

**TUESDAY, JUNE 20, 2017**  
**TOWN OF SAWMILLS REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING**  
**6:00 PM**

**COUNCIL PRESENT**

Joe Wesson  
Gerelene Blevins  
Keith Warren  
Jeff Wilson  
Joe Norman

**STAFF PRESENT**

Christopher Todd  
Terry Taylor  
Julie A Good

**COUNCIL ABSENT**

Reed Lingerfelt

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Joe Wesson called the meeting to order.

**INVOCATION:** Pastor David Woods gave the invocation.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Mayor Joe Wesson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ADOPT AGENDA:** Mayor Joe Wesson asked for a motion to adopt the June 20, 2017 Agenda.

Keith Warren made a motion, and Joe Norman seconded, to adopt the June 20, 2017 Agenda. All were in favor.

**APPROVE MAY 16, 2017 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES:** Mayor Joe Wesson asked for a motion to approve the May 16, 2017 regular meeting minutes.

Gerelene Blevins made a motion, and Keith Warren seconded, to approve the May 16, 2017 regular meeting minutes. All were in favor.

**APPROVE MAY 16, 2017 CLOSED SESSION MEETING MINUTES:** Mayor Joe Wesson asked for a motion to approve the May 16, 2017 closed session meeting minutes.

Joe Norman made a motion, and Gerelene Blevins seconded, to approve the May 16, 2017 closed session meeting minutes. All were in favor.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** Mayor Joe Wesson asked if anyone had any questions or comments at this time.

Allyson Burgett spoke against the alcohol referendum.

Kathy Ramsey spoke against the alcohol referendum.

Mark Dula spoke against the alcohol referendum.

Ron Burgett spoke against the alcohol referendum.

Kelly Price spoke against the alcohol referendum.

Pastor David Woods spoke against the alcohol referendum.

Dwight Joplin spoke against the alcohol referendum.

**RECOGNITIONS:**

**RECYCLE REWARDS WINNER:** Mayor Joe Wesson announced Mr. Kenneth Simmons as the June Recycle Rewards winner. A credit of twenty-eight dollars (\$28.00) will be added to his sanitation bill.

No Council action was required.

**PUBLIC HEARING: FY 2017-2018 BUDGET:**

**OPEN PUBLIC HEARING:** Mayor Joe Wesson asked for a motion to open the public hearing.

Joe Norman made a motion, Keith Warren seconded, to open the public hearing. All were in favor.

**STAFF COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS:** Town Administrator Christopher Todd stated that the budget is balanced as required by the NC Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act. The Town's overall budget for FY 2017-2018 totals three million five hundred sixty-two thousand two hundred nine dollars (\$3,562,209.00). A few highlights of the proposed budget include no property tax increase; a twenty-five percent (25%) increase of the water and sewer rates; an increase in sanitation rates; merit raises for Town employees; maintains current level of services; maintains current levels of benefits for employees. The Town will also maintain its current levels of service to the citizens.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** Mayor Joe Wesson asked if anyone wished to speak on the FY 2017-2018 Budget.

Kelly Price spoke against raising utility rates by twenty-five percent (25%).

**CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING:** Mayor Joe Wesson asked for a motion to close the public hearing.

Joe Norman made a motion, and Keith Warren seconded, to close the public hearing. All were in favor.

**COUNCIL ACTION:** Joe Norman made a motion, and Keith Warren seconded, to adopt the FY 2017-2018 Budget. The vote passed 3 to 1 with Jeff Wilson being the only Council Member opposed.

#### **FINANCIAL MATTERS:**

**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS CHAPTER 6 DONATION REQUEST:** Mayor Joe Wesson stated that the Disabled American Veterans Chapter 6 had requested a donation in the amount of fifty dollars (\$50.00).

Keith Warren made a motion, and Gerelene Blevins seconded, to give a donation in the amount of one hundred dollars (\$100.00) to the Disabled American Veterans Chapter 6. All were in favor.

#### **DISCUSSION:**

**STORMWATER DISCHARGE PROGRAM AGREEMENT:** Town Administrator Christopher Todd stated that the current agreement between the City of Lenoir and the Town of Sawmills for the Storm Water Discharge Program needs to be renewed. The renewal Agreement will cover the period of July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018. The cost the Town will pay the City of Lenoir to continue responsibility of the plan is thirteen thousand one hundred four dollars and ninety-three cents (\$13,104.93).

Joe Norman made a motion, and Jeff Wilson seconded, to adopt the renewal Agreement with the City of Lenoir in the amount of thirteen thousand, one hundred four dollars and ninety-three cents (\$13,104.93). All were in favor.

