MINUTES
SNOW HILL BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Monday, June 9, 2025, 6:00 p.m.
G. Melvin Oliver Town Hall
908 SE Second St.
Snow Hill, NC 28580

Call to Order: Mayor Dennis Liles
Invocation: Mayor Pro-Tem Wilkes
Pledge of Allegiance: Mayor Dennis Liles

I. Roll Call - Mayor Liles, Mayor Pro-Tem Wilkes; Commissioner Andrews; Commissioner Daniels; Commissioner Shackleford; Commissioner Washington

II. Approval of Agenda

Motion was made to approve the agenda.
Motion by: Andrews
Second by: Shackleford
Votes: Ayes – 5
Nays – 0
Abstained –
Approved

III. Consent Agenda

A. Consider Approval of Minutes May 12, 2025 – Regular Meeting
B. Consider Approval of Minutes May 21, 2025 – Budget Workshop
C. Consider Approval of Minutes May 28, 2025 – Special Called Meeting
D. Consider Approval of Minutes June 2, 2025 – Emergency Called Meeting

Attorney Pridgen requested that the June 2 Emergency meeting minutes be excluded from the motion, stating that there may be a potential correction needed. The corrected minutes will then be presented for approval at the board meeting on August 11, 2025.
Motion was made to approve the rest of consent agenda.
Motion by: Washington
Second by: Daniels

Votes: Ayes – 5
Nays – 0
Abstained –

Approved

IV. Public Comments (NCGS § 160A-81-1)

Mayor Liles introduced David Jones and Douglas Slicker, respectively.

Speaker 1:

David Jones, a resident of 105 7th Street, stated, "I would like to share my comments and observations regarding the reinstatement of the Snow Hill Police Department. As a resident on the south side of Seventh Street, I have noticed a limited police presence in my neighborhood. Additionally, discussions with various residents on the north side of Snow Hill indicate that some are unaware of the Snow Hill Police Department's existence. Mr. Jones said that the Greene County Sheriff's Office often responds first to calls, stating, "Oftentimes, when there are calls in Snow Hill, particularly on the south side, the Sheriff's Office is usually the first to arrive. This trend, according to Mr. Jones, has persisted throughout the current tenure of the Snow Hill Police Department.

Mr. Jones asked the board, could you please inform citizens well in advance regarding any potential tax increases? I understand that a definitive answer may not be immediately available, but I kindly request that this information be communicated as soon as feasible.

Speaker 2:

Douglas Slicker, a resident of 206 SE 4th St., addressed the board with a personal grievance regarding a $136 water bill, which he found excessive for a two-person household that uses rainwater for plants and bottled water for cooking and drinking. "Something's not right," he said, also disputing a $25 late fee. "I went in the next day and explained I'd been sick. The clerk told me, 'Don't worry about it. I haven't added the late fees yet.' But now it's on this bill. I won't be paying that part, but I'll gladly pay the rest."

Mr. Sliker expressed strong support for the police department's reinstatement, emphasizing unity across the community. "I'm glad that y'all made the decision you did about the police. Law enforcement—whether it's the Police Department or the Sheriff's Office—should never become a racial issue in any town. I don't feel that it is here, but we need to stay aware to ensure everyone is treated the same," he said.

To enhance community safety, Mr. Sliker proposed establishing a neighborhood watch program and offered financial support. "I looked it up, and it's more than just saying you want to have one. There's a process to get it started. You need a lot of people willing to be involved, from all walks of life, all kinds of neighborhoods—rich, poor, everyone," he explained. He added, "They sell signs once the program is up and running, about $40 each. My wife and I will sponsor the first 10 signs—that's $400. If this group can adopt a neighborhood watch. We can make it work." Mr. Sliker stressed the importance of

community vigilance, urging residents to "join together, keep an eye out for suspicious activity, and report it immediately to our local police department."

V. Town Manager Report:

A. Salvador Tinoco – Economic Development

Town Manager April Vinson presented to the board Salvador Tinoco, a local business owner and resident of Snow Hill, NC. Mr. Tinoco expressed his gratitude for the extended speaking time to the Town Manager, and for allowing him to be put on the agenda. I didn't think three minutes would be enough to convey his detailed thoughts on Snow Hill's economic development he said.

