

**MINUTES OF TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
OF THE
TOWN OF STALLINGS, NORTH CAROLINA**

The Town Council of the Town of Stallings met for its regular meeting on January 27, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. at the Stallings Government Center, 321 Stallings Road, Stallings, North Carolina.

Those present were: Mayor Pro Tempore David Scholl; Council Members Steven Ayers, Taylor-Rae Drake, Graham Hall, Brad Richardson and Laurie Wojtowicz.

Those absent were: Mayor Wyatt Dunn.

Staff present were: Alex Sewell, Town Manager; Erinn Nichols, Assistant Town Manager/Town Clerk; Police Chief Dennis Franks; Max Hsiang, Planning Director; Kevin Parker, Engineering Director; Jessie Williams, Finance Officer; Karen Reid; Human Resources Director; Brig Sheehy, Planning Technician; and Melanie Cox, Town Attorney.

Invocation, Pledge of Allegiance and meeting called to order

Mayor Pro Tempore David Scholl welcomed everyone to the meeting and Council Member XXX delivered the invocation. Mayor Pro Tempore Scholl then led the Pledge of Allegiance and called the meeting to order.

Public Comments

This item was done after Agenda Item 2, Agenda Approval.

John Short, 2002 Trailwood Drive, thanked the Council for addressing the Chestnut Lane median during the meeting. Neighbors were concerned about the unsafe median as it caused many problems. He stated the median was put in because of NCDOT regulations but it has caused numerous safety hazards including reckless driving and driving over the median.

David VanHelleMont, 1109 Headwaters Ct., lived in the neighborhood in front of the median since 2023 and experienced a near accident due to median. He stated cars pull into near houses driveways to use to turn around with close accidents. Mr. VanHelleMont paid the church nearby because he uses their parking lot to turn around.

Peter DeMille, 2035 Trailwood Drive, stated that GPS did not acknowledge the median and tell people to turn in where the median was located. The visibility at the median's location was poor and felt there would be a bad accident there soon. Everyone was putting extra miles on cars every day because of the median. The stated the new neighborhood across the street would have same issue in addition to delivery drivers.

1. Consent Agenda

- A. Parks and Recreation Rules and Regulations Ordinance
- B. Amended Budget Ordinance 11 – Stallings Municipal Park Sound System Phase 2

Council Member Richardson made the motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented with Council Member Ayers seconding. The motion received Council’s unanimous support. The *Parks and Recreation Rules and Regulations Ordinance* and *Amended Budget Ordinance 11 – Stallings Municipal Park Sound System Phase 2* are attached to these minutes and therefore incorporated herein.

2. Agenda Approval

Council Member Scholl requested adding Agenda Item 4.E., *Council Technology*. Council Member Richardson made the motion to approve the Agenda with the addition above. The motion was seconded by Council Member Hall and passed unanimously.

Public Comment was held at this point in the meeting.

3. Chestnut Median Removal

Engineering Director Kevin Parker explained Town Staff had received numerous concerns from residents of both Stallings and Indian Trail regarding traffic safety and efficiency issues caused by the concrete median installed on Chestnut Lane at the new entrance to the Courtyards at Chestnut subdivision developed by Epcon. The issues were expected to worsen once the 57 single-family home subdivision being constructed by Pulte on the north side of Chestnut Lane (in Indian Trail) was completed.

The concrete median was originally required by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) because neither Pulte nor Epcon were able to secure sufficient right-of way (ROW) from surrounding property owners to install left-turn lanes (LTLs). Without LTLs, NCDOT determined that left-turn movements could create traffic congestion and an increased risk of rear-end collisions due to the average annual daily traffic (AADT) on Chestnut Lane. As a result, NCDOT mandated that Epcon install the median.

Since receiving resident feedback, Staff coordinated with NCDOT, Epcon, Pulte, and the Town of Indian Trail to address these concerns and remove the median. NCDOT had granted written approval for the median removal, and staff was currently in the Encroachment Agreement approval process with NCDOT, awaiting further comments and final approval.

Epcon had agreed to contribute \$20,000 toward the cost of removing the median. In collaboration with Indian Trail, staff had also coordinated with Pulte, who agreed to cover the remaining costs for the median removal.

Staff requested Council authorize the removal of the Chestnut Lane median and approve a budget allowance not to exceed \$20,000 to cover any potential additional costs resulting from NCDOT's final comments during the Encroachment Agreement approval process.

