

# Town of Vandemere

*North Carolina*



## *Town Board Meeting*

January 2024  
Minutes



**TOWN OF VANDEMERE**  
**REGULAR WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES**  
**January 17, 2024**

In Attendance: Mayor Sandra Snipes, Commissioners Judy Thaanum, Danny Wooten, Carolyn Jones, Steve Lacy, David Snipes and Clerk Britt.

Absent: None

Visitors: Anna Simeon, Max & Blaine Ware, Bryan & Terry Cole, Debbie Hudson, Brenda Heiberg, David & Sherri Howlett, Judy Roatche, Scott Harvey, Tiffany Edmonds and Carla Byrnes

Mayor Snipes addressed the Board and attendees of the meeting with an introduction to herself and some of her family history. She gave a power point presentation explaining that we're in Phase 3 of a four-phase plan to set up the reorganization of the Board and assignment of their departments. Mayor Snipes stated she wanted around 15 people to volunteer, which would be composed of elected officials, appointed officials and community champions to help move the Town forward. She would like work session meetings, Board meetings, Planning Committee meetings and open Town Hall meetings. She announced that the proposed Town Hall business hours would be on Tuesday and Thursdays, from 10 am to 4 pm. Ending her introduction, Mayor Snipes called the regular work session meeting to order at 7:15 PM.

Comm. Thaanum offered a prayer to begin the meeting which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Snipes asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Comm. Wooten made a motion to approve the agenda, which was seconded by Comm. Lacy. Motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Snipes stated that the Town was set up as a Mayor-Council governance and she would like to propose that it stays that way. She would like to add a planning committee and ambassadors to help.

Comm. Snipes wanted to know what the Administrative financial cap limit was for the manager. Comm. Lacy stated that it was \$500.00, and the local Board decides on that amount. Comm. Lacy stated that \$500 was the amount that could be spent without coming to the Board for approval.

Mayor Snipes stated that 160A says if a Town manager is hired by the Board, he runs the departments, but the Commissioners run the departments, so there is a conflict of interest. Comm. Thaanum stated that Tom Woodruff was the Town Manager because they needed him to manage the work for the grant at the Vandemere Waterfront Park. He needed to be able to make decisions about the park without calling in the Commissioners all the time. Comm. Lacy said that if there is no Town manager, someone has to take on that responsibility.

Mayor Snipes said that the Departments need to be set up and the Board will be asked to approve them. She stated that the Departments will have Department heads and that volunteers will help the heads. Comm. Lacy wanted to know if the Town would no longer have a Town Manager. Mayor Snipes stated that the charter was set up as a Mayor-Council governance and she felt that the Town would be better served under this governance. She stated that the money that was to be appropriated for the Town

Manager would be used for training classes. Mr. Woodruff received about \$12,000 a year for his manager position and cutting the grass for the Town. Comm. Lacy said that the Town Manager is involved in the day-to-day operations and the person to call at any time when something needs to be handled. Mayor Snipes stated we have those daily fires, and they are being dealt with on a regular basis. She stated that Comm. Wooten and Comm. Snipes have been called and they are taking care of those items.

Comm. Thaanum asked about the phone numbers that have been posted on the Town Hall Door. She wanted to know how people could contact someone, when only the office numbers are listed, and the office is not open except on Tuesdays and Thursdays. She said people need to be able to talk with someone at all times. Mayor Snipes said she is checking into that. Mayor Snipes said that it's not a 24/7 job for her, unless there's a problem or a huge emergency.

Comm. Snipes stated that the Town already has the Mayor-Council governance, but he would like to know what the administrative financial cap is. Mayor Snipes asked what the cap limit for spending is, without getting Board approval. Comm. Thaanum stated that the Town doesn't have a finance officer and that Clerk Britt has expressed her desire not to take on that responsibility. Comm. Thaanum wants to know who it will be. Mayor Snipes said there is a general statute section on the finance officer, but she has not located that information yet. Commissioners Lacy and Thaanum stated that it couldn't be the mayor. Mayor Snipes again asked what the financial cap amount was. Commissioners Lacy, Thaanum and Wooten said they thought the single expenditure amount was \$500.00. Mayor Snipes will research who can be the finance officer and email that information to the Commissioners. Comm. Thaanum stated that the North Carolina League of Municipalities (NCLM) has experts that you can contact.

