

TOWN OF WILSON'S MILLS
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
March 19, 2026

PRESENT: Mayor Fleta Byrd, Mayor Pro-tem JC Triplett, Councilmembers David McGowan, Tim Brown, Carolyn Dobbin, and Doris Riley.

OTHERS PRESENT: Town Administrator Leighanna Worley, Town Clerk Emily Matthews, and Town Attorney Gabriel Du Sablon.

CONVOCATION: Mayor Byrd declared a quorum present and called the meeting to order at 6:33pm.

PLEDGE Mayor Byrd led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

INVOCATION: Mayor Byrd gave the invocation.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Mayor Byrd amended the agenda to add item 6b(iii) "Recommendation to Johnston County Board of Commissioners Economic Development Board Representative" and 6b(iv) "Municipal Personnel Policy Amendment – Article 2, Section 2" as well as remove item 8a "Closed Session pursuant to N.C.G.S 143-318.11a(3) "...consult with attorney..."

A motion was made by Councilmember David McGowan and seconded by Councilmember Carolyn Dobbin to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

1st OPEN FORUM Mayor Byrd opened the 1st Public Forum at 6:36pm.

With no one wishing to speak, Mayor Byrd closed the 1st Open Forum at 6:36pm.

REGULAR BUSINESS

MAYOR FLETA BYRD: Mayor Byrd said the Johnston County Mayors Association met in our new Council Chambers last week and everyone was pleased with how the Chambers were coming along. She said Council should be able to hold their April meeting in the new chambers. She thanked staff for their patience throughout the construction process.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT – Leighanna Worley:

Resolution in Support of Preserving Municipal Property Tax Authority and Protecting Property Tax-Funded Services:

Town Administrator Worley referenced the resolution in Council's packets. She said earlier this year the General Assembly started reviewing property tax policies and House Speaker Hall has convened a committee on property tax reduction. She said the key proposals are mostly about levy limits which would restrict local government revenue. She also said the North Carolina League of Municipalities has several lobbyists on this to try to fight it. The League has asked for municipalities to sign a resolution of opposition to send the Representatives. Mayor Byrd said the Johnston County Mayors are concerned about this and thinks the passing of it will limit our resources. Ms. Worley said this also included reforms to policy about taxing and some does deal with tax exempt status for affordable housing.

Councilmember McGowan asked if we have received any input from Representative Larry Strickland or Senator Benton Sawery and Ms. Worley said not yet. Councilmember Tim Brown said he would like to know what their feelings are as well.

Councilmember Brown expressed concerns about not having all the needed

information before approving the resolution and having our name tied to the opposition. Mayor Byrd said we want to make sure we protect our right to levy taxes.

A motion was made by Councilmember David McGowan and second by Mayor Pro-tem JC Triplett to adopt the following Resolution In Support of Preserving Municipal Property Tax Authority and Protecting Property Tax-Funded Services. Motion carried unanimously.

**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF PRESERVING MUNICIPAL PROPERTY
TAX AUTHORITY AND PROTECTING PROPERTY TAX-FUNDED
SERVICES**

WHEREAS, the North Carolina House of Representatives has convened an interim committee to examine the State’s property taxation system, exemptions, and related fiscal impacts prior to the 2026 legislative short session; and

WHEREAS, property taxes represent the primary revenue source over which municipalities in North Carolina maintain direct authority and control; and

WHEREAS, revenues generated through municipal property taxes fund essential public services including, but not limited to, police protection, fire protection, emergency response, sanitation services, street maintenance, infrastructure improvements, code enforcement, and administrative services; and

WHEREAS, public safety expenditures alone typically exceed forty percent (40%) of municipal general fund budgets statewide, and in many of North Carolina’s largest cities average approximately forty-seven percent (47%) of general fund spending; and

WHEREAS, since 2020 municipalities have experienced significant cost increases due to inflation, including higher personnel costs for police officers, firefighters, sanitation workers, and other frontline public servants, as well as increased costs for infrastructure materials, equipment, fuel, and capital improvements; and

