

**NAVASSA REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING**

April 18, 2024

7:30 P.M.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Eulis Willis, Mayor  
William Ballard, Councilman  
LaTonyia Lowe, Councilman

Jerry Merrick, Councilman  
Ida Dixon, Councilwoman  
Ernest Mooring, Councilman

**STAFF PRESENT**

Michelyn Alston, Clerk  
Landin Holland, Planner  
Matthew Kollmeyer, Police Officer

Scott Solari, Police Officer  
Dale Thomas, Police Chief

**CITIZENS & VISITORS PRESENT**

Joe Bryant  
Rose Terry  
Chiwale Thomas  
Clifton Ballard  
Ruby Brown  
Melvin Walker  
Darlena Jones  
Derwood Shaw

Minnie Brown  
Lee Curry  
D. Delesline  
Steven Smiles  
Roderick Brown  
Craig Suggs  
Rodney Grady  
Dorsey Jones Jr

Jon Roan  
Eric Wallen  
Thomas Merrick  
Damien Jennings  
Bobby Brown  
Denise Shaw  
Tim Clarksles  
Q Booker

Council Member Ballard led the Invocation.  
Mayor Willis called April 18, 2024, meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

**ADJUSTMENT & APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**COUNCILMAN MERRICK MADE A MOTION SECONDED BY COUNCILWOMAN DIXON TO ADD THE CAPE FEAR MEMORIAL BRIDGE RESOLUTION TO THE AGENDA. ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.**

**COUNCILMAN MERRICK MADE A MOTION SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN BALLARD TO ADD CEDAR HILL BLUFF CONCEPT PLAN TO THE AGENDA. 3 YEAS, MERRICK, BALLARD, LOWE, 2 NAYS MOORING, DIXON.**

**COUNCILMAN MERRICK MADE A MOTION SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN BALLARD TO ADD CEDAR HILL BLUFF ALTERNATIVE CONNECTOR REQUEST TO THE AGENDA. 3 YEAS MERRICK, LOWE, BALLARD, 2 NAYS DIXON, MOORING.**

COUNCILMAN MERRICK MADE A MOTION SECONDED BY COUNCILWOMAN LOWE TO ADD NAVASSA POLICE MUTUAL ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT TO THE AGENDA. ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.

COUNCILMAN MERRICK MADE A MOTION SECONDED BY COUNCILWOMAN DIXON TO ADD EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR PERSONNEL TO THE AGENDA. ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.

COUNCILMAN MERRICK MADE A MOTION SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN BALLARD TO ADD THE BUDGET AMENDMENT ORDINANCE TO THE AGENDA. ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.

COUNCILMAN MERRICK MADE A MOTION SECONDED BY COUNCILWOMAN DIXON TO ADD THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING UPFIT TO THE AGENDA. ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUETS**

COUNCILMAN BALLARD MADE A MOTION SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN MERRICK TO APPROVE THE MINUTES WITH NECESSARY CORRECTION. ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.

### **VENDORS WITH TOWN BUSINESS**

Mr. Joe Bryant spoke to the board about having a presentation at the Community Center that would feature the 135<sup>th</sup> USCT. This event would be 4-hours and will be done on June 19<sup>th</sup> which would be celebrating Juneteenth. He informed the board that the organization African American Heritage Foundation is organization that has supported the Town in their event.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### **Project Updates**

Holland reported the following.

- MUP—Bike path easement was received and will be recorded still need two additional easements.
- 3-Crossing project is 70% completed and DOT issues have been addressed with the estimate completion date of the design being this summer.
- NFW—from August to February the project run date with the ending being September due to funding. Bid packets close to being released and access to the water is still an issue for the town.
- Stormwater element is ongoing.
- The waterfront project is delayed working on bid packets once again there will be a pause in August and restart again in February.

### *Municipal Upfit*

COUNCILMAN MERRICK MADE A MOTION SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN BALLARD TO MOVE FORWARD AS PRESENTED WITH ALL THREE SIDES AND NO CHANGES. ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.

### NEW BUSINESS

#### *Proclamation for Clerks Week*

Mayor Willis read the Proclamation for Clerks Week and asked that the clerk stand to be recognized. Councilwoman Dixon shared her gratitude for the time and hard work being done.

