



# Town of HOLLY RIDGE

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## HOLLY RIDGE TOWN COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING November 14th, 2023 6:30 P.M.

Mayor Jeff Wenzel called the Regular Meeting of the Holly Ridge Town Council to order at 6:34 p.m. at the Holly Ridge Town Hall. Council members present were Councilman Hines, Mayor Pro-Tem Hall, Councilman Sholar, Councilwoman Stanley, and Councilwoman Bragg. Also, present were the Town Manager, Heather Reynolds, Deputy Clerk, Tracy Martin, and Attorney Kyle Fountain; Attorney Sam Potter; and Attorney Clay Collier.

### *Invocation and Pledge*

Dr. Joe Martin -Liberty Baptist Church gave the Invocation and Mayor Wenzel led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### *Adoption of Agenda*

Mayor Wenzel said he knows Chairman Tim Foster and Onslow County Manager David Smitherman were unable to make the meeting tonight.

Mayor Pro-Tem Hall asked for the Bee Committee report to be placed later on the agenda.

Manager Reynolds said we need to add the discussion of the Ordinance pertaining to Recreational Vehicles under Old Business 8-C. Manager Reynolds said we also need to add a Closed Session for Attorney Client Privilege NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (3). Manager Reynolds said in the Budget Amendment, there are two additional items on the budget amendment.

Councilwoman Bragg arrived at 6:36 p.m.

A motion was made by *Councilman Hines* and seconded by *Mayor Pro-Tem Hall* to adopt the agenda as amended. *All Agreed.*

### *Persons Wishing to Address the Council*

### *Town Manager Report*

Manager Reynolds said Public Works worked hard to set the new Christmas tree is set up at the Community Center and we will have to set a fence up around it due to the ornaments falling off the tree.

The planning of the Hometown Christmas event is underway which will take place December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, at the Community Center. The children's Christmas party will be held from 2:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. Following the Children's Christmas party will be the Tree lighting at 5:00 p.m.

***Manager Reynolds said Major Waddell with the Holly Ridge Police Department has a presentation tonight which was for the following:  
Major Waddell introduced Detective Brandi Thompson and her father was in the audience to pin Detective Thompson.***

**Consent Agenda**

- A. Approval of the Following Minutes
  - September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Regular Meeting
  - September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Special Meeting
  - October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Emergency Meeting
  - October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Regular Meeting
- B. Department Head Reports
  - Finance Department
  - Fire Department
  - Police Department
  - Planning & Zoning Inspections Report
  - Parks and Recreation
- C. Committee Reports
  - Planning Board
  - Board of Adjustment
  - ONWASA
  - Busy Bee Committee
- D. Approval of Tax Refund Report

A motion was made by ***Mayor Pro-Tem Hall*** and seconded by ***Councilman Sholar*** to approve the consent agenda minus the Bee Committee report. ***All Agreed.***

Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said she has a concern for the Town Council and the Manager Reynolds. Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said when she was reading the report, it seemed to be focusing on a street fair. Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said we just had a successful Liberty Festival in the park where we are focusing a lot of our resources and energy around the

park. Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said after the festival, Councilman Hines had a few suggestions on how we can improve the vendor area and she feels we need to continue to use the park for any events that we can.

Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said she would like to direct the Busy Bee Committee to go back and look at using the park for this event. Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said there are a lot of unknowns with the street festival. Mayor Pro-Tem Hall was involved with the last street festival where we closed Sound Road, and it was horrendous in a way nobody knew where to park, and it was very confusing.

Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said her suggestion that we really consider having this event in the park as a Town sponsored event.

Mayor Wenzel asked if there was a reason why this was being planned in the street. Manager Reynolds said she was not at the last meeting but Dorothy Royal sits on this committee and she had offered up her space in front of her business.

Councilwoman Stanley said Mayor Pro-Tem Hall is correct, there is no parking along the streets, and she thinks the park would be a better location for events.

**Tony Rydzynski – 445 Belvedere Drive** said being on the Bee Committee, it was discussed that it was going to be more like a street market like the Blueberry Festival in Burgaw. Parking was going to be down the side streets and with the Liberty Festival it was not quite as inviting for other people to come down on Highway 17. Tony Rydzynski said we are trying to attract as many people as we can off Highway 17. Mr. Rydzynski said he did not have an opinion either way, he was just letting us know what was discussed at the meeting.

