

Town of Mount Olive
June 13, 2023
Regular Board Meeting
Minutes

Mayor Kenneth Talton called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. Those in attendance per roll call were Mayor Pro-Tempore Steve Wiggins, Commissioner Delreese Simmons, Commissioner Barbara Kornegay, Commissioner Tommy Brown, Commissioner Vicky Darden, Town Attorney Carroll Turner and Town Clerk/Administrative Assistant Sherry Davis. Town Manager Jammie Royall was unable to attend due to illness.

Mayor Kenneth Talton welcomed everyone to the meeting. Mr. Ed Cromartie delivered our invocation and Commissioner Barbara Kornegay led us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Kenneth Talton read the Conflict of Interest Statement; there were no conflicts.

Mayor Kenneth Talton requested a motion to approve the agenda. Town Clerk Sherry Davis advised that Action Memo 06-30 needs to be removed due to possible rebid or negotiations for the project. Mayor Pro-Tempore Steve Wiggins made the motion to accept the agenda once removing Action Memo 06-30. Commissioner Barbara Kornegay seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Kenneth Talton requested a motion to approve the March 23, 2023 special meeting minutes. Commissioner Tommy Brown made the motion. Commissioner Vicky Darden seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Kenneth Talton then moved to the Public Forum. He advised everyone to hold comments to three minutes.

Fire Chief Greg Wiggins of 401 North Center Street, Mount Olive, NC 28365, 919-658-3243 wanted to update everyone regarding our ISO (Insurance Services Office) rating. He advised for the first time we received a Class 4 across the board. This takes effect September 1, 2023. This rating will help keep everyone's insurance rates down. There is a difference of \$800.00 per year for a Class 4 versus a Class 9. He wanted to thank all the volunteers for their dedication and proving this could be accomplished.

Mayor Kenneth asked if there was an ISO rating for Code Enforcement. Code Enforcement Officer Justin Hill stated he received something in the mail recently regarding this matter.

Mr. Edward Cromartie of 313 West James Street, Mount Olive, NC 28365, 919-922-0398. He informed everyone that he attended a budget work session and there was some discussion of a possible property tax increase of seven cents. He stated between the recent Wayne County property tax increase of ten cents and the town's proposed increase it effects everyone negatively. There will be a property tax re-evaluation in a few months anyway. The last time this happened, he had a one thousand dollar increase on his property taxes. He has worked hard for his properties and cannot just raise the rent on his tenants because it is inappropriate. He said do not punish him because he works hard. He commented that election time is coming and he has no intention of running but he will not support anyone who votes to raise taxes.

Mayor Kenneth Talton thanked Fire Chief Greg Wiggins and Mr. Ed Cromartie for their comments and closed the public forum.

Mayor Kenneth Talton then moved to the public hearing to consider approval of the 2023-2024 Budget. Mayor Kenneth Talton asked Town Attorney Carroll Turner if the budget has to be voted on tonight. Town Attorney Carroll Turner responded if the board chooses to vote on it tonight that is fine. He did caution that he must be adopted by June 30, 2023 and there have been several budget workshops.

Mayor Kenneth Talton requested a motion to go into public hearing. Commissioner Barbara Kornegay made the motion. Mayor Pro-Tempore Steve Wiggins seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Talton asked if anyone wished to speak.

Fire Chief Greg Wiggins stated as a property owner, he is not interested in a property tax increase. However, he is also not interested in losing any services and cost are going up on everything. However, he would like to see a pay increase for the employees the two thousand five hundred in-town residents could not cover the cost for the whole town. Fire Department volunteers are unable to keep up with the call volume and training. There is a five-year rotation on the ISO (Insurance Services Office) rating. We need to find a way to be more efficient because he does not want to see anyone laid off. We have twenty-five volunteers and many of them will be unable to show up for training during the summer. Both paid fire and police personnel are carrying a lot of compensatory and vacation time because volunteers just cannot do it. We have to find a way to make it work.

Mayor Kenneth Talton commented that he appreciates what Fire Chief Greg Wiggins has done. He wanted to know if there were requests for additional employees in this budget. Fire Chief Greg Wiggins responded, yes one full time employee and raises for the current employees. If the money is not there, we have to figure out a way to have coverage on the weekends.

