



**TOWN OF ELM CITY
REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

**January 23, 2024, at 6:30 PM
Elm City Train Depot 101 Nash Street**

In attendance:

Mayor Tawanda Moore (hereinafter, Mayor Moore)
Mayor Pro Tem Tammie Atkinson (hereinafter, Commissioner Atkinson)
Commissioner Gil Wheeler (hereinafter, Commissioner Wheeler)
Commissioner Zachary Mercer (hereinafter, Commissioner Mercer)
Commissioner Tim Bridgers (hereinafter, Commissioner Bridgers)
Commissioner Bridget Wimberley (hereinafter, Commissioner Wimberley)

Also in Attendance:

Town Attorney Slade Rand (hereinafter, Slade Rand)
Zoning Officer Shawn Lucas (hereinafter, Zoning Officer Lucas)
Customer Service Administrator Melissa Younger (hereinafter, Melissa Younger)

Absent

Public Works Supervisor Wilbur Etheridge (hereinafter Wilbur Etheridge)

Call To Order: Mayor Moore called the regular council meeting to order on January 23, 2024 at 6:30pm.

Invocation: Mayor Pro Tem Atkinson

Pledge Of Allegiance: Mayor Pro Tem Atkinson

Approval of Agenda: Mayor Moore asked for a motion to approve the agenda for the January 23, 2024 council meeting. Mayor Moore asked to add the Town Administrator's report before the public comment section and a closed session at the end of meeting. Commissioner Bridgers made the motion to approve the agenda and Commissioner Wheeler seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes: Mayor Moore asked for a motion to approve December 12, 2023 regular council meeting minutes as well as the special called meeting on December 19, 2023. Commissioner Mercer made the motion to approve these minutes and Commissioner Bridgers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Town Administrator's report – Mayor Moore handed out a chart/graph explaining our financial growth from 2019 to present. Mayor Moore spoke with Tracy Connor of Wilson County Sheriff Department on 1-8-2024 whom stated that The Town of Elm City currently has no outstanding balances.

Public Hearings/Comments: Mayor Moore opened the floor for public comments

1. Gene Wells expressed his displeasure that the Mayor Pro Tem seat was not filled the way it has been done in the past; with the highest count of votes. He also addressed rumors that he has heard about gambling parlors being allowed to operate in town.
2. Dennis Knight, a retired military veteran asked about the vision for Elm City, a question he has asked many times before. He would like to see growth.
3. Denise Thompson expressed her disappointment with the Board of Commissioners but did not state her reason why.
4. Eunice Lindsay stated that the Mayor Pro Tem position should have been appointed the way it has always been done in the past.
5. Joshua Robinson, founder of Elm City Forward Coalition thanked the mayor and board for their commitment to the town. He was pleased to see so many citizens attending the meeting. Mr. Robinson stated that with the handouts given at tonight's meeting; it was the most transparency that he's ever seen. He spoke about the Sheriff Dept responding to calls even without direct patrol. He called on citizens to keep their persistence when it comes to the growth and vision of Elm City.

Presentations/Discussions:

- Zoning Officer Lucas- Internet Café Sweepstakes in an OI & B-3 (Office and Institutional & Business Highway District) as a Special Use.

Mayor Moore asked for a motion to go into public hearing. Commissioner Wheeler made the motion to go into public hearing. Commissioner Atkinson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

1. Gabe Merando asked the board to keep in mind that ordinances are in place for a reason. It would not be good for the town to have an internet café, whether it would be in town limits or out by 301.
2. Gene Wells stated that legal and ethical are two different things. Sin is sin no matter how much profit comes from it.
3. Marsha Wells who served on the board for 10 years, stated that this very matter was voted on before and doesn't understand why it's being revisited.
4. Joshua Robinson expressed that the town will see an influx of people applying for different "casino" business due to the state changing.

Mayor Moore asked for a motion to come out of public hearing. Commissioner Wheeler made the motion to come out of public hearing. Commissioner Bridgers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Zoning Officer Lucas' recommendation was to bring the internet café special use permit before the planning board and then revisit it in March at the regular council meeting before the board.

Mayor Moore asked for a motion to bring the internet café special use permit before the planning board and then revisit it in March at the regular council meeting before the board. Commissioner Wheeler made a motion to bring the internet café special use permit before the planning board and then revisit it in March at the regular council meeting before the board. Commissioner Bridgers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- Zoning Officer Lucas - Family Care Home as a Special Use in a RA, R-40, R-20, R-15, R-10 changing the ordinance that allows it as a permitted use in all residential zoning district.

