

City of High Shoals  
Regular Council Meeting  
December 10, 2024

- Call to Order: Mayor PJ Rathbone called to order the December 10<sup>th</sup> meeting at 6:30 p.m. The following council members were in attendance: Dennis Cash, Bo Rhyne, Kathy Rhyne, Tim Eidson and Bobby Vassey. Denese Cook was excused from the meeting.
- Invocation
- Pledge of Allegiance
- Approval of Agenda: Motion to approve the agenda was made by Bo Rhyne, seconded by Bobby Vassey, all in favor.
- Approval of Minutes: Dennis Cash made the motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Bo Rhyne. All in favor.

Citizens' comments/concerns: The City of High Shoals Council offers citizens the opportunity for Public Expression issues per NCGS 160A-81.1 (limited to 3-5 minutes per speaker).

No one signed up to speak and no one requested to speak during this time.

Good of the Order: This is a time set aside for members to offer comments or observations (without formal motion) about the organization and its work. The good of the order is also the time to offer resolution to bring disciplinary charges against a member for the offenses committed outside a meeting.

No council member had anything to add to this section.

- **PUBLIC HEARING-CDBG**

Open Public Hearing: The Mayor called for a motion to go into a public hearing regarding the close out of the City's Neighborhood Revitalization grant #21-C-4014. A motion was made by Dennis Cash and seconded by Kathy Rhyne. The motion passed unanimously.

The Mayor asked Steve Austin to discuss the grant. Mr. Austin stated that the City received \$950,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds in 2022 from the North Carolina Department of Commerce, Rural Economic Development Division (REDD) to rehabilitate six single family dwellings within the City. In June 2024, the City was awarded an additional \$45,065 in CDBG funds to complete the project. In August 2024 the City was awarded an additional \$250,000. In September 2024 the City was awarded an additional \$37,000 for a total award amount of \$1,282,065. The project is completed. These funds were provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development HUD). He said that no local funds were part of this project.

The City has rehabilitated 4 single-family homes and replaced two homes with new modular homes. Program guidelines require that the entire house must be brought up to the current building code, including handicap accessibility (if needed), lead paint abatement, and any historical district requirements. The City is not allowed to only make partial improvements. Due to inflation in the last few years since COVID, the average cost per house was \$179,225.

For each house rehabilitated, the City placed an 8-year lien and deed of trust on the property to secure the funds spent. This was a zero percent interest loan with no payments that decreases proportionately each year so that at the end of the 8-year period, the lien is automatically forgiven.

The final total cost of the project was \$1,282,065. The project is completed nine months ahead of schedule. At some point the REDD staff will visit the City to review the project.

Mr. Austin said that the Council does not need to take any action other than holding the public hearing and receiving any public comments or questions.

The Mayor asked if there were any questions or comments. There were none.

He called for a motion to close the public hearing. The motion was made by Kathy Rhyne and seconded by Bo Rhyne. The motion passed unanimously.

- **Departmental Reports:**

- Police Report-Gaston County

- Financial-Dennis Cash

CHECKING:	\$335,722.33
CHECKING 2:	\$ 11,120.32
SAVINGS:	\$160,959.86
CAP MGMT:	<u>\$ 48,711.28</u>
TOTAL:	\$556,513.79

- Cemetery-Denese Cook –No update on the cemetery

- Water/Sewer-Bo Rhyne said that all is well with water/sewer.

- Streets/Maintenance/Sanitation-Kathy Rhyne attended the solid waste recycling summit. The conclusion is under new business for staging debris.

- Parks/Recreation-Bobby Vassey

- Yard of the Month:– Luke Eidson at 185 Old Hardin Rd.

- Vehicles- Tim Eidson said that the trucks are up and running. The new ones should be checked for mileage and oil change.

- Administration/Mayor Report-PJ Rathbone asked if the council members had any projects for the winter to be tackled to let him know. Frye Street and River Street need concrete covers. The meeting room needs to be buffed and polished. The parade was good though shorter than previous years. In the following years; however, we should have marching bands and horses, etc.

- **New Business:**
- Policy/Action: Pornography Policy (State required) Motion to adopt the state required pornography policy was made by Bo Rhyne, seconded by Dennis Cash, all in favor.