Utilities Director Jeremy King commented raising taxes is not always a good thing but we need to look after our employees. Over the years, his department has been cut by five positions. He is not sure why and this has left his department short staffed. He wants to know why the county gets to advance while we stay the same. We need to give a small amount to the employees who give their all for nothing. He appreciates all the mayor and board of commissioners do.

Mrs. Linda Boykin of 600 East Main Street, Mount Olive, NC 28365, 919-922-9364 advised that she is in favor of a property tax increase. She said none of us will go hungry and we need to keep services and employees.

ADLA, Inc. founder and director Mr. Danny King asked, what is the tax structure for businesses to improve. He stated there are just not enough revenues. What are some of the resources the town can reach out to? We have to be creative to take the burden off the business owners and improve revenue. He asked what happened to that creativity and resources such as fire fighter grants. Who is Town Manager Jammie Royall working with to navigate that forward? He recommends a committee to come up with some these resources.

Mayor Kenneth Talton stated he agrees with ADLA, Inc. founder and director Mr. Danny King and is in support of an additional fire fighter. He said our biggest challenge is our sewer moratorium. We are currently replacing and repairing inflow and infiltration and infrastructure. We have had set backs with contractors, weather and equipment in which we have sought litigation. We have to meet the requirements of the state before they will release additional flow. Several businesses want to come but we cannot allow any requiring sewer hookup. That includes new housing as well. We can continue to look at this situation and become more creative.

Fire Chief Greg Wiggins stated the Fire Department received a thirty five thousand dollar grant for turn out gear and air packs. They apply for that grant every year but this is only time it has been awarded to them since he has been here. They have been working hard for fire grants and even had Zoom meetings with state representatives. The fire department budget was cut last year by eighteen thousand dollars. He cannot find any additional funding but he has been working on it.

Mayor Kenneth Talton asked if the board would like to contribute anything. He then turned the floor over to Finance Director Jamie Butler. She presented a quick highlight of the budget. She advised trash fees would increase from eighteen dollars to nineteen dollars per month. This is expected to provide an additional thirty thousand dollars in revenue. She stated there is no property tax increase at all and this is a very tight budget. The General Fund budget is four million six hundred twelve thousand and one hundred dollars. There are no salary increases, health insurance costs have decreased and the amount for the surveillance cameras has been decreased. Our property tax rate is sixty- seven cents per one hundred dollar evaluation.

Mayor Kenneth Talton asked if there was another option besides a cost of living increase. Town Manager Jammie Royall stated the town still has one hundred thousand dollars in American Rescue Plan monies. They plan to use that to give employees a fifteen hundred dollar (net after taxes) one-time bonus. They plan to distribute it in August 2023. This is separate from longevity pay in December 2023.

Mayor Kenneth Talton wanted to know what the seven cents property tax increase would be used for. Finance Director Jamie Butler stated it would go toward employee raises, public works equipment and cameras. Mayor Kenneth Talton asks how much revenue a one-cent property tax increase would generate. Finance Director Jamie Butler responded twenty seven thousand and three hundred dollars. A seven- cent property tax increase would generate one hundred ninety one thousand and one hundred dollars. ADLA, Inc. founder and director Mr. Danny King commented that is not a lot of money. Mayor Kenneth Talton stated paving streets is expensive.

Utilities Director Jeremy King said our fund is self-sufficient, why can't we divide out the American Rescue Plan monies and let water/sewer handle their own raises. Mayor Kenneth Talton responded to Jeremy King, that is something to consider but we have to comply with state standards or we could be penalized. Every seven years tax assessors look at all properties in the county to determine if the property has improved, He heard someone state the tax assessor said he feels the market is stable. Mayor Kenneth Talton feels there will be an increase of six or seven hundred dollars on his property.

ADLA, Inc. founder and director Mr. Danny King thinks we need create a focus group. A relationship needs to be established with the funding groups. People need to know who you are before they will give you funding. You need to tap into people who have already done it. He is also concerned with the moratorium. Contractors can be bad; some repairs that were made to the Carver Cultural Center are terrible. Now the groups using these buildings have to go back and pay for this. Our Town Employees noticed the bad work.