**FIFTH AMENDMENT TO TOWN OF SAWMILLS LICENSING AGREEMENT:** Town Administrator Christopher Todd stated that the current licensing agreement between the Town of Sawmills and the Sawmills Optimist needs to be renewed. The renewal

licensing agreement will cover the period of July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018.

Joe Norman made a motion, and Keith Warren seconded, to adopt the Fifth Amendment to Town of Sawmills Licensing Agreement. All were in favor.

**ALCOHOL REFERENDUM:** Town Administrator Christopher Todd stated that the Town of Sawmills Town Council has been asked by the owners of Market Basket to consider voting to allow a referendum for the sale of alcohol in the Town of Sawmills. Currently there are no alcohol sales allowed within the Town of Sawmills. Alcohol sales within Caldwell County are currently permitted in Granite Falls, Hudson, Lenoir, Hickory, and Blowing Rock.

The state of North Carolina defines five (5) different categories of sale for alcohol. These include malt liquor, unfortified wine, fortified wine, ABC Stores, and Mixed Beverages. The Town Council can choose to put one, multiple, or all of these items on the ballot. There are different sub categories that can be placed on some of these items as seen in **§ 18B-602. Form of ballots.**

If a referendum were to pass it would mean additional revenue to the Town of Sawmills. Currently the Town of Sawmills could receive from \$15,000-\$20,000 in additional revenue annually if the sales of malt liquor, fortified wine, and unfortified were permitted. The revenue from the sales tax connected to aforementioned categories are defined in **§ 105-113.82. Distribution of part of beer and wine taxes**, which designates this particular revenue source by population. This number is variable and based around total sales within the state, the population of the town, and the number of participating local governments in the state.

Joe Norman made a motion, and Jeff Wilson seconded, to allow for a public referendum regarding Malt Beverages in accordance with NCGS 18B-602 (a)(1), Unfortified Wine in accordance with NCGS 18B-602 (d)(1), Mixed Beverage in accordance with NCGS 18B-602 (h), and ABC Store in accordance with NCGS 18B-602 (g). Keith Warren and Gerelene Blevins opposed. With a tie vote of two (2) in favor and two (2) opposed, Mayor Joe Wesson broke the tie by voting in the affirmative.

#### **UPDATES:**

**JUNE CODE ENFORCEMENT REPORT:** Town Planner Leslie M. Meadows stated that there are ten (10) code enforcement cases open:

- Teresa Annas Compton is the owner of a dilapidated house located at 4476 Sawmills School Road. On May 25, 2017, Town Planner Leslie M. Meadows met with Caldwell County Building Inspector Mark Annas onsite. Caldwell County Building Inspector Mark Annas provided a list of violations. Town Planner Leslie M. Meadows is preparing a letter for Town Attorney Terry Taylor to review. Town

- Planner Leslie M. Meadows stated that after Town Attorney Terry Taylor reviews the letter that she will send letter to landowner in hopes of initiating foreclosure;
- WNC Properties, LLC owner of 4209 Creekview Pl. Minimum housing complaint. Town Planner Leslie M. Meadows stated that she will be arranging a site visit with Caldwell County Building Inspector Mark Annas;
  - David Graham (Landlord) owner of 4176 US Highway 321A. Minimum housing complaint. Town Planner Leslie M. Meadows stated that will be arranging a site visit with Caldwell County Building Inspector Mark Annas;
  - Casey Lynn Wallace, owner of 3950-1 Walters MHP Drive. Minimum housing complaint. Town Planner Leslie M. Meadows stated that she will be arranging a site visit with Caldwell County Building Inspector Mark Annas;
  - Dwayne and Bridget Mann, owner of 4353 Eli Lane/Fancy Place. Garbage, trash, refuse complaint. Town Planner Leslie M. Meadows stated that she sent notification that daily fines would begin on May 17,2017. Landowner called on May 22, 2017. Town Planner Leslie M. Meadows stated that homeowner has begun removing some of the junked vehicles and old electronics. Landowner informed Town Planner Leslie M. Meadows that there are plans to get a dumpster or dump truck to fill. Town Planner Leslie M. Meadows stated that she will continue to monitor and work with landowner as long as progress is being made;
  - Carolyn Bray, owner of 2570 Baker Cir. Abandoned mobile home. There has been no reply and no change in the status of this case;
  - Andrew Dehart, owner 4036 US Highway 321A. High grass and junked vehicles. High grass/weeds still need to be tended. Town Planner Leslie M. Meadows stated that the mowing and trimming has been completed. Local contact, Leslie Kenworthy, called to report that the tree saplings growing up around the building's foundation are to be cut down with a chainsaw. Town Planner Leslie M. Meadows spot checked the site on June 8, 2017, and all the trailers have been removed, but the saplings are still there. Town Planner Leslie M. Meadows will continue to monitor;
  - Cheney Carter, owner of 4361 Sawmills School Road. Abandoned/dilapidated home. Town Planner Leslie M. Meadows stated that on May 25, 2017, she met with Caldwell County Building Inspector Mark Annas onsite. Town Planner Leslie M. Meadows is preparing a letter for Town Attorney Terry Taylor to review. Town Planner Leslie M. Meadows stated that after Town Attorney Terry Taylor reviews the letter she will send it to the homeowner in hopes of initiating foreclosure;
  - Christian Christopher, renter at 4201 US Highway 321A. High Grass. Town Planner Leslie M. Meadows verified the complaint and sent a Notice of Violation letter on May 26, 2017, with a deadline of June 13, 2017. Yard was mowed. Case closed;
  - John Wilcox, landowner Ellen St/Janettes Way. High grass. Town Planner Leslie M. Meadows verified the complaint and placed a call to the landowner. Town Planner spot checked on May 25, 2017, and lot had been mowed. Case closed;
  - Gena Edwards and Buster Price, owners of 4492 Mayfield Drive. Outdoor storage, junk vehicles and pool complaint. Town Planner Leslie M. Meadows stated that the

