

**HIGH POINT CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING
(VIRTUAL)
JUNE 1, 2021 – 4:00 P.M.
COUNCIL CHAMBERS – HIGH POINT MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

MINUTES

As part of the City of High Point's on-going COVID-19 mitigation efforts, in-person attendance was not allowed at this meeting. Instead, the meeting was live-streamed and the public was provided a link to listen to the meeting as it was being live-streamed. www.HighPointNC.gov/VirtualPublicMeeting

CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Mayor Wagner called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

He then called the roll for attendance. The following council members participated **remotely**:

Mayor Jay W. Wagner; Mayor Pro Tem Britt W. Moore, At Large; Council Member Tyrone Johnson, At Large; Council Member Cyril Jefferson, Ward 1; Council Member Christopher Williams, Ward 2; Council Member Monica L. Peters, Ward 3; Council Member S. Wesley Hudson, Ward 4; Council Member Victor Jones, Ward 5; and Council Member Michael Holmes

Staff participating **remotely**:

Randy McCaslin, Interim City Manager; Greg Ferguson, Assistant City Manager; Eric Olmedo, Assistant City Manager; Jeron Hollis, Managing Director; JoAnne Carlyle, City Attorney; Meghan Maguire, Assistant City Attorney; Bobby Fitzjohn, Director of Financial Services; Stephen Hawryluk, Budget and Performance Manager; and Lisa Vierling, City Clerk

2021-223 Adoption-Proposed City of High Point FY 2021-2022 Annual Budget & Related Documents

Council is requested to consider the adoption of the City of High Point's FY 2020-2021 Annual Budget and related documents.

Transcript

Mayor Wagner: *At this point, the floor is open for a motion regarding the budget.*

Council Member Williams: **Motion to approve.**

Mayor Wagner: *Okay, a motion has been made by Councilman Williams to approve the budget and related documents. Is there a second?*

Council Member Peters: **Second.**

Mayor Wagner: *Second by Councilwoman Peters. Okay, the floor is open for any comments regarding the budget.*

Council Member Hudson: *Mayor Wagner, this is Council Member Hudson. I would like to have the floor if I may for just a few minutes.*

Mayor Wagner: *Okay.*

Council Member Hudson: *The two principal responsibilities of the City Council are to establish policy and to approve the budget. We are performing one of those duties today, but we are completely ignoring the other one. The established policy of this City Council is to give funds to non-profit organizations through our Non-Profit allocation process. This process is clear. It was created by City Council to act as a vehicle to distribute funds to High Point non-profit agencies. It is well-vetted and it has been a very effective way to help non-profit organizations use city funds for specific projects that help all of the citizens of High Point. It has been the policy of the City of High Point to not include non-profit organizations as the line item in the city's budget and there are very good reasons for this policy. Primarily, that it is impossible and not prudent for this City Council to pick and choose one agency to receive funding while ignoring the remaining sitting non-profit agencies. The Arts Council, for example, has requested for at least ten years to be included as a line item in the city budget and it has always been this City Council's response that the city does not wish to pick and choose between non-profit agencies. That has always been a wise policy to not play favorites. By placing Southwest Renewal Foundation in our budget as a line item expense, some of the members of this City Council are stating that the Southwest Renewal Foundation is more important than the dozens and dozens of other non-profit agencies who are not receiving funding.*

The Hayden-Harman Foundation, the Lenny Peters Foundation, the Congdon Foundation, the Hayworth Foundation-none of these are included as line items in the budget. Why is Southwest Renewal? The YWCA is not included. The Greater High Point Food Alliance is not included. The Open ,Door Ministries is not included. Why is Southwest Renewal receiving public money and these other non-profit organizations are not? This line item also takes taxpayer money from the entire city and distributes it solely to Ward 3 and only to the Southwest quadrant of Ward 3. Citizens in Ward 6 are paying taxes for a program that only benefits the Southwest quadrant of Ward 3. Citizens of Wards 4 and 5 are paying taxes for a program that only benefits the Southwest quadrant of Ward 3. If the goal is for economic development, then we should increase the economic development budget by \$50,000. If the goal is to build a greenway, we should increase the Parks & Rec budget by \$50,000. If the goal is to provide more sidewalks, we should increase the Transportation budget by \$50,000. As the budget stands now, a recurring \$50,000 line item for Southwest Renewal Foundation is unfair to the High Point taxpayer. It sets a terrible precedent for the future, and I will not be supporting the approval of this budget for these reasons.

Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Wagner: *Thank you, Mr. Hudson. Is there anyone else who would like to be heard?*

Mayor Pro Tem Moore: *Yes, Mayor Wagner. This is Mayor Pro Tem Moore. Thank you for your comments Councilman Hudson. The challenges I have, I've never voted on a budget that I liked everything about it when presented in such a big budget. As a matter of fact, I don't like everything that falls in my home budget. The weekend coming off COVID is so freeing and feeling. You can feel it in the air and the feeling of the stadium-the things that are going on. The ramifications of COVID outside of the loss of life, which is tragic, and the illness, have a huge financial impact. Even our Guilford County manager recently in their talks stated in the paper that we are at the very tip of an iceberg with this manna from heaven.....well, money from D.C. coming down to artificially stimulate our losses. We were running at a 10-12 percent increase up through the fiscal year a year ago last February prior to COVID. There's a lot of unanswered questions on how we're going to rebound, how quickly we're going to rebound, and I feel like some of the, you know, we've had large numbers of vacancies that staff shared with us in key positions in our city. We've been challenged by competitive cities for our talent. I commend our staff and employees for the job that they continue to do. But I feel like some of these positions that are placed in this budget-the timing is wrong. So, for several reasons, mainly fiscal, I think this is not a responsible answer at this time and I will not be supporting this budget.*

Mayor Wagner: *Is there anyone else who would like to be heard?*

Council Member Jones: *This is Council Member Jones. I would echo basically what Wesley said. I fully support doing projects in our city that improve the look and feel, especially in the things that have to do with safety in our city. But I don't agree with putting line items in our budget that goes specifically to a non-profit. I think that it should always follow under the same processes that we've been using since I got elected and that is to factor in .03 cents on the tax dollar that we have already decided is a fair use to go towards non-profits and consider it in that method and not to put a line item in the budget. It's not that I don't want the project to happen-it's just the method of how you pay for it and from what account. So, that's my two cents. Thank you.*

Mayor Wagner: *Okay, anyone else before we call the vote? Okay, hearing none, we'll now call for the vote. Make sure you are unmuted when you vote. Councilman Holmes, how do you vote?*

Council Member Holmes: *Aye.*

Mayor Wagner: *Councilman Johnson?*

Council Member Johnson: *Aye.*

Mayor Wagner: *Councilwoman Peters?*

Council Member Peters: *Aye.*

Mayor Wagner: *Councilman Moore?*

Mayor Pro Tem Moore: *No.*

Mayor Wagner: *Councilman Williams?*

Council Member Williams: *Aye.*

Mayor Wagner: *Councilman Hudson?*

Council Member Hudson: *No.*

Mayor Wagner: *Councilman Jones?*

Council Member Jones: *No.*

Mayor Wagner: *Councilman Jefferson?*

Council Member Jefferson: *Aye.*

Mayor Wagner: *And the Mayor votes Aye. This budget is approved by a vote of 6-3.*

I want to thank the staff for doing a good job with working us up a budget in another kind of weird year and all their work during the past year getting us through COVID and watching our budget numbers so intensely during a time period, really, where we didn't know exactly what the impact was going to be. So, I want to thank Eric Olmedo especially and Randy McCaslin and the others for what they've done in the last year keeping track of our figures and helping guide us through a very, very tough year. With that, there's no more business to come before the meeting, so I'll entertain a motion to adjourn.

[end of transcript]

Adopted the Ordinance approving the FY 2021-2022 Annual Budget & Related Documents.

A motion was made by Council Member Williams, seconded by Council Member Peters, to adopt the Ordinance approving the FY 2021-2022 Annual Budget & Related Documents. Following a roll call vote by Mayor Wagner, the motion carried by the following 9-0 unanimous vote:

Aye (9): Mayor Wagner, Mayor Pro Tem Moore, Council Member Johnson, Council Member Jefferson, Council Member Williams, Council Member Peters, Council Member Hudson, Council Member Jones, and Council Member Holmes.

Ordinance No. 7717/21-34

Ordinance Book, Volume XXII, Page 34

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before Council, Mayor Wagner entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting. Council Member Holmes moved to adjourn the meeting; Council Member Johnson made a second to the motion. Mayor Wagner asked if there was anyone who would like to be heard before adjournment. Hearing none, he proceeded with a roll call vote which carried by a unanimous 9-0 vote as follows:

Aye (9): Mayor Wagner, Mayor Pro Tem Moore, Council Member Johnson, Council Member Jefferson, Council Member Williams, Council Member Peters, Council Member Hudson, Council Member Jones, and Council Member Holmes.

The meeting adjourned at 4:11 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jay W. Wagner, Mayor

Attest:

Lisa B. Vierling, MMC
City Clerk