



**TOWN OF WENTWORTH
MINUTES
OF
THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
WENTWORTH, NORTH CAROLINA
JANUARY 7, 2014
7:00 p.m.**

The regular monthly meeting of the Wentworth Town Council was held on Tuesday, January 7, 2014, at the Wentworth Town Hall at 7:00 p.m.

Council Members Present: Mayor Dennis Paschal, Mayor Pro Tem Evelyn Conner, Cheryl Moore, Dennis Paschal III

Council Members Absent: Iris Powell
A quorum was present.

Staff Present: George Murphy, Town Administrator
Yvonne Russell, Clerk/Finance Officer

Others Present: Patrick Kane, Attorney – Smith Moore Leatherwood
Erin Hughes – Rockingham County High School

Article I. Call to Order

Mayor Paschal called the meeting to order.

Article II. Invocation

Councilman Paschal III gave the invocation.

Article III. Approval of Town Council Agenda

A. Requests and Petitions of Citizens

Erin Hughes signed the speaker register to address Council regarding the funding request made by the RCHS Renaissance Club.

B. Approve/Amend Agenda

Mayor Paschal made a MOTION, “To add the following names to New Business, A., Item 1: Aaron David Bailey, James Talley Jr., Robert Witherspoon”.

Mayor Pro Tem Conner seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

Mayor Paschal made a MOTION, *“To add the following name to New Business, A., Item 2: James F. Harmon”*.

Mayor Pro Tem Conner seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

Mayor Paschal made a MOTION, *“To add Erin Hughes to the agenda under Old Business, Item B”*.

Mayor Pro Tem Conner seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

Article IV. Approval of Minutes for December 3, 2013

Councilman Paschal III made a MOTION, *“They stand approved as written”*.

Mayor Pro Tem Conner seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

Article V. Old Business

A. Post Office Project Update

George Murphy reported that Jeff Johnson is planning a visit to the proposed Post Office site with mechanical and electrical engineers. Mr. Johnson expects to finish the design work in approximately two more weeks, and he plans to be ready to put the project out for bid shortly thereafter.

Councilman Paschal III asked if there is an estimated date to break ground.

Mr. Murphy said there is not an estimated date at this time.

There was no further information to report and there were no further questions from Council.

Article V. Old Business

B. Funding Request – Rockingham County High School (Renaissance Committee)

Mayor Paschal invited Erin Hughes to address Council.

Ms. Hughes apologized for not having a school faculty member in attendance at the Council's November 7, 2013 meeting. She began her presentation by noting that the primary goal of the Renaissance Committee is to support students who are high achievers. She then explained that each semester the committee hosts a "Classic Cougar Celebration" which is intended to celebrate students who excel in vocational courses or have been nominated by a teacher based on their character and for being an excellent student. At the celebration, students are served breakfast and given "goody bags". The celebration cost approximately \$500 per semester for a total of \$1,000 per year.

Ms. Hughes stated that the Renaissance Committee awards four scholarships for high achieving students in the amount of \$250.00 each, totaling \$1,000.00 per year.

Ms. Hughes said there is also an awards ceremony for students on the A Honor Roll. She explained that the students are served breakfast and that they receive a t-shirt and goody bag as well. She said, "It's just really a good way for the staff and the community to tell these students that we love them and that we're proud of them".

Mayor Paschal asked Ms. Hughes to clarify the eligibility requirements for the scholarships.

Ms. Hughes said, "We ask them to be very service oriented. We like them to do a lot of volunteer work and community service type things. The idea is that they will give back to the community before we will give them a scholarship. Grades are also a factor."

Councilman Paschal III asked if the whole student body is eligible for the scholarships. **Ms. Hughes** said that was correct.

Mayor Paschal asked Ms. Hughes if she knew how much of a deciding factor a student's grades would be in relation to the other criteria. **Ms. Hughes** said she did not know.