WHEREAS, any significant reduction in municipal property tax authority or revenue capacity would directly impact a municipality’s ability to provide critical public safety services and maintain infrastructure necessary for safe and thriving communities; and

WHEREAS, municipalities must retain adequate and reliable revenue streams to meet current service demands, comply with state and federal mandates, and plan responsibly for future obligations; and

WHEREAS, local elected officials are in the best position to determine appropriate tax rates and service levels based on the needs and priorities of their respective communities.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Town of Wilson’s Mills respectfully urges the North Carolina General Assembly to preserve municipal property tax authority and avoid legislation that would significantly reduce or restrict this essential local revenue source without providing a sustainable and

equivalent alternative; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town of Wilson’s Mills requests that any proposed changes to the property tax system be carefully evaluated to ensure that municipalities retain the ability to adequately fund public safety, infrastructure, and other essential services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution shall be transmitted to the Town of Wilson’s Mills, the members of the North Carolina General Assembly representing both municipalities, and the North Carolina League of Municipalities to express support for protecting local government fiscal stability

Resolution Calling a
Public Hearing for
Town of Wilson’s
Mills Charter
Change:

Ms. Worley referenced the resolution in Council’s packets and said the adoption of the resolution would call for a public hearing for next month in order to change the Town of Wilson’s Mills form of government from Mayor-Council to Council-Manager.

A motion was made by Councilmember Tim Brown and seconded by Councilmember Carolyn Dobbin to adopt the following Resolution of Intent of The Town Council of the Town of Wilson’s Mills to Consider an Ordinance Amending the Charter of the Town of Wilson’s Mills Concerning Its Town Administration and call a public hearing for Monday April 20, 2026 at 6:30pm in the Wilson’s Mills Twon Hall Council Chambers. Motion carried unanimously.

**RESOLUTION OF INTENT OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF
WILSON’S MILLS TO CONSIDER AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE
CHARTER OF
THE TOWN OF WILSON’S MILLS CONCERNING ITS TOWN
ADMINISTRATION**

WHEREAS, the Town of Wilson’s Mills presently operates under the mayor-council form of government and employs a Town Administrator to carry out its directives.

WHEREAS, North Carolina General Statute 160A-102 permits municipalities to amend their form of government by adoption of an ordinance amending the governing charter;

WHEREAS, it is the determination of the Town of Wilson’s Mills Town Council that a conversion of the Town’s form of government from a mayor-council form to a council-manager form would be in the best interest of the Town of Wilson’s Mills and would best promote the efficient management and efficient operation thereof;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF WILSON’S MILLS that pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 160A-102, the Town Council shall consider adoption of an ordinance amending the Town Charter to change the form of government of the Town of Wilson’s Mills from the mayor-council form to the council-manager form following a public hearing.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town Council hereby calls for a public hearing on the herein-described change in form of government at its next regular meeting of April 20, 2026. A public hearing on the proposed charter

amendment shall be held and notice thereof shall be published at least once in a local newspaper not less than ten (10) days prior to the date of the public hearing and said notice shall contain a summary of the proposed amendment. Following the public hearing called hereby, the Town Council of the Town of Wilson’s Mills shall consider passage of such an ordinance at its regular meeting on April 20, 2026, or at some other date within sixty (60) days of the public hearing.

Recommendation to Johnston County Board of Commissioners Economic Development Board Representative:

Ms. Worley said our Economic Development Board representative is to be reappointed every 2 years and we are now up for reappointment. She said the appointment is done by the County Commissioners but it is the duty of Council to recommend someone to the Commissioners that we wish to serve as our representative. She said Councilmember Carolyn Dobbin has filled the position and Mayor Pro-tem Triplett has as well. She said Councilmember Carolyn Dobbin has reapplied and Jonathan Stovall of Little Creek Church Road in Clayton also applied to represent us on the Board.

Councilmember David McGowan said he read both applications and thinks Councilmember Carolyn Dobbin should continue to represent us.

A motion was made by Councilmember David McGowan and seconded by Councilmember Doris Riley to recommend Councilmember Carolyn Dobbin as our Economic Development Board representative. Motion carried unanimously.

