

Maiden Town Council Regular Meeting
Tuesday, April 11, 2023, 6:00 PM
Council Chamber, Maiden Town Hall

The Maiden Town Council met on Tuesday, April 11, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. for their regular scheduled meeting, held in the Town of Maiden Council Chamber.

Present for the meeting were, Mayor Max Bumgarner Jr., Mayor Pro Tem Beth Rudisill, Councilmembers Bob Sigmon, Ronnie Williams, Cameron Ramseur, and Holly-Crafton-Lay.

Also, present were Town Manager Todd Herms, Town Attorney Wesley Deaton, and Town Clerk-HR Officer Wanda Barnes

Others attending: See attached sheet.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Mayor Max Bumgarner Jr. The invocation was given by Mayor Max Bumgarner, Jr.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Max Bumgarner Jr.

4. Approval of the Agenda

MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILMEMBER RONNIE WILLIAMS AND COUNCILMEMBER BOB SIGMON TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 5-0.

5. Approval of Meeting Minutes

MOTION WAS MADE BY MAYOR PRO TEM BETH RUDISILL AND SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER HOLLY CRAFTON-LAY TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 5-0.

6. Citizen Request & Comments

Town Manager Mr. Todd Herms states, our new customer service person is Ms. Jennifer Rose Edwards. She came to us from the Catawba County Clerk Court office.

Citizen Mr. Rick Lawing states, I went off council 95 maybe 96. it's been a long time I haven't even been to a council meeting since then. I should have done better. I would like to address you after talking with Todd. I was asking, what the town council of Maiden going to do about our tax rate. Basically, he told me that we weren't going to change it. You were going to keep the same rate you had. I would like to go over and some of the effects it had on me. I'm going to give you a couple of examples of how much the taxes have gone up. My name is Rick Lowing, at 1205 E Main St. It went up 15% which was the lowest one of my taxes, 601 E Boyd St. That went up 91%. 317 E Boyd St went up from \$300,700 to \$514,000 that is a 71% increase. I purchased the new mini warehouses on the other side of town, and I did a \$650,000, addition the tax reevaluation went from \$354,000 to \$1,537,000. That is a 334% increase. My town taxes were \$1348 they are going to \$5843. I had probably 8 properties here, this is just part of them. They are going up to \$8217. My duplex 420 Oak Park Road went up from \$127,000 to \$249,000 that is a 51% increase. All the apartments at 310 E Main St. they were reevaluated from \$203,000 to \$421,000 that is a 49% increase. I didn't tell you the total, but it was like \$8217 increase. That is almost a \$10,000 increase in taxes. Dwayne is my brother-in-law; we own properties together one of them went up from 38,800 to 85,100 a 20% increase in taxes. Basically \$12,000, my taxes for the town of maiden are going up. My clients and customers are calling me all the time, what should I do. I told them it will be the town of Maiden who should adjust their tax rate. I think every other municipality in Catawba County is readjusting the rate. My question to you is why the town need