Council Member Richardson made the motion to endorse and coordinate the removal of the Chestnut Lane median. The motion was seconded by Council Member Drake and passed unanimously by the Council.

Council Member Richardson made the motion that if there were any additional costs to remove the median resulting from NCDOT's final comments during the Encroachment Agreement approval process to have Staff engage the developers for additional funds and come back to Council for any additional costs requests. Council Member Ayers seconded the motion to which Council unanimously approved.

4. Administrative Employee Pay Study and Budget Items

A. Pay Study Proposal

Town Manager Sewell reminded the Council that as a part of its 2024-2025 strategic priorities, a comprehensive pay and benefits study was approved to ensure competitive compensation and alignment with industry standards. The Town engaged David Hill of the Piedmont Triad Regional Council to conduct the study who was experienced in his field and completed similar pay studies recently for other municipalities such as Waxhaw and Matthews.

David Hill, Piedmont Triad Regional Council, conducted the Administrative Employee Pay Study for the Town of Stallings and presented the Council with the findings of that study. The Administrative Employee Pay Study Presentation is attached to these minutes and therefore incorporated herein.

The Town budgeted \$50,000 to implement the pay study in FY24-25. The cost to implement the pay study for employees in FY24-25 was approximately \$32,800 with an annualized cost of \$98,575 not including any future CPI/pay step increases. The cost to implement the pay study for Town Council in FY24-25 was an additional \$12,722, with an annualized cost of \$50,885.

Staff requested any questions be submitted by February 12.

Council Member Richardson made the motion to excuse Council Members Ayers from the meeting due to work obligations. The motion was seconded by Council Member Drake and passed unanimously by Council.

Council Member Ayers left the meeting at 7:41 p.m.

B. Parental Leave Study

Human Resources Direction Karen Reid reminded Council that it requested staff research the feasibility of offering a Paid Parental Leave Policy. Currently, the Town did not provide paid parental leave for employees following the birth or placement of a child through adoption or foster care. Employees may utilize Short-Term Disability (STD), which covered 60% of salary for 6 to 8 weeks (pending approval), supplemented by vacation or sick leave for the remaining 40%. The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) provided up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave, which employees may use alongside accrued leave balances. The recommended policy allowed six weeks of paid parental leave as outlined in the attached memo which is incorporated herein to these minutes. Staff requested Council allow the development of a Parental Leave Policy by staff to bring back to Council for adoption.

Council Richardson made the motion to have Staff develop a Parental Leave Policy and bring back for Council approval. The motion received Council's unanimous support after a second from Council Member Wojtowicz.

C. Attorney Hourly Rate Increase Requests

Town Manager Alex Sewell explained that the Town Attorneys, Melanie Cox, and Mac McCarley (land planning attorney), were requesting rate increases for the remainder of FY25.

- Mac McCarley: \$300/hr. to \$325/hr.
- Melanie Cox: \$225/hr. to \$275/hr.

It was clarified by Finance Officer Williams that the rate increases could be absorbed in the current budget.

Council Member Richardson made the motion to increase Mac McCarley's rate to \$325/hr. and Melanie Cox's rate to \$275/hr. effective immediately. Council approved the motion unanimously after a second from Council Member Drake.

D. CPI Increase Cap Policy

Town Manager Sewell explained that per the 2024 Council Priorities & Action Strategies, Council requested staff present a policy capping CPI increases as outlined in the Pay Policy. The proposed policy capped CPI annual increases 5.0% per fiscal year, regardless of the actual CPI change. In cases where the CPI exceeded the cap significantly, Staff may review and consider temporary adjustments, subject to Council approval and budget availability.

Staff requested Council review proposed policy and suggest any changes to Staff.

The motion was made by Council Member Hall to approve the CPI Increase Cap Policy to which Council Member Wojtowicz seconded. Council approved the motion unanimously.

E. Council Technology (Scholl)

Council Member Scholl explained that he had an old Town issued iPad and would like it replaced. Council discussed the issue and held consensus to have Staff create a Council Technology Stipend Policy and bring back to the Council for consideration.

5. Adjournment

Council Member Wojtowicz moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Council Member Hall , and the motion received unanimous support. The meeting was adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

Approved on February 10, 2025.

s/Wyatt Dunn
Wyatt Dunn, Mayor

s/Erinn Nichols
Erinn E. Nichols, Town Clerk

Approved as to form:

s/Cox Law Firm, PLLC
Cox Law Firm, PLLC