

**TOWN OF BURGAW BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING**

DATE: January 10, 2023
TIME: 4:30 PM
PLACE: Historic Train Depot, 115 S. Dickerson Street
BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Olivia Dawson
Mayor Pro-tem Wilfred Robbins
Bill George, Jan Dawson, Vernon Harrell and James Malloy
STAFF PRESENT: James Gantt, Town Manager
Kristin J. Wells, Town Clerk
Wendy Pope, Finance Officer
Kimberly Rivenbark, Deputy Town Clerk
Jim Hock, Police Chief/Assistant Town Manager
Louis Hesse, Building Code Administrator
Alan Moore, Public Works Director
Cody Suggs, Parks & Recreation Director
Gilbert Combs, Planning Director
Jessica Gray, Community Development Coordinator
Jim Taylor, Fire Chief
STAFF ABSENT: Zachary Rivenbark, Town Attorney (attended a portion of the meeting via phone)
MEDIA PRESENT: None
INVOCATION: Reverend Nick Smith
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: All

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Dawson at 4:30 PM and the invocation was led by Reverend Smith.

Approval of Agenda

Commissioner George made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Harrell and carried by unanimous vote.

Approval of Consent Agenda

Commissioner Harrell made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner George and carried by unanimous vote.

- A. Approval of the November 8, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes
- B. Approval of the November 8, 2022 Closed Session Meeting Minutes
- C. Ordinance 2023-01 Amending the FY 2022-2023 budget to reflect changes to the pay classification plan
- D. Resolution 2023-03 Resolution Regarding the Purchase of an Easement from the Pender County ABC Board for the construction of US Highway 117 Bypass Regional Pumpstation and Force Main project

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS/REQUESTS

NC Blueberry Festival – *Jaliese Blackburn, Executive Director*

Jaliese Blackburn, Executive Director of the NC Blueberry Festival Association, was present and requested the waiving of rental fees for use of the Burgaw Community House on Saturday, February 25, 2023 for the take-out line at the Annual Pancake Breakfast. After some discussion, Commissioner George made a motion to waive the rental fee for use of the facility but charge the cleaning fee. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Robbins and carried by unanimous vote.

DEPARTMENTAL ITEMS

Parks, Recreation & Tourism Department – *Cody Suggs, Director*

Burgaw Area Chamber of Commerce Agreement

Mr. Suggs advised the updated agreement was included in the agenda packets. The only changes that were made to the agreement for renewal was updating the dates and the Mayor's name for the signature. Mr. Suggs advised the agreement has been reviewed by Attorney Rivenbark. Commissioner Harrell asked about the word "rent" mentioned several times within the agreement. Mr. Suggs advised there is no rent for the Chamber of Commerce. There being no further comments from the board, Commissioner Robbins made a motion to approve the agreement as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Harrell and carried by unanimous vote.

Burgaw Incubator Kitchen

Per the request of the board from the last meeting, Mr. Suggs made a presentation of the revenues and expenditures for the Incubator Kitchen (attached). He also explained the rate changes that were amended over the past few years. After some discussion, the board agreed that our kitchen is comparable to other kitchens in the area regarding fees, etc. Tina Harget was present (spoke during the December meeting) and reiterated she was only requesting the "in-town resident rate" be reinstated as it was in the years past. After some comments from the board, Commissioner George made a motion to keep the fees as they currently are. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Robbins and carried by unanimous vote.

Departmental Updates – *Department Heads*

Police Department- *Jim Hock, Police Chief*

- Advised he is wrapping up the School Resource Officer (SRO) program and informed the board that Officer Rossi has taken the SRO position at C.F. Pope Elementary School. The second SRO position for Burgaw Middle School is hoping to be filled by May.

- Earlier in 2022, Officer Cooper left as a full-time officer and became part-time with the department. Chief Hock advised Officer Cooper has returned as a full-time employee with the department and replaced Officer Rossi's patrol position.
- All training for the year is complete and will be submitted to NC Training & Standards.
- Shop with a Cop event went well.

Commissioner Malloy voiced his concern regarding the need for speed bumps in the area of Satchwell Street. He said he was called by Michael Pearsall and visited the area. He is very concerned with the vehicles speeding through the area. Commissioner Harrell said he has seen motorcycles speeding in the area and feels the same way as Commissioner Malloy. He said residents in the area are saying the reduced speed limit is not working unless a Police Officer is nearby. Michael Pearsall was present at the meeting and voiced his frustration about the situation. Commissioner Harrell made a motion to initiate the process of installing speed bumps on Satchwell Street. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Malloy. Commissioner Robbins would like to know exactly where the speed bumps will be located before he votes. Commissioner Harrell said he basically wants to get the speed humps here and then Chief Hock can determine the best location. All in favor; motion carried.