**RESOLUTION PROHIBITING VIEWING OF PORNOGRAHY ON CITY NETWORKS AND DEVICES**


**WHEREAS**, House Bill 971 / North Carolina General Statute §143-805 requires all public agencies to adopt a policy governing the use of its network and devices owned, leased, maintained, or otherwise controlled by the City of High Shoals; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of High Shoals prohibits the viewing of pornography by its employees on the City's network or devices owned or maintained by the City.


**NOW, THEREFORE**, be it resolved that the following policies shall apply in the City of High Shoals:

1. No employees of the City of High Shoals, elected officials, or City appointees shall view pornography on any computer network owned, leased, maintained, or otherwise controlled by the City, whether on a City owned and maintained device, or a privately owned or controlled device.
2. No employee, elected official, or appointee of the City shall view pornography on a device owned, leased, or maintained or otherwise controlled by the City.
3. Each year, and no later than August 1, the City shall report information required in NCGS §143-805 to the State Chief Information Officer.
4. This policy shall not apply to investigation, law enforcement training, or actions related to law enforcement purpose; identifying potential security or cyber security threats, establishing, testing, and maintaining firewalls, protocols, and otherwise implementation of this policy; or other exceptions as specifically set forth in NCGS §143-805(d).
5. The terms used herein shall be defined as set forth in NCGS §143-805(g).
6. Any employee, elected official, or appointee of the City who has saved pornography to a device owned, leased, maintained or otherwise controlled by the City shall remove, delete or uninstall the pornography no later than January 1, 2025.
7. Any employee of the City who violates any provision of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action under the City's personnel policy.
8. Any appointee of the City who violates the provision of this policy shall be subject to removal by the City Board.
9. Any elected official who violates any provision of this policy shall be subject to censure proceedings.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that this Resolution shall become effective on the date of its adoption. This the 10<sup>th</sup> day of December 2024.

  
P.J. Rathbone  
Mayor of High Shoals

ATTEST:

  
Brandi Strange, City Administrator

- Discussion/Action: WINTER HOURS
  - The motion to have the employees come in at 7 am on Tuesday (trash days), and 8 am on the remaining days, with having someone stay to 5 pm daily, made by Kathy Rhyne, seconded by Dennis Cash, all in favor.
- Discussion/Action: Staging debris (future emergency)
  - Motion to submit 1-the field beside the basketball court, 2-the Mill Property, 3-the ballfield as a future emergency debris staging made by Kathy Rhyne, seconded by Bobby Vassey, all in favor.
- Action: Motion to RECESS TO Thursday, December 12<sup>TH</sup> FOR AUDITOR REPORT at 6:30 pm. Made by Kathy Rhyne, seconded by Dennis Cash, all in favor.
- Motion to come out of recess to reconvene meeting was made by Dennis Cash, seconded by Denese Cook. All in favor. Present for the reconvened meeting are the following: Denese Cook, Bo Rhyne, and PJ Rathbone.

Mr. Carrick wanted to thank the board to be allowed to serve as our auditor this past year. Please feel free to contact me if I can help you in any way. The second thing is that I gave a clean opinion and are representing the books as they are. Audit report is a public document. Basically, the town broke even but it was anticipated that you would use \$82,000 of fund balance. It turned out better than what was anticipated during the budget process. Primarily the expenditures were from the street department with street repairs than in years before; as well as leasing the vehicles. We have to show it as that the money was borrowed and turned around and purchased the assets. The expenditures in the street department were \$209,000. Still ending up with over \$300,000 unassigned fund balance. When you look at it as a percentage, we're at 51% this year. Over 98% of ad valorem receiving rate.

Water/Sewer and the cost and expenditure have dropped. Revenues are over expenditures this year. Whoever writes your grants is doing a phenomenal job. High Shoals has gotten so many grants, more-so than any other town that I work with. Unrestricted cash, a slight increase during the year.

Performance indicators did not have any "bad" performance indicators this year. I encourage the council to look through the audit performance indicators. It shows how our town compares to other towns. It's my opinion that High Shoals is in good standing. Mr. Carrick also stated that Brandi is doing a great job and was able to pull all documents he requested in an impressive time frame.

Denese Cook motioned to adjourn the meeting, Bo Rhyne seconded, all in favor.