Mayor Moore asked for a motion to go into public hearing. Commissioner Mercer made the motion to go into public hearing. Commissioner Atkinson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

There was no public comment.

Mayor Moore asked for a motion to come out of public hearing. Commissioner Wheeler made the motion to come out of public hearing. Commissioner Atkinson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Zoning Officer Lucas' recommendation was for Family Care Homes be changed from a permitted use to a Special Use with the applicant having to come before the Town of Elm City Board of Adjustment through a quasi-judicial hearing. Removing it entirely from the Special Use District which allows manufactured homes such as Double-wide and Singlewides.

Add and additional Note for Parking - Two parking spaces for at least two employees, not counting the facility van, car, or bus.

Mayor Moore asked for a motion in regards to Family Care Homes in town limits. Commissioner Bridgers made a motion to go with Zoning Officer Lucas' recommendations. Commissioner Wheeler seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- **Pinetops Police Chief, Stacy Harrell** came to discuss the benefits of having camera systems placed around town. He stated several times that Cameras do not replace law enforcement, but that are helpful when used as tools in solving crimes.
- **Gabe Merando** spoke about the Sheriff Department contract, ongoing water issues and that he has not received a Consumers Confidence Report.
- **Toni Merando** expressed her concern for water testing not being done or reported properly. She believes that the quality of the water has led to her daughter being sick and a case of pink eye, she herself had.
She requested the board to revisit the fees being charged on the water bills, and she spoke about the audit not being completed. She stated that officials need to be insured and bonded by law. Lastly, she asked that her medical bills, as well as her daughters be paid by the town; as well as the speeding ticket she received taking her daughter to the doctor.
- **Carla Stutts** stated that she would like to have a community meeting, for citizens to express their concerns and invite the Sheriff's Department to join. She would like to have her property looked again due to the cement collapsing and water bubbling up.

- **Marsha Wells** made a suggestion for the board to add new business items for the upcoming meeting and not discuss them at current meeting. She expressed her disappointment with how the Mayor Pro Tem position was chosen. She felt as though the citizens should have been made aware that it would change from the way it had been done in the past. She recommended setting dates that would remain the same every year for town events.

Action Items:

- Mayor Moore asked for a discussion on Elected Officials renting the Train Depot and at what pay rate.

Mayor Moore asked for a motion regarding Elected Officials renting the Train Depot. Commissioner Wheeler made the motion that Elected Officials pay the rate everyone else does when renting the Train Depot. Commissioner Mercer seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- Train Depot Mural -Tabled
- Internal Control Policy – Tabled

Mayor Moore stated that under the direction of our accountant, Powell Bill and payroll have separate bank accounts.

Mayor Moore asked for a motion for Powell Bill and payroll funds have separate bank accounts. Commissioner Wimberly made the motion for Powell bill and payroll funds to have separate accounts. Commissioner Mercer seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business: None

New Business: None

Town Staff Reports:

Mayor Moore

Zoning Officer Shawn Lucas recommended reinstating the Historic Commission Board with five (5) members and those members reside in the historic district to serve on said board.

Mayor Moore asked for a motion to reinstate the Historic Commission Board with Zoning Officer Lucas' guidelines. Commissioner Wheeler made the motion to reinstate the Historic Commission Board with Zoning Officer Lucas' guidelines. Commissioner Bridgers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor & Commissioner's Reports:

Commissioner Wheeler stated that the Rotary Club would like to plant up to four (4) elm trees behind the veteran's memorial located next to the substation.

Mayor Moore asked for a motion to allow the rotary club to plant up to four (4) elm trees behind the veteran's memorial located next to the substation. Commissioner Bridgers made the motion to allow the

rotary club to plant up to four (4) elm trees behind the veteran's memorial located next to the substation. Commissioner Wheeler seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Wheeler asked that it be considered to replace old carpet with new carpet and tile at the front and back door of the Elm City Library.

Mayor Moore asked for a motion to get 3 bids to replace library carpet and tile using a portion of ARP funds. Commissioner Mercer made the motion to get three (3) bids and use remaining ARP funds to replace carpet and tile at the Elm City Library. Commissioner Atkinson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Wheeler also spoke about a town truck being broken down in the cemetery and there is a current vacancy on the library board.

Mayor Moore asked for a motion to go into closed session. Commissioner Bridgers made the motion to go into closed session. Commissioner Atkinson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.