Fire Department – Jim Taylor, Fire Chief

- There were 661 calls for year 2022.
- The 22 year old squad is in Rocky Mount being worked on.
- Advised Brian Williamson has left the department so there is currently a vacant driver position available.
- Clay Jasper will be doing a leadership course in the next couple of weeks.

Commissioner Malloy commented on the 22 year old truck and asked Chief Taylor for his recommendation. Chief Taylor advised he will be bringing a proposal to the board during budget preparation on replacing the truck.

Commissioner Malloy also commented on the growth of Burgaw and what staff is needed for the department. Chief Taylor said we will definitely need more full-time employees and we need to add supervisors to the crews. He briefly explained the shifts and employees for the department. He said we really need four full-time staff on shift 24 hours a day. Right now, the department currently has two full-time staff per shift. Chief Taylor will provide more information during the upcoming budget meetings.

Public Works Department – Alan Moore, Director

- Christmas decorations are down.
 - Will be working on water leaks around town soon.
 - There are some I&I issues that need addressing.
 - In the next few weeks, the pipe should be scheduled to go in under the walking trail.
- Commissioner Malloy said the pipe needs to go in more straight than the current one.

Commissioner Malloy said he spoke to someone from the church on Bodenheimer Street and the man said someone with the town said he could leave it there. Mr. Moore said the pile is from

land clearing and we don't pick it up. Mr. Gantt said we need to look at this area for future draining projects as well.

Commissioner Malloy added the town needs to be concerned with everyone in town, including the west side of town, when it comes to drainage ditches, etc. He said he knows there is a lot going on, but we need to do things that the west side citizens can see happening. Mayor Dawson suggested we start making a list of things that need to be taken care of. Mr. Gantt said the town can not go onto private property to clean out ditches unless the town has legal right to do so.

Commissioner Harrell said he believes it is time to retire the large Santa Claus that is placed near the depot every Christmas. Santa is losing plastic and asked for the board to keep this in mind for next year.

Building Inspections Department – Louis Hesse, Building Code Administrator

- Hare Asian Foods has final inspection scheduled.
- Burgaw Brewing is in the final stages and expect to be finished by the end of the month.
- Cardinal Foods is moving along smoothly.
- Ms. Gray is working on minimal housing issues.

BREAK 5:23 PM – 5:35 PM

PUBLIC FORUM

Rochelle Whiteside, 315 West Bridgers Street, submitted a letter (attached) to the board with requests from Spring Fest, which will be held on May 6, 2023. Included with the request is assistance with street closures: the block of Fremont Street between Wright Street and Walker Street, 6:00 AM until 4:00 PM the day of the festival, as well as the block of Wright Street between Fremont Street and Wilmington Street, 6:00 AM until 4:00 PM. On Friday, May 5th, they request half of Courthouse Avenue be closed from the alley to Wright Street be closed for the pig picking and square dance. Ms. Whiteside said all of the requests are the same as last year. She also requested funding from the town in the amount of \$2,500. Ms. Whiteside also requested, as stated in the letter, use of the depot dock on May 5, 2023 for the square dance in the event of rain. Mr. Suggs advised the depot is already reserved for that evening. Mr. Hesse commented on Ms. Whiteside contacting 811 to located lines on the Courthouse Square before tents are put up. Commissioner Robbins made a motion to approve the requests described in the letter by the Spring Fest. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Harrell and carried by unanimous vote. Commissioner Robbins said the funding request can be discussed during the budget process. Mr. Suggs will bring back costs for rental of the portable toilets at the next meeting.

Michael Pearsall, 213 South Bodenheimer Street, commended Mr. Moore and his Public Works crews on street sweeping and cleaning of ditches on the west side of town.

John Westbrook, 410 East Fremont Street, said the brewery will be opening soon and the town needs to address parking issues in the downtown area. He suggested the town look at state owned and town owned properties in regards to developing parking areas. He also added the town look

into the Presbyterian Church's parking lot area between the church and the old Biberstein office on Walker Street.