A motion was made by ***Councilman Hines*** and seconded by ***Councilman Sholar*** to accept the Busy Bee Committee report. ***All Agreed.***

- A. Approval of the Following Minutes
  - December 13th, 2023, Regular Meeting
- B. Department Head Reports
  - Finance Department
  - Fire Department
  - Police Department
  - Planning & Zoning Inspections Report
  - Parks and Recreation
- C. Committee Reports
  - Planning Board
  - Board of Adjustment

- ONWASA
- Re-Branding Committee

D. Approval of Tax Refund Report

**Old Business**

**Update on Holly Plaza Apartments and Receive Direction from the Town Council**

Manager Reynolds said we were anticipating the results of the testing to be in and complete, but we are still lacking a hand full and Town staff nor our Attorney's have had a chance to look at the results. Manager Reynolds said more information is needed so we can go through the information. Manager Reynolds said we had discussed having a Special meeting later and the Closes Session later in this meeting to discuss Attorney Potter.

Mayor Pro-Tem Hall asked if there would be someone to explain what all the data means because it was difficult to understand what all the data meant.

Mayor Wenzel said here is his concern about the additional time, which he understands we need that time. Mayor Wenzel said we are on day 19 of the 30 days we are paying for the hotel in Jacksonville. Mayor Wenzel said the 30 days would end Sunday, November 26h, 2023.

Mayor Wenzel said since we cannot handle this today, he thinks the Town Council needs to consider some type of extension. Mayor Wenzel said the tenants have 11 days of knowing what is being paid for. Mayor Wenzel said right now we are paying the hotel approximately \$33,000.00 a week to the hotel.

Councilwoman Bragg asked if the 30 days is for everyone there are just for the ones who moved into the hotel in the beginning. Mayor Wenzel said the Town Council allocated 30 days which was done on Friday the 27<sup>th</sup>, and there were people who stayed that night. Mayor Wenzel said that is the Town Council with that motion allocated up to 30 days for the hotel and they allocated which fund the money would come out of.

Manager Reynolds said we allocated \$200,000.00 for those 30 days and four weeks cost around \$132,000.00 so there would be lead way with the \$200,000.00.

Councilwoman Bragg asked if the Town Council and Staff will have all the information pertaining to the apartments in time for the Special meeting. Manager Reynolds said she is hopeful.

The Town Council discussed and decided on having a Special Meeting on November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023, at 3:00 p.m.

A motion was made by *Mayor Pro-Tem Hall* and seconded by *Councilwoman Bragg* to extend the hotel stay for an additional seven days. *All Agreed.*

**Update from Attorney Sam Potter Regarding Drag Strip Road**

Attorney Potter said the last time he was here the Town Council had voted to move forward with an appraisal of the property for the purpose of widening Drag Strip Road to serve the Camp Davis Industrial Park. Hal Morgan with JC Morgan Appraisals in Wilmington did the appraisal on the Sholar, Ottaway, and Harris property. Attorney Potter said we presented to you previously the forty-foot right-of-way of Drag Strip Road. Attorney Potter said it is that plus 120 foot of right-of-way once you get passed the initial lots on Highway 17. Mr. Morgan conducted an appraisal of that property, and the way that works is he appraises the value of that property as it sits there today and the value of the property after the portion of the land is taken away. You compare the two values and the difference between those values, so the value before condemnation and the value after condemnation and the difference is what the law says the landowner is entitled to.

Attorney Potter said Mr. Morgan completed his appraisal and Manager Reynolds has it and they appraised that property at \$126,000.00. This does not include the three properties to the south of Drag Strip Road as it sits today. Mr. Spruill Thompson said his instructions from Mark Sutherland are that we are to negotiate with all three property owners, as all three of those properties are needed for the expanded entrance. The Department of Transportation has a larger entrance in mind and all that property is going to be needed for the entrance area. Mr. Thompson said they have asked him to negotiate with all three property owners to see if we can reach an understanding with them where Jones Onslow Economic Development could buy the property, preventing the Town from having to condemn anything. This way there should be a negotiating sale that would be fair to everyone.

Attorney Potter said the request at this point is for Town Council to approve moving forward with the filing of the condemnation, depositing \$120,000.00 with Superior Court and the process as it relates to existing strip of Drag Strip Road and the Ottaway, Sholar property and a Resolution has been prepared.

