESOLUTION(S)**

**RESOLUTION#2024-18 FOR APPROVING WATER SHORTAGE RESPONSE PLAN**

Mayor Womble presented Resolution #2024-18. The N.C.G.S. 143-355 (I) requires that each unit of local government that provides public water service and each large community water system shall develop and implement water conservation measures to respond to drought or other water shortage conditions as set out in a Water Shortage Response Plan and submitted to the Department for review and approval. There being no discussion, Commissioner Mike Suggs made a motion and seconded by Commissioner Jake Womble TO APPROVE RESOLUTION #2024-18 AS PRESENTED (Unanimous in favor).

**OTHER BUSINESS/PREVIOUS AGENDA ITEMS**

**(Other Commissioners Business Not on the Agenda (Non-voting Items))**

No discussion.

**DEPARTMENTAL BRIEFINGS**

Departmental reports were provided as information.

**OPEN FORUM:**

Finance Director Mary Jo Lennon came up and addressed changes in segregation of duties and daily responsibilities amongst the finance department staff.

**CLOSED SESSION: §143-318-11.(a) (6)**

At approximately 8:19 pm, Mayor Womble asked for a motion to go into Closed Session. There being no further discussion, Mayor Pro-Tem Tim Blount moved, seconded by Commissioner Mike Suggs TO GO INTO CLOSED SESSION AS PRESENTED (Unanimous in favor).

After approximately 30 to 45 minutes, Mayor Womble asked for a motion to go out of Closed Session and back into the regular open meeting. There being no further discussion, Commissioner Dean Hilton moved, seconded by Commissioner Jake Womble TO GO OUT OF CLOSED SESSION AND BACK INTO THE REGULAR OPEN MEETING. (Unanimous in favor). No decisions were made.

**MEETING ADJOURNED to a Budget Retreat on Tuesday, April 30, 2024 at 6:00 pm.** There being no other business to come before the White Lake Town Board of Commissioners, Commissioner Dean Hilton moved, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Tim Blount TO ADJOURN THIS MEETING TO A BUDGET RETREAT ON TUESDAY, MARCH 30, 2024 AT 6:00 pm. (Unanimous in favor).

Respectfully submitted by:

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Patricia Kennedy-Taylor – Town Clerk

Approved:

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H. Goldston Womble, Jr., Mayor