

## **TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES, DECEMBER 10, 2024**

**SUMMERFIELD COMMUNITY CENTER (5404 CENTERFIELD DR., SUMMERFIELD, NC 27358)**

In attendance: Mayor Tim Sessoms; Mayor Pro Tem Lynne DeVaney; Councilman Jonathan Hamilton; Councilman Heath Clay; Councilman John Doggett; Town Manager Charles "Twig" Rollins, Town Attorney Jim Hoffman, Town Finance Officer Jennifer Kelley, Manager's Assistant/Events Coordinator Jeanette Dockery, and Acting Town Clerk Jeff Bacon.

Absent: Councilwoman Janelle Robinson.

### **1. Call to Order.**

Mayor Sessoms called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

### **2. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.**

Mayor Pro Tem DeVaney delivered the invocation.

Councilman Doggett led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **3. Introductions.**

Present Town Council members and Town Staff introduced themselves.

### **4. Consent Agenda Approval.**

- a. Review and Adopt the Agenda: December 10, 2024
- b. Review and Adopt Open Session Meeting Minutes:
  - November 12, 2024
- c. Review and Adopt Closed Meeting Minutes:
  - June 6, 2024
  - June 11, 2024
  - November 12, 2024

Councilman Hamilton noted errors in the June 6, 2024, Closed Session Meeting Minutes, specifically that the minutes incorrectly state that former Town Manager Scott Whitaker and Town Attorney Jim Hoffman were present, when neither of them attended the meeting. Councilman Hamilton also noted that the June 11, 2024, Closed

Sessions Meeting Minutes were incorrectly labeled as June 6, 2024, and needed to be adjusted.

Councilman Hamilton requested an amendment that an opportunity for the Town Council to respond to Public Comments be added to the agenda following item number 8 as item number 8b.

Councilman Hamilton made a **Motion** to accept the consent agenda as amended

Councilman Clay **seconded** the motion.

<b>Mayor Sessoms</b>	N/A	<b>Mayor Pro Tem Devaney</b>	YES
<b>Councilman Clay</b>	YES	<b>Councilman Doggett</b>	YES
<b>Councilman Hamilton</b>	YES	<b>Councilwoman Robinson</b>	ABSENT

**Motion carried (4-0).**

#### 5. Announcements.

Mayor Pro Tem DeVany expressed her gratitude to the Summerfield staff and citizens for the Christmas tree lighting. She said that all the citizens that attended had a good time and mentioned the children that performed at the event. She thanked the staff for their marvelous job. Additionally, Mayor Pro Tem DeVaney announced that the Summerfield Town Council will be in the Stokesdale Christmas parade on Saturday, December 14, 2024. She also announced that the Town of Summerfield's Founders' Day celebration will be held on Friday, May 16, 2025, and Saturday, May 17, 2025. Citizens can vote on who will be the 2025 Grand Marshall through the Town's website.

Mayor Pro Tem DeVaney announced several opportunities to get involved with Boards and Committees including two alternate positions available on the Planning Board, along with an opening position on the Board of Adjustment. Additionally, the Finance Committee and the Trails and Open Space Committee both had one opening, and two openings each on the Founders' Day Committee and History Committee.

Councilman Hamilton announced that the Town of Summerfield will be hosting a Rabies Clinic with Guilford County Animal Services at the community center on January 18, 2025, from 9:00 a.m. until noon.

## 6. Emergency Services Reports.

Councilman Doggett presented the Emergency Services reports.

## 7. Town Activity Reports for Council.

Councilman Hamilton inquired with Finance Officer Kelley about getting a copy of the check register for the monthly financial report. Finance Officer Kelley said that she would be happy to start preparing that.

Finance Officer Kelley said that the audit was submitted by the deadline thanks to the tireless efforts of former acting Town Manager and Finance Officer Dana Luther. Finance Officer Kelley said that they were working with the auditor to make sure that he could be present at the next Town Council meeting in January to present his findings.

## 8. Public Comments.

Mayor Sessoms opened the floor for public comments.

Speaker: Dwayne Crawford

- Address: 1106 NC Highway 150 W, Summerfield, NC 27358
- Comment: Mr. Crawford nominated Danny Nelson to be the Grand Marshal at the Founders' Day Parade. He said that Mr. Nelson has been involved with the Town since nearly the beginning and has done a lot for the community including cleaning up for the first Fishing in the Park and always volunteering whenever there is a problem. Mr. Crawford also said that regarding item number 10f. that he believes that the Town should not help organize, form, or curate a new business, but that it should be independent of the Town.

