

**Town of Pilot Mountain
Board of Commissioners Meeting
Monday, December 11, 2023
7:00 PM**

Members Present: Mayor Evan Cockerham, Mayor Pro-Tem Donna Kiger, Commissioner Rachel Collins, Commissioner Scott Needham and Commissioner Dwight Atkins

Staff Present: Town Manager, Michael Boaz and Town Clerk, Holly Utt

Call to order 7:00 PM

Mayor Cockerham called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. After a moment of silence, Commissioner Collins led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Adoption of Agenda

Commissioner Collins made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented and it was unanimous.

Presentations

Surry County Housing Study

Blake Moyer gave a presentation on housing in Surry County and surrounding areas.

Public Comment

My name is Kim Quinn

102 W Main Street Pilot Mountain

As you know, I am the director of the nonprofit Pilot Mountain Unites that coordinates the Hot Nights, Hot Cars event in Pilot Mountain. As you guys said in the press conference, the police officers were being paid on duty at the same time as being contracted out to the nonprofits for event services. Considering the police department's scheme to fraud the nonprofit organizations, we ask the town to remove the requirement for nonprofits to contract police and clean up.

This requirement, from my understanding, was put into effect when Earl Sheppard was mayor to reduce town costs. At a time when the town was in dire financial straits. This requirement opens the gates to fraud and the town is no longer in poor financial standing. The town has been able to pay the officers ON DUTY so that should still be feasible going forward.

Damages to Pilot Mountain Unites for the last 3 years are upwards of \$15K, depending on how many fraudulent officers were involved. Which remains to be reported.

And that doesn't factor in all years prior to 2021 nor does it factor in the effect on other nonprofits like the Pilot Mountain Civic Club.

Please remove the requirement for the nonprofits to pay for police and public works. It is the right thing to do.

Regarding the Downtown Pilot Mountain Page – The ABOUT section states:

EXPERIENCE DOWNTOWN PILOT MOUNTAIN WITH A VARIETY OF UNIQUE SHOPS, RESTAURANTS AND EVENTS.

The social media for this page is continually being used for reasons other than the downtown. Over 50% of the posts from last month do not promote the downtown. And very little posts are made about the Unique Shops and Restaurants. Specifically, the Thanksgiving Community Dinner which was at the Armfield Center not Downtown has been promoted in depth along with the upcoming Christmas Community Dinner. We request that the town either turn this page over to the downtown or rename it and change the ABOUT to match what it really is.

The Community Dinner has been promoted on the Town of Pilot Mountain page, the Visit Pilot Mountain Page, the Downtown Pilot Mountain page and the Armfield Center page. All of these pages are run by the Town of Pilot Mountain government. Using government staff at a cost to taxpayers.

It has been presented to the public that the community dinners are a government provided event. Asking for volunteers and sponsors on government pages. Using government staff to publicize, create social media posts, flyers, and registration links. Also providing a location at no cost to the nonprofit organization hosting this event.

This is not a government event. It is hosted by the nonprofit Pilot Mountain Development Corporation. A 501c3 created by the town manager, Michael Boaz.

There is no doubt that the community dinners are a thoughtful and kind event that brings fellowship to the community. But I hope that you see that you are taking revenue into that nonprofit yet using taxpayer funded facilities and taxpayer funded staff for an outside nonprofit. It is neither transparent nor fair. You are setting precedence that all nonprofits such as the PTOs, churches, community organization can use the town facilities at no cost, town staff and advertising on government pages.

I ask that you put thought into how the government pages are used. How the government staff is used. If the town continues to provide all these at no charge to one nonprofit, then it should be available to all nonprofits.

Consent Agenda

Commissioner Atkins made a motion to adopt the consent agenda as presented and it was unanimous.

New Business

AIA Funding Approval

Mr. Boaz stated that the Town had received a grant from the NC Division of Water Infrastructure to conduct further study of the water distribution system. This would assist in installing district meters and that will help with leak detection. This will help further the plan of what water lines need to be replaced based on that information. This will also include a new rate study. This is all grant funding with no match from the Town. Commissioner Kiger made a motion to approve Resolution R2023-09, authorizing town acceptance of AIA funds, and it was unanimous.

Administrative Reports

- The last day for leaf pick-up will be December 15th.

- Community Meal December 23rd at the Armfield Center, no pre-registration required
- Recycle pick-up will resume on Tuesday.

Mayor Cockerham asked if there had been any research on the overgrown lot that Dana Thomas had inquired about at the previous meeting. Mr. Boaz stated that it was a code enforcement issue.

Mayor and Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Needham– He wished everyone a happy holiday season and he’s looking forward to next year.

Commissioner Atkins – He stated that the Mistletoe Market, Polar Express and Christmas parade was great. He thanked everyone involved.

Commissioner Kiger – She wanted to celebrate our community as a whole. We’ve had an amazing year and events that have brought people into our little town. She stated that our town is making waves and being heard about in other areas. The success of the programs would not be possible without dedicated staff. She expressed her appreciation for each and every one that had a hand in the success of our town. She thanked the Public Works Department, Police Department and staff of the Armfield Center for all their hard work this year. She thanked Mr. Boaz for his leadership and transparency.

Commissioner Collins – She wished everyone a Merry Christmas and happy holidays. She reminded everyone of the events at the library coming up for Letter to Santa. Next year they are planning a Mother’s Day Tea. The Christmas events were great and she is looking forward to next year. She wanted to thank Megan and Paul Hutchens for all that they do for the town and events.

Mayor Cockerham – Thanked the Public Works Department for all their hard work. They are a small team and they do a really great job for the Town. He welcomed Interim Chief of Police, Adrian Tillotson. The Community meals have been a great success and he thanked everyone for pitching in and providing for each other in the community. He wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. He wanted the public to know that the town would be very transparent with the issues within the Police Department and they would release that information as soon as possible.

Closed Session – Personnel

Commissioner Needham made a motion to go into closed session and it was unanimous.

Commissioner Atkins made a motion to come out of closed session.

Commissioner Kiger made a motion to authorize the release of certain personnel information included in the conclusion of the internal investigation at the press conference and it was unanimous.

Other Business – No other business

Adjourn


Commissioner Kiger made a motion to adjourn and it was unanimous.


State of North Carolina
County of Surry

Town of Pilot Mountain
Board of Commissioners

Respectfully Submitted:

Attest:


Holly Utt
Town Clerk


Evan Cockerham
Mayor