PUBLIC HEARING

Public Hearing #1 – Jessica Gray, Community Development Coordinator

Consideration of a text amendment to the Unified Development Ordinance requested by staff, to amend Section 8.16 and Section 9.28 to require a 25-foot buffer for new cemeteries and create a bufferyard for existing cemeteries.

Mayor Dawson declared the public hearing open at 5:53 PM.

Ms. Gray explained the text amendment request as described in Ordinance 2023-03. Commissioner Dawson commented on our current cemetery and the amount of buffer we have. She also asked who will determine the types of invasive plants.

After some brief discussion, Mayor Dawson declared the public hearing closed at 6:04 PM.

Resolution 2023-02 Adopting a statement of consistency regarding text amendments of the Town of Burgaw Unified Development Ordinance requested by town staff to amend Section 8.16 and 9.28 of the Unified Development Ordinance to require a 25-foot buffer for new cemeteries and add a cemetery bufferyard to protect existing cemeteries.

Commissioner Dawson made a motion to approve Resolution 2023-02 as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Harrell and carried by unanimous vote.

Ordinance 2023-03 Approving a text change amendment to the Town of Burgaw Unified Development Ordinance requested by staff of the Town of Burgaw to amend Section 8.16 and 9.28 of the Unified Development Ordinance to require a 25-foot buffer for new cemeteries and add a cemetery bufferyard to protect existing cemeteries.

Commissioner Harrell made a motion to approve Ordinance 2023-03 as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner George and carried by unanimous vote.

Departmental Updates - continued

Planning Department – Gilbert Combs, Director

- Planning staff has a few topics to bring before the Board to determine whether additional research and work should be conducted for text amendments. These topics have the potential to cause disagreement with project owners, developers, and maybe Joe or Jane Citizen. Staff hopes to gauge the opinion of the board on these topics and get some direction if an amendment is desired. *Topics and descriptions listed below are from Mr. Combs presentation notes.*

Topic #1 – Tree Survey Requirements

In December, a text amendment to modify the tree survey requirements was brought before the Planning board. Currently we require a tree removal permit for trees that fall into the protected category. On properties smaller than five acres, we do not require a tree survey, which would identify these protected trees. The proposed amendment is to remove the five-acre threshold and include ALL commercial development and exempt only single- and two-family residential properties. During the planning board meeting, discussion over important trees on single- and two-family residential lots was brought up since property owners would basically not be required to retain or replace what could be a tree that falls into the protected tree category. One planning board member began to identify what was thought of as appropriate diameters to save. 36" was mentioned. Benchmark research was conducted for the staff report. Mr. Combs explained the request and said the proposed amendment is consistent with the findings and takes into consideration the costs that may be incurred from requiring residential property owners to pay for tree surveys. He said this topic comes before the board at the request of the planning board. It has been brought before board because of the sensitive nature of the topic and the planning board directed staff to bring this before the board for their opinion. Though unorthodox, the board's recommendation will go back before the planning board for discussion and recommendation.

After discussion and questions by the board, everyone was in favor of the recommendation presented by Mr. Combs and the Planning Board.

Topic #2 – Changes of Use and Vacant Designation

Mr. Combs gave an example of a building located in town about this topic. Our code requires a project owner comply with landscaping requirements such as parking lot landscaping and street yard landscaping for newly constructed projects but for existing structures, the town requires various conditions (within the UDO) to be followed. It breaks expansions down into different percentage categories which is reasonable but only covers tree preservation, and for existing portions of a property. If the board agrees, planning staff would like the directive to benchmark changes of use and expansions and infrastructure requirements. If we require landscaping for new projects only, and it is the desire of the town to have a cohesive appearance, it may be reasonable to introduce stricter standards for changes of use.

Commissioner Dawson asked if people are notifying the Planning Department of changes of use in buildings. Mr. Combs and Ms. Gray confirmed there have been people notifying the town.

If in the future a use other than retail and assembly were to occupy these buildings (referring to the example shown in the presentation), no improvements would be required. Parking lot landscaping islands with vegetation and street yard landscaping is shown (presentation). Sidewalks could play an important role in providing a pedestrian infrastructure network throughout town to accommodate those that do not own or depend on a vehicle. The sidewalk requirement will cause many to ask why we are building

sidewalks to nowhere. As redevelopment, expansions, and changes of use occur, these sidewalks will begin to connect.