Mrs. Doris Yates of 702 South Church Street, Mount Olive, NC 28365, 919- 299-4000 commented the sidewalk project was terrible work by the contractor. She said the town employees had to step up, repair, and complete the project. She stated Town Manager Jammie Royall was stubborn and did not stand up to the contractor. She commented do not hire your good buddies.

Reverend Dennis Draper of 310 North Martin Street, Mount Olive, NC, 919-222-8353 advised we have had nothing but problems with the Waste Water Treatment Plant Contractor especially relating to the spray field irrigation system. The contractor has had to redo the work three or four times. The engineer is also a problem. He can take you to the site and show you in two minutes. Until the job is properly completed, we will not come off the moratorium. There are one hundred and sixty spray heads that we are unable to run full time due to run-off. There are problems with the design and the progress is slow. Mayor Kenneth Talton thanked Reverend Dennis Draper for the update.

Mayor Kenneth Talton requested a motion to come out of the public hearing and back into regular session. Commissioner Tommy Brown made the motion. Commissioner Barbara Kornegay seconded and the motion was passed 5-0.

Mayor Kenneth Talton then moved to Action Memo 06-29 - Consider Adoption of the Proposed 2023-2024 Budget, Budget Ordinance & the Town Manager's Budget Message. Town Attorney Carroll Turner stated the board may proceed any way they would like. Mayor Kenneth Talton asked what the board wishes to do. He requested a motion to adopt the 2023-2024 budget presented tonight. Commissioner Barbara Kornegay made the motion. Commissioner Tommy Brown seconded the motion. Commissioner Tommy Brown commented they were originally presented with an unbalanced budget. They attended several budget workshops and he remember in 2010 employees had to be laid off. He does not want to see it get to that point again. The board is trying to get additional revenues and he wants the employees to have a pay increase but the money has to be there. We

ended up with thirty thousand dollars that can be used as contingency. We could give raises at a later time if additional revenues are raised. He does not want to raise property taxes for an employee pay increase. We should have been having this conversation six months ago.

Commissioner Vicky Darden said she has been fighting for employees to get a raise despite what other people are saying. She knows they are being followed around. She thanks God for the employees and advised them that not everything you hear is always right.

Commissioner Delreese Simmons asked if the employees would still receive the bonuses if we have a storm and the American Rescue Plan monies are needed for that. Finance Director Jamie Butler responded this funding is earmarked for one purpose but she will need to do an amendment to place funds so they are not spent.

Mayor Pro-Tempore Steve Wiggins appreciates everyone's hard work. The moratorium has us in a strong hold. We cannot have new industries such as Popeye's, Dollar Tree or Waffle House. In his opinion, the problem is the engineer not the contractor. We have appealed to the people in Washington, NC to allow us additional flow. We do want the employees to have a pay increase but bonuses would actually be more in the long-run and we are all unanimous on that. Mayor Kenneth Talton commented, we do want employees to have a pay increase but there is a lot to consider. We did not feel like this was the right time when people are struggling. We increased the property taxes last year by three-cents and felt like this was not the right time for another increase. He feels like this is the direction we should take. With vehicle tax and utilities increase, it is already hard on the taxpayers. The trash service increase of one dollar per month should help some. Employees are our greatest asset. He asked if there was any other discussion.

Commissioner Tommy Brown wants the board to be able to give the employees a substantial increase. Instead of two and one half percent, he would like to be able to give a fifteen to twenty percent increase.

Commissioner Barbara Kornegay requested this item be called to question. Mayor Kenneth Talton asked for votes in favor of adopting the 2023-2024 budget. Mayor Pro-Tempore Steve Wiggins voted yes, Commissioner Barbara Kornegay voted yes, Commissioner Tommy Brown voted yes and Commissioner Vicky Darden voted yes. Commissioner Delreese Simmons voted no. The motion passed 4-1.

