

Taylortown

Town Council Meeting
Tuesday, February 13, 2024
Town Hall
5:00 p.m. Closed Session
6:00 p.m. Open Session

Agenda

I. **Call to Order**

This meeting of the Taylortown Council is now called to order.

Carolyn Cole will serve as our Acting Town Clerk this evening until further decisions are made.

II. **Roll Call**

Ms. Cole, please call the roll.

Mayor Gaddy
~~Mayor Pro Tem Moody~~
(Absent)
Councilwoman Cotton
Councilwoman Parker
Councilman Taylor

III. **Closed Session**

I seek a motion to go into closed session to discuss legal matters, and personnel which includes town employees and contract service providers.

Motion: I move that we go into go into closed session to discuss legal matters, and personnel which includes town employees and contract service providers. [Councilwoman Cotton](#)

Second: [Councilwoman Parker](#)

I have a motion and second.

Are there any questions or discussion?

If there are no questions or discussion, Councilmembers, please vote by saying yes or no.

Ms. Cole, please call the vote.

Mayor Gaddy
~~Mayor Pro Tem Moody~~
Councilwoman Cotton
Councilwoman Parker
Councilman Taylor

All that were present voted in the affirmative.

The motion passed. We are now in closed session.

JV. Return to Open Session:

Greetings everyone. Welcome to the Taylortown Council meeting.

Thank you for caring enough about our town to attend our Town Council meetings.

We opened the meeting at 5:00 p.m. and went into closed session to discuss some legal and personnel matters. You will hear more about that as we move through tonight's agenda.

I seek a motion to return to open session.

Motion: I move that we return to open session.

Councilwoman Parker

Second:

Councilwoman Cotton

I have a motion and second.

Are there any questions? Any discussion?

If there are no questions, no discussion, Councilmembers, please vote by saying yes or no.

Ms. Cole, please call the vote.

Mayor Gaddy
~~Mayor Pro Tem Moody~~
Councilwoman Cotton
Councilwoman Parker
Councilman Taylor

All that were present voted in
the affirmative.

**The motion passed. This February 13, 2024 Taylortown Council meeting
is now back in Open Session.**

**It is with the blessings of our ancestors that we are gathered here to
continue their work to keep Taylortown strong--our home, a place for
family and friends.**

Please join us in a moment of silence.

V. Approval of Agenda

**The agenda for this February 13, 2024 Town Council meeting was posted
at town hall and is available this evening as a handout.**

**We believe we have satisfied state law that requires us to give public
notice of our Council meetings. The schedule of council meetings for the
year is also available.**

**I seek a motion to approve the agenda for this February 13, 2024
meeting of the Taylortown Council.**

Motion: I move that we approve the agenda for this January 23, 2024 meeting
of the Taylortown Council.

Councilwoman Cotton

Second:

Councilwoman Parker

I have a motion and second.

Are there any questions or discussion?

If there are no questions or discussion, Councilmembers, please vote by saying yes or no.

Ms. Cole, please call the vote.

Mayor Gaddy
~~Mayor Pro Tem Moody~~
Councilwoman Cotton
Councilwoman Parker
Councilman Taylor

All that were present voted in
the affirmative.

The motion passed. The agenda is approved.

VI. Minutes

It has been stated by our attorney, Mr. William Morgan, that the Town Council does not need to approve the minutes. Our minutes are presented to Council.

However, the accuracy of our minutes is important. They are our legal documents. So, Council, when minutes are presented to you, please read them carefully. They are not word for word or verbatim minutes.

But, if the minutes are not accurate then I ask that you bring that to the Council's attention, so that it can be corrected.

Are there any corrections to previous minutes that you would like to bring to the Council's attention at this time?

In our minutes, we only want the exact words on motions that we vote on.

That being said, I seek a motion to receive the minutes for January 23, 2024.

Motion: I move that we accept the minutes for January 23, 2024.