55<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL PROFESSIONAL MUNICIPAL CLERKS WEEK

May 5- 11, 2024

**Whereas**, The Office of the Professional Municipal Clerk, a time honored and vital part of local government exists throughout the world, and

**Whereas**, The Office of the Professional Municipal Clerk is the oldest among public servants, and

**Whereas**, The Office of the Professional Municipal Clerk provides the professional link between the citizens, the local governing bodies and agencies of government at other levels, and

**Whereas**, Professional Municipal Clerks have pledged to be ever mindful of their neutrality and impartiality, rendering equal service to all.

**Whereas**, The Professional Municipal Clerk serves as the information center on functions of local government and community.

**Whereas**, Professional Municipal Clerks continually strive to improve the administration of the affairs of the Office of the Professional Municipal Clerk through participation in education programs, seminars, workshops and the annual meetings of their state, provincial, county and international professional organizations.

**Whereas**, it is most appropriate that we recognize the accomplishments of the Office of the Professional Municipal Clerk.

**Now, Therefore, I**, Eulis A. Willis, Mayor of Town of Navassa, do recognize the week of May 1 through May 11, 2024, as Professional Municipal Clerks Week, and further extend appreciation to our Professional Municipal Clerk, Michelyn Alston and to all Professional Municipal Clerks for the vital services they perform and their exemplary dedication to the communities they represent.

Dated this 18<sup>TH</sup> day of April 2024

#### *Street Paving*

Mr. Holland presented the board with three bids, Highland Paving, CM Mitchell, Atlantic Coast Paving. Two of the companies only provided bids for one street. Holland recommended CM Mitchell since he provided bids for both Forest Hill and Church Street in the amount of \$203,903.

COUNCILMEMBER MERRICK MADE A MOTION SECONDED BY COUNCILWOMAN LOWE TO ACCEPT CM MITCHELL BID FOR \$203,903 FOR THE PAVING OF FOREST HILL AND CHURCH STREET. ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.

**Town Council/Staff Dress Shirts**

COUNCILMEMBER MERRICK MADE A MOTION SECONDED BY COUNCILWOMAN DIXON TO APPROVE THE PURCHASING OF SHIRTS FOR BOARD AND STAFF IN THE AMOUNT OF \$488.84. ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.

**Proclamation for National Cities, Towns and Villages Month**

Mayor Willis read the Proclamation for National Cities, Towns and Villages Month.

COUNCILMAN BALLARD MADE A MOTION SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN MERRICK TO ADOPT THE PROCLAMATION FOR NATIONAL CITIES, TOWNS AND VILLAGES MONTH. ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.

**National Cities, Towns and Villages Month**

**Whereas**, the National League of Cities was founded in 1924 in Lawrence, Kansas, as the American Municipal Association by state municipal leagues seeking more coordination and national representation as cities, towns, and villages expanded rapidly.

**Whereas**, the nonpartisan National League of Cities is the oldest and largest organization representing municipal governments throughout the United States, representing the interests of more than 19,000 cities, towns, and villages across the country.

**Whereas today**, the National League of Cities works in partnership with 49 state municipal leagues across the country to strengthen local leadership, drive innovation, and influence the federal policies that impact local programs and operations.

**Whereas**, as the voice of cities, towns, and villages in Washington, DC, the National League of Cities has successfully championed federal legislative solutions that support municipalities and has worked closely with Congress and the Executive Branch to educate policymakers on the realities of local implementation.

**Whereas**, Town of Navassa is a proud member of the National League of Cities, and has benefited from the organization's research, technical expertise, federal advocacy and opportunities to learn from other local governments.

**Whereas**, local governments are the bedrock of American democracy, providing 336 million residents with the most accountable, responsive, inclusive, ethical, and transparent government in the world.

**Whereas**, from the nation's smallest villages to its largest cities, America's local governments have been essential in transforming the United States of America into the greatest, most influential nation in world history.

**Whereas**, the Town of Navassa was first incorporated in 1977 and is proudly served today by Council members and a municipal workforce of six dedicated public servants.

**Now, therefore, be it resolved that** Town of Navassa hereby proclaims May 2024 as **National Cities, Towns, and Villages Month** in celebration of America's local governments and the National League of Cities' historic centennial anniversary.

**NCDOT Reimbursement Mowing Agreement**

COUNCILMAN MERRICK MADE A MOTION SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN MOORING TO APPROVE AND ACCEPT THE NCDOT REIMBURSEMENT MOWING AGREEMENT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$5,203.41. ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.

**Facility Signage Bid**

Councilman Merrick asked that this item be tabled until next month meeting so board could review quotes.