There was a brief discussion about the difference between the A Honor Roll awards assembly, the Classic Cougar Celebration, and the scholarships. Due to his experience working at Rockingham County High School, **Councilman Paschal III** clarified that the first semester awards assembly is for all students who have a 3.0 GPA. The scholarships are for four seniors who meet the service criteria, and all seniors are eligible to apply for a scholarship.

Councilwoman Moore asked if the students who receive a scholarship are selected by a teacher.

Ms. Hughes explained that teachers select students for the Classic Cougar Celebration only. She said, “The idea behind the Classic Cougar is perhaps a student who isn’t necessarily a star athlete but is giving to the community and is very dedicated. They are nominated by a teacher and we give them breakfast and a goody bag and it’s more low key.”

Mayor Paschal thanked Ms. Hughes for her presentation.

Councilman Paschal III asked the Clerk/Finance Officer from which account were funds distributed for the Renaissance Committee’s request during the previous fiscal year.

Ms. Russell said the funds were distributed from the Cultural & Recreational account.

Mayor Paschal asked if enough funds were currently available in that account for the request being presented by Ms. Hughes. **Ms. Russell** said there was not and explained that funds would need to be transferred to that account in order to fulfill the request.

Councilman Paschal III expressed his concern in funding the full \$2,500.00 requested due to budget constraints that Council had to consider because of changes to the State’s disbursement of sales tax and utility franchise taxes, which is where the majority of the Town’s funds come from.

Councilwoman Moore asked Ms. Hughes if the program would not continue if the Town did not provide the funds requested. **Ms. Hughes** said the program would continue but the Renaissance Committee would have to find another way to raise the funds.

Mayor Paschal asked Ms. Hughes if the committee could come up with additional funding needed if the Town could grant \$1,500.00 to them. **Ms. Hughes** said she believed they could make it work.

Mayor Paschal made a MOTION, “*That we fund the request in the amount \$1,500.00 to the Rockingham County High School*”.

Councilman Paschal III seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

Ms. Russell asked Mayor Paschal, “Would you like to make a **motion** for us to bring back a budget amendment at the February meeting to reflect the transfer of funds necessary to cover the funding request?”

Mayor Paschal said, “*So moved*”.

Councilman Paschal III seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

Article VI. New Business

A. Consideration of Application for Board/Committee Appointment

1. Wentworth Planning Board

- **Brian Benfield**
- **Aaron David Bailey**
- **James Talley, Jr.**
- **Robert Witherspoon**

Mayor Paschal made a MOTION, *“To appoint Brian Benfield to fill the remainder of Nathaniel Willis’ term on the Planning Board”*.

Mayor Pro Tem Conner seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

Mayor Paschal made a MOTION, *“To reappoint James Talley Jr. and Robert Witherspoon for 4 year terms”*.

Mayor Pro Tem Conner seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

Mayor Paschal made a MOTION, *“To appoint Aaron Bailey to a 4 year term”*.

Councilman Paschal III seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

2. Wentworth Historic Preservation Committee

- **Cindy Shannon**
- **James F. Harmon**

Mayor Paschal made a MOTION, *“To reappoint Cindy Shannon to the Historic Preservation Committee”*.

Mayor Pro Tem Conner seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

Mayor Paschal made a MOTION, *“To appoint James Harmon to the Historic Preservation Committee”*.

Mayor Pro Tem Conner seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

Article VII. Public Comments

No one signed the register to speak during Public Comments.

Article VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Paschal made the following announcements.

- The next regular meeting of the Wentworth Planning Board is January 21, 2014, at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Hall Council Chambers.
- The next regular meeting of the Wentworth Town Council is February 4, 2014, at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Hall Council Chambers.

Article IX. A D J O U R N

Mayor Paschal made a MOTION, “*We adjourn*”.

Mayor Pro Tem Conner seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted by: _____
Yvonne Russell, Town Clerk

Approved by: _____
Robert Dennis Paschal, Jr., Mayor