Second: Councilwoman Parker
I have a motion and second.

Are there any questions or discussion?

If there are no questions or discussion, Councilmembers, please vote by

saying yes or no.

Ms. Cole, please call the vote.

Mayor Gaddy
~~Mayor Pro Tem Moody~~
Councilwoman Cotton
Councilwoman Parker
Councilman Taylor

All who were present voted in the affirmative.

The motion passed. The minutes have been received for January 23, 2024.

VII. Public Comment

The floor is now open for public comment. Please come to the podium and speak directly into the microphone. Limit your comments to 3 minutes.

Anita Young comments: Is this town so broken that we can't fix it that we need to hire a consultant?

Gail McKinnon: 1st annual Sr. Taylortown luncheon in Pinestraw.

VIII. Closed Session Report

As you know we are not allowed to vote on matters in Closed Session or use it as a way to keep the people's business away from them.

November's election was a referendum on transparency. This Council promised you that and we're going to give you that. Sometimes it will be ugly. Remember that's just a stop on our journey to getting things back on track for our town.

If there is a vote or any action required on a matter discussed in Closed Session, the vote or whatever action will be taken in Open Session in your presence.

Most of the items discussed this evening in closed session will be

addressed as we move through the agenda. I'll let you know when we come to those items on the agenda.

At our last meeting Council made some decisions regarding the company, RGJ. ~~Mayor Pro Tem Moody~~ Mayor Gaddy, please recap our discussion and decision regarding RGJ.

Mayor Gaddy

Council voted at our last meeting to bring RGJ on board to help Taylortown plan for its future. Ms. Carolyn Cole is the lead team member for RGJ

Specifically, they are talking about helping us:

To Build our boards and commissions,

To Build our departments,

To hire new people to work in those departments and to provide workspaces for them.

RGJ's Finance team will help us prepare our budgets, the Management Report for our audits, and work with us to hire the right company to update our Comprehensive Plan.

They will work with us to attract funding for the repair, renovation, and programming of the Academy Heights school and other projects that we feel are important.

They will work with us to create our historic district,

Rebuild our business district, and

Create programs to help with home repairs, and address the zip code issue that has concerned us for so long.

Ms. Patricia Jacobs co-owner of RGJ with Lana Allen has been here since Friday, February 2 assisting Ms. Cole and the Taylortown staff with putting our files back together after a former employee emptied some of our file drawers, file folders, and notebooks into trash bags, boxes, plastic containers, and scattered documents on the floor.

I want to thank Ms. Cole, Ms. Jacobs, and most importantly Mayor Gaddy, Councilwoman Cotton, and Dallas Gaddy, our new Utility Billing and Collections Coordinator. Three of us could not come to the office because it would have been a quorum.

You see them here at town hall late in the evening, in the wee hours of the morning and at weekends putting our files back together.

Mayor Gaddy

The clean up on just our hard copies is estimated at \$48,600, close to \$50,000. This does not include damages to our computer files, bank records, and other financial records. This work is still ongoing.

Folks, we can't put a price on the damage done by former employees making phone calls, meeting and sending emails to interfere with and disrupt the town's business relationships.

When I said that I liked RGJ's approach to working with us because they take pride in the fact that they roll up their sleeves and work alongside us to get work done. None of us knew at that time how much work they would be doing to help us restore our files instead of being able to focus on what we brought them on board to do.

They are working as hard as we are and we have not paid them a dime.

I want to take a moment here to say that Council's decision to bring RGJ on board was met with resistance and a lot of push back here in the office and with some of our contract service providers, a bank, and the Local Government Commission.

Our town attorney was asked to help smear Ms. Cole and he refused to do it.

Councilwoman Cotton

Mayor Gaddy and Council, I would like to read the email exchange between our town attorney and the former clerk.

Please attach a copy of the email exchange to Council's minutes.