While we are on the topic of sidewalks, Mr. Combs advised a new small subdivision project may be coming soon and they asked about the requirements for sidewalks within the development. We are hoping they introduce sidewalks, and are encouraging them to construct sidewalks, but our current language seems more suggestive than prescriptive. Words and terms like may, likely, and such as, make it difficult for planning staff to say “yes you meet the standard” or “no you don’t meet the standard”. Something like this is not as vague as is currently written, “sidewalks shall be required on one side of the street for projects within ¼ mile of a school or park.”

Mr. Combs advised there is a building in town that appears to have been a laundromat and currently lays vacant. Some jurisdictions consider vacant to be a use designation after six months of a structure sitting unused, meaning any proposed project at this location would be a change of use, even if say another laundromat were wanting to fill the space after more than 180 days have passed. This is a mechanism that could allow the town to start to bring old properties into a new light above receiving just a new paint job.

If the commissioners agree, planning staff looks to benchmark best practices in the region and similar jurisdictions to determine the following...if a vacant use for X number of days should require improvements, and if requiring infrastructure improvements is appropriate for changes of use, especially from vacant designations. Mr. Combs asked the board if they thought piecing together a pedestrian network is worth the additional expense to a project owner. He also asked the board if there is a desire to have a consistent look and feel throughout Burgaw, at least on commercial developments. The board agreed on these matters as presented, especially along the US Highway 117 corridor.

After discussion and questions by the board, everyone was in favor of the recommendation presented by Mr. Combs and the Planning Board.

Topic #3 – Short-term Rentals

Recently an inquiry related to short-term rentals was received via email. The Town Attorney has mentioned that it may be time to take a look and discuss the wishes of the board as they relate to this topic. Planning staff has a few questions to determine whether research should be conducted to begin the development of a code section for short-term rentals. First, does the board wish to regulate such a use? A quick search on Airbnb and VRBO show that there are properties within Burgaw’s planning jurisdiction that are renting a portion of or an entire house for a time period generally less than a month.

The Finance Director has mentioned that the big STR companies automatically pay an occupancy tax to the town. Privately owned STR, similar to beds and breakfast, would be required to pay the tax monthly. Mr. Combs asked if the board wishes to continue not regulating the use as the code does not address it, develop regulations, or wait until a later

time to discuss. Commissioner Harrell asked how big of an issue is this topic in Burgaw. There was discussion about there being two residences in town currently.

After discussion and questions by the board, everyone was in favor of Mr. Combs doing further research on this topic.

- Mr. Combs advised he is working on research related to murals. Commissioner Malloy said people in town want murals. Mr. Combs briefly explained ways other towns have constructed murals.
- Mr. Combs is working on research for housing as shipping containers. He briefly explained the state statute and said we cannot, not allow that material as housing as long as it meets building code. After some discussion, Mr. Combs will discuss this matter further with Attorney Rivenbark.

Parks, Recreation & Tourism Department – Cody Suggs, Director

- Advised he has given all the board members a calendar of events for the year.
- Commented on resurfacing the tennis courts. This will come to the board for consideration during the budget meetings.
- Fence has been completed at Rotary Park.
- Working on repairs for the back wall at the depot, as discussed at a prior meeting.
- Tennis camp in December was a success.
- The department is working on a check-out system for tennis rackets, balls, and other sport equipment at no cost.
- Advertisement was posted for the upcoming Daddy Daughter Dance and the event sold out very quickly. There was interest for a Mother Son Dance, so that event was added to occur the night before. Both events are sold out.
- Advised the fireworks and band that were scheduled for the New Year's Eve Blueberry Drop (cancelled event), will be on hold until the next New Year's event, December 31, 2023. Mr. Suggs advised the stage that was reserved must be used this fiscal year since it was already paid for. He said he will bring back more information, but would like the board to consider closing Fremont Street between Walker Street and Wright Street so the stage could be utilized for the summer concert on the Thursday before the Blueberry Festival. It is the same stage the festival will use beginning that Friday. The board was in agreement to close the street over night on Thursday, June 15, 2023.

Commissioner Dawson commented on the events calendar regarding the Annual Christmas Tree Lighting. For 2022, the event was moved to Saturday evening instead of Friday evening after Thanksgiving due to weather. There was brief discussion about changing the event from Friday to Saturday because it was such a good turnout. Mr. Suggs said we can revisit this at a later date.

Finance Department – Tiffany Byrd, Deputy Finance Officer

- Working on end-of-year reporting, 10-99s, and W-2s.

Human Resources Department – Kim Rivenbark, Director

- The board received an updated staff directory with the recent hires.

