

Regular Meeting

Town of Cooleemee
December 18, 2023

Absent: Wendy Terry
Dawn Mitchell here in her place

Minutes

(open session)

Mayor Smith called the meeting to order at 6:00PM.

Mayor Smith gave the Invocation.

Mayor Smith led the room in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Smith welcomed a room full of attendees.

Motion made by Commissioner Reavis to adopt the agenda along with the consent agenda which includes the Financial Report and Minutes from the 11-20-23 regular meeting as well as the 11-20-23 closed session meeting.

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

Public Comments had one sign up.

Ellen Herbert of Center St. spoke of concerns of potential harassment from post seen on Social Media.

Ron Bivens gave an update on the River Park stating they counted 26,5000 visitors for 2023 some days seen 1800 folks visit the Park. Reminded the public and the Board the Town owned that property and yes, it is operated by a volunteer board. The park saw 12 total employees working during peak days and hours this summer have scaled back to 6 currently to open and close the Park during operation. Work to the canoe portage, a flagging system for potentially dangerous conditions are in the works a new shelter and trail were added this year.

Sergeant Crotts gave a report that 534 hours had been logged for the Town over the past month 117 calls spread among Emergency calls, Traffic stops, School checks. Papers served, and Dog complaints all being included. No real hard Crimes in town to speak of said folks can and should feel safe.

The Clerk/Finance Officer made the board aware banking account reconciliations were finally complete, there is still a slight unbalance of financials, so we were performing reconciliations of each individual revenue and expenditure account to get balanced. Not as hopeful the Audit will take place in January as hoped before but shooting for February as the Town will hopefully be ready. He also reported on concerns over pool funding from fund raisers in the past many included the board were concerned if that money was taken during the potential embezzlement. He had tracked records back for a few years to find the last reporting on such funds and stated since those funds were allocated for the pool at this time that's all they should be spent on considering it was donations that the balance should remain what was last reported, and the Town could then decide what to do with the remainder of those funds. So yes, on paper the pool

funds are in the same accounts that were hit but the balance remains the same. So technically they were not part of the missing.

Mayor Smith has met with County Officials recently trying to get to know them a little bit over time, he wanted to look at a possible sound and visual system for future use so folks can hear better and see the agenda and topics better in the audience during meetings. He wants to begin looking at potential Code Enforcement beginning the first of the year. Announced the Town had received a \$1,000,000 grant from the State, and we needed to begin thinking of things to come as far Capitol Improvement such as the Community Center, Library, and other similar uses for the funds. Mayor thanked the Clerk and The Bridge Church for everything they did to make the Parade a success, he had a great time, and we had a great turn out.

Motion made by Commissioner Reavis to move forward with meeting dates set for 2024 as current with the 3rd Monday each month at 6:00PM unless otherwise posted, noting the January 2024 meeting would be the 4th Monday on the 22nd at 6:00PM due to the Martin Luther King Holiday.

Seconded by Commissioner Tippett; motion carried (4-0)

Motion Made by Commissioner Almond to adopt the Division of Labor Liaisons for the 2024 year, Placing Andy Reavis with Public Works, Chris Almond with Public Safety, Sheighla Tippett with planning and zoning, and Sandra Ferrell with Community Communications.

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

Motion made by Commissioner Ferrell to appoint Commissioner Reavis for the position of Mayor Pro-Tem for the 2024 year as he is the current senior member of the Board.

Seconded by Commissioner Tippett; motion carried (4-0)

The Finance Officer passed around a Budget Transfer sheet as a few unforeseen items were presented for payment not originally prepared for. Such as unemployment security, leaf pickup services, and the election costing \$80.56 more than budgeted for. The total transfer would be for \$16,070 so would not change any final budget numbers rather it would be taken from Contingency Line 999-01.

Motion made by Commissioner Reavis to allow the Budget Transfer to pay necessary invoices.

Seconded by Commissioner Ferrell; motion carried (4-0)

Commissioner Tippett discussed some changes were going to be needed to the Zoning Ordinance book in the near future, the Code Ordinance book there was no need for real updating as the only change that was noticed to be made was to the way the Town would Criminally Charge a Misdemeanor to a home owner and the Town really hasn't performed this recently so they could continue onward with Code Enforcement once and new hire was agreed upon.

She also spoke on the need for of a planning board currently the Town was without, she stated the allowance was for the Twon Limits only currently could we look at expanding that to generate more interest? The Mayor said perhaps but would rather have further discussions on that before the board has the final vote.

The Mowing Contract will expire on February 29, 2024. Commissioner Reavis stated he had spoken with Oneal's Lawn Care and they were requesting \$1200/month and \$7000/year for mowing and leaf services. The Mayor made a request, verses paying the invoices monthly and the leaf pickup all at once could we not spread that payment into one monthly payment. That was agreed upon that decision and the new monthly contract would be at \$1783/month to include both mowing and leaf services. It was asked what if the Town ever determined it could not afford leaf services any longer the Finance Officer stated you simply would make those decisions during your budget talks each year and could be left out year to year if ever determined that portion was unobtainable.

Motion made by Commissioner Tippett to award a contract to Oneal's Lawn Care from March 1, 2024, until June 30, 2025, for \$1783/month to cover fees for lawn and leaf services.

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

(**It was noted after the meeting that this contract would award too much funding for services based on the leaf services that would be collected for 23/24 year would be paid in full at \$7,000 once invoiced and that should have leaf pickup paid for that fiscal year 23/24. So, the remaining pay out would be \$1000 Jan and Feb 2024, \$1200 March-June 2024, then proceed to \$1783/month for the 24/25 fiscal year July-June**) Respectfully.

Commissioner Tippett stated that she wanted further contact with citizens and looks forward to the Community Engagements she has planned for January 16-18 which is a Tuesday-Thursday at 6:30PM taking place at the Bridge on Main Street with refreshments being offered.

Commissioner Ferrell thanked everyone for a great parade she hated she had to miss this due to a Family Christmas event but heard great things.

Commissioner Reavis updated on the Island on Junction Rd. said the state was aware of the condition and should be working on that soon. But reminded folks it takes time and also further construction to the roads due to the work at the new Water Treatment plant could very well cause delays as they do not want to fix and have those guys mess up again.

Mayor, Jeff Smith

Interim Clerk, Steven Corriher