- complaint was verified on April 27, 2017 and a violation letter was mailed with a deadline of May 16, 2017. Town Planner Leslie M. Meadows stated that homeowner has begun removing vehicles and trash. Town Planner Leslie M. Meadows also stated that homeowner agreed to cover the pool until officially treating it to open for use in June. Town Planner Leslie M. Meadows will continue to spot check;
- Wayne Austin, owner 1710 Carriage Ln. Vacant home/high grass. Town Planner Leslie M. Meadows stated that a Notice of Violation letter was sent on May 11, 2017 with a deadline of May 25, 2017. Town Planner Leslie M. Meadows spot checked the property on May 25, 2017, and property has been mowed. Case closed;
  - Arnold and/or Jeff Wilson, owners of 1769 Cahah Mountain Road. Outdoor storage and junk vehicles. Town Planner Leslie M. Meadows stated that the complaint was verified on April 27, 2017 and a violation letter was mailed with a deadline on May 16, 2017. Town Planner Leslie M. Meadows spot checked the property on June 8, 2017, the old camper, food truck and some porch items have been removed. Town Planner Leslie M. Meadows will continue to monitor;
  - Sasser Family, LLC, owner 2526 Meadows Park Lane. Minimum housing complaint. Town Planner Leslie M. Meadows stated that she will be arranging a site visit with Caldwell County Building Inspector Mark Annas;
  - Jose Montes, owner 4321 Cherokee Court. High grass/junk vehicles. Town Planner Leslie M. Meadows sent Notice of Violation letter on June 1, 2017, with a deadline of June 16, 2017.

No Council action was required.

**COUNCIL COMMENT:** Mayor Joe Wesson asked if anyone on the Council had any questions or comments at this time.

Joe Norman thanked everyone for coming out and stated that the meeting and he hated that there was such a controversial issue on the agenda. Joe Norman stated that he hoped everyone had a safe trip home.

Jeff Wilson wanted to thank everyone for coming.

Mayor Joe Wesson wanted to thank everyone for coming out. Mayor Joe Wesson stated that he tries to stand up for everyone's rights. Mayor Joe Wesson stated that people have stood up and died for everyone to have equal rights. Mayor Joe Wesson stated that he had received a lot of calls on the referendum and the discussion has went both ways. Mayor Joe Wesson stated that the fair thing to do would be to let the citizens decide for themselves because he did not want to dictate what the citizens should and shouldn't do that it was up to the citizens.

**CLOSED SESSION: PERSONNEL MATTERS:** Mayor Joe Wesson asked for a motion to go into closed session.


Joe Norman made a motion, and Jeff Wilson seconded, to go into Closed Session at 7:01 pm. All were in favor.

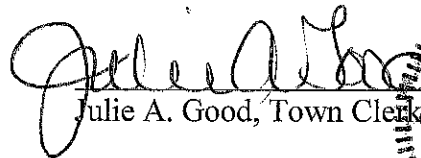
Joe Norman made a motion, and Gerelene Blevins seconded, to come out of Closed Session at 7:23 pm. All were in favor.

Joe Norman made a motion, and Keith Warren seconded, to allow Town Administrator Christopher Todd to negotiate a severance agreement with Kim Trivette.

**COUNCIL ADJOURN:** Mayor Joe Wesson asked for a motion to adjourn.

Keith Warren made a motion, and Gerelene Blevins seconded, to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor.

  
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Joe Wesson, Mayor

  
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Julie A. Good, Town Clerk