The estimated cost that Mayor Gaddy gave us doesn't include the other people on the RGJ team that are working to sort out what is happening

with Taylortown's financials. We have learned more about the town's finances in two weeks than we've known in all of my years on Council.

We have three (3) engagement letters from people with CPA behind their names. These Certified Public Accountants, financial advisors from the Local Government Commission, financial advice, we've paid for from consultants at the NC League of Municipalities, plus an employee with three job titles: one of which was Finance Officer. We pay these people and we are on the Local Government Commission's Unit List.

Mayor Gaddy

Ms. Cole, please read the Local Government Commission's definition of the Unit List.

I've been saying for a long time that no one had the right to keep financial information from Council and the public. This has been going on for years. I want to know what is happening with our financials and even bullying and attempts to intimidate our Mayor and this council from Ms. Tiffany Anderson at the Local Government Commission will not stop us. She demanded that we re-hire the former clerk, get rid of Dallas, and even went as far as to say that our Mayor cannot sign checks. She has clearly decided to use her position with LGC to protect individuals whose activities in our office is of great concern to us. Our job as council members is to protect Taylortown. The phone call she made to Mayor Gaddy on Monday, February 12 was most unprofessional and inappropriate which calls into question her motives and intent.

Mayor Gaddy

I agree with you Councilwoman Cotton. Thank you for your comments.

Our community clapped last year when Kenneth Anderson told us that our audit was good while telling us at the same time that about \$30k was unaccounted for but excusing it by telling us it happens in small towns and not to worry about it.

I have not heard from Mr. Anderson directly. Our audit is past due and he is just now asking for information that he should have requested months ago from the former mayor and clerk.

Getting information about the town's finances from people that we pay and the banks has been very difficult. Some of the people we are paying have lied to us about our financials.

I want to take a minute to clear up Council's relationship with Mr. Thompson. We kept him on board to help with the transition from the old council to the new council.

We thought he would be helpful to us since the previous council got very little information from him about the town's finances. It became very frustrating to keep hearing him say, "I don't know" when asked about the town's finances.

Mr. Thompson has not been able to get the town's seal back for us. He decided to hinder us rather than help us. I don't understand it, but I had to accept that he had no intention of helping us.

When the former clerk and he cancelled the town's credit cards at Truist Bank without letting Mayor Pro Tem Moody and me know about it and when the former clerk closed a town bank account without our knowledge after we voted on the banking resolutions, withheld information about the location of our accounts and in whose names they were held, we knew we had to end his time as acting town manager. That was done earlier today.

He will be paid for the month of February and that ends his compensation from the town.

The town attorney is sending the former clerk a letter directing her to return town hard files and computer files, our town seal, and anything else belonging to the town that's in her possession.

They really may not be hiding any malfeasance or other criminal activity with our finances, but the pushback and stonewalling from the former clerk, you, the accountant, and bankers, plus our audit being past due indicates something is wrong. We're going to find out what it is and we're going to get it straight. Taylortown deserves better.

As for Council. we will continue to work with the team we are putting in place to put the town's files back together until we have all of the answers pertaining to our financials.

Council. I seek your support in hiring Ms. Cole as Interim Town Administrator. We will discuss our future staffing requirements in more detail during the budget workshop. We will also negotiate salary with Ms. Cole mindful of a reduction in the RGJ contract.

I seek a motion to hire Ms. Cole as interim town administrator and authorize the mayor and mayor pro tem to negotiate a salary for her and a reduction in the RGJ contract.

Motion: So moved.

Councilwoman
Cotton

Second:

Councilwoman Parker

I have a motion and second.

Are there any questions or discussion?

If there are no questions or discussion. Councilmembers, please vote by saying yes or no.

Ms. Cole. please call the vote.

Mayor Gaddy

~~Mayor Pro Tem Moody~~

Councilwoman Cotton

Councilwoman Parker

Councilman Taylor

All that were present voted in the affirmative.

The motion passed.

Ms. Cole, you are now the interim town administrator for Taylortown. You are no longer our acting town clerk and no longer the team leader for RGJ.