Mayor Wenzel asked if private negotiations could continue. Attorney Potter said they could. Attorney Potter said he believes neither the Ottaway's nor the Sholar's knew the numbers pertaining to the property.

Councilman Hines said Attorney Potter just said he did not believe the Sholar's, or the Ottaway's knew about the numbers, and so they had not been notified. Councilman Hines said he thought that was part of what we were going to do is notify them before we started the process of condemnation.

Attorney Potter said not the starting process of the condemnation. There is a 30-day period between when you start the process and when something gets filed. What will happen next is Attorney Potter will send a letter to the owners of the property and say it is the Town's intention to condemn this property. It has been appraised at \$126,000.00. The condemnation will not start for 30 days after that. This is statutorily required, and we must do this before the next step. Councilman Hines said he thought we were going to notify the property owners of their appraisal and talk to them before we did anything with condemnation.

Mayor Wenzel said he remembers as soon as we received the appraisal, we were going to make this public information within the next 24 hours. Attorney Potter said he had the information but had not had time to review the information until this weekend.

Mayor Wenzel asked if this could be added to next week's meeting and then we could start the condemnation process within a week. Councilman Hines said he thinks that would be fair.

Attorney Potter said if the Town Council does not want him to send the letter for two weeks, he would not send the letter and he would send the official notice.

Mayor Wenzel said we need to table this until the next meeting.

**Maxton Sholar – 111 Highway 17 S** asked what the total acreage is and is there a map that shows what will be taken of the Sholar and Ottaway property. Attorney Potter said it is 2.73 acres according to Weston Lyalls survey.

Councilman Hines said over the next week, we should try and negotiate with you about the price because he does not want this to go to condemnation at all.

Attorney Potter said Mr. Ottaway is at 3.6 acres so the total is 3.6 and the new area is 2.63 so it is 3.6 in total.

### **Ordinance Pertaining to Recreational Vehicles**

Manager Reynolds said Councilman Sholar requested after the agenda packed went out this item of discussion at tonight's meeting which has carried over from the Special meeting between the Planning Board and Town Council. Manager Reynolds talked with Wes MacLeod with the Council of Government, and he advised a full analysis to be made on making these changes. Currently no local government in our area permits recreational vehicles as an accessory structure in the commercial district. Recreational vehicles are not to be used for storage purposes and if a commercial business is going to have an accessory structure where it is going to be used for storage, these are typically in buildings that have been engineered and are brick and mortar.

Manager Reynolds said Mr. MacLeod's suggestion was a full analysis be done whether in conjunction with the Planning Board, Town Council and the Council of Governments come down and walk through those different scenarios.

Councilman Sholar said since we do not know what is going on, is there a way to eliminate that ordinance until we can get a handle on it. Manager Reynolds said we cannot eliminate it. We had one fine that was being issued and the customer was notified, and it was a substantial amount and today Manager Reynolds said she found out it is a plastic greenhouse which is not something we should even be regulating. Manager Reynolds spoke with the property owner and Manager Reynolds let them know there would be no more enforcement. Manager Reynolds said she would confirm that in writing so they would have that for their records.

Manager Reynolds asked Attorney Fountain if the Town could not enforce it. Attorney Fountain said he recommends we re-examine to see what ones are in violation.

Mayor Wenzel asked if the Planning and Zoning department could look at these as new cases and re-evaluate them and report back to us by the December meeting. Manager Reynolds said that would work.

Councilman Hines said he is asking if the violation on Sanders Street is in by the December meeting and these fines have accumulated, can we waiver these if they have been corrected.

Attorney Fountain said it is his understanding is a warning notice is sent out to the property owner that says there has been a finding of a violation of the ordinance and we advise them of a time frame of thirty days to either cure the violation or to appeal the finding of the violation to the Board of Adjustment to request a hearing on it. Attorney Fountain said within those thirty days if it is cured, then there is no actual citation issued to set out any filing penalties. Attorney Fountain said this would not be until after the thirty-day notice was given.

Councilman Hines said their thirty days would be up before they get the house fixed. Manager Reynolds said after our last meeting, when we tried to do the moratorium and then they said we could not do the moratorium, staff was directed to continue with enforcement. Those violation letters went out, so they are accruing \$100.00 per day civil penalties.

Mayor Wenzel said his concern is we are in a unique situation. Mayor Wenzel said our Town Planner resigned and right before he resigned, he sent out letters and Mayor Wenzel thinks we need to go back and look at everything to make sure all is kosher and have the town report back to the Town Council in December.