Mayor Snipes wants to rename the Departments and have a team and a planning committee to help. The Departments will be Dept. of Infrastructure, led by Comm. Wooten, Dept. of Parks and Recreation led by Comm. Thaanum, Dept. of Emergency Management led by Comm. Jones, Dept. of Health and Public Safety led by Comm. Snipes and Dept. of Economic Community and Development led by Comm. Lacy. Comm. Thaanum said she couldn't be responsible for being the head of Parks and Recreation, she can't do what she used to do. She must have help doing things around home now. Mayor Snipes stated you must trust your team to help. Comm. Thaanum stated that's why the Town had a Town Manager and that they all worked together in one office. Mayor Snipes stated she understood what she was saying, but each book has a chapter and tells what their responsibility is. The Commissioners need to decide if they can do it or not. If they can't, look at another department. Comm. Jones stated she worked for the school and didn't know what Emergency Management was for the Town, but she would be helping with the school kids if there was an emergency, she couldn't help with the Town during that time. Mayor Snipes stated that she couldn't do this by herself. Mayor Snipes tabled this discussion for the next meeting. Comm. Lacy wanted to know if the heads of the departments had to be Commissioners. Mayor Snipes said "no", but the Commissioners needed to decide. Comm. Lacy stated he will serve as the head of his department. Comm. Jones said she will serve but won't be here during emergencies. Mayor Snipes said they won't be doing it alone. Comm. Snipes stated there were five departments and five department heads. He will help with any other departments. Comm. Lacy stated Comm. Thaanum will need help with the Parks and Recreation Department because daily maintenance is needed at the Waterfront Park. Mowing at the park will need to be done, and the contractor who normally cut the grass at Town Hall and the park every other week has decided to drop all accounts that

are not weekly. Comm. Thaanum said if they keep the contract, mowing goes from around \$700.00 a month to \$1,400.00 a month. Mayor Snipes stated they need to get back on the meeting schedule and work on acceptance of the heads of the departments. She asked the Commissioners to look over and decide at the next meeting.

Mayor Snipes wants the Board meetings to be on the second Wednesday of the month. Commissioners Jones and Lacy stated they have other commitments on that night. Mayor Snipes said she is suggesting that night because it misses most of the holidays and honors the work week. Comm. Lacy wanted to know why there wasn't an issue before. Comm. Wooten said he went to the Fire Academy years ago, but Comm. Snipes is in the Fire Academy now. Those meetings are every Tuesday and Thursday through July. Comm. Jones stated that Wednesday night is for her bible study classes. Comm. Lacy wanted to know if she was going to keep the same meeting format. Mayor Snipes said she was. Comm. Jones wanted to know if there was going to be a work session meeting every time. Mayor Snipes again said "yes". Mayor Snipes asked the audience what a good time was for them. Comm. Wooten stated that the work session meeting should end at 7 pm and Mayor Snipes suggested no more than three subjects be addressed. Comm. Lacy said 6:30 to 7:00 pm was a good time for the work session meeting. Mayor Snipes advised that there would be a vote at the next meeting on the time.

Mayor Snipes wanted to know if they wanted to talk about the road repair on Shell Castle Lane and the soft terrain repair at the Waterfront Park. It was decided to talk about it at the next meeting. Mayor Snipes also said they would talk about the meetings being on the second Wednesday of the month.

Mayor Snipes asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Comm. Snipes made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Comm. Wooten. Motion passed with all yeas.

**TOWN OF VANDEMERE**  
**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING MINUTES**  
**January 17, 2024 (AMENDED)**

In Attendance: Mayor Snipes, Commissioners David Snipes, Danny Wooten, Carolyn Jones, Steve Lacy, Judy Thaanum and Clerk Britt.

Absent: None

Visitors: Same visitors remained from the Work Session Meeting.