Mayor Kenneth Talton then moved to Action Memo 06-31 - Consider Approval for Award Bids for CDBG – Infrastructure Grant 20-I-3610. Mayor Kenneth Talton turned the floor over to McGill Associates Engineer David Honeycutt. He advised the low bidder was Step Construction in the amount of \$696,970.10 with an alternate bid of \$280, 018.00 for service laterals. Commissioner Barbara Kornegay asked Mr. David Honeycutt to tell the board about Step Construction. Mr. David Honeycutt responded McGill Associates has worked with Step Construction before. They will be the primary and the subcontractors will be Tri-State Utilities and Sampson Storm and Sewer. He feels comfortable with that team who will be performing the asphalt and service laterals work.

Commissioner Barbara Kornegay wanted to know how long the project would take. Mr. David Honeycutt stated it will take the subcontractor one hundred and fifty days and the whole project will take one hundred and eighty days, which equal around six months. A construction meeting is scheduled for July 2023. Commissioner Barbara Kornegay asked what streets would be involved in the project. Mr. David Honeycutt advised Church Street and the area north of that. Grant Administrator David Harris of Harris and Associates commented Hillsboro, Franklin, Center, Short and Smith Streets. The sections of sewer lines that cause the greatest amount of inflow and infiltration will be replaced. These streets were the highest priority.

Mayor Kenneth Talton requested a motion to approve the award bids for CDBG-Infrastructure Grant 20-I-3610 to the lowest bidder Step Construction. Commissioner Barbara Kornegay made the motion. Mayor Pro-Tempore Steve Wiggins seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Kenneth Talton then moved to Action Memo - 06-32 - Consider Approval of Proclamation in Support of Juneteenth Holiday. Town Clerk Sherry Davis read the proclamation. Mayor Kenneth Talton requested a motion to approve. Mayor Pro-Tempore Steve Wiggins made the motion. Commissioner Tommy Brown seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Commissioner Barbara Kornegay reminded everyone that Carver High School Alumni and Friends Association is hosting a Juneteenth Celebration in Westbrook Park on Sunday, June 18, 2023 from 2:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M.

Mayor Kenneth Talton then moved to Action Memo – 06-33- Consider the Issue Elected Official Filing Fees for the November 7, 2023 Municipal Election. Town Attorney Carroll Turner stated N.C. General Statute 163-294.2 (e) provides for the board of commissioners to set their own filing fees for the Board of Elections. The current filing fees are Mayor- \$24.00 and Commissioner - \$6.00. He advised the board of commissioners they have the following options:

- 1) Increase the filing fee up to 1% of salary
- 2) Cannot be less than \$5.00
- 3) They can do nothing and leave the filing fees the same.

Commissioner Barbara Kornegay said to just leave the fees the same. Everyone agreed and no action was needed.

Mayor Kenneth Talton then moved to Action Memo – 06-34 - Consider Approval of Cemetery Plots Rate Increase To Be Effective August 1, 2023. Code Enforcement Officer Justin Hill provided a document with the current cemetery rates and the requested increased rate. The current prices for Oakview Cemetery (also known as Maplewood) are \$800.00 for the old section and \$900.00 for the new section. He is requesting an across the board increase to \$1,200.00. The current prices for the Carver Cemetery are \$800.00 for the old section and \$900.00 for the new section. He is requesting

an across the board increase to \$1,000.00. Urn Burials for both cemeteries are currently \$300.00. He is requesting an increase to \$500.00. He commented that we offer inside financing for the all cemetery plots and many citizens purchase with the pre-payment plan.

Code Enforcement Officer Justin Hill explained the increase is needed due to future development, increased costs of maintenance, materials and overhead expense. The contractor services are currently \$60,000.00 but will be increased by ten percent for the fiscal year 2023-2024. We have already sold fifty-four plots this year and thirty-six last year. He stated our plots are selling out quickly; the proposed increased prices are comparable to other cemeteries. He advises we are currently charged \$300.00 for urn burials and only charge the citizens \$300.00 so we make no profit. The estimated number of remaining plots in Oakview Cemetery is one thousand and in Carver Cemetery four hundred. The projected revenue for the remaining plots at the proposed increased prices are as follows:

Oakview Cemetery - \$300,000.00
Carver Cemetery - \$40,000.00

Code Enforcement Officer Justin Hill informed the board that Carver Cemetery would need expansion. Mayor Kenneth Talton asked if the needed land is available. Code Enforcement Officer Justin Hill responded, yes. Commissioner Tommy Brown stated for informational purposes, Wayne Memorial Park charges \$1,500.00 per plot. Our citizens are still receiving a deal.

