



Town of Waynesville, NC
Town Council Emergency Council Meeting
Town Hall, 9 South Main Street, Waynesville, NC 28786
Date: September 30th, 2024 Time: 5:00 p.m.

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(828) 452-2491 cpoolton@waynesvillenc.gov

A. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Caldwell called the meeting to order at 5:02pm.

B. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

A motion was made by Councilmember Freeman, seconded by Councilmember Dickson, to approve agenda as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

C. PRESENTATION OF IMPACT OF HURRICANE HELENE

1. Fire Department

- Fire Chief Joey Webb

Fire Chief Joey Webb reported that they did not lose any firefighters during the rescues, but neighboring counties have lost first responders. Chief Webb said they have a rescue boat they were able to utilize for swift water rescues. Chief Webb said they rescued over 100 people from homes and vehicles and so far, have no fatalities. Assistant Fire Chief Chris Mehaffey reported that the police department assisted with many of the rescues. He said that SAR from Raleigh and Winston-Salem assisted as well. He said that the department is assisting with hazardous waste removal now. Chief Webb reminded residents not to burn within town limits.

2. Police Department

- Police Chief David Adams

Police Chief David Adams reported that dispatch has been assisting with Haywood County. Assistant Chief Schick said they were able to establish another dispatch center. Councilmember Sutton thanked the Police Department for rescuing his family.

3. Public Services

- Director of Public Services, Jeff Stines

Public Services Director Jeff Stines reported that the Wastewater Treatment Plant has experienced some moderate damage and there are land slides that they have not been able to assess. He said the land slides have

increased the turbidity of the water. He said the boil water advisory has since been rescinded. Mr. Stines reported that a 24 inch sewer main was taken out at Lake Junaluska and is currently under repair. He said everyone's power has been restored within a day and a half and that under the Russ Ave bridge has propane tanks, vehicles that still needed to be cleaned up by HazMat.

4. Recreation Department

- Director of Parks & Recreation, Luke Kinsland

Recreation Director Luke Kinsland reported that all public parks are closed until further notice. He said the Rec Center will remain open from 8am-5pm. He said that most fitness classes will be cancelled due to staff availability. He said Vance Park and along Richland Creek, the new section of the greenway, as well as the Softball Field were flooded. Mr. Kinsland reported that the outside bathrooms were flooded at Dutch Fisher, Vance Park, and near the Mountain Creek Apartments and that the Dog Park is a total loss. He said the skate park, playgrounds, and tennis courts seem to be unaffected. He said the Old Armory was flooded and closed until further notice.

5. Development Services

- Director of Development Services, Elizabeth Teague

Development Services Director Elizabeth Teague reported that staff have been working to evaluate damage assessments. She said staff will only do storm associated building assessments and waive those building permit fees for the coming weeks.

E. **PRESENTATION IN CHANGES IN DAILY WORK PRIORITIES**

Town Manager Rob Hites reported the following:

1. Finance Department building has been closed until further notice. Department staff will be relocated to the Municipal Building. Residents should deliver utility or tax payments to the Municipal Building.
2. Debris, furniture, yard waste, will be picked up by contractors, not the Town staff.
3. Regular garbage & recycling will continue with normal service. **DO NOT PLACE STORM DEBRIS IN TOWN OF WAYNESVILLE CANS. STORM DEBRIS IS CONSIDERED A BIOHAZARD.**
4. Consider all Town public parks closed until further notice: Do not cross red warning tape because there are safety hazards along the trail. Playgrounds and play structures may be damaged and unsafe to use in ways that are not visibly apparent. Please exercise good judgment in accessing all Town facilities during this clean-up and recovery period.
5. Development Services will conduct a damage assessment survey from for FEMA.
6. Residents should observe and obey all road closure signs. Do not drive through standing water. Residents should stay home and shelter in place.

F. **ADOPT STATE BIO DEBRIS CONTRACT**

ADOPT STATE BIO DEBRIS REMOVAL MONITORING SERVICE CONTRACTS

Town Manager Rob Hites reported that FEMA regulations require bids to be in place before a storm event, which the state has approved for debris removal.