Meeting was called to order at 8:15 PM

Mayor Snipes asked for a motion to accept the agenda. Comm. Wooten made a motion to accept the agenda. Comm. Jones seconded the motion which passed with all yeas.

Minutes of the December 18th, 2023, meeting was emailed, by the clerk, to the Commissioners, on January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Mayor Snipes asked for a motion to approve the minutes as read. Comm. Thaanum stated that there were corrections that needed to be made. She stated that on page 4, Robby needed to be put in front of McCotter, because there were several McCotters in Town. On page 2, under Communications, she wanted to add that all Towns had a provisional vote. Comm. Snipes stated you can't just add information, the minutes are what was said in the meeting. Comm. Lacy said you could take out the ballot sentence. Clerk Britt will make corrections. Comm. Thaanum also remarked that an "s" needed to be added to the word culvert on page 2. Mayor Snipes asked for a motion to accept the minutes as amended per Comm. Thaanum's requested changes. Comm. Lacy made a motion to accept the minutes as amended; Comm. Wooten seconded the motion. Motion passed with all yeas.

Clerk Britt reported on the financials for the month of November 2023. She stated that the net income was a negative \$7,234.87 due to expenses for the park bathroom project, office cleaning, and supplies for the holiday. The overall year to date balance is a positive \$3,345.03. Clerk Britt also reported on the funds for the grants and projects that are still ongoing. VWP bathroom funds remain at \$8,216.19, the NCLM paid \$46,375.00 for the Black Mountain Software program, remaining ARPA funds is \$53,062 and the Town needs \$183,000.00 more to finish out the sewer line project, we have \$250,000 in grant awards for the RCCP Phase 4, the Golden Leaf grant was filed December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023, asking for \$500,000.00 in funding, we are filing an extension with FEMA to keep the \$122,289.52 in funding, we are currently filing another application for funding through the StRAP, which is the Streamflow Rehabilitation Assistance Program and we currently have \$6,058.99 left in the NCORR grant which is for the tractor and RTV.

Mayor's Comments: Mayor Snipes stated that they competed against 7 other contestants in the Pamlico County Christmas Parade and the Town won. She also commented that she is 17 days into her term. She wants to keep people in the loop of what's going on in the Town. Mayor Snipes said that the zoning ordinances are still in the lawyer's office but should be presented back to the Town by January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024, for review and approval. She advised that the plan for the general ordinances is to approve drafts of the ordinances, make copies of them and then get them organized. She said it will take time,

maybe a year or more, but they need to be in good order. When grants are applied for, they ask about your ordinances. She wanted to give an update on the sale of the Town's lots. Comm. Thaanum said she talked to Mr. Tran and that his bank can't do the paperwork by January 20<sup>th</sup>, but the money should be here by the end of this week or the first of next week.

Mayor Snipes stated that there was an issue with a dog being loose in Town. She said there was a leash law ordinance, but in 1999, Pat McCotter said to follow the state regulations. Pamlico County adopted a "Dangerous Animal Ordinance" in 2022. Copies were placed on the shelf for attendees. Mayor Snipes stated that the ordinance tells you to talk to your neighbors if there is an issue and call the Sheriff and Animal Control if it is a repetitive problem. Pamlico County can't support the leash law. Mayor Snipes advised that the Pamlico County ordinance should be followed. Comm. Wooten wanted to know if there was a leash law for the Town. Mayor Snipes said that the last item in the general ordinance book was from 1999 and it said to go by the state regulations.

#### Public Comments or Questions:

Judy Roatche: Stated that she takes her dog, Bella, for walks and has Bella on a leash. She said she was pulled down to the ground by Bella when another dog came around that was not on a leash. Judy stated that there are three dogs running loose around Town. She's afraid to take her dog on walks and wants to know why nobody else has theirs on a leash. Comm. Lacy said Animal Control will check out a dangerous dog call but does not come out for a stray dog running loose. Comm. Lacy said the problem we have is that we don't have a way to enforce our ordinance. He stated that the Board can put another leash law in effect. Mayor Snipes stated that if a dog makes you fearful, go by the Pamlico County ordinance and call Berkley with Pamlico County Animal Control to have the dog assessed.

