

# Town of Vandemere

*North Carolina*



## Town Board Meeting April 2023 Minutes



**TOWN OF VANDEMERE**  
**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING MINUTES**

**April 24, 2023**

**In Attendance:** Mayor Thaanum, Commissioners Lacy, McCotter, Wooten, Jones, Fema (on phone) and Clerk Britt

**Absent:** TM Woodruff

**Meeting was called to order at 7PM**

**Comm. Jones offered a prayer to begin the meeting.**

**Visitors:** David & Sandra Snipes, Max & Blaine Ware, Russ Hudson, Jan Fredberg, Will Sanderson, Koen Vanmeeter, John Hirko, Brenda Heiberg, Otis Smith, Judy Roatche and Nghiem Tran and wife.

**Minutes of the March 20th, 2023, meeting were read by Clerk Britt. Comm. Lacy made a motion to accept the minutes as read, seconded by Comm. Wooten. Motion passed with all yeas.**

**The financial report for the month of March 2023 was presented by Clerk Britt. There were no questions from the Board upon their review of the report.**

**Public Comments or Questions:** Mayor Thaanum explained that each person had three (3) minutes to speak for public comments and must be signed in to speak. Max Ware started his address to the Board with "We all want a nice town to live in" and stated that most towns in the US have rules of conduct for citizens to follow. He explained that the Town of Vandemere has a Code of General Ordinances that's about 90 pages that he has looked over. He said that they are active, but not enforced, and everyone has been bemoaning them for years. He gave examples from Chapter G, Articles I, II and III. He expressed concern that the Ordinances were outdated, and items needed to be deleted. As he continued, Mayor Thaanum advised him that his time was up. Max wanted to know who set that limit? Mayor Thaanum advised that there are general rules for conducting Board meetings. Max interrupted again and wanted to know why they are being muzzled. Comm. Lacy advised Max that he wasn't running the meeting and if he continued to interrupt, he would be escorted out of the meeting. Max told the attendees that they needed to come in and read the ordinances. John Hirko was going to ask a question, but Mayor Thaanum stated they don't have to answer, but can address it in the next Board meeting. Comm. Lacy told him to sign up and ask his question. David Snipes spoke next. He wanted to thank Comm Wooten for asking him to attend the ECC Board meeting. They gained good insights into things that were going on in our region. He also wanted to thank everyone attending this Board meeting. He told everyone he was burning pinecones in the backyard and people were welcome to come. He stated that "Max is on the right track" and a forum is needed so they can have discussions longer than 3 minutes. Sandra Snipes wanted to reiterate what David and Max said. She wants open Town meetings where people can talk. She went on to talk about the Town website, Squidders website and the quarterly newsletter. Comm. Wooten wanted to know who pays for the supplies for the newsletter. Sandra advised that she and David pay for it. Comm. Wooten said he would help. Next, Judy Roatche said she agreed with Max, as well. She agreed that the letter was good for the Town, and because it was for the Town, that David and Sandra shouldn't be paying for it alone. She recommended that the Town pay for it. John Hirko wanted to know what the Morton building was. He was reading the minutes and found the information there. Mayor Thaanum and Comm. Lacy explained that it was the huge metal building at the Waterfront Park and Morton was the name of the builder. Mr. Hirko asked Sandra about the website. She explained the website and her role. Mr. Hirko said he was wondering where the slides and things were at the water park. He is now aware that it's not a water park, but a "Waterfront Park". Comm. Wooten addressed everyone. He said there were 13 people here and it was great to see so many

people. He would like to see people who had concerns about the community come and ask questions because we all wanted to make the Town better. Comm. Lacy told Mayor Thaanum that we need to work on having open meetings. He asked the attendees when the best time would be to have it. He received feedback from John Hirko and Judy Roatche.

Communications: Mayor Thaanum read the card from Clerk Britt to the Town staff and Board regarding her father's death. Clerk Britt also thanked any others who sent their condolences. Mayor Thaanum then read a card that she received from Courtney Norfleet, who was secretary to County Manager Tim Buck, regarding the sympathy card she received one year ago after the death of her baby from our staff and thanked us for our concern.