Councilman Hines asked what Manger Reynolds would tell Ms. Rackley about her situation. Mayor Wenzel said we would tell her that we are looking at everything fresh and we will let her know in the future if there is a violation.

Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said if they are not in compliance in December, starting from that day on do they have another thirty days after that to get into compliance. Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said she is asking at the December meeting are we going to start over, and they are still not in compliance. Mayor Wenzel said he thinks it needs to be re-evaluated. Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said not any of those people that are non-compliant may not fix the non-compliance themselves at this point and we are not going to ask them to do that. Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said they still must get their Certificate of Occupancy and get everything set up inside of the home.

Councilman Hines said the only one he is sure about is Ms. Rackley's and they are ready to set the house. The foundation is already there, and they are waiting in the house. Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said they still must get their Certificate of Occupancy and get everything set up inside of the home.

Attorney Fountain said it is his understanding that the staff will take a fresh look at the notices that were sent out to confirm that an actual violation does exist. If the violation is valid, staff can send out a warning notice and that will start a thirty-day period for the property owners to either fix the non-conformity, file an appeal and request a hearing with the Board of Adjustment or enforcement could take place after the 30-day window.

Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said her understanding from that is we are going to re-evaluate all those that have received letters that are in non-compliance and then they would re-start the clock. Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said we have never done this before, and we have gone back and said somebody was not in compliance so let's start the clock over for 30-days.

Councilman Hines said we are not going to be setting a precedence because once the new ordinance is established that is what it is going to be. Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said that is this ordinance, but there are also others that could not be complying.

Manager Reynolds said the Planning Board had a Special Meeting scheduled for this past Thursday and we did not have a Community Development Director and the admin that takes the minutes was in a conference and we as staff are not prepared to present options. Manager Reynolds said we are waiting for Wes MacLeod to give us his thoughts. Manager Reynolds said this is a unique situation and there are a lot of things that have led us to this. Manager Reynolds said the previous director sent a notice of cancellation for the meeting, so the meeting was not noticed properly which did not allow us the forty-eight hours that is required. Manager Reynolds said if someone could just say we don't have to charge the penalties.

Attorney Fountain said based on these questions, he thinks it is appropriate for us to re-evaluate from scratch. Attorney Fountain said this is the best thing to do because we do not want a situation where we are accessing any enforcement that the Town is not supposed to be doing.

A motion was made by *Councilman Sholar* and seconded by *Councilwoman Stanley* to re-evaluate from scratch and not charge any penalties at this time.



*Voting was as follows:*

*Councilwoman Bragg – Yes*  
*Councilwoman Stanley – Yes*  
*Councilman Sholar – Yes*  
*Mayor Pro-Tem Hall – No*  
*Councilman Hines – Yes*

*Motion Passes*

Manager Reynolds asked for clarification if the Town Council needs to hold a Special Meeting with Wes MacLeod and the Planning Board to review these ordinances. Mayor Wenzel said it sounds like it is prudent but there is a lot of leg work that needs to be done beforehand and he does not want to be starting from scratch at an open meeting.

**Mr. Dave Mosey- 815 Lennox Drive**, who is a Planning Board member, had a discussion today with Manager Reynolds regarding having a meeting. Mr. Mosey said there will be a meeting and it may be nothing more than discussions about the criteria that was presented in the last joint meeting. Mr. Mosey said they will start there and in conjunction with Mr. MacLeod if we can get his activities, Mr. Mosey believes they can have some meaningful dialogue.

Councilwoman Bragg said about will they be receiving some type of notice. Manager Reynolds said she would personally reach out to them.

**Flonnie Wullenwaber – 402 Caroline Sanders** asked if the residents that were being fined, were they sent a warning letter first. Manager Reynolds said they did. Ms. Wullenwaber asked if they attended a hearing. Manager Reynolds said we try an informal compliance first which is for 30-days and typically the Code Enforcement officer goes out and has a conversation with the property owner and or leaves a door hanger. After this a warning letter goes out and that gives them 30 days to bring it into compliance and at that point, they can request a meeting. After that 30days an official notice of violation goes out and at that time, they can request a hearing with the Board of Adjustment.

Ms. Wullenwaber asked if any of the residents have put in an appeal. Manager Reynolds said that is correct. Ms. Wullenwaber asked if that is why the town was implementing a fine. Manager Reynolds said that is correct. Ms. Wullenwaber since the residents have not followed the chain of command, why are not the residents being fined. Ms. Wullenwaber said these were just her thoughts.