Municipal Personnel Policy Amendment – Article 2, Section 2:

Ms. Worley said in March of 2025 Council approved a temporary change to Article 3 Section 2 of the Municipal Personnel Policy which would allow Police Officers to earn overtime due to having to work more hours when the department is understaffed. She said the department is now fully staffed and the Personnel Policy needs to be amended again to remove the ability to earn overtime.

A motion was made by Councilmember Tim Brown and seconded by Mayor Pro-tem JC Triplett to amend the Municipal Personnel Policy Article 3 Section 2, removing employees of the Police Department to collect overtime for hours greater than 171 in a 28-day period. Motion carried unanimously.

OTHER

Ms. Worley said the Council Chambers are almost complete and we should be able to hold our work session next week in the chambers and tonight should be the last night meeting at the Elementary School. She said the Chambers Open house is now scheduled for May 4th.

PLANNING DIRECTOR – Wendy Oldham:

Call Public Hearing – Town of Wilson’s Mills Unified Development Ordinance:

Mayor Byrd said in Council’s packets they received a list of proposed changes for the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). She said Council will not be discussing the changes tonight, they are only calling the hearing, and discussion will take place next month. She instructed Council to call Mrs. Oldham with any questions.

A motion was made by Councilmember Tim Brown and seconded by Councilmember Doris Riley to call a public hearing to discuss the Town of Wilson’s Mills Unified Development Ordinance on Monday April 20, 2026 in the Wilson’s Mills Town Hall Council Chambers at 6:30pm. Motion carried unanimously.

Call Public Hearing – Special Use Permit – 115 Gladstone Loop:

Mayor Byrd said 115 Gladstone Loop is located in the Crescent Mills subdivision and they have applied for a Special Use Permit and a hearing will need to be called for next month.

A motion was made by Councilmember Tim Brown and seconded by

Councilmember David McGowan to call a public hearing to discuss the Special Use Permit for 115 Gladstone Loop on Monday April 20, 2026 in the Wilson’s Mills Town Hall Council Chambers at 6:30pm. Motion carried unanimously.

Appointment of New In-Town Planning Board Member:

Mayor Byrd said there is currently a vacancy on the Planning Board and applications have been received and sent to the Planning Board. She said the applicant that was recommended by the Planning Board, Charlotte Cox, is here tonight and available for questions.

A motion was made by Councilmember Tim Brown and seconded by Councilmember Doris Riley to appoint Charlotte Cox to the Wilson’s Mills Planning Board. Motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Oldham said prior to tonight’s meeting Councilmember Riley asked for a list of Planning Board absences for the last 12 months, noting anyone who has missed more than 3 meetings. She said one member has missed more than 3 meetings. Mayor Byrd said Planning Board needs to act, Councilmember Tim Brown agreed. Mrs. Oldham said the Board operates at the pleasure of the Council. Mayor Byrd said if Planning Board said someone needs to be removed to move forward with it.

COUNCILMEMBER COMMENTS:

Councilmember David McGowan thanked Charlotte Cox for her willingness to serve on the Planning Board. He also thanked the Planning Board and Mrs. Oldham for their work on the Unified Development Ordinance.

2nd OPEN FORUM

Mayor Byrd opened the 2nd Public Forum at 7:04pm.

With no one else wishing to speak, Mayor Byrd closed the 2nd Open Forum at 7:05pm.

MOTION TO GO INTO CLOSED SESSION:

A motion was made by Councilmember Tim Brown and seconded by Mayor Pro-tem JC Triplett to go into Closed Session at 7:05pm pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(6) “...personnel...” Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION TO COME OUT OF CLOSED SESSION:

A motion was made by Councilmember Tim Brown and seconded by Councilmember Carolyn Dobbin to come out of Closed Session at 7:27pm. Motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURN:

A motion was made by Councilmember David McGowan and seconded by Mayor Pro-tem JC Triplett to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:27pm.



Emily Matthews

EMILY MATTHEWS, CMC
Town Clerk

Fleta A. Byrd

FLETA A. BYRD, Mayor