Speaker: Lexi Cline

- Address: 7966 Highfill Road, Summerfield, NC 27358
- Comment: Mrs. Cline criticized Councilman Hamilton for calling her words "defamatory" in a previous meeting and said that the people of Summerfield deserve representatives who listen, respond, and, above all, respect their right to question and critique.

Speaker: Teresa Perryman

- Address: 7401 Greenlawn Drive, Summerfield, NC 27358
- Comment: Mrs. Perryman inquired about item number 10f. on the agenda and asked what problem the Council is trying to fix. She said that the Government is not in the business of creating businesses. She mentioned that there are already 88 charitable organizations within the Town and criticized the name "Friends of Summerfield" being that it is too close to a previous organization called "Friends for Summerfield." Mrs. Perryman also mentioned proposed events for 2025 including an Easter egg hunt and inquired why the Town would want to take away from the fire department and churches who also do Easter egg hunts. She mentioned the Fall Festival and \$1,500 for a back-to-school event for teachers and inquired if that was only for Summerfield or for the entirety of Guilford County. She also mentioned that the amount for the dog show is not listed.

Speaker: Richard L. (Dick) Feulner

- Address: 3507 Windswept Drive., Summerfield, NC 27358
- Comment: Mr. Feulner expressed his gratitude to the Town Council for all they do to make Summerfield a great community. He mentioned that the Town had become a desirable location for those seeking to escape the city life of Greensboro. He pointed out that volunteers and Summerfield citizens help make and enrich the Summerfield community which has helped a lot of new residents come in. Volunteers have helped deal with unexpected situations and made things run a lot smoother. On October 5, 2024, Trudy Whitacre, one of Summerfield's most active volunteers, passed away. Mr. Feulner proposed that the Town Council establish a Lifetime Service Award to present periodically to individuals who have helped on a continuous basis to make Summerfield a better place. The award should be based on criteria developed and adopted by the Town Council. He proposed that the award be named after Whitacre in honor of her contributions and that she be the first recipient.

Speaker: Don Wendelken

- Address: 3406 Windswept Drive, Summerfield, NC 27358
- Comment: Mr. Wendelken voiced his advocacy for Danny Nelson to be considered for the role of Grand Marshal at the 2024 Founders' Day Parade citing Mr. Nelson's accountability and his dedication to his family and the Town of Summerfield.

#### 8b. Council Response to Public Comments.

Councilman Hamilton complimented Mr. Crawford and Mr. Wendelken's recommendation stating that Mr. Nelson is a very helpful person that volunteered for the Town and that he could understand why citizens wanting to have him as the Grand Marshal. Councilman Hamilton addressed Mrs. Cline by acknowledging that she is Councilman Doggett's daughter. He said that he felt like she was doing what she could to be featured in the Northwest Observer, but he felt that the Town Hall has been helpful to allow for more discussion. He acknowledged Mrs. Perryman's concern for the topics that she addressed and said that Mr. Feulner's idea was very thoughtful.

#### 9. Old Business.

No Old Business was discussed.

#### 10. New Business.

##### a. 2025 Town Meetings and Holiday Calendar.

Town Manager Rollins presented the 2025 Town Meetings and Holiday Calendar.

Mayor Pro Tem DeVaney requested that the July 8, 2025, Town Council Meeting be removed from the calendar citing that the Council and staff tend to take vacation during that time.

Mayor Pro Tem DeVaney made a **Motion** to accept the 2025 Town Meetings and Holiday Calendar with the amendment that there be no Town Council Meeting for the month of July and that in November, due to Veterans Day, the meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 12, 2025.

Councilman Doggett **seconded** the motion.

Councilman Clay seconded the motion.

<b>Mayor Sessoms</b>	N/A	<b>Mayor Pro Tem Devaney</b>	YES
<b>Councilman Clay</b>	YES	<b>Councilman Doggett</b>	YES
<b>Councilman Hamilton</b>	YES	<b>Councilwoman Robinson</b>	ABSENT

**Motion carried (4-0).**

**b. 2025 Town Events Calendar.**

Town Manager Rollins presented the 2025 Town Events Calendar.

Councilman Clay inquired about which events were new in the incoming year. Town Manager Rollins said that the Easter Egg Hunt and the Fall Harvest are the two new events.