Mayor Wenzel said we are in a special situation with this. Our Town Planner left and there are some questions that the Town Council need answers to make sure things are being done properly.

**Maxton Sholar – 111 Wilmington Highway** said a resident can stay in their camper for six months or more if a storm comes through and damages their primary residence. Why can't this same type of situation fall under the same category? Mr. Sholar said we do not know the situation of their home in which they were staying. Their home may have been a disaster for them so therefore they had to have another home.

Mayor Wenzel said we gave directions to the Planning Board to see how we could write that. Mayor Wenzel said our ordinance is typically with disasters and that was the only thing that was thought of when that ordinance was put into place.

**New Business**

**Possible Approval of Budget Amendment # 3 for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 to allow funds for Paving the Parking lot behind the Liberty Fountain from Fund Balance**

Manager Reynolds said this budget amendment is for three items. Manager Reynolds said at the emergency meeting, when we set aside funds for the Holly Plaza tenants, Manager Reynolds stated what accounts we were taking from and moving to, but we did not have the paper budget amendment official form. Manager Reynolds said the \$250,000.00 would be coming from Maintenance Repair and Streets which is where we put the ARP funds and that will be credited to the contingencies line item under the General Fund.

Manager Reynold said we have \$180,000.00 that we are proposing to come out of Fund Balance Appropriation, this is for the remodel of the pier at Morris Landing. We were awarded that grant, and it was not included in the budget originally, so we are receiving invoices, and we have no way to expend those funds. Manager Reynolds said we also need to create a revenue line item on the revenue side so that we can receive those grant funds as we file for the reimbursements and start receiving them.

Manger Reynolds said the third part is taking \$90,000.00 from what we set aside in partiff money in the parks and moving that into Capital Improvements under Parks and Recreation so that the parking lot behind the Liberty Fountain can be paved. This was budgeted last year but was not completed.

Mayor Wenzel said because it was not completed at the end of the budget any leftover money goes back into the General Fund. Mayor Wenzel asked because it was supposed to be completed last year. Due to some meeting issues and engineering it was not completed during the fiscal year. Mayor Wenzel said it could be completed this year and he thought it would be appropriate to use those funds that were deposited into the General Fund balance to be brought back.

Councilman Hines said he does not think that paving that parking lot is a necessity considering what we have facing us and how much money we are going to have to spend. Councilman

Hines said the new Town Council should be able to make their determination. Councilman Hines said we are not able to spend more money on things that are not a necessity.

Mayor Pro-Tem Hall said she did not think we were going to be able to pave the parking lot this year because it was tied to whether we could do the road work around the park, but the allocation needed to stay because it was part of the park plan. Mayor Pro-Tem Hall agrees the money should be moved back and it should stay until the budget season.

Councilwoman Stanley said it should stay with the budget and left to the incoming Town Council.

Councilman Sholar thinks it should be left to the next Town Council.

Councilwoman Bragg agreed it should be left to the next Town Council.

A motion was made by *Councilman Hines* and seconded by *Councilman Sholar* to table this item for a future meeting which will need to be addressed within the next one hundred days.

*Voting was as follows:*

*Councilwoman Bragg – Yes*

*Councilwoman Stanley – No*

*Councilman Sholar – Yes*

*Mayor Pro-Tem Hall – No*

*Councilman Hines – Yes*

*Motion Passes.*

**Discussion of Outstanding Old Business Items for the Out-Going Town Council to be Placed on the December Regular Meeting Agenda**

Manager Reynolds said she added this to see if there is any unfinished business of the outgoing members so we could add it to the December meeting agenda. None of the Town Council had any unfinished business to discuss.

**Persons Wishing to Address the Town Council**

**Christy Chambers – 1 Circle Dr Apt A-1** asked if there is a possibility we could move back into her apartment. Ms. Chambers said if we must find another place to live, we are not given much lead way to find somewhere else to live. Ms. Chambers said she is not familiar with some of the terms that were going on, but it is a very scary situation. Ms. Chambers said she is confused about the whole situation.