Mr. Tinoco voiced significant frustration regarding the town's stagnation since the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasizing his deep concern for Snow Hill's future. He described the current situation as "running on a treadmill, not moving forward" and criticized the tendency to delay decisions, stating that "kicking the can down the road won't solve our issues." He also focused on the police department's funding, stressing the need for sustainable solutions to avoid repeatedly addressing budget shortfalls. He argued that a strong police presence is crucial for safety and growth, as business owners like him contribute to police funding through taxes, and safety is essential for the town's expansion. Mr. Tinoco underlined that economic development is key to funding community initiatives and expressed disappointment at the lack of visible progress, urging the town to "knock on the right doors and talk to the right people and officials who can help us." Mr. Tinoco recalled a successful grant program led by Congressman Don Davis five years ago that provided $25,000 or $50,000 matched funds to business owners for revitalization efforts, which he found highly effective, though he acknowledged that more work is needed downtown.

Inspired by towns like Farmville and Kinston, Mr. Tinoco proposed several initiatives. His "Center Square" vision includes a revitalized downtown with an amphitheater for events such as Christmas performances by the Greene Central High School band behind the Upper Crust Pizza and Burger Bar, believing this could draw more people downtown. He also discussed a potential mural project, having consulted with the owner of Hardy's Appliance, who is eager to commission a large mural, and offered to spearhead this effort. Mr. Tinoco strongly opposes property tax increases, arguing that citizens and businesses already pay enough without receiving adequate return. He advocated for expanding the tax base through new businesses and housing, noting his efforts in improving 35 to 40 houses in the area. He highlighted the importance of retaining younger families moving into subdivisions, who appreciate local services, but acknowledged the need to address street repairs and house rehabilitation. He concluded with a call for unity, urging everyone to "set aside any grudges and work together" to attract businesses and new

residents. Mr. Tinoco suggested leveraging Airbnbs to compensate for the lack of a local hotel and called for renewed collaboration with officials like Congressman Don Davis and Representative Humphrey to secure funding for beautification projects such as improved streetscapes, lighting, and landscaping, emphasizing that "these small things can make a big difference."

Commissioner Andrews expressed appreciation for Mr. Tinoco's dedication and contributions to various community projects. Town Manager Vinson is actively seeking grant opportunities for the initiatives you have proposed and is thoroughly researching available grants, including those for projects such as murals, drawing inspiration from successful initiatives in Kinston.

Commissioner Andrews noted that some of these grants may have specific deadlines or requirements concerning new construction or existing facilities. Nevertheless, we are committed to exploring all feasible options to support these endeavors. Commissioner Andrews also emphasized the invaluable contributions from our residents to projects such as the splash pad, which truly exemplifies the collaborative spirit we value in Snow Hill.

Mayor Liles, along with Commissioners Washington and Daniels, thanks Mr. Tinoco for his various development contributions to the town.

B. 2025-2026 Budget Information Needed -Action

Town Manager Vinson provided an overview of the challenges faced with the 2025-2026 budget, emphasizing to the board the urgency to finalize our decisions by the June 30th deadline. Vinson stated that, "I've presented another budget proposal, and I'm seeking your direction as it's unusual to have so many proposals at this stage. Currently, we face a $38,297 shortfall, which includes a proposed 2.5% salary increase and the continuation of the School Resource Officer (SRO) position. Manager Vinson discussed the ongoing negotiations with the Greene County Board of Education regarding the $20,334 benefits cost for the SRO, which the town currently covers. I've spoken with Dr. Creech and Antonio Blow, and they are checking to see if the school board can cover this amount. If they do, the deficit would decrease to $17,965.

Manager Vinson wanted clarity from the board on the following:

a. Do you wish to keep the SRO position, contingent on the school board covering the full $20,334?
b. Should I balance the budget with or without the SRO, and with a 3% or 2.5% salary increase?

Manager Vinson cautioned the board against relying on the fund balance annually to cover shortfalls. She stated that while we can use remaining balances this year, it is not a sustainable practice.

Regarding the SRO position, Commissioners Dianne Andrews and Lorraine Washington support retaining it, even if it means using the general fund this year. However, Commissioner Rosa Wilkes advocates for returning the SRO to the school board, citing that residents already contribute to children's safety through county and town taxes and there's no guarantee of school board funding.

Manager Vinson noted that retaining the SRO would necessitate purchasing a new vehicle due to an accident in February, with $31,500 allocated in capital outlay. This cost could be partially offset by a potential $50,000 grant Police Chief Josh Smith is pursuing. If the school board covers the SRO benefits, our shortfall would drop to $17,965. If we also avoid further vehicle purchases next year, we would be only $5,000 away from balancing the budget.

Non-Profit and Civic Donations

Motion was made to remove nonprofit donations, except for the library,

Motion by: Andrews
Second by: Wilkes
Votes: Ayes – 5
Nays – 0
Abstained –

Approved

Manager Vinson stated that $10,000 was put back into the budget.