Mayor Kenneth Talton requested a motion to approve the requested increases for both cemeteries. Mayor Pro-Tempore Steve Wiggins made the motion. Commissioner Vicky Darden seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Kenneth Talton then moved to 06-35 – Consider Approval of Resolution of Intent to Transfer Caver Cultural Center Real Property to 501 (c)(3) Organizations ADLA, Inc, Men of Faith, Integrity and Character and Carver High School Alumni and Friends. Town Attorney Carroll Turner stated he is ready to prepare the deeds for the transfer of these properties. However, there is an updated N.C. General Statute 160A-279 that requires this resolution to be published one time and ten days must pass before the transfer.

Mayor Kenneth Talton requested a motion to approve the resolution of intent to transfer Caver Cultural Center Real Property to 501 (c) (3) Organizations ADLA, Inc, Men of Faith, Integrity and Character and Carver High School Alumni and Friends. Commissioner Barbara Kornegay made the motion. Mayor Pro-Tempore Steve Wiggins seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Kenneth Talton remind the Board of Commissioners that any member present who does not vote is automatically counted as a yes vote.

Mayor Kenneth Talton then moved on to Action Memo - 06-36 – Consider Approval of Budget Ordinance Amendments #19 thru #21

Finance Director Jamie Butler presented the Budget Ordinance Amendments as follows:

Budget Ordinance Amendment #19

BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Commissioners of the Town of Mount Olive, North Carolina, that the following amendment be made to the Budget Ordinance for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023:

Section I. Transfer between departments — Fund 10

A. Revenue

B. Expenditure

Salaries and Wages	10-4530-0200	\$ (201000)
Salaries and Wages	10-4200-0200	\$ 20,000

Section II. Explanation

Transfer from Refuse Department (Salaries) to Administration (Salaries) in order to forecast costs until End of Year.

Budget Ordinance Amendment #20

Section I. Transfer between departments — Fund 30

A. Revenue

B. Expenditure

Reserve	30-8250-0600	\$ (80,000)
Contract Services	30-8100-4500	\$ 80,000

Section II. Explanation

Transfer from Capital reserve (30 fund) to Water Treatment (contracted services) in order to forecast costs until End of Year.

Budget Ordinance Amendment #21

BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Commissioners of the Town of Mount Olive, North Carolina, that the following amendment be made to the Budget Ordinance for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023:

Section I. Transfer between departments— Fund 36

A. Revenue

Grant Funds 36327.52.15.1	36-3470001	\$(6,706.00)
Grant Funds 36327.52.15.2	36-3470-0001	\$ (35,090.60)

B. Expenditure

Engineering	36-4300-0400	\$ 6,706.00
Construction	36-4300-0901	\$ 35,090.60

Section II. Explanation

1. Amendment to the budget for Grant \$1 36237.52.15.1 made by NCDOT Division of Aviation. Grant funds of \$6706.00 were received.
2. Amendment to the budget for Grant 36237.52A5.2 made by NCDOT Division of Aviation. Grant funds of \$35,090.60 were received.

Mayor Kenneth Talton asked if there were any questions. There being none he requested a motion to approve budget ordinance amendments #19-#21. Commissioner Barbara Kornegay made the motion. Commissioner Tommy Brown seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Kenneth Talton asked Finance Director Jamie Butler if she could provide a budget to actual at the end of year. Finance Director Jamie Butler responded yes, she could email it to everyone. She did advise that the books are not actually closed out with the correct figures until September 2023. She commented last year was a tight budget.

The Commissioner's Reports were as Follows:

Commissioner Barbara Kornegay

- She stated she should invite ADLA, Inc. founder and director Mr. Danny King to the planning grants committee. All funding is critical.
- She advised on October 3, 2023 we are having a walking tour of downtown.
- We are still awaiting additional bids on the Street Scape Design. We have one from Allison Platt, she designed downtown Goldsboro and did a wonderful job in planning and receiving additional funding to implement. It is a four- block area.