Commissioner Malloy asked Ms. Rivenbark where vacancy advertisements are published. Ms. Rivenbark explained advertisements are posted on the town's website, newsletter, NC Works, local newspaper, etc.

Clerk's Office – Kristin Wells, Town Clerk

- Ms. Wells and Ms. Rivenbark will be hosting the Cape Fear Council of Governments Regional Clerks Seminar on January 26, 2023 at the depot.

ITEMS FROM ASSISTANT MANAGER – Jim Hock, Assistant Town Manager

Ordinance 2023-02 Amending the Town of Burgaw Code of Ordinances Chapter 10, Cemeteries

Chief Hock advised Ms. Rivenbark has updated the ordinance based on recommendations mentioned at the last meeting. Commissioner Harrell asked why metal or cast iron benches are not allowed in the cemetery. Chief Hock said it was more of a regulation for the public not to bring in outside benches for gravesites. Mr. Gantt explained benches are not allowed unless approved by the Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Robbins commented on the regulation of animals in the cemetery. After some discussion, it was agreed upon to replace the verbiage under section 10-7, animals: "No person shall take any animal into cemetery or allow any animal to run at large within the cemetery" with "No person shall allow any animal to run at large within the cemetery." Commissioner Robbins asked about the school not allowing the town to put slats in the fence along the school property line. Chief Hock advised the school maintenance director had an objection to the slats in the fence. School maintenance agreed to clean up the fence and get rid of weeds, but said it was not a priority at this time. After some discussion, the board requested Chief Hock to reach out to the Board of Education for permission to add slats to the existing fence along the property line. Commissioner Robbins commented on the number of urns allowed on a gravesite for cremains. There was discussion on how many urns are typically placed on a 4 by 11 gravesite, based on information from local funeral home directors. It is usually a standard to allow four urns on one gravesite. Commissioner Harrell also added funeral homes see a fee associated with burials ranging from \$100 to \$1,500 per interment. Commissioner Harrell suggested to make a requirement to have a marker so we know who is buried where. He recommended only flat markers. Mr. Gantt advised the town does not currently charge fees for interment. Commissioner George and Harrell said we should. Ms. Rivenbark explained our current perpetual care fees. After some discussion, it was agreed upon to change the verbiage under section 10-13(b)(2), burials, from "The interment of one human body and one cremation urn" to "The interment of one human body and four cremation urns," as well as section 10-13(b)(3), burials, from "The interment of one or two cremation urns" to "The interment of four cremation urns."

After discussion, Chief Hock said staff will make the recommended amendments and bring back at the next meeting. He also gave updates on the progress of the projects within the cemetery, such as landscaping, fencing, etc.

Prohibiting the unlawful use of engine and compression brakes – Discussion

Chief Hock presented the following draft ordinance regarding jake braking in town.

PROHIBITING THE UNLAWFUL USE OF ENGINE AND COMPRESSION BRAKES.

(a) *Purpose.* The purpose of this ordinance is to prohibit the excessive, loud, unusual, or explosive use of engine and compressed air-braking devices within the Town of Burgaw limits. The noise created unreasonably and excessively disturbs the public, and adoption of this ordinance would further the public health, safety, and welfare of the citizens.

(b) *Definitions.* For the purposes of this section, the following definition shall apply unless the context clearly indicates or requires a different meaning.

ENGINE RETARDING BRAKE. Any engine retarding brake system, transmission brake, or any other retarding brake system that alters normal compression, including but not limited to DYNAMIC BRAKE, JAKE BRAKE, JACOBS BRAKE, C-BRAKE, PACCAR BRAKE, or any other make or model of engine braking system, or other braking system that alters the normal compression of the engine and subsequently releases that compression.

(c) *Prohibited Conduct.* It shall be unlawful for the driver of any vehicle to use or operate or cause to be used or operated within the Town of Burgaw, any engine brake, compression brake or mechanical exhaust device designed to aid in the braking or deceleration of any vehicle unless such use is necessary to avoid imminent danger.

(d) *Signage.* Signs stating "ENGINE RETARDING BRAKE ORDINANCE ENFORCED" may be installed at locations deemed appropriate to advise motorists of the prohibitions contained in this section.

(e) *Penalties.* Any person, firm or corporation violating the provisions of this section, shall be punished as provided in section 1-6.

(f) *Exceptions.* Emergency vehicles shall be exempt from the application of this section.