Bryan Cole: Wanted to know if the two lights on Vandemere Creek road were supposed to be working. He stated that if we pay for them, they should be working. Comm. Thaanum said they should be and Mayor Snipes said it would be checked into. He also wanted to know if anybody knew what they were going to do at the end of 307 where the property has been cleared. Resident Tiffany Edmonds said she heard that tiny homes were going to be built there.

Blaine Ware: Reported that you couldn't see when trying to pull into the back parking lot of Town Hall. Stated it was very dark and could a light be put up. Comm. Thaanum said there is a light on the back of the Fire Department. Someone needs to see if it is working or not.

Anna Simeon: Wants to know if they can do Zumba again. They were doing it in the Town Hall meeting room at one time. Anna stated that the TV and the stand are hers. She said it would be free and anyone is welcome to join. Mayor Snipes said she would get back to her.

#### Ongoing Business:

Barricades: Comm. Wooten said he called Forrest Farm Supply and the barricades that were ordered have not come in yet. He did get a quote from another company, but the quote was high.

#### Department reports:

- Health and Sanitation: Comm. Wooten stated that he and Comm. Snipes worked on the bathrooms at the park. They put up part of the wall paneling. Comm. Wooten said the

project is going a little slower due to other obligations. Comm. Thaanum wanted to know if anybody called GFL when the trash was picked up early and most people didn't put out their trashcans because of the winds from the storm the previous day and night. Debbie Hudson stated Squidders called, but no other residents present at the meeting did. The trash truck came before 7 am, made their rounds, and then came back a little later and picked up trash again. Mayor Snipes said she didn't call them then but would call GFL and put some information on the website when there is a holiday or inclement weather.

- Drainage and Waterways, Streets & Roads: Comm. Wooten stated that he noticed a hole in the road on Shell Castle Lane. He said that it looked like a concrete pipe under the road had separated. He stated that Phillip Willis would be coming out tomorrow to look at the hole in the road and propose a quote and Daniel Hacker would be coming out on Friday. Comm. Wooten took Brandon Bloomberg from the Dept. of Transportation to Shell Castle Lane to show him the hole. Brandon stated that concrete pipes break down and he would suggest putting in a plastic pipe. He said the plastic pipes tend to hold up better. Comm. Thaanum recommended that a quote be taken from Dustin Turnage as he has done work for the Town in the past. Due to safety concerns, Comm. Wooten said he placed two traffic cones around the hole. Comm. Wooten also said that Daniel Hacker is doing some drainage work in Oriental, and he wanted to go by and see the work Daniel is doing. Brandon Bloomberg, from Dept. of Transportation, came to Town to look at the steel plate located at the intersection of First Street and Pennsylvania Avenue. The steel plate has been pushed back from its placement in the concrete. Brandon says he will see what he can do to keep this from reoccurring. Mayor Snipes asked that the repair and maintenance discussion of Shell Castle Lane be tabled for the next meeting.
- Regulations and Compliance: No report
- Public Safety, Flags and Banners, Maintenance, and Installation: No report
- Decorations and Social Functions: No report

#### New Business:

- Clerk Britt stated that we received an email from David Bone, Executive Director of the Eastern Carolina Council (ECC), stating that if the Mayor and Commissioners take the Ethics training that is being provided by Attorney David Baxter, the Town has to pass a resolution to certify that Attorney Baxter is qualified to give the training. Mayor Snipes asked for a motion to approve the resolution. Comm. Thaanum made a motion to approve the Resolution approving a Qualified Source for Obtaining the Ethics Training Required by N.C. General Statute 160A-87. Comm. Snipes seconded motion. Motion passed with all yeas.

- Mayor Snipes asked for a motion to approve a new time for the February 2024 meeting to be moved from the third Monday of the month to the second Wednesday and start at 6 pm. Comm. Wooten made a motion to accept that schedule. Comm. Thaanum seconded the motion. Motion passed with all yeas.

Being no other business, Comm. Snipes made a motion to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Comm. Jones. Motion passed with all yeas.