COUNCILMAN MERRICK MADE A MOTION SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN BALLARD TO TABLE THE FACILITY SIGNAGE BID UNTIL NEXT MONTH MEETING. ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.

**Audit Contract with Nunn, Brashear & Uzzell**

COUNCILMAN MERRICK MADE A MOTION SECONDED BY COUNCILWOMAN DIXON TO ACCEPT AND APPROVE THE AUDIT CONTRACT WITH NUNN, BRASHEAR & UZZELL. ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.

**African American Heritage Foundation Request**

COUNCILWOMAN DIXON MADE A MOTION SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN MERRICK TO APPROVE REQUEST FROM AAHF. ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.

**Grounds Maintenance Bid**

The board discussed the bids with Councilman Mooring stating that last year contract will remain and all streets within the Town and Phoenix Park needs to be awarded tonight.

COUNCILMAN MOORING MADE A MOTION SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN MERRICK TO AWARD THOSE JOBS WITH THE STIPULATION IN DETAIL LANGUAGE THAT WEED EATING AROUND SIGNS BE INCLUDED IN CONTRACTS.

Councilwoman Lowe oppose two bidders that came in after the April 1<sup>st</sup> deadline and asked that Mapson and Brown be removed. Councilman Merrick stated because no one else turn in a bid for that particular job that is why he was considered after the deadline.

COUNCILMAN MOORING MADE A MOTION SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN MERRICK TO AWARD OTIS MAPSON THE CONTRACTS FOR STREETS AND PHOENIX PARK MOWING. 4 YEAS MERRICK, MOORING, DIXON, BALLARD, 1 NAY LOWE

## **Cape Fear Memorial Bridge Resolution**

**COUNCILMAN MERRICK MADE A MOTION SECONDED BY COUNCILWOMAN DIXON TO ACCEPT AND ADOPT THE CAPE FEAR MEMORIAL BRIDGE RESOLUTION. ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.**

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION'S (NCDOT) APPLICATION TO THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION'S MULTIMODAL PROJECT DISCRETIONARY GRANT (MPDG) FOR THE REPLACEMENT OF THE CAPE FEAR MEMORIAL BRIDGE

WHEREAS, the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge, linking US 17, US 76, and US 421 over the Cape Fear River, has been an indispensable conduit for regional transportation and economic development.

WHEREAS, the replacement of the bridge adds an additional lane of capacity for the projected 94,900 vehicles per day that will travel it in 2050 compared to the 2023 base year counts of 65,200 vehicles per day.

WHEREAS, the replacement of the bridge also adds a 15' multi-use path which will serve as the only bicycle and pedestrian connection between New Hanover County and Brunswick County, which does not currently exist today.

WHEREAS, the bridge is a critical element in facilitating freight movement to and from the Port of Wilmington, ranked number 1 as the most productive port in North America and 44<sup>th</sup> in the world for 2022, underlining its importance to the regional economy.

WHEREAS, assessments from the 2021 Routine Inspection Report designate the bridge as functionally obsolete.

WHEREAS, given the repeated financial investments for its rehabilitation, including \$15M in 2019 and an anticipated \$15M-\$20M in 2024, accompanied by a 20-week one-direction (10-weeks in each direction) traffic shutdown, there exists a pressing imperative for a holistic solution.

WHEREAS, the proposed alternatives and design considerations harmonize with both regional and statewide infrastructure development goals, ensuring sustained and efficient traffic flow on one of North Carolina's key Strategic Transportation Corridors.

WHEREAS, the most recently available crash data, drawn from the bridge and its contiguous roadways, underscore the urgency of the situation, with trends consistently surpassing statewide crash metrics. The project is poised to mitigate these crash rates.

WHEREAS, beyond ameliorating current traffic and safety challenges, the replacement of the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge stands to stimulate regional economic resurgence, amplify the operational efficacy of the Port of Wilmington, and foster economic opportunities in neighboring underserved areas.

WHEREAS, this initiative holds pronounced potential environmental dividends, including a marked reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and bolstered infrastructure resilience against natural hazards.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Town of Navassa unequivocally expresses its support and endorsement for the NCDOT's application for Federal Discretionary Grants for the much-needed replacement of the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge.

## **PARKS AND RECREATION**

Councilwoman Lowe asked the board to appoint Mr. Lee Curry to the Parks and Recreation Board to replace her.

