

MINUTES OF THE WHITSETT TOWN COUNCIL

July 14, 2026

Whitsett Town Hall Building

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

The regular meeting of the Whitsett Town Council was held on Tuesday, July 14, 2026, at the Whitsett Town Hall. The following members of the Town Council were present: Mayor Chip Bell, Mayor Pro Tem Jerry Rice, and Council Members Craig York, Cindy Wheeler, and Lee Greeson. Also present were Town Administrator Karen Horne, Town Clerk Barbara York, North Carolina House District 59 Representative Alan Branson, Dr. Elma Hairston, Lane Williamson, and several citizens.

Mayor Chip Bell called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and noted that a quorum was present. He asked Mayor Pro Tem Jerry Rice to give the invocation, which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

REGULAR MEETING

OLD BUSINESS

1. Adoption of the Minutes from the June 9, 2026, Regular Meeting and Public Hearing

- Council Member Craig York made a motion to adopt the minutes from the June 9, 2026, Regular Town Council Meeting. Council Member Lee Greeson seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.
- Council Member Lee Greeson made a motion to adopt the minutes from the June 9, 2026, Public Hearing. Mayor Pro Tem Jerry Rice seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

2. Update on Town Hall Renovation

- Council Member Craig York displayed concept images showing the current condition of the building and the proposed restoration of the upstairs auditorium, museum areas, meeting rooms, and bathrooms. He estimated that the remaining restoration work may take approximately two years, depending on available funding.
- After the current payment is made, approximately \$5,000 will remain from the \$300,000 restoration grant. The Town has begun the process of seeking additional grant funding.
- Two rooms are nearing the inspection stage for electrical and structural work. After those rooms are completed, the Council room and office will be moved temporarily so reconstruction of the floor joists can continue through the present office and meeting areas and then proceed upstairs.
- Council discussed preserving historic features, including the original quarry tile, while replacing the old knob-and-tube wiring with shielded wiring and separate electrical services for the downstairs and upstairs portions of the building. The restoration will continue to follow historic-preservation and accessibility requirements.

3. Update on Outdoor Bathrooms

- No update was provided.

4. New Trash Service with Freedom Junk Removal

- Mayor Bell announced that the new service with Freedom Junk Removal had begun and reminded residents of the upcoming trash and recycling pickup.

5. Any Other Old Business

- There was no additional Old Business.

GUEST SPEAKER - REPRESENTATIVE ALAN BRANSON

- Representative Alan Branson presented the Town of Whitsett with a \$100,000 direct grant from the State budget for capital improvements and equipment related to the restoration of Town Hall and fire-service apparatus.

- Representative Branson discussed recently enacted and proposed State measures affecting Guilford County property reappraisals and tax levies. He stated that the 2026 reappraisal had been delayed for twelve months and discussed a proposed tax-levy limit and the quarter-cent sales-tax proposal expected to be considered by voters.
- Council members discussed the effect of the reappraisal delay on the Town's adopted FY 2026-2027 budget, concerns about large and inconsistent property-value increases, and issues involving agricultural-use valuation. Representative Branson stated that the legislative tax committee would continue reviewing these matters.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

Planning Board

- The Planning Board did not meet.

Enforcement Officer

- No enforcement issues were reported.

Town Administrator

Public Works - Burlington Water Conservation

- Town Administrator Karen Horne reported that the City of Burlington had adopted voluntary water-conservation measures because of drought conditions. Because the Town purchases water from Burlington, Whitsett is included in the conservation request.
- A conservation letter will be sent to the Town's approximately 35 water customers. Staff will continue using the new monitoring system to identify possible leaks and contact customers promptly. Residents will be asked to limit nonessential uses such as frequent lawn watering and car washing.

Circle K Site Plan and DCC

- Town Administrator Karen Horne reported that Circle K submitted its site plan and paid the required fee. The plan is undergoing Guilford County commercial review, including setback and environmental review for the septic system, before returning to the Planning Board for a recommendation.
- Circle K will use a septic system and will be responsible for extending the water connection to the property. The Town cannot estimate future property-tax revenue until the completed commercial property is assessed.

NEW BUSINESS

Financials

- Town Administrator Karen Horne reported that Guilford County tax bills are expected to be mailed later than usual, likely near the end of August, but will retain the usual due date. Property values will remain at the prior year's level during the twelve-month delay. The Town's tax rate remains unchanged at \$0.20 per \$100 of assessed value.
- Because the FY 2026-2027 budget was prepared using the new reappraisal values, the Budget Committee will review prior-year spending and identify areas for reductions. A substantial budget amendment will be presented to Council after additional spending information is available. Savings from the new trash contract may help offset part of the revenue reduction.
- Mayor Pro Tem Jerry Rice reported that a \$1,000 FY 2025-2026 budget amendment had been completed by transferring funds from the bookkeeping line to Administration to cover other expenses. The Council acknowledged the amendment; no vote was required.

Landscaping

- Because of the drought and voluntary conservation measures, the Town is not watering the outdoor landscaping, and mowing is being performed only as needed. Several bushes near the marquee have died. Town Clerk Barbara York reported that the contractor had been asked to remove them.

Town Hall Security Monitoring System with Intercom

- Council Member Craig York reported that the most recent estimate was approximately \$10,000 for the proposed door and security work, which Council considered too costly.

- Council discussed less expensive camera, intercom, and recording options. Council Member York will consult Jack Burton and investigate simpler systems, including consumer camera and security-system options, while also addressing the weak door frame and front-door security.

Any New Items from Council Members

- Council Member Craig York reported that he and Lane Williamson are working on a proposed replacement ordinance to strengthen requirements for green space, tree protection, buffers, and natural transition areas between commercial or residential developments and adjoining properties.
- Council discussed concerns that grading and stormwater-retention work near property lines can damage tree-root systems and destroy required buffers. The proposed ordinance will include measurable standards and stronger enforcement provisions. The Town Attorney will review the draft for compliance with North Carolina General Statutes Chapter 160D before it is brought to Council for consideration.
- Council also discussed the existing approved site plan for Hudson Way and whether the area designated to remain undisturbed is being adequately protected. No formal action was taken.

Announcements

- There were no announcements.

SPEAKERS FROM THE FLOOR

Mayor Chip Bell asked if there were any speakers from the floor and reminded speakers of the three-minute limit.

- Dr. Elma Hairston, a candidate for North Carolina House District 59, introduced herself and described her priorities for Whitsett and the district, including infrastructure investment, high-speed internet, support for small businesses, grant funding, long-term property-tax relief, health care, public schools, housing, jobs, and voter participation.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Council, Mayor Pro Tem Jerry Rice made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Council Member Lee Greeson. The motion carried unanimously, and the July 14, 2026, Town Council meeting adjourned at approximately 7:00 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Whitsett Town Council is scheduled for 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 11, 2026, at the Whitsett Town Hall.

APPROVED:

Chip Bell, Mayor

Jerry Rice, Mayor Pro Tem