

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
TOWN OF MINT HILL, NORTH CAROLINA  
JANUARY 21-22, 2022**

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Mint Hill met in called session on Friday and Saturday, January 21-22, 2022. The retreat began at 1 p.m. at the Mint Hill Town Hall, 4430 Mint Hill Village Lane, Mint Hill, North Carolina.

**ATTENDANCE**

Mayor: Brad Simmons

Commissioners: Dale Dalton, Twanna Henderson, Patrick Holton and Tony Long

Town Attorney: \*Kevin Bringewatt

Town Manager: Brian L. Welch

Deputy Town Manager: Lee Bailey

Assistant to Town Managers: \*Sheryl Smith

Town Engineer: Steve Frey

Planning Director: \*John Hoard

Finance Director: Naida Sergel

Fire Chief: \*David Leath

Police Chief: Joseph Hatley

Town Clerk: Michelle Wells

\*Not in attendance for the entire meeting

Mayor Simmons called the meeting to order, ruled a quorum present and the meeting duly constituted to carry on business. He stated the purpose of the called meeting was to hold a multi-day retreat to provide Board members an opportunity to discuss and take action as deemed appropriate on short-term and long-term planning for the Town of Mint Hill. The Mayor and Commissioners were provided with a work plan of various topics for discussion in which Board members had expressed interest.

**Review Retreat Schedule, Format and Expectations:** Mayor Simmons, Town Manager Welch, and Town Attorney Bringewatt reviewed the work plan as presented to the Board; the work plan was a guide to produce an information gathering session and to facilitate a Board directed planning session. Staff indicated the plan was a guide and was not to be considered an agenda.

**Discuss Four Year Staggered Terms and Term Limits:** Commissioners Dalton and Long asked for this item to be placed on the work plan for discussion. Town Attorney Bringewatt referenced the Town Charter; specifically, Section 3.4.

**Sec. 3.4. - Terms; qualifications; vacancies.**

(a) Except for the initial terms of office hereinbefore specified, the members of the board of commissioners shall serve for terms of two (2) years, beginning the day and hour of the organizational meeting following their election, as established by ordinance in accordance with this Charter; provided, they shall serve until their successors are elected and qualify.

(b) No person shall be eligible to be a candidate or be elected as a member of the board of commissioners, or to serve in such capacity, unless he is a resident and a qualified voter of the

town.

(c) If any elected commissioner shall refuse to qualify, or if there shall be any vacancy in the office of commissioner after election and qualification, the remaining members of the board shall by majority vote appoint some qualified person to serve for the unexpired term. Any commissioner so appointed shall have the same authority and powers as if regularly elected. **State Law reference**— Organizational meeting, G.S. 160A-68.

Town Attorney Bringewatt stated the Board had options to consider if they chose to pursue changing the terms. The Board was authorized, by State Statute, to modify the terms of elected officials; or, the Board could add a referendum on the 2022 ballot to allow the voters to make the decision about the four-year staggered terms. The Board discussed the four-year staggered term option. Town Manager Welch stated Staff would be in favor of four-year terms because it helped with the implementation of the directives made by the Board and allowed for continuity.

The Board asked Town Attorney Bringewatt to bring further information back to the Board to detail the two processes and the length of time each would take to implement.

**Land Use and Development Ordinances:** Town Attorney Bringewatt and Planning Director Hoard spoke about Land Use and Development Ordinances. The consistency statement and what it provided for the Town, was discussed in length. It was decided Town Staff would read the consistency statement aloud at the Board of Commissioners meeting ahead of the vote. The use of Developers Workshops and the implementation of these were discussed. The Board along with Staff discussed providing applicants with direct and clear feedback during these meetings before the applicants invested additional resources for a project that would not have the support of the Board.

The Board discussed the multifaceted topic and thanked Staff for the presentation.