Ms. Jacobs will assign a new team leader for RGJ.

That concludes our Closed Session Report and we will now move on to Old Business.

IX. Old Business

A. Town Boards & Commissions

At our last meeting I presented a list of boards and commissions that I would like for the Council to consider.

I proposed that each board or commission have five members. I asked each council member to present names for consideration.

I asked that when submitting a person for consideration to please make sure you are presenting people that will take the duty seriously and attend meetings.

If you submit a person that has a conflict of interest or pending legal action against the town, they will not be considered for appointment to a Board or Commission

You may submit the names of people that are not residents of Taylortown; however, we want most of our boards and commissions to have majority Taylortown residents.

Council members, let's start with the Planning Board. Do you have your list of names to submit for service on our Planning Board?

If you have a list, please pass it to the clerk.

At our Management Committee Mtg we will do conflicts checks and contact you if you need to submit another name.

The Appointments to the Planning Board will be at our next meeting.

B. NCLM Council Training

At our first meeting in January the former clerk was asked to check with the North Carolina League of Municipalities (NCLM) to see if the Council and staff can attend the course on Essentials of Municipal Government online on February 22 - 23. The course is sponsored by Chapel Hill, School of Government

Ms. Jacobs has picked up the ball on that and will let us know as soon as she has the information.

C. Pinesage Subdivision

Mr. William Morgan, our attorney will be at our next meeting and will hopefully have some options for us to discuss regarding the situation with Pinesage.

D. Finance Department

Ms. Cole, I am going to ask you to address the work you're doing to build our Finance Department.

What we call Management Committee meetings is Mayor Pro Tem Moody, Ms. Cole, and me on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday

mornings from 10:00 am to noon preparing the town's business for Council to address.

X. New Business

A. Department of Employment Security

This is a matter pertaining to a former employee that we took up in Closed Session.

We were trying to respond to an unemployment claim for a former employee when we learned that we do not have access to our account.

Ms. Cole, please provide the details of your conversation and the steps we must take to re-establish their ability to communicate with anyone in the office at Taylortown, including the mayor.

Have you sent the information to Employment Security Division?

B. Southern Software Training

Mr. Dallas Gaddy who attended Sandhills Community College in Computer Technology, along with Councilwoman Cotton, Ms. Cole, and Jalyn Black will receive training on the utility billing software and other modules in the system which will give us sufficient backup in the office. We need to rely on more than one person to keep the town moving forward.

Ms. Cole, when is training?

C. Police Car Accident

Chief Hobgood was involved in a car accident last week. We are grateful that he was not hurt. The car is damaged and the adjuster will have more information soon so that we can figure out repairs or replacement.

XI. Announcements

Councilmembers, are there any announcements you wish to make at this time?

Black history program, February 24th at 2:00 pm.

~~Mayor Pro Tem Moody~~

Councilwoman Cotton

Councilwoman Parker

Looking for active seniors to

give suggestions on activities

Councilman Taylor

Ms. Cole, do you have any announcements?

Saturday, February 17th there is a democrats org meeting.

Ms. Jacobs, please stand so folks can see you. Ms. Cole and Ms. Jacobs

will be here after the meeting for those of you that would like to meet

them or have questions.

Council accomplished its goals this evening.

We need all hands-on deck to make this new system work for all of us.

Citizens, I hope you heard that we hear you. We won't always agree, but we will always respect you.

XII. Adjournment

I seek a motion to adjourn.

Motion: I move that we adjourn.

Councilwoman Cotton

Second:

Councilwoman Parker

I have a motion and second.

Are there any questions or discussion?

If there are no questions or discussion, Ms. Cole please call the vote.

Mayor Gaddy

~~Mayor Pro Tem Moody~~

Councilwoman Cotton

Councilwoman Parker

Councilman Taylor

Motion passed. This meeting of the Taylortown Council is adjourned.