all this extra money? I have two different figures. They say its and average of a 70% increase. The Town of Maiden is going to have \$4,723,000. I was on town board for four years and Fire Chief for the town. I did a budget the town. I talk to Todd, and he said the budget is not going up. I can afford this, but what about the people that cannot afford the difference in taxes? Why the town need three million dollars more in revenue? Town Manager Mr. Todd Herms states, it's not exactly \$3 million. Our largest taxpayer gets a taxpayer gets a tax incentive of eight percent. The revenue comes in, but our expenditures are also going up by more than what our revenues. Mr. Lawing states, we looked at like Ethan Allen, their taxes quadruple. Your dad's plant quadruple. Did he not say anything about his taxes going up 400%? He is a businessman, I'm sure he is concern. I told people do not worry about it. They are going to readjust the rates. It is my understanding that Catawba County and every municipality is adjusting the rate. Mayor Max Bumgarner states, we have until July 1st to finalize what we are going to do. Town Manager Mr. Todd Herms states that I would recommend it to the council. Mr. Lawing on states, when I was on council, they want you to have three months in surplus. Mr. Herms states eight percent. If you have eight percent, you are in trouble. I do not know what other cities and towns are doing, but when I develop a budget for this town, I look at a long-term plan. I look at five to seven years out. Unless something major happens, our rate has been thirty-eight cent for the last twelve years and it will be thirty-eight cent for the next twelve years. I do not think there is another city manager in this county that can look you in the eye and tell you that. Mr. Lawing states, I agree, we have Apple and Microsoft is coming. All of us get benefits from that. Town Manager Mr. Todd Herms states, the amount that we bring in from residential is less than 10% of one line. We are going to bring in \$990,000.00 in residential taxes this year. Mr. Herms states, that is very few departments the amount will cover. Mr. Lawing states, we did a little research; Maiden property tax was \$6,675,000.00. The City of Newton was \$6,475,000.00, their taxes are less than ours. They took in less tax, and they are three time larger than Maiden. Conover is \$6,232,000.00. We took in more tax than all of them. City of Hickory \$31,000,000.00. Mr. Herms states, did you look at their tax rate? Mr. Lawing states, I look at bottom-line, I am a businessman. I'm on different boards and we set the budget on what is needed. I know excess is needed. Mr. Herms states, I asked my Public Works Director to do this in the last hour. He picked out a few things we bought in the last month, fuel is up 71.3%, motor oil is up 48%, street signs up 44.3%, asphalt up 48.1%, concrete up 90.9%, copper up 112%, meters up 106%. When you have a tax rate as low as thirty-eight cents, we do not have a lot of room for movement. By your numbers you say we are collecting three million dollars more, but 80% of that goes back in incentives to two of the town's largest taxpayers. It is not a real number. When I do the budget, I show them what we collected in taxes and what must go back out. This year in incentive payment, it is almost five million dollars. Mr. Lawing states, the numbers you throughout there do not even apply to this budget. What you say the average house in Maiden. Mr. Herms states, \$221,000.00. Mr. Lawing states, that mean those houses are going up \$600.00 to \$700.00. You think an elderly person can afford to pay that with everything else is up? Mr. Herms states, if they are on a fixed income, under state statues they can get their taxes lowered by 50%. Mayor Pro Tem, Beth Rudisill states, to be transparent, we have not made in definite decisions. We as a town has supplemented our resident's cost for trash pick-up and other services. We decided to collect what it cost. All those costs are increasing. We tried to offer breaks in those areas. At thirty-eight cents, that is low. I do not see cities staying where they are at. I will be surprised if you do not see an increase. I would like for it to be lower, but to support our budget, I do not see how we can lower it. Mr. Herms states, we are looking at a 3.5% increase in Republic services for the increase at the landfill. We are looking at cutting the trash rates. The average taxpayer's rate will increase about \$67.00 a year. We are looking at cutting the trash rates for the citizens about \$5.00 a month. We will have to use some of the fund balance to balance this budget to keep the services at the same level. Councilmember Holly Crafton- Lay states, are your rental home renters, families with children are single folks? Mr. Lawing states, its more elderly with a fixed income. Councilmember Holly Crafton-Lay states, there are things on the agenda that are big ticket items. I am still trying to figure out where I stand with these items. I am still struggling with these items. Mayor Pro Tem Beth Rudisill states, with the housing market, did you have to increase your houses? Mr. Lawing states, I have always rented cheaper than the market because I do not like turnover. I had an increase, but not much. Mayor Pro Tem Beth Rudisill states, I think the commissioners committed to lowering it. Councilmember Ronnie Williams states, why did the cost of housing increase. Mr. Lawing state, because of materials. It used to cost \$25.00 an hour, now they want \$100.00 an hour. If you can get them to come. Councilmember Ronnie Williams states, if we lower it now two to three years down the road the increase will be more to compensate for lowering it. Like Todd said, unless something major happens our tax rate will remain thirty-eight cents. Citizen Kirk Wintz states, I am an investment property owner in the town of Maiden. Todd, can you explain the budget process? Mr. Herms states, 65% of our budget we do not know. We will not find out what it is

until the end of April. In most cities that is about 10% of their budget. In Maiden that is about 65% of our budget. I normally use the same numbers from last year to do this year's budget. If we have anything left over, it will roll into the fund balance. When I came to Maiden there was three cities that was at forty-eight cents. After two years we were at thirty-eight and everyone else increased. Maiden do not follow other cities. Our make-up is different than any other city around us. We are the only city that has a larger general fund than electric fund. Those numbers are miss leading because we have incentive agreement with two of our largest companies, GKN, and Apple. The incentive is based on how much money they invest in the town and the years. They have invested about five or six billion dollars. They get thirty years. We have a budget amendment on the agenda tonight. They paid more taxes than we thought they would pay. We must give them a percentage of that back. This is GKN last incentive year. Microsoft is a 20-year deal, and they get five years at a time. I take what people say very serious. I am not a reaction manager. Those people have a very special place in my heart. I put together a budget that the council can vote on, and I consider the long term affect. This even affects everyone on council. Mr. Wintz states, you will have your preliminary budget know what your tax rate will be and then start the massaging process. Mr. Herms states, I will have a draft budget for council by the end of April. Council will review it in May and vote on it in June.

