



TOWN OF GRANITE QUARRY
TOWN COUNCIL
STRATEGIC PLANNING
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, September 4, 2025, 9:00 a.m.

Present: Mayor Brittany Barnhardt, Mayor Pro Tem Doug Shelton, Council Member John Linker, Council Member Laurie Mack, Council Member Rich Luhrs

Staff: Town Manager/Fire Chief Jason Hord; Town Clerk Aubrey Smith; Finance Director Shelly Shockley; Public Works Director Colton Fries; Planning, Zoning, and Subdivision Administrator Richard Flowe

Guests: Dodie Renfer & Kim Walawender of Electus Governmental Affairs; Senator Carl Ford

Call to Order: Mayor Barnhardt called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

1. Finance Update

Finance Director Shelly Shockley provided the Council with a handout summary of last year's numbers. She explained the budgeted revenues were exceeded by almost \$190,000 and the Town was able to stay \$621,000 under budget even with purchases made for capital items. The savings were due in part to having effective policies in place, the Council's consideration of spending on capital items, and frugal spending. Questions were asked for clarification and kudos were given to Ms. Shockley for her work. Manager Hord shared that the auditor stated the Town was very fortunate to have someone so organized handling the town finances.

2. Governmental Affairs Update

Dodie Renfer of Electus Governmental Affairs addressed the Council to provide a governmental report. She handed out a packet that included staff biographies and shared that multiple staff members are able to locate and help municipalities with grant applications. Ms. Renfer summarized the current situation in Raleigh. The packet included a list of long session vetoes, successful overrides, and bills that may be added to the calendar for override votes in late September or October. She briefed the Council on the status of SB205, the Swimming Pools/Housing Regulatory Reform bill, further limiting local government's authority for regulating land development which is currently in Rules Committee. She shared a list of long session bipartisan successes including the mini budget bill, which is one of the bills passed to address small items while the budget has still not been adopted. A list was shared of the items that still need to be addressed in the remainder of the long session and beyond including a comprehensive two-year budget. Electus has a list of requests for direct appropriations from Granite Quarry based on Council priority projects.

3. Economic Development Properties Update

A. Dunns Mountain Church Road Property

Manager Hord shared that plans for the Town's property on Dunn's Mountain Church Road are still being discussed with Coleton Boone. He has a conceptual plan in hand and a draft economic development agreement is in the discussion phase. Mr. Flowe shared that it is important for Mr. Boone to come up with what his commitment would be. The next steps would be similar to the process for a rezoning: to advertise and conduct a public hearing after a recommendation from the Planning Board.

B. Balfour Quarry Road Property

The property owner, Mr. Marsh, has a conceptual plan for his property on Balfour Quarry Road and there is a draft economic development agreement relating to the adjacent property owned by the Town. There has been frustration regarding the struggles relating to water and sewer. Mr. Marsh's mining permit has been released and he is ready to discuss rezoning on his current property. Mr. Flowe shared that there are options for water and sewer connections and explained the zoning situation regarding water expansion and Mr. Marsh's planned use of the property. A development agreement would guide timelines and qualifications and would be optimal to have in place prior to rezoning. The property is currently zoned "Industrial". A rezoning to "Agriculture" would allow a house to be built on the property.

4. Water and Sewer Extensions

A. Balfour Quarry

Manager Hord shared handouts that showed the Balfour Sewer project budget estimate and a map with the proposed sewer route. The cost estimate does not include rights-of-way. A public-private partnership and grant funding would be optimal for the purchase. Mr. Flowe shared that three projects could cover the cost: the quarry project and two large residential projects. Faith's lines are roughly a thousand feet from the proposed line. Manager Hord shared that he was confident in SRU's participation. Manager Hord will provide updates when they are available.

B. Highway 52 Sewer Improvements

Manager Hord showed a map with an overview of the Highway 52 Sewer project area and shared the project cost from SRU. SRU will need to do lift station upgrades that are not part of the project but will most likely coincide. He shared that he felt the project was very likely to be reimbursed if the Council wanted to pursue it. Mr. Flowe shared that key properties along the project area are for sale. The next step would be for staff to work with SRU to coordinate design updates and updated cost estimates before moving towards funding and construction. Construction administration could be reimbursed. There was discussion regarding this project being priority for staff focus.

5. Civic Park Improvements

Manager Hord shared that the Civic Park Improvements project is still in the design phase. The cost of Phase I is \$2.1 million with \$1.4 million currently committed. He referenced a handout for the capital campaign that showed several giving options for donors. The flyer will be pushed out in the community and available at Granite Fest. The goal is for the project to break ground in December of this year. The LWCF grant work continues for Phase II.

6. Centennial Park Trail Improvements

Manager Hord provided an update on the status of the Centennial Park Trail Improvements project. The trails have suffered erosion over the years and the official survey showed that some trails encroach on private property. The next step would be a design that moves trails further from the creek. The design cost is estimated at \$25,000. The construction is currently estimated at an additional \$50,000 to \$100,000. There was consensus for Manager Hord to continue discussions with AWCK on the cost of a design not to exceed \$20,000.

Recess

ACTION: Mayor Pro Tem Shelton made a motion to take a ten-minute recess. Council Member Mack seconded the motion. The motion passed with all in favor.

The meeting was recessed at 11:00 a.m.

Mayor Barnhardt called the meeting back to order at 11:13 a.m.

7. Downtown Improvements Updates

Manager Hord shared updates on the Downtown Improvements project. He shared that the next steps are subsurface utility investigation & survey; geotech exploration; preliminary environmental; utility coordination; coordination allowance; and renderings & 3D views which would total \$195,000. He shared a grant opportunity that doesn't require a match. Manager Hord has asked Colliers Engineering to write the grant application for the maximum amount. Once the next steps are completed, the project will be considered shovel ready. There was Council consensus to move forward with the grant application. The grant application is due September 8, 2025, and will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. Colliers will submit the application on the Town's behalf when the grant application period opens.

8. Town Hall Updates

Manager Hord shared the ongoing town hall upgrades. In the near future, for a cost not to exceed \$25,000, Public Works will build two offices and an evidence room in an upstairs storage room. HVAC will be the largest cost. Manager Hord shared future options for town hall upgrades including a potential relocation and a remodel and update for space needs. He provided terms for a \$6 million USDA loan. An adjacent property owner does have interest in partnering with the Town for a potential project. Manager Hord asked the Council for direction. There was consensus to hold a work session to solely discuss town hall and future needs.

9. Town Council Comments

- Council Member Mack stated Dodie Renfer of Electus Governmental Affairs mentioned that there were grants available that could possibly be used for expansion of Bank/Legion Street and sidewalks to address safety issues. Ms. Renfer stated she has been in touch with her staff to update them on the interest.

Adjourn

ACTION: Council Member Linker made a motion to adjourn. Council Member Luhrs seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0.

The meeting ended at 11:48 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Aubrey Smith

Town Clerk