Events Coordinator Dockery pointed out that other new events for the town include a vintage car show as part of the touch a truck event and a back-to-school event to support teachers.

Mayor Pro Tem DeVaney said that since she is a teacher she really appreciated the back-to-school event, but pointed out that the date of August 13, 2025, potentially could be an issue for families that are taking vacations before their children return to school.

Councilman Clay requested that the date for the back-to-school event be written down as "TBA" like they have done for the summer shred event and for a date to be chosen later. He then inquired about the goal of the back-to-school event. Events Coordinator Dockery explained that the event would be to help provide supplies for teachers.

The Town Council expressed their satisfaction with the calendar with the change requested by Councilman Clay.

**c. 2025-2026 Budget Development Calendar.**

Town Manger Rollins presented the 2025-2026 Budget Development Calendar.

Town Manager Rollins confirmed that a formal adoption of the calendar is not necessary and that the Town Council should mark the dates in their calendars if there are no changes.

**d. Founders Day Fireworks Contract Approval.**

Town Manager Rollins presented the Founders' Day Fireworks contract.

Town Manager Rollins clarified that it does require a permit from the Fire Marshal's office and part of the contract states that the Town will secure a fire permit and make sure that it follows all state and local regulations.

Councilman Doggett expressed his concern about a nearby horse farm, noting that a previous turkey shoot event was shut down due to noise issues. He also mentioned that approximately 50 percent of dogs are terrified of fireworks, and other animals tend to abandon their nests due to fireworks.

Councilman Clay inquired whether the fireworks event would take away from the Founders' Day events in the downtown area. Town Manager Rollins clarified that the fireworks event would take place after all the events in the downtown area had finished.

A citizen reported that a protected sea hawk lives atop the lights in the area. The citizen said that the Division of Wildlife said that these birds are tracked and protected, warning that any harassment, intimidation, or disturbance could result in the park being shut down. The Citizen said that he would check to clarify with the Division of Wildlife.

The Town Council decided to postpone this item and discuss it at a later date.

**e. Voluntary Annexation Forms and Process.**

Town Manager Rollins said that there are certain property owners who have expressed interest in learning what the process is for voluntary annexation into the Town. There were no updated forms available for the process. New forms were drafted for anyone who wants to be voluntarily annexed into the Town to fill out for the Town Council to consider. The forms and process were vetted by the current Town Planner and is compliant with North Carolina General Statutes.

Mayor Pro Tem DeVaney made a **Motion** to adopt the Voluntary Annexation Forms and Process.

Councilman Clay **seconded** the motion.

Mayor Sessoms	N/A	Mayor Pro Tem DeVaney	YES
Councilman Clay	YES	Councilman Doggett	YES
Councilman Hamilton	YES	Councilwoman Robinson	ABSENT

**Motion carried (4-0).**

**f. 501(c)(3) Organization (Friends of Summerfield) Assistance**

Town Manager Rollins presented the concept behind the 501(c)(3) Organization Assistance. He explained that during Founder’s Day Committee meetings, several individuals expressed their interest in donating money to specific causes within the Town. However, they lacked a means to do so and still get a tax deduction.

One of the ideas discussed was if a 501(c)(3) could be formed independently of the Town, but with the Town’s support, in order for the Town to be able to receive donations and the citizens could get a tax deduction for their benefit. Examples of such donations include park benches and sponsoring live music acts. The 501(c)(3) would establish their own bylaws, policies, and procedures. If anyone inquired with the Town about a donation, then the Town could point them in the direction of the 501(c)(3).

Mayor Sessoms said that he did not believe there was any action that the Town Council could take for this item. He believed that the only consideration on the Council’s part would be the consideration of acceptance of such donations.

Town Manager Rollins said that he thinks the mayor is correct. The Town does not need to blur the lines between government and 501(c)(3) organizations and if there are already a number of organizations within the Town of Summerfield, then maybe one of them would be willing to do it.



Mayor Pro Tem DeVaney mentioned that before she joined the Council, someone had donated money for a town clock, and that money remains in the bank to this day. She asked if the laws had changed since then, as she believed that individuals used to receive tax deductions for such donations.

Town Manager Rollins clarified that individuals cannot receive a tax deduction by donating directly to a local government. This is why they would prefer the donation to go to a 501(c)(3) organization, as it allows the individuals to claim the deduction personally. Businesses can donate to the Town and count it as a business expense.

Councilman Clay said that he liked the idea of a 501(c)(3) organization for the benefit of the Town. He agreed that it should be completely independent of local government. He encouraged the staff to research and use an established organization.