Manager Reynolds said all the tests were submitted at the same time to the lab. Manager Reynolds said we started receiving some of the results today, but we have not had a chance to look at them. Manager Reynolds said she can not say one way or another if people will be able to return to their apartments. Ms. Chambers said normally when you are getting kicked out of

your home or you are evicted you are given 30 days or more. Ms. Chambers said when we left the apartment complex, we did not know what was happening or if we could return or not. Ms. Chambers said no one said start looking. Ms. Chambers said if she were to speak to a real estate person today, she would have to fill out paperwork to see if she is eligible. Ms. Chambers said she would like to enjoy the holidays with her family. Ms. Chambers said all this is very frustrating and sad and she is trying to manage this the best way we can. Ms. Chambers said she is looking at rent and some places are \$2000.00 or more, which is impossible for her to pay. Ms. Chambers said she has a child that she is trying to take care of, and she has even asked if there are any programs to help get her out of the apartments and she was not offered anything.

Manager Reynold said she has tried to be in constant communication with all the tenants daily, all hours of the day and night. Manager Reynolds said she has tried to answer all the questions but when it comes down to what is going to happen, we are all in the dark until we have more information.

Amanda Riddle asked if any of the Town Council has a plan in place. Councilman Hines said we want to have a plan but until the test results come back, we do not know if all of them are going to be condemned. Councilman Hines said it is one of those things we do not know if we will be planning for one tenant or all tenants.

**Dawn Gillian – 1 Circle Dr Apt. K-1** asked if the Town Council has a plan for the worse case. Councilman Hines said all the tenants have got to think about the worse case also. Councilman Hines said you know we did not create this problem as a town. Pendergraph and the company before them and HUD are the ones that do not want to produce any kind of plan. Councilman Hines said we must work out what is best for all involved. Councilman Hines said hopefully the meeting next week will give us an idea what direction we will have to go in to. Councilman Hines said he has been waiting to see the test results as well.

Ms. Chambers said the time is coming up when the tenants do not have much time to prepare. Councilman Hines said he understands and that is why he said plan for the worst and hope for the best.

Manager Reynolds said that is why she asked the Town Council to be able to expend the additional amount to the tune of \$200,000.00 so the time can be maximized at the hotel to buy that extra time, so we can figure out what the results mean. Manager Reynolds said as HUD, Ms. Paull said HUD they voted against it, they only voted for one week. Manager Reynolds said she asked for it to be expended up to \$200,000.00.

**Sandra Ippolito – 1 Circle Drive Apt G-5** said the tenants do not know how to look for help and would the Town Council help them look for help because they do not know what to do for themselves. Ms. Ippolito said she thought they were Section 8. Pendergraph kept them in the dark. Ms. Ippolito said we had that wonderful meeting where there were a lot of resources, but Hud is not answering and that is scaring the tenants. Ms. Ippolito, we should get a bus and go

to Washington, DC, and camp out on the lawn. Ms. Ippolito said Mayor Wenzel said there were pockets of money, but it is not easy to find these pockets.

Ms. Chambers said it is not the tenants' fault they are in this position either. Ms. Chambers kept up with her stuff like she was supposed to. Ms. Chambers said Pendergraph has not done anything maintenance-wise in the buildings, which is not our fault either. Ms. Chambers said the only thing that has been done since 2008, which is how long Ms. Chambers has lived in the apartment, was put a roof on, paint the walls and fix one or two holes. Ms. Chambers said the only thing Pendergraph was concerned about was their cleanliness and how they took care of the buildings.

Councilman Hines said the sad part is the ones that are supposed to tell us like HUD what to do are trying to cover themselves.

Ms. Chambers said she is trying to do the best that she can, but she does not think it is appropriate to send ninety-three people out on the street and say to fend for yourself because she has tried. If you sign up for anything there is a waiting list, and it is a lot longer than one to three weeks. Ms. Chamber said they were not told when they went to the hotel that we should start looking, it was no do not do anything and do not listen to the rumors, don't believe anything you hear. Ms. Chambers said hope for the best and plan for the worst is not a particularly good thing for her to hear, especially when you have family to take care of. Ms. Chambers said she works, and she is doing the best that she can. Ms. Chambers said she quit her job to obtain a better job to support her family and she feels lost and does not know where to go. Ms. Chambers said she spoke with someone today and it does not sound good based on her income. Ms. Chambers said she only had two and half days to get all her stuff out of her house. Ms. Chambers said this is so upsetting and they are people too. Ms. Chambers said they had plans for the holidays and now she cannot put her Christmas tree up or give her son the presents she wants to give him.