A motion was made by Councilmember Sutton, seconded by Councilmember Feichter, to adopt the attached contracts for Bio Debris Contracts. The motion passed unanimously.

G. RESOLUTIONS FOR STORM-RELATED EXPENDITURES

Town Manager Rob Hites requested Council permission to make large purchase decisions for emergency expenditures without having to meet with Council for each expenditure approval. Councilmember Feichter asked if funds spent would be reimbursed by FEMA. Mr. Hites said that FEMA would reimburse any amount spent making storm related repairs as well as staff hours spent on storm related work.

A motion was made by Councilmember Dickson, seconded by Councilmember Freeman, to adopt Resolution R-21-24 to authorize manager to make large purchases related to the emergency and to direct the Finance Director to allocate these fund balance transfers, and other expenses related to storm recovery as “FEMA Reimbursement.”. The motion passed unanimously.

H. ADOPT BUDGET AMENDMENT ALLOCATIONS OF \$500,000.00 EACH FROM GENERAL, WATER, AND POWER FUND BALANCES TO “STORM RELATED EXPENSES” TO COMPLY WITH FEMA COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS.

A motion was made by Councilmember Sutton, seconded by Councilmember Feichter, to adopt budget amendments of \$500,000.00 each from the General, Water, and Sewer fund balances to “Storm Related Expenses.” The motion passed unanimously.

I. ADOPT SUSPENSION OF UTILITY CUTOFFS FOR NONPAYMENT

Town Manager Rob Hites reported that many residents have had their daily lives severely disrupted. He recommended to Council that mandatory cutoffs be postponed. He said bills still need to be paid, but after the suggested deadline.

A motion was made by Councilmember Sutton, seconded by Councilmember Freeman, to approve suspension of mandatory utility service cut-off for nonpayment through October 1, 2024 to November 30th. The motion passed unanimously.

J. ADOPT MUTUAL AID AGREEMENT

Town Manager Rob Hites reported that in a FEMA event if the town is called to assist another municipality or county, the mutual aid agreement allows them to keep track of services and have them charged to FEMA.

A motion was made by Councilmember Feichter, seconded by Councilmember Sutton, to approve North Carolina Department of Public Services 2023 Mutual Aid Agreement. The motion passed unanimously.

K. OTHER BUSINESS

A motion was made by Councilmember Feichter, seconded by Councilmember Freeman, to waive the permit fees for storm related recovery efforts. The motion passed unanimously.

L. COMMENTS BY TOWN COUNCIL

Councilmember Dickson thanked everyone for their help. Councilmember Freeman said that she knows Waynesville is good hands, especially after attending an emergency meeting listening to staff's plans. Mayor Caldwell said he went to Frog Level and spoke to merchants and the damage is devastating. He said he is thankful that Waynesville have not lost lives. Councilmember Feichter asked if staff have heard anything about cell service. Councilmember Sutton said the fiber lines coming into Haywood County were severely damaged and will most likely need to be replaced. He said it will take a while because equipment is coming from up north. Councilmember Feichter and Sutton thanked town staff. Council asked for everyone to have extra patience and understanding.

Councilmember Freeman said that Rep. Chuck Edwards is fighting hard for resources for WNC, and asked the audience to contact Mark Pless and other state representatives and request help. Councilmember Sutton said Mark Pless reached out to him personally and stated he would do what he could to help Waynesville. Mr. Hites sad FEMA has not reached out to the Town yet. He encouraged people to reach out to their insurance agents. Ms. Bradley reported that there are free legal resources to help during disasters through the NC BAR association.

M. ADJOURN

A motion was made by Councilmember Dickson, seconded by Councilmember Freeman, to adjourn the meeting at 6:08pm. The motion passed unanimously.

ATTEST:

Gary Caldwell, Mayor

Robert W. Hites, Jr. Town Manager

Candace Poolton, Town Clerk