**American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA):** Town Manager Welch gave an overview of ARPA. In March of 2021, federal funding was directly allocated to states, counties and individual municipalities. The two installments had to be obligated by 2024 and used by 2026. Town Manager Welch indicated what could be used for Town Funding, Eligible Expenses and Projects, Accounting and Reporting, and Proposed Division of Funds. COVID response and adaptation, Premium Pay, Revenue Loss and Infrastructure Investments were the four categories for eligible uses of the ARPA funding. In depth discussions were held regarding the spirit and proposed uses of the ARPA funds. Some of the highlighted uses for the internal ARPA funding included 1.8 million at the Police Department to increase Staff, Information Technology and Cyber Security; \$600,000 at the Fire Department to allow for PPE, Turnout Gear, SCBAs and other regulated uses; Parks 4.7 million for proposed fields, courts, LED lighting, and, playgrounds; and, Administration \$700,000 for public outreach, software & systems, communications, digital signage & message boards and an online reservation platform. External allocation was discussed extensively with Servant's Heart and Mecklenburg County as conduits for distribution to help with the needs of the community. It was noted the Chamber of Commerce had submitted a funding request a few days prior to the retreat.

The Board, by consensus, decided to review the vast information presented and re-visit the topic on the second day of the retreat.

**Police Department:** Chief Hatley provided information related to the organization of the department, the core functions and services, level of services, citizen expectations and addressed the current gaps in service along with current and future needs of the department. Chief Hatley compared and contrasted the number of officers as related to other towns/cities. He stated the Police Department was working with inadequate manpower, an inadequate facility and aging/high mileage vehicles.

The recommendation to address the manpower shortage was to add three patrol officers and one sergeant bringing the total to 47 sworn officers. Four patrol vehicles would need to be purchased. The department was requesting 10 Flock license plate readers and \$10,000 in additional training all using ARPA funds. The funding was discussed, by the Board, in depth. The recommendation for 2022/2023 was to create an administrative Captain position, add 11 police vehicles and increase the number of sworn officers to 48 with budgeted monies and using ARPA funding. The replacement of five portable radios, 5 replacement in-car cameras, five replacement AEDs, 10 replacement laptops, five replacement workstations, re-format older server, and replacement tasers would be requested for the upcoming budget year. The proposed allocation of ARPA monies was discussed.

The Board discussed the information related to the Police Department; they also discussed the partnership with the Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Department.

**Fire Department:** Chief Leath provided information related to the organization of the department, the core functions and services, level of services, citizen expectations and addressed the current gaps in service along with current and future needs of the department. He spoke about the number of firefighters and fire stations as compared to other towns/cities. The proposed allocation of ARPA monies was discussed.

The recommendation to address the firefighter shortage was to add a total of three firefighters per shift in July of 2022 and to build the proposed new fire station on Lebanon Road. In 2023, the request would include three additional firefighters along with three battalion chief positions. In 2024, the request would include two firefighters and planning for fire station #3. In 2025, the request would include two firefighters and the building of station #3. An additional two firefighters per shift, would be requested beginning July of 2027; a training officer, would be requested beginning July of 2028; planning of station #4 would be requested beginning July 2029; and, building fire station #4 at Lawyers Road and Interstate 485 and add four firefighters per shift, would be requested beginning July of 2030. (Please note there were no request for July of 2025 and 2026 because of the projected retirement of Chief Leath.)

The Board discussed all of the information related to the Fire Department.

**Mint Hill Events:** Mrs. Smith stated the last Mint Hill Madness hosted by the Chamber of Commerce was held in September of 2012. The creation of Mint Hill Events was in the Fall of 2013. In early 2014, Mrs. Smith was hired as the Executive Assistant to support Town Manager Welch and Town Deputy Manager Bailey. Information related to the organization of the 501C3, the functions of Mint Hill Events along with the first Town run Mint Hill Madness in May of 2014,

was given to the Board along with a list of the Board of Directors. A summation of events, vendors and sponsorships of all of the events hosted by Mint Hill Events from 2014 to 2021 was provided. In 2022, Mint Hill Events would host Hop Around Mint Hill, Family Fun Nights, Tina Ross Afternoon in the Park, Mint Hill Madness, the Veterans Breakfast and the Christmas Tree Lighting/Parade; she explained the planning and implementation process to the Board of Commissioners.

The Board discussed the information related to Mint Hill Events.