**Briana Paull – 1 Circle Drive Apt G-1** said when we initially met, we talked about getting the water shut off, so it is not running to the apartment, and we have not been updated about that. There was talk about contacting the utility company, so our electric is not sitting there racking up a bill. Ms. Paull said once again we are low income, and we are not there but still receiving these bills. Ms. Paull said another concern is her children go to the doctor in Wilmington and Ms. Paull is now in Jacksonville so that is another expense that Ms. Paull is incurring.

Ms. Paull said the tenants are supposed to be getting help from HUD per HUD for any relocation or gas and we are not. Ms. Paull said no one is communicating with the tenants through HUD or the town about HUD. Ms. Paull asked is someone could advise them on each one of these items.

Mayor Wenzel said these are HUD inspectors and they are going to have the answers to the questions you are asking.

Manager Reynolds said HUD was on the property today and we were scheduled to meet at 1:30 p.m. and HUD did not show up until almost 4:00 p.m. Manager Reynolds said HUD is saying this is an annual inspection and they are also looking at the condition of the units. Manager Reynolds said they were not forthcoming with any information and there were some issues with Pendergraph, Manager Reynolds and a staff member with a HUD representative. As far as help with HUD, Manager Reynolds, Attorney Potter have been on multiple phone calls with HUD, USDA, Rural Development, and all the Fed partners and they are unable to receive any answers.

Ms. Paull said the tenants are not getting proper notice of them entering their apartments until the day of and that goes against their lease. Ms. Paull said the tenants are vulnerable and they are not sure what to do or get assistance.

Mayor Wenzel said we do not have those answers because HUD is not providing them to the Town.

Manager Reynolds said in previous meetings, HUD had talked about a pass through meaning they could take the subsidy that is provided to the tenants and pass that through to another property. Manager Reynolds said as a town we have tried to be proactive with the tenants. Manager Reynolds said she knows some tenants have gone out and tried to secure other housing arrangements that are HUD approved and can take the subsidy. Manager Reynolds said she has taken that information and sent it to HUD with the Landlord, tenant, address, contact information and what Manager received back from HUD was you can't just move people it does not work that way. Manager Reynolds said the places that are deemed uninhabitable for some federal term to kick in and allow the pass through to happen. Ms. Paull said this is when we are supposed to receive the stipend for the relocation, but we can't do any of that until it is deemed uninhabitable. Ms. Paull said we are all struggling with gas and getting from Jacksonville to Wilmington. to work or daycare and different places. Ms. Paull asked if anybody could tell them how they are to find assistance for that. Manager Reynolds said she has worked with Onslow Transit and her understanding from a couple of tenants is that is not working out well as far as transport. Manager Reynolds said she did not think the transport goes outside of the county.

Councilwoman Bragg said she thought the transport did go outside of the county, but they needed planning time to do so. Ms. Paull said that is good if it works out like that but there are people that are driving between Jacksonville and Hampstead to their jobs and dropping their kids off in between and then driving back to Jacksonville. Ms. Paull said that is a lot for one day or they lose their job and don't have a way to pay for their apartment when they go back. Ms. Paull said the tenants need resources and they are not getting any and it is extremely hard to maintain this for 30 days.

Councilwoman Bragg said she understands what Ms. Paull is saying because Councilwoman can relate back to herself in the sense that she would get up at 5:30 a.m. and take her son to

Jacksonville to daycare and come back to Holly Ridge where Councilwoman Bragg worked. After work drove back to Jacksonville to pick her son up, but she was not looking for a place to stay. Councilwoman Bragg said you must do what you must do to support your family. Councilwoman Bragg said she tells people to put a plan in place and you work towards that plan.

Mayor Wenzel said right now there are no resources that have been allocated towards gas or anything else. Manager Reynolds said she will reach out to Onslow transit.

**Dawn Gilliam – 1 Circle Drive Apt. K-1** said she wants to start out by thanking the Town of Holly Ridge and especially Manager Reynolds. Ms. Gilliam said the holidays are coming up and we had a short time to throw our things together. Ms. Gilliam said the testing has been done but why can't the tenants enter their apartments at this point if everybody else is? Ms. Gilliam asked why they could not go and get some comfort items. Ms. Gilliam said she has packed all her stuff, and it is on her front porch in boxes. Ms. Gilliam said she is missing her things after three weeks. Ms. Gilliam said the tenants have already been living in these apartments and it is not like they are going to be exposed to anything new.