#### Department reports:

- **Drainage and waterways, Streets & Roads:** Mayor Thaanum stated that Town Manager Woodruff reported that we are in Phase 3, which is the engineering phase, of the RCCP program. She asked Clerk Britt if she would give some information on it. Clerk Britt advised that we are in Phase 3 of the program which is getting the engineering done on the drainage improvements for the Town and that we are turning in the application for Phase 4 of the RCCP program on Friday. She explained that Phase 4 is applying for funds to start the construction part of the program. Once the funds are received, then we are shovel ready and equipment can be brought in to begin the process of making improvements for the Town drainage.
- **Health and Sanitation:** Comm. Jones had nothing to report.
- **Regulations and Compliance:** Comm. Lacy asked Mayor Thaanum where we stood on getting a bound copy of the ordinances for Sandra. Mayor Thaanum advised him that it was not ready at this point. Mayor Thaanum stated that they could come in, and had come in, to review the ordinances that we have on file, but a copy was not ready to be put out yet. Comm. Lacy says we are trying to get a clean copy for her.
- **Public Safety, Flags and Banners, Maintenance and Installation:** Mayor Thaanum said the flags needed to be put up for the Memorial holiday. Comm. McCotter said he would get them put up but didn't know if he would be able to get the equipment to put them up with. Mayor Thaanum said he didn't need the lift to put the regular flags up, just a tall ladder would work.
- **Decorations and Social Functions:** Comm. Wooten said they are working on building the bathrooms at the park. He stated that Greg Simeon, David Snipes, and Chuck Reed were helping. They have the posts, rails and deck done. They are working to get the doors put in, and will work on the interior after that. Once the interior is finished, they will call in a plumber. The ramp will be done last. Comm. Wooten hopes to have the bathrooms ready by July 1<sup>st</sup>.
- **Public Relations:** Mayor Thaanum advised we have the white goods pickup scheduled for June 10<sup>th</sup>. We have requested a new flyer but haven't received it yet. She read last year's flyer. Item must be on the curb by 7 am Saturday morning. We will get a copy to Sandra to post on the website.

Old Business: N/A

#### New Business:

- Mayor Thaanum stated that the Commissioners were polled by email on 2/27/23 to accept the contract from TRC for the engineering phase of the RCCP program. The Commissioners accepted the proposal. She is now asking for an official vote. Comm. Lacy wanted to know why they had to vote. Mayor Thaanum advised him that we had to get an official record for the minutes. Comm. Lacy made a motion to place the vote in the official minutes, Comm. Jones seconded the motion. Motion passed with all yeas.

- Mayor Thaanum stated that the Squidderfest would be held on July 1<sup>st</sup> and that the insurance and paperwork was in place. She advised that the Squidderfest Committee chairman Anna Simeon, submitted a proposal to have a waterslide and had agreed to pay the water bill for the month that included the day of the event. Mayor Thaanum asked for a motion from the Board to accept the proposal and give permission for the waterslide at the festival. Comm. Lacy made a motion to permit it, seconded by Comm. McCotter. Motion unanimously passed.
- Mayor Thaanum advised the Board that the Pamlico County Library, which will be housed in the old Hardee's building, has sent a letter requesting a donation. The donation requested is \$1.00 per resident. They are requesting \$240.00 from the Town. Comm. Wooten said he had a problem with this and expressed his disappointment regarding the mobile library who has discontinued their weekly set up at the Town Hall. Mayor Thaanum and Comm. Wooten discussed the mobile library and the Pamlico County library. After the discussion ended, Mayor Thaanum asked for a vote on the donation. Comm. McCotter made a motion to make a one-time donation of \$240.00, seconded by Comm. Wooten. Motion passed with all yeas.
- Mayor Thaanum then addressed the Board, staff and attendees of the meeting. First and foremost, she thanked everyone for their service of time, energy and commitment to the Town. Most have volunteered with no monetary compensation and others have worked under the "recommended salaries" for their jobs. She stated that each of the Boards, with combined efforts, have accomplished many things and projects. She went on to say that as always, in life, some things have not turned out as expected, or gotten the attention that others thought was more important, but together, through "combined efforts", much has been accomplished through the best of our abilities to judge, act and serve as a whole. Finishing up, she added that being human, we will sometimes fail. She will remember all Boards and staff for their efforts made. Mayor Thaanum asked that the letter be entered into the minutes. (Placed in minutes book)
- Mayor Thaanum stated that an email was sent to the Town from Russ Hudson stating that if a Town meeting is postponed, it should be posted to the website. She apologized for this not being done, but Clerk Britt had to leave due to her father's affairs and didn't have a chance to let Sandra know. It was posted on the board in front of the Town Hall. We will try to be sure to let Sandra know in the future.
- The last item on the agenda was a discussion of last month's public comments. Mayor Thaanum referred back to Max reading items from the General Code of Ordinances from 1978. She said all the ordinances for the same thing are grouped together in chronological order according to the date. She also said that Sandra stated the zoning ordinances had not been updated in 35 years, but they were revised in 2005, 2009, 2010 and 2012. A copy of the Zoning Ordinance cover page was shown. Mayor Thaanum said some information that has been given is not correct. It was previously stated that the Land Use Plan was not current, but a resolution showing amendments was made and adopted on 5/25/21. We admit that the ordinances and other things change frequently. She explained that a planning board is good, but it only recommends to the council. The planning board phased out and defaulted back to the Board of Commissioners. Comm. Lacy stated that the Town's zoning ordinances are functional as is, but they do need to be in a certified, publishable form. He explained that the Town has been through two devastating hurricanes, and it took the Town away from some projects. Dealing with the issues that arose from these hurricanes consumed the Town's energy. Comm. Lacy talked about some of the examples that Max talked of previously, the noise ordinance, the enforcement process, junked cars, and condemned homes. Sandra interjected that she would like everyone to be addressed, as a whole, not just Max. Comm. Lacy stated he would address Max, as Max addressed him. Max stated that the existing ordinances spell out how to handle them. Comm. Lacy told Max his time was over and continued his explanation about ordinance processes. He also advised any attendee to check with the Clerk of Court and see when the last ordinance violation was tried. He stated these issues are not unique to Vandemere. Jan wanted to know how long it would take to fix ordinances. Comm. Lacy said the Board was working on it when COVID shut everything down. It's been on hold