**Website & Social Media:** The Mint Hill website ([www.minthill.com](http://www.minthill.com)) had been launched in January of 2021. It was more user friendly and allowed for information to be added for Active Cases. It was discussed a texting service could be used to update residents about road closures, unforeseen trash delays, etc. The Police Department already had the capability, and the Town could possibly expound upon the features.

**10 Year Land Use Plan Update:** As a recap, it was stated North Carolina required a Comprehensive Plan be reviewed every five years and updated every ten. The consultant, Ian Anderson, advised the Board about the project engagement via virtual, public forums, surveys and in person activities. The website had been viewed over 2,900 times, with more than 400 participants, 2,260 responses and 524 comments. The Community Topics included Sense of Community, Things to Do, Growth and Changing Demographics, Open Space Matters and Infrastructure to Guide and Support Development; the planning responses of these topics were also given to the Board. The consultant and Board reviewed mixed use developments, non-residential, employment centers, residential, transportation/mobility, parks and open spaces. Land Use considerations were brought before the Board along with a draft future Land Use Plan (with an activity center prototype) and policy recommendations. Mr. Anderson covered a lot of ground with the Board and said he would be before them at the February 10, 2022 for a Public Hearing; adoption of the plan, by the Board of Commissioners, would likely be in March.

The Board asked many questions and discussed the information related to the 10 Year Land Use Plan.

**Review of Friday's Topics and Overview of Saturday's Topics:** Town Attorney Bringewatt would bring back detailed information about creating 4 year staggered terms.

Mayor Simmons said on Saturday the Board would hear presentations regarding Public Works, Charlotte Water, Town Hall, the Roles and Responsibilities of the Boards and Committees, Creation of a Racial Diversity Advisory Committee, Solid Waste & Recycling, Budget, Town Park Development, Transportation, Sidewalks, Public Services, and Communications & Technology.

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By consensus of the Board, the Board voted to recess the meeting and reconvene at 9 a.m. on Saturday, January 22, 2022. Mayor Simmons recessed the meeting at 4:47 p.m.

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Mayor Simmons resumed the meeting at 9 a.m. on Saturday, January 22, 2022. Mayor Simmons, Commissioners Dalton, Henderson, Holton and Long were in attendance along with Town Staff.

**Areas of Congestion & Stacking:** Commissioner Long asked for this item to be placed on the work plan for discussion. There were areas of congestion and stacking concerns in Town. The places included Bain School Road at Bain School Road (Bain School Elementary), 7001 Matthews-Mint Hill Road (Dunkin Donuts) and 6400 Matthews-Mint Hill Road (Queens Grant Community School). Chief Hatley reviewed the issues, communication with the owners and possible solutions at each of the areas in question.

The Board discussed the issues surrounding the congestion and stacking.

The Board asked Engineer Frey to place signage at Queens Grant Community School and Dunkin Donuts to clear the roadway.

**Improved Street Lighting at Intersections:** Commissioner Long asked for this item to be placed on the work plan for discussion. The lack of proper signage and inadequate lighting play a role in the safety issues at the intersection of Truelight Church Road and Interstate 485 based on the number of wrecks/crashes. The speed limit along Highway 51 was 55 miles per hour and the congestion in this area may warrant better lighting. Engineer Frey stated the Town would install a light if it met the NCDOT lighting plan. The issue of Jake Brakes had already been addressed by the State of North Carolina, but enforcement of these laws would take additional manpower.

The Board discussed the potential of improved street lighting at this stretch of Highway 51 (Blair Road).

**Town Hall Administrative Staff:** Deputy Town Manager Bailey provided information related to the organization of the departments, the core functions and services, level of services, citizen expectations and addressed the current gaps in service along with current and future needs of the Town Hall. Deputy Town Manager Bailey showed the flow chart of delegation in the Town Hall. He explained the roles and tasks associated with each department as related to community services and administration. The roles and tasks associated with Mint Hill Events were also reviewed.

The Board discussed the information related to the Town Hall Administrative Staff. The Board would refer residents to Town Staff for specific questions and concerns.