Mayor Wenzel said he believes this was discussed earlier on a case-by-case basis by Manager Reynolds. Mayor Wenzel said the concern is safety and contaminating your new place right now. Ms. Gilliam said she took toiletries and honestly Ms. Gilliam's wallet smells like your great grandmother's house. Ms. Gilliam said she has washed all her things and there is mold down to her driver's license. Ms. Gilliam said she has not escaped it. Her totes were clean, she has taken toiletries because she has zero dollars, and her car is just sitting because she does not have insurance on it. Ms. Gilliam said she had to throw her wallet out and she had done what she was told to do. Ms. Gilliam said she has been stretching all her things today in the sun and she knows she aggravated HUD or Pendergraph today doing so.

Mayor Wenzel said if you need to enter your apartment, please reach out to Manager Reynolds. Ms. Gilliam thanked the Town Council again and said all of this is scary. Ms. Gilliam said they do not know if they need to buy a tent to live in or what because they feel like they are in a whole different universe being so far away.

**William Hare – 1 Circle Drive Apt I-5** said they were having a tough time at the hotel and what is going to happen at the end of the hotel stay. Mr. Hare said they cannot sleep on the street. Mr. Hare said what do we do next.

**Candace Wood – 1 Circle Drive Apt B-3** said she has been looking for places non-stop. Ms. Wood said she understands that this is not necessarily the fault of the Town's but whatever the situation we must be responsible for it regardless and we must figure it out, which is what Ms. Wood has been doing. Ms. Wood said she has lived in the apartments for a decade, and she is proud to say she has had stable housing and has been raising her child as a single mother. Ms. Wood said she does not have any referrals she can call Pendergraph and every place she is applying to needs a rental referral. Ms. Wood asked if this was something the Town would do

for them since the town owns the property. Ms. Wood said she has a place that she needs to secure tonight or it is gone, and she is not happy right now, but it is what it is. Ms. Wood said before this she owned a home that belonged to her family, so she does not have much of a rental history. Manager Reynolds said the Town would be happy to provide a rental reference letter. Ms. Wood thanked Manager Reynolds and said at the end of the day we are responsible to ourselves whether we must get a new job, place to live or stay in a tent. Ms. Wood said she has done research and there are first-time home loans available. Ms. Wood said we can't rely on everyone else to fix this for us.

**Brenda Nelms – 1 Circle Drive Apt I-5** said she is one of the seniors there and she is disabled, and she lives on a very tight budget. Ms. Nelms said she went to ten different HUD properties yesterday looking for a home and was told there is anywhere from a one year to five year waiting list. Ms. Nelms said they will not even give you an application until your name comes up on the waiting list. Ms. Nelms said this makes it extremely hard when you live on a budget. You cannot just go out and get a \$700 to \$800 home when you do not have the money. Ms. Nelms said she just wanted to speak on behalf of the seniors because they have a lot to do with this too.

### **Town Council Comments**

Councilwoman Bragg thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and she thanked the Town Staff for all the work they have been doing.

### **Announcements**

- Thursday, November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023, ONWASA Board Meeting – beginning at 6:00 p.m. at the Jacksonville City Hall
- Tuesday, November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023, Planning Board Meeting – beginning at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers
- Thursday, November 23<sup>rd</sup>, and Friday, November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Town Hall Closed in Observance of Thanksgiving
- Tuesday, November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Board of Adjustment Meeting – beginning at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers
- Saturday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, Hometown Christmas event – beginning at 2:00 p.m. in the Community Center followed by the Christmas Tree Lighting at 5:00 p.m. at the Community Center

A motion was made by ***Councilwoman Bragg*** and seconded by ***Councilman Sholar*** to go into Closed Session. ***All Agreed.***

### **Closed Session**

Pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11 (a)(3) for the purposes of consulting with an attorney employed or retained by the Town to preserve the attorney-client privilege.



Mayor Wenzel said we gave Attorney Fountain and Manager Reynolds direction from the Closed Session.

**Adjournment**

A motion was made by ***Councilman Hines*** and seconded by ***Councilman Sholar*** to adjourn at 9:55 p.m. ***All Agreed.***

***Attest:***

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***Jeff Wenzel, Mayor***

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***Tracy Martin, Deputy Clerk***

***These minutes were recorded and prepared by Deputy Town Clerk, Tracy Martin.***