Town Manager Rollins asked the Town Attorney whether it would be better to recommend a specific 501(c)(3) organization or compile a list of them. Town Attorney Hoffman suggested reviewing multiple organizations that are structured to provide the desired services.

Town Manager Rollins said that he would task Events Coordinator Dockery to compile a list of 501(c)(3) organizations and start looking at their bylaws.

No motion was made.

#### **11. Manager and Council Updates.**

Town Manager Rollins announced that he along with Mayor Pro Tem DeVaney and Councilman Clay met with all the stakeholders in the Bandera project and that they informed them of what the Town's position was. They need to do more severe value engineering to bring the project to a close. Collectively as a group, they were able to reduce the budget by \$1.5 million. He also mentioned that they have another grant application in for an additional \$500,000. He met with the chairman of the Town's Open Trails Committee and that he has an idea to save more money on the trail. Engineering is doing their final touches on the 75% and he will be meeting with Councilman Clay and Councilman Doggett to consider their recommendation. There is no update for the water system. The Town is now fully staffed with the addition of a new Town Clerk, Mason Winfree, who is starting Thursday morning during the Town's staff retreat at Camp Weaver. He also gave a Sign update stating that he and Mayor Pro Tem

DeVaney have been making progress and are in the process of obtaining quotes of the actual sign, itself. He also mentioned upcoming events such as the Stokesdale Christmas Parade, Rabies Clinic, etc. Additionally, he said that he along with Councilman Clay and Councilwoman Robinson attended a Strategic Planning Workshop through the North Carolina League of Municipalities.

Councilman Clay said that when opportunities come available, he encourages the Town Council to participate in events such as the Strategic Planning Workshop along with the Town Manager as it gives you a template to follow and an opportunity to network with other municipalities.

Councilman Hamilton mentioned a previous idea of Councilman Clay's of a running tally of the projects to show how money has been spent over a course of time. Councilman Clay said that he had discussed this with Town Manager Rollins and that it is Council approved.

**12. Closed Session to:**

- A. consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege as provided under NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3)**
- B. address the amount of compensation and other material terms of an employment contract and to instruct staff or negotiating agents concerning the price and other material terms concerning real property as provided under NCGS 143-318.11(a)(5)**
- C. consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, conditions of appointment, or conditions of initial employment of an individual public officer or employee or prospective public officer or employee; or to hear or investigate a complaint, charge, or grievance by or against an individual public officer or employee under NCGS 143-318.11(a)(6)**

Mayor Pro Tem DeVaney made a **Motion** to move to closed session to:

- A. consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege as provided under NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3)**

- B. address the amount of compensation and other material terms of an employment contract and to instruct staff or negotiating agents concerning the price and other material terms concerning real property as provided under NCGS 143-318.11(a)(5)
- C. consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, conditions of appointment, or conditions of initial employment of an individual public officer or employee or prospective public officer or employee; or to hear or investigate a complaint, charge, or grievance by or against an individual public officer or employee under NCGS 143-318.11(a)(6)

Councilman Clay **seconded** the motion.

Mayor Sessoms	N/A	Mayor Pro Tem Devaney	YES
Councilman Clay	YES	Councilman Doggett	YES
Councilman Hamilton	YES	Councilwoman Robinson	ABSENT

Motion carried (4-0).

The Town Council entered into closed session at 7:47 p.m.

Mayor Pro Tem DeVaney made a **Motion** to return to open session at 8:09 p.m. The Council discussed NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3).

Councilman Hamilton **seconded** the motion.

Mayor Sessoms	N/A	Mayor Pro Tem Devaney	YES
Councilman Clay	YES	Councilman Doggett	YES
Councilman Hamilton	YES	Councilwoman Robinson	ABSENT

Motion carried (4-0).

### 13. Post Closed Session Business.

No post closed session business was discussed.

### 14. Adjournment.

Mayor Pro Tem DeVaney made a **Motion** to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

Councilman Doggett **seconded** the motion.

Mayor Sessoms	N/A	Mayor Pro Tem DeVaney	YES
Councilman Clay	YES	Councilman Doggett	YES
Councilman Hamilton	YES	Councilwoman Robinson	ABSENT

Motion carried (4-0).



\_\_\_\_\_  
 Tim Sessoms, Mayor



\_\_\_\_\_  
 Jeff Bacon, Acting Town Clerk