

**TOWN OF WEDDINGTON  
SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING  
TUESDAY, AUGUST 16, 2022 – 6:00 P.M.  
WEDDINGTON TOWN HALL  
1924 WEDDINGTON ROAD WEDDINGTON, NC 28104  
AGENDA**

1. Open the Meeting
2. Determination of Quorum
3. Additions, Deletions and/or Adoption of the Agenda
4. Form of Government Presentation by Rob Shepherd, Executive Director, NC City & County Management Association
5. Questions from Public for Mr. Shepherd
6. Council Comments
7. Adjournment

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MINUTES  
PAGE 1 OF 4**

**1. Open the Meeting**

Mayor Horn called the meeting to order

**2. Determination of Quorum**

Quorum was determined with Mayor Craig Horn, Mayor Pro Tem Janice Propst, Councilmembers Anne Pruitt and Brannon Howie present. Councilmember Jeff Perryman was absent.

Staff present: Town Administrator Clerk Karen Dewey, Town Attorney Karen Wolter

Visitors: Thomas Smith, Bill Deter, Jack Plyler, Harry Chilcot, Paul Greenwood, Will Greenwood, Max Greenwood, Patricia Hines, Rusty Setzer, Cathy Dow

**3. Additions, Deletions and/or Adoption of the Agenda**

**Motion:** Mayor Pro Tem Propst made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented  
**Vote:** The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

**4. Form of Government Presentation by Rob Shepherd, Executive Director, NC City & County Management Association**

Mr. Shepherd made a presentation on the forms of government in North Carolina.

Councilmember Pruitt asked if one form was more expensive than another. Mr. Shepherd responded that it depends on the municipality.

Mayor Pro Tem Propst asked if Mr. Shepherd thought changing to a Manager-Council form of government would benefit Weddington. Mr. Shepherd responded that it depends on what vision the council has for the community. Changing to a Manager-Council form pulls some of the day to day business from the council.

Mayor Horn: How much money the administrator has control over? That is in the state statute. The council can set financial policies regardless of form of government. Council doesn't give up any authority over making financial policies.

Mayor Horn expressed that the administrator should be recognized for the position she/he holds. Just because other towns our size have managers, doesn't mean Weddington needs to do it. Is there a preponderance of evidence that indicates that we should, given size that we should move from what is apparently a successful system with our town admin to town manager? It depends. You want to attract future candidates tends to bring more stability regardless of who is on council. Managers typically will last longer than an election cycle.

Councilmember Howie: Does having a manager make council less accountable to citizens? No, because you're ultimately accountable every time there is an election. There are policies you can put in place, outlining how much oversight you all want.

Mayor Pro Tem Propst stated that her consideration of this change is more about protecting the employees from rogue councilmembers and giving the employees stability. She expressed that she is not a proponent of big government.

## **5. Questions from Public for Mr. Shepherd**

- Is there a benefit to change to this other than name only? There is benefit with contract negotiation as an agent of the mayor /council, service issues.
- Is there a need to have manger versus the staff Weddington already has? There are a number of towns that have chosen to move to manager/council, looking at long term growth. As a town grows, may need to rethink a need for staff or to bring services in house.
- Would Advisory Boards/Volunteer Committees be accountable to the Manager or the Council? Advisory Boards are appointed by the council and are held accountable by the council.
- Will the manager be allowed to have any ability to argue or disagree with the council or are they just to follow direction of the Council? The manager can disagree with the council and makes recommendations but follows direction of the Council. Once council makes decisions, the manager implements the decisions.
- Will the public have any say in the choice for a manager? The public having a voice in the choice of a manager is the choice of the council. Some municipalities have public input sessions, but it's rare that a council will narrow down candidates and hold a public session as there are confidentiality issues that can arise. There are some pros to holding public input sessions and a lot of cons.
- What would the benefit be to have a manager? Benefits include contract negotiation and management and dealing with service issues in contracts.
- Is there more flexibility with town administrator in what responsibilities council can allocate vs. manager? Manager directs all staff unless spelled out in charter otherwise. Council sets policy/expectations of manager or administrator. Depends on community staffing. If things start to become more complex, may need a higher level of service. Look at long term growth. Need for more professional staff or need for more services.
- What are the restrictions for the manager entering into contract? The Town passed a procurement policy. There is a process and the administrator can enter into contract without council review up to \$10,000. That won't change if the form of government changes. It's up to the council to adopt a procurement or financial policy
- After a change in the form of government, how long before it escalates to additional services that must be managed? Services can only be added at the approval of the council. It's more based on other factors like growth of the town or reaching a point where it's more efficient to bring services in house.
- Can the manager add additional staff or services? No. The budget gives the manager authority to make decisions. There is a process to amend budget. Adding staff would require budget amendments which only the council can approve.
- If Council delegates supervision of town staff to administrator, with a rogue councilmember shouldn't employee go to the town manager or "superior" and file a complaint to take to council?
- Assuming the council can fire manager just like they can fire the administrator? Manager can be fired with or without cause. NC is a right to work state. Manager serves at the pleasure of the

council. It goes for other employees as well. It is easier to fire a manager than other employees. There are no due process rights that a typical government employee has. Typically, there is an employment agreement. Managers typically go into the position knowing that they could be fired with the next election cycle. There is usually a clause for severance in employment contract.

- How attractive is Weddington with its size and services offered to hire a manager? Depends on compensation packages, community assets, quality of life factors. Some candidates may not want to come to a small town.
- What title is more attractive to potential employees? Anecdotal evidence shows that the most professional staff candidates will be more attracted to working for a manager.
- The town charter can only be changed every two years. Does that mean if the charter is changed to manager/council, if a year later the council wants to change to a different number of councilmembers, they have to wait? Depends on what part of the charter being changed. Will have to check the answer. Ms. Wolter would advise waiting for the year.
- Is Town Manager always full time? No.
- Is our Administrator full time? No.

Mayor Horn thanked Mr. Shepherd.

## 6. Council Comments

Councilmember Pruitt: I just want to say thank you so much for coming. I hope you all got some information and answers to your questions. If you think of a question after you leave, feel free to reach out to use through email. I appreciate you all coming out tonight. Thank you Mr. Shepherd for coming down here.

Mayor Pro Tem Propst: Thank you, Rob, we appreciate it. I feel like with the two different sessions we've had on this we've asked a lot of good questions and we have a good idea of the benefits to both types. I thank everybody for coming out. I appreciate your input and I appreciate everybody wanting to be engaged. I want to make sure that everyone realizes that the only reason we are considering this is we want to look at the best option and make sure the town is in good hands no matter who is leading the community

Councilmember Howie: Thank you to the attendees. Thank you to Mr. Shepherd for your time and your information. I think we've gleaned a lot of hard facts and we can use those to draw the line of Weddington and see which form of government Weddington intersects with more.

Mayor Horn: Thank you very much. If anyone in the audience has questions, go to the town website and get all of our emails. Call us and let us know what is on your mind. We have to figure out what we all believe is in the best interest of Weddington not only for now, but the future.

## 7. Adjournment

- Motion:** Councilmember Pruitt made a motion to adjourn the August 16, 2022 Special Town Council meeting minutes at 7:35 p.m.
- Vote:** The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

Approved:

Sept 12, 2022

Karen Dewey

*Karen Dewey, Town Administrator/Clerk*

D. Craig Horn

*D. Craig Horn, Mayor*