

Regular Meeting

Town of Cooleemee
November 20, 2023

Absent: Mayor Almond
Comm. Taylor
Comm. Fleming

Minutes

(open session)

The clerk updated the Board and Attorney that a quorum was not present at this time but giving the Town Charter had suggested and the Town had plan on swearing in newly elected officers on this date we could move to do so before opening the meeting.

Magistrate David Miller was present to Swear in
Mayor-Elect Jeff Smith
Commissioner-Elect Sandra Ferrell
Commissioner-Elect Sheighla Tippet

Mayor Smith called the meeting to order at 6:15PM
Commissioner Reavis led the room in the Invocation.
Mayor Smith led the Pledge of Allegiance.
Mayor Smith welcomed a room full of guests.

Public Comment saw two folks.

Josh Ijames congratulated the new board and welcomed them to their seats. Still feels a lingering shadow of neglect hanging over the board, due to a potential \$55k discrepancy back in March they may not have been fully investigated but looked forward to the great things to come over the little bit with newly elected officials in the seats.

Ellen Hebert again congratulated the newly elected officials and questioned if the prior mayor being involved with the suit for the Town would raise a conflict with her husband sitting on the board.

Ron Bivens gave an update on River Park ¼ mile trail complete, new shelter coming soon and encouraged the board to go see the updates. Will have better updates at the December meeting with numbers of guest and such. Updated the board to the hours of the Park currently which are Friday, Saturday, and Sunday 10AAM-4PM. Throughout the winter months.

Sergeant Crotts gave an update stating Cooleemee was a very safe place to live Sheriff Deputies logged 456 hours to the Town which is over their allotted time contracted 126 total calls ranging from School checks, paper issued, Traffic Stops, emergency calls, and a few necessary calls to respond to an issue within Town.

The clerk gave an update to Town Hall, stating Powell Bill reports are complete and submitted that was perhaps the most grueling steps in getting everything listed into his name for proper payments and reports as it took weeks and is finally complete. Also, he and the Auditor had worked tirelessly on getting prepared for the audit the Checking and Deposit accounts are

complete and square, we took to reconciling back to 2019 on the checking account to assure ourselves we were working with a correct balance. The Powell Bill, and Arp Funds are still in need of reconciling but there is not a lot of moment within those accounts so this should not be a long process like the other two.

Board Comments:

Reavis welcomed the new board and looks forward to working with them.

Almond corrected a statement made earlier there was no \$55k discrepancy in March there was a \$21k discrepancy that was investigated and when they pulled numbers back in the past Finance Officer had everything corrected to the penny and the board was told there was a crash of the software that caused this issue. They did not learn until later that no such crash was ever reported, nor did it happen.

Ferrell thanked folks for believing in her and for voting for her, she plans to operate to the best of her abilities during her term in office.

Tippet would like to form committees to help in certain areas of town where help would be needed, she feels committees would get the public involved and work to get the Town items to be proud of. Also, thanks to the folks for believing in her that she can make a difference within Town.

Smith Thanked newly elected members for willing to get on board and begin to move the Town in the right direction, thanked the outgoing members for their duties to the Town. Thinks training is going to be key to righting the town. He would like to get an understanding of how things work and operate, including the finances for the purposes of knowledge but as well making sure the board is staying on top of all items that it should be.

Motion made by Commissioner Reavis to enter a closed session 143-318.11(3) for attorney client privilege.

Seconded by Commissioner Almond, motion carried (4-0)

Motion made by Commissioner Almond to enter open session.

Seconded by Commissioner Reavis, motion carried (4-0)

Mayor stated the Town Government needs to be able to fully operate and function so asked that the prior motion from August be lifted so the Town can fully operate once again under the new board. So, it can begin to hire a Clerk, an Attorney, and other items that may come up soon.

Motion made by commissioner Reavis to lift those restrictions beginning this night and return to normal operation.

Seconded by Commissioner Tippet, motion carried (4-0)

Mayor discussed renewing the attorney contract knowing the Town must have one but at this time it's vital to have that presence of the attorney. It would not be a good time to attempt to bring in a new attorney for the purpose of the current investigation and having that person fully brought up to speed so it would be ideal that the current attorney remain in place for a year.

Motion made by Commissioner Almond to hire Wendy Terry to remain the Towns Attorney for the next year at a rate of \$9000/year.

Seconded by Commissioner Reavis, motion carried (4-0)

Commissioner Almond had agreed to the board and then to the public he would refrain from attending closed session meetings regarding the Civil Lawsuit as it pertains to the Town and his Spouse to make things smoother and more open for all.

Motion made by Commissioner Ferrell to adjourn the meeting.

Seconded by Commissioner Reavis, motion carried (4-0)

Mayor, Jeff Smith

Interim Clerk, Steven Corriher