Maiden Business Association President, Samantha states, April the 1st we had our Maiden mystery egg event. We had to move indoors. The Athlete's Lab was gracious enough to open their facilities and let us use their yoga room. There were about 200 kids and parents. April the 13th is our next meeting. We are going to meet and finalize the Jive after five. We plan to have a beer garden to sell beer and wine, vendors, and food trucks. Mr. Herms states, April the 28th we will have band of Oz, May the 12th Too Much Sylvia and May the 14th is Mother's Day.

Mayor Pro Tem Beth Rudisill states, I appreciate the productive, professional open discussion and everyone was very respectful. Councilmember Cameron Ramseur states, do we clean the outside of the buildings? Someone came to me about cleaning the police department building. Town Manager Mr. Todd Herms states, yes, they are on a cleaning schedule.

Consent Agenda

- A. Finance Officer's Report March (Motion)

MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILMEMBER HOLLY CRAFTON-LAY AND SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER BOB SIGMON TO APPROVE THE MARCH FINANCE OFFICER REPORT AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 5-0.

8. New Business

- A. Local Water Supply Plan

Public Works Director, Bryan Duckworth states, the 2022 local water supply plan must be composed and submitted to the state based on every five years. It must be brought to council with an attached resolution. We have 39 miles of water distribution lines. We have 1.8 million gallons of water storage that is with three water tanks, Capricorn and Turberfield. We have about 2200 water customers on a monthly basis. The industrial usage per day is about 600,000 gallons. We average between 900,000 and 1,000,000 gallons a day from the city of Hickory. That that is about 65% of our water sales every day. The city of Hickory water purchases, we purchase about 1,000,000 gallons a day from them. We have a contract for three million a day, with the option of expanding it to an additional 3 million. Our contract is good through 2027 with the option to extend that for 20 more years. The wastewater plant was permitted to handle a million gallons a day. Once you reach the threshold of 80% you must start planning for plant expansion. Currently, we are about 450,000 gallons per day, so we are at 45 to 50% of plant capacity. Now you'll see maximum discharge in 2022 is 2.2 million gallons in one day. That has to do with rainfall. It is expensive to treat rainwater. Mr. Herms states, the water and wastewater math do not add up because one of our largest customers, treats it's on water. Mayor Pro Tem Beth Rudisill states, what is regional water supply? Mr. Duckworth states, four or five towns go in together and own a plant.

B. Yard of the Month Committee Appointments – Rachel Penhollow and Holli Hipps (Motion)

Planning/zoning Director Blake Wright states, the Yard of the Month committee had a rotation of Ritchie Fox this year. Anne Byrne stated that she would be unable to continue to serve this year. Rachel Penhollow and Holly Hipps have volunteered to request to be appointed to the board. They will be able to serve three terms.

MOTION WAS MADE BY MAYOR PRO TEM BETH RUDISILL AND SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER RONNIE WILLIAMS TO APPROVE THE YARD OF THE MONTH COMMITTEE. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 5-0