**Roles and Responsibilities of Appointed Boards and Committees:** Deputy Town Manager Bailey provided information related to advisory and ad hoc (e.g., Land Use Plan Committee, Downtown Plan Committee, Small Area Plan Committee, Transportation Plan Committee, Pedestrian Plan Committee) boards/committees. The Board of Adjustment was a quasi-judicial board that made variances and appeal decisions based on applications made on an as needed basis. The Planning Board was a board that made studies of the Town and ETJ area to be studied, prepare and made recommendations to the Board of Commissioners regarding the achievement of such objectives, develop and recommend policies, ordinances and administrative procedures, advised the Board of Commissioners concerning the use and amendment of means for carrying out the plans, exercised any functions in the administration and enforcement or various means for carrying

out the directives of the Board of Commissioners, performed any other duties as allowed by ordinance or directed by the Board of Commissioners, reviewed and approved site plans, made recommendations on the Conditional District rezoning applications.

The Board discussed the roles and responsibilities of boards/committees.

**Creation of a Racial Diversity Advisory Council to Promote an Inclusive Community:**

Commissioner Henderson asked for this item to be placed on the work plan for discussion. The reason a Racial Diversity Advisory Council would be formed was because it would allow the Town the ability to embrace information and insights brought forth by people unlike ourselves. The term Diversity was defined and was used to convey "...all people in Mint Hill are meaningfully included...". Statistics were shown regarding the racial origins of residents in Mint Hill. Members would complete race and equity training. The goal would be to unite all people with the purpose of building and growing relationships together by 1) education, 2) communication, 3) training, and 4) partnerships.

The Board discussed the information related to the potential council creation.

**Solid Waste and Recycling Update:** Town Manager Welch stated the contract with RCS was purchased by Waste Pro in May of 2019 and would be valid until June 30, 2022. Staff spoke about the operations and implementation of Waste Pro policies as related to the Town. The costs associated with going out to bid were discussed. The operational increases were discussed by the Town Manager and the Board.

The Board discussed the information related to the Solid Waste Contract for 2022.

**Budget:** Town Manager Welch stated he drafted an annual budget pursuant to Section § 159-11 of the North Carolina General Statutes with the revenue and expenditure highlights along with a proposed tax rate that encompassed capital projects, external agency funding and other items as related to the budget workshops leading up to the draft budget submittal by June 1<sup>st</sup>. The Board would hold a public hearing and adopt a budget at the June meeting. Town Manager Welch reviewed the training and education incentives related to retention of Town employees. Cost of Living Adjustments were discussed and would be discussed further as the Board headed into the spring budget season.

The Board discussed the information related to the Town Budget.

**Public Works:** Engineer Frey provided information related to the organization of the department, the core functions and services, level of services, and citizen expectations. He highlighted the functions of the department: roads and right-of way maintenance, stormwater services, fleet maintenance, storm response, facilities maintenance, land development, park maintenance, special events along with other roles as assigned. Engineer Frey concluded the presentation by stating the Public Works department supported nearly every function and aspect of the Town. The proposed allocation of ARPA monies was discussed.

The Board discussed the information related to Public Works.

**Sidewalks:** Engineer Frey stated the Town had identified a few gaps in Town where the Board may want to invest in additional sidewalks. The possible projects included Lebanon Road (from the bridge to Green Glen Drive), Central Drive (from Wilson Grove Road to Barkridge Road), Bartlett Road (from Canongate Drive to the Stonebridge subdivision Sidewalk), and Wilgrove-Mint Hill Road to Lawyers Road. He explained CRTPO (Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization) and how it functioned.

The Board discussed the information related to the sidewalks; the Board asked Engineer Frey to look into constructing a sidewalk from Matthews-Mint Hill Road to the Police Department.

**Town Entrance Signage, Branding and Graphics:** Engineer Frey stated Mint Hill had non-decorative entrance signs that were unattractive and cluttered. He showed the Board a sketch of an entry sign and said they were approximately \$2,000 installed.

The Board discussed the design of the signs and agreed by consensus to eliminate the Town Seal from the sign. Engineer Frey would revise the signs by eliminating the seal and increasing the font; he would move forward on the approximately ten signs.