Mayor Kenneth Talton thanked her for all she has done.

Commissioner Delreese Simmons

- He thanked everyone for coming out tonight.
- He discussed Matthew Chapter 17 verses 24-27 – He said Pay to the Emperor, even Jesus paid taxes.
- He said taxes take care of services such as police, roads, and etcetera and are needed. Now he says what taxes do.
- He commented employees really do need a raise, maybe we can figure out a way to make it happen.
- He received a phone call from someone stating District 2 looks good.
- He said he does this job because he wants District 2 to look better not because he wants the commissioner title.
- He looked toward Commissioner Vicky Darden and she said, "Why are looking at me?"

Mayor Pro-Tempore Steve Wiggins

- He stated he met with the Veterans Memorial Committee and he, Commissioner Barbara Kornegay and Town Clerk Sherry Davis are going to go door to door to local businesses to request donations. We have a fundraiser scheduled for November 12, 2023.
- He informed everyone the East Carolina Council had a presentation on the American Flood Coalition Foundation. There is no fee to join; he will discuss it with Town Manager Jammie Royall to see how he feels about it. They offer a number of grant resources such as grocery reimbursement for elderly citizens.
- He talked about Gateway; the number of trips for this year is 1,041. They leave Goldsboro at 6:30 A.M. and come to Mount Olive by 7:00 A.M. three times per day. They have a circular route in Mount Olive starting at 7:00 A.M. The is only \$3.00 and very beneficial to seniors and people with disabilities.
- A celebration of the Juneteenth Holiday is this weekend at Westbrook Park.
- The Exchange and Rotary Clubs are hosting their annual Fourth of July at Westbrook Park from 5:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. There will be hot dogs. Ice cream, pickles, live music and the pickle train.

Commissioner Vicky Darden

- She thanked everyone for coming tonight.
- She reminded everyone about the Widow's group free clothing and other items give-a-way on Saturday, June 24, 2023 at the First United Methodist Church, Mount Olive, NC.
- She commented that she is tired of people going around saying she does not want the employees to get a raise. She is also tired of the Facebook posts targeting her and Commissioner Tommy Brown.

Commissioner Delreese Simmons responded she was the first one to. She commented you are a lie. Commissioner Delreese Simmons then commented to Commissioner Tommy Brown, you know what you did at my damn house, you told a lie at my house. Commissioner Tommy Brown replied you were not even supposed to be there Commissioner Delreese Simmons said to Commissioner Tommy Brown, when his son went missing that he told him to shut the f*** up. Commissioner Tommy Brown advised that he knew about the trailer but not about his son.

Commissioner Tommy Brown

- He announced Walmart is having their grand re-opening on Friday, July 7, 2023 at 10:00 A.M.
- He wanted to go on the record that he is not opposed to a property tax increase. We have a commissioner who has not paid taxes since 2018.

Commissioner Delreese Simmons said to Commissioner Tommy Brown, what about your wife and the HIPPA violations, you running around with all those women when you was chief and driving a town vehicle to Wilson making money on your other job.

Mayor Kenneth Talton asked everyone to please calm down. He asked Town Attorney Carroll Turner how this should be handled. Town Attorney Carroll Turner suggested ruling Commissioner Delreese Simmons out of order for interrupting both Commissioner Vicky Darden and Commissioner Tommy Brown and because of the foul language he used in a public meeting. Commissioner Delreese Simmons responded weren't they out of order too.

Town Attorney Carroll Turner informed the board they are to seek permission from the chair before speaking.

Mayor Kenneth Talton

- He reminded everyone that filing begins on July 7, 2023 at 12 Noon and ends on July 21, 2023 at 12 Noon. He encourages all who would like to serve to please file.
- He stated he has learned a lot tonight. He stated any comments made need to be verified and some of them should have been discussed outside the meeting.
- He said try to love one another and forgive.

There being no further business Mayor Pro-Tempore Steve Wiggins made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Barbara Kornegay seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Our next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 11, 2023 at 7:00 P.M. in the board meeting room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kenneth Talton
Mayor

Sherry Davis
Administrative Assistant/Town Clerk