C. Discuss Parks Master Plan Timeline to Direct Staff – Motion

Town Manager Mr. Todd Herms states, the timeline for the master park plan and give staff direction on how they would proceed. I have had multiple elected officials ask me when we are going to build the amphitheater. Councilmember Holly Crafton – Lay states, everyone knows where I stand. Councilmember Ronnie Williams states, what kind of timeline are we looking at with phase one? Would it be one, two or three years? Mr. Herms states, everything is taking longer than normal. The amphitheater design and permitting phase will take six months. The material may take longer. The plan was to build a couple of parking lots, but the elementary is in the process of building and they will have a huge parking lot. We can leave it grass to save money and people can park across the street and walk. If this is something council would like to move forward with, council will give staff direction. The next phase would be to get some drawing, site plans and a better cost. My recommendation is direct staff to get a more precise plan to do the amphitheater and the bathrooms. Councilmember Ronnie Williams states, will Jive after Five be moved to the amphitheater? Mr. Herms states, yes and Maiden Business Association is excited about this possibility. It also allows for other events like movies in the park. Councilmember Holly Crafton- Lay states, are you going to increase the number of Jive after Fives? Mr. Herms states, that would be a council decision. The five million is for the complete phase. Councilmember Holly Crafton -Lay states how would the citizen feel if we use five million and taxes were raised. I must take this into consideration with the state of the economy. I am not going to support moving forward on this tonight. Mr. Herms states, it was my understanding that council want to nail down the cost of the amphitheater and the shelters. Mrs. Samantha Saunders states, I hear every Jive After Five, why isnt it held at the rec center. We try to coordinate these vendors and food trucks and it is very difficult. As an owner of Piedmont hardware, I love that it is right here because people shop my windows. As the leader of the Maiden Business Association, I must keep the whole town in perspective. Councilmember Holly Crafton- Lay states, I am not saying never, but we must be good stewards over of the money. We do not know what the fire department cost will be. We need the fire department. My concern is what the town needs as a whole. Mrs. Samantha Saunders states, with the new housing development, it would be nice to have the amphitheater to show that we are growing, mean business and here to accommodate the public. Councilmember Cameron Ramseur state, my concern is the handicap. Councilmember Ronnie Williams states, we need to move forward with giving staff some direction. Councilmember Holly Crafton-Lay states, what is our cushion for the fire department budget? Mr. Herms states, we have \$450,000.00 set aside to make the payment monthly. Once the bid is in, it is firm. We must go back and amend our environmental report because of a bat and flower being protected. That will add two or three months on getting the report. It will get done. We are debt free, have great credit and a few million dollars set aside. Citizen Mariam Brown states, can we make a sidewalk from Main Street? Mr. Hems states, when applying for a grant, we must have public input sessions. That would be a great time to add that into the public record.

MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILMEMBER BOB SIGMON AND SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER RONNIE WILLIAMS TO APPROVE TOWN MANAGER AND STAFF DIRECTION TO PROCEED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 5-0.

9. Ordinance/Resolution/Proclamation

A. A Proclamation Proclaiming April 11, 2023, as Maiden’s Child Abuse Prevention Awareness Month.

Katie Pate, from Catawba County Children’s advocacy center states, the children's advocacy and Protection Center in Catawba County exists to provide a systematic multidisciplinary response to all reported cases of child sexual abuse, serious physical abuse, and neglect. Catawba county the multidisciplinary team consists of representatives from local law enforcement agencies, the Department of social services, the district attorney’s office, medical and mental health providers. The mission of the CPC is to advocate for the protection of children. Police Chief Tracy Ledford states, our office has seen a 50% increase in child assault in the last seven months. We work in partnership with the advocacy center, and they do an amazing job. Town Manager Todd Herms states, every year we display pinwheels to support and recognize Child Abuse Prevention Awareness Month.

B. Ordinance #22-2023 An Ordinance to Amend the FY 2022-2023 Budget in the Capital Reserve Fund 60 (Motion)

Councilmember Ronnie Williams states, would it help us to have a special medical response vehicle instead of one of our fire trucks? Fire Chief Luke Shoffner states, currently we have only two full time on staff. Our big goal is cut down response time. My guys have done a fantastic job. We are in the top five for medical response every month now our average response time is 4 minutes 36 seconds.

MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILMEMBER HOLLY CRAFTON-LAY AND SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER BOB SIGMON TO AMEND THE FY 2022-2023 BUDGET IN THE CAPITAL RESERVE FUND 60. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 5-0.

C. ORDINANCE #23-2023 An Ordinance to Amend the FY 2022-2023 Budget in the General Fund Economic Development (Motion)

MOTION WAS MADE BY MAYOR PRO TEM BETH RUDISILL AND SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER BOB SIGMON TO AMEND THE FY 2022-2023 BUDGET IN THE GENERAL FUND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 5-0.

D. RESOLUTION #10-2023 A Resolution Approving Local Water Supply Plan (Motion)

MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILMEMBER HOLLY CRAFTON-LAY AND SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER RONNIE WILLIAMS TO APPROVE THE LOCAL WATER SUPPLY PLAN. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 5-0.

10. Adjourn

MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILMEMBER BOB SIGMON AND SECONDED BY RONNIE WILLIAMS TO ADJOURN AT 7:41 PM MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 5-0

Respectfully Submitted:
Wanda Barnes, Town Clerk

Max Bumgarner Jr., Mayor

ATTEST:

Wanda Barnes, Town Clerk