



## **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY BOARD**

### **Special Meeting- January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

The Waynesville Environmental Sustainability Board held a special meeting on Thursday, January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 4:30 pm. in the Public Services Training Room located at 129 Legion Drive Waynesville, NC.

#### **Members present:**

William Hite (Chair)  
Case Brown (alternate)  
Paul Carlson  
Besty Wall  
Aparna Keshaviah  
David Henderson  
Mary Kayler  
Price Berryhill  
Kay Kirkman  
Buffy Queen  
Kipp Sutton

#### **Members Absent:**

Reid Conway (Vice Chair)

#### **Staff Members Present:**

Rob Hites, Town Manager  
Ricky Bourne, Public Services Director  
Julie Grasty, Asset Services Manager

### **A. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman William Hite called the meeting to order at 4:38pm.

### **B. APPROVAL OF 12/5/2024 MEETING MINUTES**

*A motion was made by Board Member Henderson, seconded by Board Member Queen, to approve the minutes from the December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024 meeting as amended. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **C. C-LEAP-TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SOW FINALIZATION—APARNA KESHAVIAH; COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT W/ HALEY—BETSY WALL; TOW SUSTAINABILITY/ENERGY WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT**

Board Member Keshaviah reported that they are hoping to begin carrying out technical assistance by April.

Board Member Wall reported that her and Hayley (NREL) will be meeting with community partners in the coming weeks. She said they will discuss the impacts of the hurricane on local organizations. Board Member Wall said that Rory said that the State has not yet communicated how IRA monies will be disbursed to NC communities, but there will be \$100 million to be dispersed for low- and middle-income residences for weatherization, efficient appliances, etc. Board Member Wall suggested that the ESB meets with Mountain Projects and DSS to discuss the money coming in from the IRA. She added that Hayley said they would like to host another community engagement meeting at the end of February.

Chairman Hite reminded the ESB that they have money from the EAC to help create an informational website for the ESB and NREL. Board Member Dickson suggested making the website a part of the Town's website so the ESB could continue to manage it years later.

### **D. DOE OFFICE OF CLEAN ENERGY DEMONSTRATIONS (OCED) FUNDING OPPORTUNITY**

Chairman Hite reported that there is a \$10 million opportunity for towns with a population of 10,000 or less. Mr. Hites said Waynesville is just above the 10,000 population mark. Board Member Dickson asked why Rory wants the town to pursue the funding if the town doesn't meet the population requirement. Board Member Brown said census subdivisions and institutes of higher education, such as Lake Junaluska, the Pigeon Community, and HCC, may be able to apply for the rural energy development funding. Chairman Hite said that Sarah Nichols with Land of Sky said there's a larger, regional opportunity.

### **E. NCFS GRANT FUNDING OPPORTUNITY- KAY KIRKMAN**

Board Member Kirkman reported that the announcement for a request for applications came out January 8<sup>th</sup>, and the deadline to turn the application in is February 12<sup>th</sup>. She said she and Board Member Carlson spoke with Justin Bennet and he said that if the town does a tree inventory, they need to have reasons to use the inventory. She said that Nick Johnson said Justin are going to put together a proposal to do the tree inventory, create a database, and do a training program. Board Member Kirkman suggested discussing any student related projects the ESB would like to see happen. Board Member Carlson said that Luke Kinsland was excited about utilizing a tree inventory program and getting trained on how to use the program during their meeting with Mr. Johnson. Board Member Carlson said perhaps the new staff person could help manage tree inventory.

### **F. NEW TOW STAFF POSITION: HOW DO SUSTAINABILITY/ENERGY PROGRAMS FIT?**

Chairman Hite asked Mr. Hites how they envision the new staff position that would be replacing Julie Grasty's position. He said he would like to upgrade the position to a Deputy Public Services Director and that person would serve as the staff member for the ESB. Mr. Hites said he would try to find someone who has experience in electrical engineering or solar, and their position would focus on efficiency.

#### **G. 2025 STATE ENERGY CONFERENCE OF NC—RALEIGH, APRIL 29-30**

Chairman Hite said the state energy conference is April 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> this year. Board Members Sutton, Wall, and Dickson expressed interest in attending.

#### **H. OTHER BUSINESS**

Chairman Hite reported that he and Board Members Queen and Kirkman met with the Recreation Advisory Commission to discuss with them the scope of work regarding solarizing the Rec Center and EV charging. He said the RAC seemed interested in learning more about the tree inventory project, tree plantings, and stream clean ups.

Chairman Hite reported that he attended a webinar about Renew America's Schools Prize. He said the program would award \$90 million to school systems. He said Phase I awards \$300,000 to identify the needs of the school, Phase II involves the school system partnering with the DOE for an energy audit, and Phase III involves implementation. He said there is a 25% cost share of the school system. Chairman Hite said funding is to go towards energy efficiency, solar, geothermal, and more. He said there are office hours February and March 12<sup>th</sup> to discuss application. Board Member Dickson suggested contacting the district superintendents to see if they're interested in applying, and then go from there.

#### **I. ADJOURN**

***A motion was made by Board Member Carlson, seconded by Board Member Sutton to adjourn the meeting at 6:08pm. The motion passed unanimously.***

ATTEST:

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William Hite, Board Chair

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Candace Poolton, Town Clerk