since then, and other things have taken priority. Mayor Thaanum said every week or two, staff checks on bills in the House and Senate that affects our Town, and we try to stay on top of that. We are not hopeless, but we are limited in our time and staff. Sandra says she understands the difficult positions we are in, but she wants to know if the Board will consider a Planning Board. Comm. Lacy said if there is enough interest in it, yes, it will be considered. Comm. Lacy said he thought there was one application brought to the Town Planning Board in the 8 years that it existed. That is why it phased out and defaulted back to the Board of Commissioners. Sandra said the Town feels like it doesn't have a voice. People have questions and want to help. Comm. Lacy said that is a new development here. Sandra said there is a shift in population from different walks of life who want to help. Mayor Thaanum said we are thankful for those wanting to help. Comm. Lacy said we can reactivate the Board. David Snipes asked that a motion be made to do that. Mayor Thaanum stated that the Board of Commissioners would appoint people to the Planning Board. David again wanted the motion made to activate a Planning Board. Comm. Lacy moved that the Board of Adjustment and Planning Board be reinstated by the July meeting. He advised that the Town take applications and put on June calendar to populate those boards. Comm. Wooten seconded the motion. Motion passed with all yeas.

- There was an open discussion as to when an open Town meeting could be held. The Board of Commissioner's meeting was scheduled for June 19<sup>th</sup>, but someone said that is a holiday. The Board of Commissioner's meeting was moved from June 19<sup>th</sup> to June 20<sup>th</sup>. They wanted the open meeting before the Board of Commissioners meeting on June 20<sup>th</sup>. June 12<sup>th</sup> was decided on for the open Town meeting. Comm. Wooten made a motion to have an open Town meeting on June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 7 pm. Comm. McCotter seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Sandra stated she will put that on the website.

Mayor Thaanum announced that the Board would need to go into Closed Session based on G.S. 143-318.11(a)(5), Employment. Comm. Lacy made a motion to close the Town Board Meeting which was seconded by Comm. McCotter. Motion passed with all yeas. Comm. McCotter made a motion to open the Closed Session meeting which was seconded by Comm. Jones. Motion passed with all yeas.

#### CLOSED SESSION

Comm. Wooten made a motion to end the Closed Session meeting which was seconded by Comm. Jones. Comm. Wooten made a motion to open the Town Board Meeting which was seconded by Comm. McCotter. Motion passed with all yeas.

Mayor asked for a motion to post the Town Manager's position on the NCLM job marketplace. Comm. Lacy made a motion for the Mayor to post the Town Manager's permanent part-time position on the NCLM's job marketplace. Comm. McCotter seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Being no other business, Comm. Jones made a motion to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Comm. McCotter. Motion passed with all yeas.