



**TOWN OF ELM CITY
REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
December 12, 2023, at 6:30 PM
Town Hall Office 117 S. Railroad St.**

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 David Greene (hereinafter, Commissioner Greene)

Also in Attendance:

Finance Officer Dena Owens (hereinafter, Dena Owens)
Customer Service Administrator Melissa Younger (hereinafter, Melissa Younger)
Public Works Supervisor Wilbur Etheridge (hereinafter, Wilbur Etheridge)

Absent

Zoning Officer Shawn Lucas (hereinafter, Zoning Officer Lucas)

Call To Order: Mayor Moore called the regular council meeting to order on November 14, 2023 at 6:30pm.

Invocation: Mayor Pro Tem Atkinson

Pledge Of Allegiance: Mayor Moore

Approval of Agenda: Mayor Moore asked for a motion to approve the agenda for November 14, 2023 council meeting. Commissioner Mercer made the motion to approve the agenda and Commissioner Bridgers seconded the motion. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Approval of Minutes: Mayor Moore asked for a motion to approve October 10, 2023 regular council meeting minutes. Commissioner Wheeler made the motion to approve these minutes and Commissioner Bridgers seconded the motion. **The motion passed unanimously.**

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

- Mr. Woody Parrish spoke on his many public service positions throughout the years, including ministering for 40+ years. He spoke on the Christian values that he has instilled in his daughter, Ashley Bass and feels she was let go (terminated) unfairly.
- Ashley Bass spoke on her previous position at the Town Office and her love for the community. She handed out a packet including a resume and references to apply for the Town Administrator position when it becomes open.
- Eunice Lindsey (203 S Railroad St.) expressed her concern about the empty buildings around town and the owner's failure in upkeep. She also spoke about the lack of advertising for celebrations and events in the town. There is an obstruction of trees and fencing at Armstrong & Main as well as Branch & Dixon that is a hazard to drivers and pedestrians.
- Charles Kirby (406 Anderson St.) spoke about a letter he received from Shawn Lucas due to being in violation of the Town of Elm City Code of Ordinances. Mr. Kirby admitted that his yard is a mess and that he fell behind in cleaning up during renovations at his home. He then was involved in a car accident and due to the injuries, he sustained, it has prolonged the clean up even more. He stated he was not pleased that an inspection was done without his presence or permission. He also expressed several times, that people coming on his property without his permission could be trouble for them. He explained that he has cameras and locks on his fence for that very reason.
- Denise Thompson (305 E Taylor St.) spoke about 301 E Taylor St., which she has previously inquired about purchasing at an earlier meeting (June 2023). It was voted (September 2023) to donate that property to Habitat for Humanity. She asked for the board to look into why that happened and is still interested in purchasing the property.

Presentations/Discussions:

- Bessie Barnes with the Wilson County Government who is an accounting specialist with 11+ years of experience (tax services as well), spoke on her focus being to assist Dena to helping to get Elm City audit ready. She expressed how urgent it is to have audits done in a timely manner. Dena needs to consult further with Colleen about bank reconciliations being done. Ms. Barnes stated that it may take some time to get audits done because of missing information (due to turnover in staff). Ms. Barnes, Dena and Colleen will continue to work on everything as fast as they can.
Dena asked the Board to allow Ms. Barnes read only access to bank accounts and NC Capital Management Trust to pull documents needed. Mayor Moore asked for a motion to allow Ms. Barnes access to above information. Commissioner Wheeler made the motion to allow Ms. Barnes to the banking information and Commissioner's Mercer & Atkinson both seconded the motion. **The motion passed unanimously.**
- Joe Durham, a Municipal Operations Consultant with the NCLM came to share all of the services the NCLM has to offer (Elm City being in his territory). He handed out a flyer and further explain each bullet point on it. He highlighted how establishing roles and responsibilities are important;

as well as working as a team, setting goals and achieving them together, and lasting, taking advantage of training sessions that are offered. Mayor Moore thanked them for being there when she inherited the Town's Administrator position, and all of the help they have provided her, and the Town of Elm City.

- Carla Stutts of 201 Branch St expressed her concerns about the Commissioner's not being very involved with the decisions that are made. In her opinion, the Town is being ran properly. She believes that it takes a team effort run the Town. She has been trying to solve the source of a leak on her corner for almost a year and has had no resolve. She mentioned how the Elms Fest was not advertise properly, the town businesses were not included, and she believes that it had the lowest attendance compared to previous years.
- Gabe Merando presented the mayor and commissioners with a handout with his concerns. Those included, Amendments to the town code regarding Family Care Homes and boarding houses within town limits, amendments to the town code regarding businesses within the town limits, and amendments and resolutions to the regarding of rental property. Mr. Merando also expressed that there is a lack of access to important documents of interest of the town. Mr. Merando has an extensive background in municipal construction and is storm water certified. He has offered to volunteer before and would still be interested in doing so now. He feels the requirements of the DPW need to reviewed and more projects should be handled inhouse rather than outsourcing.

Action Items: None

Old Business: None

New Business: None

Town Staff Reports:

- Mayor Moore read the Town Administrator's Report in detail.
- Wilbur Etheridge gave an update of the fire hydrants that were going to be replaced.
- Melissa Younger stated that the HVAC unit has been fixed and the heat is working well. She also spoke about the fire hydrants being replaced and that there would be door hangers placed on homes that would be directly affected, to notify citizens.

Mayor & Commissioner's Reports:

- Commissioner Mercer appreciated the speed radar that was placed on Branch & Wilson St.
- Commissioner Greene asked for an update on the Town Administrator and Town Clerk positions. Commissioner Greene made a motion to actively look for personnel to fill the Town Administrators position as well as the Town Clerks position. Commissioner Wheeler seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- Commissioner Wheeler asked if ARP funds could be used to fix leaks. He stated that he has received a lot of complaints about the patch job done on S Parker St. He recommended getting

an asphalt company to fix patch work done. \$6,200 worth of plots were sold in the past couple of months. Commissioner Wheeler will call to get prices for tree removal, and would like to use the profit from the plots sold to pay for it.

- Mayor Pro Tem Atkinson addressed some previous statements from citizens and wanted to clarify that the Board and Mayor, do work as a team and that the citizens concerns are ideas are heard. She too, would like to see the empty buildings in Elm City filled with businesses that would help the community thrive.

Adjournment: Mayor Moore asked for a motion to adjourn the Regular Council Meeting. Commissioner Greene made the motion to adjourn the Regular Council Meeting. Commissioner Mercer seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.