C. Budget Amendment Request #3 – Action

Manager Vinson presented Budget Amendment Number Three, which involved reallocating $55,579 within the budget without changing the bottom line. "It's just moving money from one line item to another, like office supplies or training," she clarified. The board was asked to review the amendment for approval.

Manager Vinson asked for approval of the Budget Amendment $3

Motion by: Washington
Second by: Andrews
Votes: Ayes – 5
Nays – 0
Abstained –

Approved

D. Internship Request

Attorney Brian Pridgen requested that the item be removed from the agenda

E. 5th Annual Juneteenth Festival

Town Manager April Vinson provided an update on the festival and mentioned that we are actively seeking elected officials to speak at the event.

If you are interested in participating as a speaker or would like to learn more about this significant community event, please contact Mrs. Joanne Stevens directly.

Manager Vinson also noted that flyers with additional information have been included in the board packets and are available at the Town Office and on the Town website.

Mrs. Stevens clarified that the festival will no longer utilize two separate locations, as this caused confusion for vendors. To enhance economic development and tourism, the event will now be consolidated within the town. The Saturday program will include an official opening ceremony, a vendor fair, and a car show. Sunday will feature the 1st Annual Juneteenth Gospel Fest at 3:00 p.m., a "My Authentic Self" Fashion Show hosted by Tiffany Speight (919-584-2235), and a special presentation by Timmy Murray.

Additionally, Mrs. Stevens stated that the Greene County Museum will be open for tours on Saturday, with support from sponsors George Mewborn and the North Carolina Arts Council. As noted by Vinson, comprehensive event details are available on the town's website, Facebook page, and utility bills. Further promotion will be facilitated through the fire department's digital sign. The primary objective of this festival is to celebrate cultural heritage while simultaneously boosting local tourism and economic activity.

VI. Monthly Reports

A. Financial Report – April Williams

Finance Officer Williams presented the financial report for the month, along with annual updates on revenue and expenses. A detailed breakdown of current town projects was also provided to the board. Additionally, Finance Officer Williams informed the board that funds collected from debt set-offs are being allocated to the water/sewer accounts.

B. Police Report – Chief Smith

Police Chief Josh Smith addressed community concerns regarding police visibility, reporting that 10 incidents occurred in May, with seven of these located south and west of West Harper Street. Chief Smith emphasized the department's consistent presence, stating, "If you haven't seen us, it's because you haven't looked. We've been there quite a bit."

Chief Smith also provided details on a shooting that took place on June 4th in the 500 block of Jordan Avenue. He noted his rapid arrival within 90 seconds of the incident, securing the scene by approximately 5:00 p.m. on June 4th. An arrest was made by 3:00 p.m. on June 5th, with an additional suspect having an active warrant. Two more suspects have yet to be identified, and the incident, which resulted in four damaged vehicles, appears to be gang-related. Chief Smith commended Corporal Payton for her exemplary work in developing a suspect profile overnight. Furthermore, Chief Smith reported a late-May incident on Pine Shoal Drive, linked to a TikTok trend involving individuals attempting to knock or kick on doors before leaving. He clarified that this was a stunt rather than a home invasion. Despite an inability to obtain a license plate from the footage, the area was heavily patrolled for a week, and no further incidents have been reported since.

C. Public Works – Public Works Director Travis Warters

Public Works Director Travis Warters provided an update on departmental activities, in which the board received a detailed handout in their packets. He reported that sidewalks and curbing were sprayed last week, and the focus for this week and next will be on cleaning curbs and storm drains. Additionally, he confirmed the completion of Phase 1 of the Well 4 project and informed that the 2024 Consumer Confidence Reports (CCRs) are now accessible online for customers to review water quality data.

Mr. Warters was commended for the excellent upkeep of the cemetery, with a commissioner acknowledging positive feedback received. He also highlighted the team's successful and innovative irrigation plan to maintain the splash pad's grass.

VII. Closed Session: § 143-318.11 Personal

Motion made to go into closed session at 7:15 p.m.

Motion by: Washington
Second by: Andrews
Votes: Ayes – 5
Nays – 0
Abstained –

Approved

Motion made to return to regular session

Motion by: Andrews
Second by: Shackleford
Votes: Ayes – 5
Nays – 0
Abstained –

Approved

VIII. Comments from Mayor and Board:

There were no comments at this time.

Packets containing relevant reports and documents were distributed to all board members and have been included with the minutes for reference.

IX. Adjournment

Motion was made to adjourn at 8:02 p.m.

Motion by: Washington
Second by: Andrews
Votes: Ayes - 5
Nays – 0
Abstained – 0

Approved

Approved: _____ Dennis Liles, Mayor

Respectfully Submitted: _____ Mary Cantey, Town Clerk