**Public Services Facility Update:** Engineer Frey gave an update on the 18.5 acres of land the Town purchased for the Public Services Facility. An abbreviated version of the contract would come before the Board in the coming months. The design build would cost between 15-18 million dollars and would include a Fire Department, Fuel Depot, Public Works facility, and a Police Department Storage facility. The Local Government Commission (LGC) allowed the Town of Mint Hill to carry approximately 100 million in debt but currently the Town only had approximately two million in debt. The Public Storage facility would plan to open in the Spring or Summer of 2024.

The Board discussed the update for the Public Services Facility.

**Charlotte Water Update:** Engineer Frey gave a high-level overview of the Charlotte Water projects in Mint Hill. He stated the Town had a great relationship with Charlotte Water. The Town of Mint Hill Staff would give approval on all sewer requests if services were available through Charlotte Water. He explained how the current projects were utilizing the infrastructure available. Engineer Frey stated if residents had questions about a particular parcel, they should contact Charlotte Water directly or call Town Hall and speak with him.

The Board discussed the information regarding the Charlotte Water update.

**NCDOT Update:** Engineer Frey spoke about the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) projects within the Town of Mint Hill. Transportation Improvement Projects (TIP) were explained to the Board. The projects included NC51 widening and Idlewild Road widening. CRTPO (Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization) was explained and how it functioned in these examples was expounded upon.

The Board discussed the information related to NCDOT.

**Town Park Development:** Engineer Frey gave a high-level review of the proposed park projects. Veterans Park on Fairview would consist of converting the two existing fields into artificial fields. Field 1 would be a full-sized soccer field that could be used as two youth fields. Field 2 would be used for football, a full-sized soccer field or two youth soccer fields. The proposed changes would transform the look of Veterans Park. The proposed cost for this project was \$2,000,000. The four lower tennis courts currently had a drainage issue; a complete demolition and rebuild of three tennis courts and two pickle ball courts would be utilized. The proposed cost for this project was \$300,000. The toddler playground would be completely demolished then a new inclusive playground would be constructed. The proposed cost for this project was \$100,000. LED sports lighting would be added to both the Veterans and Wilgrove Park. The soccer fields and tennis courts at Veterans Park along with the softball field, upper tennis courts and lower tennis courts at Wilgrove Park would be lit. The proposed cost would be \$1,350,000. Both Veterans Park and Wilgrove Park would have the parking lot resurfaced. The proposed cost would be \$270,000. The Brief Road Park would have the following amenities: Dog Park, Playground and Hiking Trails. The proposed cost for these amenities plus the gravel parking lot and portable restrooms would be \$700,000. The proposed cost for all of the Park Project Improvements would be \$4,720,000 of the ARPA funding allocated to Mint Hill.

The Board discussed the information related to Town Parks.

**American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) Continued:** The Board continued the discussion regarding the allocation of ARPA funding. The Board all agreed the proposed and projected allocation by Town Manager Welch and Town Staff fell in line with the services they wished to provide to the residents of Mint Hill; however, it was the decision of the Board to modify the external allocations listed. Servants Heart would receive funding. The remaining amount would be held and allocated at a future date to a future project/endeavor in an unassigned contingency fund. Various discussions ensued. The items which needed Board approval would be placed back in front of the Board of Commissioners. The Board would be kept abreast of items, in the works, that were overseen by Town Staff.

**Commissioner Comments and Wrap Up:** The Board discussed the intimidation factor of the Town Hall building and how many residents were not aware of what happened in Town Hall; it was suggested a Mint Hill 101 be offered (virtually or in person) to residents wanting to know more about local government. Weekly updates, from each department, were requested for the Board. The annual retreat format was agreed upon by the Board; discussion ensued about team building and training. Mayor Simmons asked the Board to reach out to the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners to help facilitate use of their ARPA funds to build the Ezell Park in its entirety. Mayor Simmons along with Commissioners Dalton, Henderson, Holton and Long thanked Town Manager Welch and Deputy Town Manager Bailey. Mayor Simmons thanked all of the Commissioners for attending and for being so productive.

By consensus, the Board unanimously agreed that the meeting be adjourned. Mayor Simmons adjourned the meeting at 2:17 p.m.

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Michelle Wells, CMC, Town Clerk