Chief Hock said the Police Advisory Board agreed to pursue this ordinance. He added the department would educate the public and place signs up in town if approved by the board. Commissioner Harrell said he likes the ordinance and thinks it is necessary to have in place. After some comments, Commissioner Harrell made a motion to approve the draft ordinance regarding jake braking. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Robbins and carried by unanimous vote. Chief Hock will present the board with a final ordinance for adoption at the next board meeting.

Other items from Assistant Town Manager

Chief Hock advised he received an approximate cost for the Public Works building expansion right before the meeting. The estimate from the contractor currently working on the EMS building said it appears to be about a \$325k project. Chief Hock presented the proposed layout of

the new addition and explained the bidding process. After some discussion, Commissioner Robbins made a motion to move forward with the bidding process. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Malloy and carried by unanimous vote.

ITEMS FROM MANAGER – James Gantt, Town Manager

Resolution 2023-01 Resolution to request stormwater drainage improvements along NCDOT maintained routes within the Town of Burgaw

Mr. Gantt explained proposed Resolution 2023-01, as requested by the board at the December 2022 meeting. Commissioner Harrell requested the west side drainage issues also be included. There being no further comments, Commissioner Harrell made a motion to approve Resolution 2023-01 as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dawson and carried by unanimous vote.

FY 2023-2024 Annual Budget Calendar – Discussion

After some discussion, it was decided to hold the Budget Strategic Thinking Retreat on February 21, 2023 and February 22, 2023 from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM each day. The date determined for the Budget Workshop was April 18, 2023 from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM. Commissioner Dawson made a motion to approve the budget calendar presented by Mr. Gantt with the dates for the retreat and workshop included. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Harrell and carried by unanimous vote.

Updates on current town projects

- Renovations at the EMS Building are moving along well.
- The extra welcome sign in Public Works has been installed by the landscaper on the NC Forestry property along NC Highway 53.
- Emergency Watershed Protection project is wrapping up.

ITEMS FROM MAYOR AND BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner George commended everyone on a job well done at the Burgaw Christmas Parade.

Commissioner Malloy made the board aware that 1865 Society is planning to speak to the board in the future about a Juneteenth celebration. It is tentatively scheduled for the week after the Blueberry Festival.

Commissioner Robbins asked for a status on the possibility of developing parking along the railroad corridor. Mr. Gantt said he talked with NC DOT Rail Division and there are no issues, but an encroachment agreement would need to be done. There was discussion about areas to look at. Mr. Suggs suggested to look at the area behind the depot along the tree line. He said the swell would need to be filled and add parking spaces and a walkway to cross over the railroad tracks. After much discussion, it was agreed for staff to look into parking areas along three blocks of the railroad right-of-way (block north of the depot, area behind the depot, and the south block of the

depot), as well as the possibility of working along with the Presbyterian Church in allowing public parking in the lot next to the church. Mr. Combs will research possibilities and bring back more information at a future meeting.

Commissioner Dawson said South Bickett Street pavement is bad. North McNeil Street, North Cowan Street and Ashe Street were mentioned as well. During the discussion, Mr. Gantt also said the quote received for the installation of the water line across Drane Street is approximately \$100k.

Commissioner Harrell commented on the grapevines on Hayes Street needing to be trimmed. Mr. Moore will reach out to the Master Gardeners. He also said there is an area in front of First National Bank at the corner where the sidewalk is sticking up about four inches. Staff will look at this issue.

Commissioner Harrell pointed out the federal definitions for the term “rural” and “urban” have changed. He briefly explained.

Commissioner Harrell asked why there is still a high number of water meter re-reads this past month. Mr. Gantt explained the situation with the satellites verses gateways and new types of meters being installed as old ones rotate out.

Mayor Dawson informed the board she has proclaimed 2023 as Year of the Trail. A hike is being planned for the future in celebration.

Mayor Dawson said we are in need of a few more trash cans in the downtown area. Mr. Suggs advised the others were purchased from the downtown revitalization fund. Commissioner Robbins made a motion to approve the purchase of four trash cans. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Malloy and carried by unanimous vote.

Mayor Dawson said we need benches for the front of the new building. Mr. Suggs said they are about \$1,000 each. Commissioner Robbins made a motion to purchase two new benches for the new building. The motion was seconded by Commissioner George and carried by unanimous vote.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Harrell made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner George and carried by unanimous vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 PM.

G. Olivia Dawson, Mayor

Attest: _____
Kristin J. Wells, Town Clerk