**COUNCILWOMAN LOWE MADE A MOTION SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN MERRICK TO APPOINT MR. LEE CURRY TO THE PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD. ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.**

**PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

**Budget Ordinance Amendment**

**COUNCILMAN MERRICK MADE A MOTION SECONDED BY COUNCILWOMAN LOWE TO APPROVE AND ADOPT THE BUDGET AMENDMENT ORDINANCE. ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.**

**BE IT ORDAINED**, by the Governing Board of the Town of Navassa, North Carolina, that the following amendments are made to the annual budget ordinance for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024.

Section 1. To amend the General and Powell Fund to transfer funds as follows:

**General Fund Amendments**

| <b><u>Account Number</u></b> | <b><u>Account Description</u></b> | <b><u>Increase</u></b> | <b><u>(Decrease)</u></b> |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 10-4999                      | Appropriate Fund Balance          |                        | \$203,903.60             |
| 10-5740-521                  | Maint/Repair-Infrastructure       | \$203,903.60           |                          |

Adopted this on the 18<sup>th</sup> day of April 2024.

**Cedar Hill Bluff Concept Plan**

A presentation was given to the board regarding the project and Mayor Willis expressed his concerns about the project. He made reference to the following points.

- \*You cannot have a lake in the middle of a PUD
- \*Sand minding is still on going.
- \*Will the mining increase the size of the lake condition use permit where it is.
- \* Concerned about not having a collector street plan.

**COUNCILMAN MERRICK MADE A MOTION SECONDED BY COUNCILWOMAN LOWE TO APPROVE THE CEDAR HILL BLUFF CONCEPT PLAN. 3 YEAS MERRICK, LOWE, BALLARD, 2 NAYS MOORING, DIXON.**

**Cedar Hill Bluff Alternative Connector Request**

Mayor Willis expressed concerns about the recommendation from the planning board regarding this project, asking Was there a quorum, Was the Planning Board Chair present and did they have Technical Support. ‘

Mr. Holland addressed the concerns stating that all three issues he mentions was in compliance.

**COUNCILMAN MERRICK MADE A MOTION SECONDED BY COUNCILWOMAN LOWE TO APPROVE THE CEDAR HILL BLUFF ALTERNATIVE CONNECTOR REQUEST. 3 YEAS MERRICK, BALLARD, LOWE, 2 NAYS DIXON, MOORING.**

**POLICE DEPARTMENT**

Mr. Holland presented the Navassa Police Mutual Assistance Agreement that Chief Thomas will bring forth to Town of Leland Chief.

**COUNCILMAN MERRICK MADE A MOTION SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN MOORING TO APPROVE THE NAVASSA POLICE MUTUAL ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT WITH TOWN OF LELAND. ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.**

**COUNCILMEMBER REPORT**

Mayor Willis spoke about the upcoming Community Trash Pick Up and encouraged the citizens to join in the efforts for beautification of the Town.

Councilwoman Dixon spoke about the curve on Cedar Hill Road stating that some markings have been done by NCDOT who has been assisting her with the request for improvement in that area.

Councilman Mooring informed the public that the Positive Hoops Basketball Project will be begin at the end of May. Also, spoke about the two-day workshop that the board held regarding the comprehensive plan and asked the public to support when it's time for citizens input.

Mayor thanked Councilmembers Mooring and Ballard for attending both days of the comprehensive workshop.

**CITIZENS TO BE HEARD**

Minnie Brown informed the board and public that a former volunteer at the Fire Department had died.

Derwood Shaw addressed the Bike Path Trail reminding the board that the overgrowth needs to be dealt with and that particular job is not just a seasonal job.

Damien Jennings asked was there an issue with the naming of the I140 bridge being named after Bobby Brown due to some rumors of a potential partition. What is the issue with the naming of the new town hall building?

**EXECUTIVE SESSION-PERSONNEL**

**COUNCILMAN BALLARD MADE A MOTION SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN MERRICK TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS PERSONNEL. ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.**



COUNCILMAN MERRICK MADE A MOTION SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN BALLARD TO COME OUT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION. ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.

COUNCILMAN BALLARD MADE A MOTION SECONDED BY COUNCILWOMAN DIXON TO HIRE ERIC WALLEN AS PART TIME OFFICER AT THE AGREED UPON RATE. 3 YEAS DIXON, BALLARD, MOORING, 2 NAYS MERRICK, LOWE.

**ADJOURNMENT**

COUNCILMAN MERRICK MADE A MOTION SECONDED BY COUNCILWOMAN LOWE TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.

**ATTEST:**

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Town Clerk

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Mayor Pro Tem