

Minutes

Town Of Ronda Work Session

January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2026, 5:00 PM

The Ronda Board of Commissioners met on Friday, January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. with the following members present: Commissioner Chris Nelson, Commissioner Kevin Reece, Commissioner Helen Porter, and Town Clerk Rachel DeGroat.

Member of the Public Present: Victor Varella, Jerry Masterson, Matthew Foster, ORC Jeff Jones and Maintenance Staff Jordan Church.

**Items for Discussion:**

1. Select Member to Chair Meeting
2. Mayor Bengé Resignation
3. Appointment of Mayor Pro-Tem
4. Mayor/Commissioner Open Seat
5. 2026 Work Session/Regular Board Meeting Schedule
6. Administrative/Clerk Report
7. ORC Report
8. Maintenance Report

Commissioner Nelson Called the Meeting to order at 5:04 PM.

Commissioner Reece immediately makes a motion to amend the Work Session agenda and to move Item for Discussion 4: Mayor/Commissioner Open Seat to the regular Board Meeting for action on Tuesday, January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026. Commissioner Munsey seconds that motion. 4/0 aye in agreement. Mayor/Commissioner Open Seat will be moved to Board Action for the upcoming Board Meeting on Tuesday, January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

Commissioner Nelson raises the question regarding Item for Discussion 3: Appointment of Mayor Pro-Tem and proposes to move that Discussion to Tuesday as well in hopes of that action taking place before a full board. The entire board agrees and Item for Discussion 3: Appointment of Mayor Pro-Tem will be moved Board Action for the upcoming Board Meeting on Tuesday, January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

**2. Mayor Bengé Resignation:** Commissioner Nelson states that he spoke with Mayor Bengé on Sunday and states she seems very resolute in this and sees no reason to object to her resignation. Commissioner Reece makes a motion to accept her

resignation. Commissioner Munsey seconds that motion to accept. 4/0 unanimous vote from board to accept the resignation of Mayor Rheajeane Bengé.

**5. 2026 Work Session/Regular Board Meeting Schedule:** Commissioner Nelson relays a question that was asked to him by the public. Commissioner Nelson asks "what would it do if we change these meetings to 6:00, both the Work Session and the Board Meeting? Or at minimum the Board Meeting." Commissioner Munsey asks "we moved it to 5:00 because of Rheajeane..." Commissioner Nelson corrects, "no, we moved it to Friday because of Rheajeane." Commissioner Munsey, "but then we moved our regular meetings we moved the time from 6 to 5 because of her needs, right?" Both Commissioner Nelson and Town Clerk answer "yes". Commissioner Munsey continues, "she's resigned so can we move these back to 6, cause most people don't get off till 5." Commissioner Nelson states, "that is what I am asking, because somebody brought it up to me tonight. I am going to say this, and I have no problem doing it but we are going to have pay her (the Town Clerk) an extra hour both nights. Which I am good with." Commissioner Nelson states "we are talking Friday and Tuesday, both nights." Jordan Church then asks "so do Rachel and I clock out for the hour and just wait on the meetings then?" Commissioner Nelson answers, "no, I don't think that will be right. I think you stay on the clock." Commissioner Reece makes the motion to accept the presented dates and change the start time to 6PM instead of 5PM. Commissioner Munsey seconds the motion. 4/0 unanimous vote from board to accept the 2026 Work Session (Fri)/Regular Board Meeting (Tues) schedule with a start time of 6PM.

**6. Administrative/Clerk Report:** Town Clerk Rachel DeGroat reports that the security camera upgrade within Town Hall has been completed. Clerk reports that she has completed a course with the UNC School of Government. A 3-part series regarding Open Meetings Law. First course was Open Meetings Law: Overview. Second was Open Meetings Law: Meeting Mechanics. Final part was Open Meetings Law: Closed Session. Clerk reports that she is currently enrolled in and has begun a course titled Essentials of Managing Cities and Town in North Carolina. Clerk reports that she has begun updating the town website, this includes catching up on posting the minutes for the 2025 Work Sessions and Board Meetings. Clerk refers the board to their packet and that there are 3 months of minutes to review for their approval come Tuesday so they can be posted. Clerk reports that she has posted the 2026 calendar for trash and recycling on the website. Clerk reports that she will be speaking with Town Financial Consultant, Michael Boaz, regarding the Budget page and posting the 2025/2026 info regarding the town budget. Clerk reports her recent with the new NC state representative who is the liaison to FEMA. Clerk discussed with the rep beginning the compensation process to FEMA regarding the additional costs the town incurred for Town Hall repairs after Hurricane Helene. This process will require a letter from the town in reference to the additional found damage, and might also include a written statement from the contractor and

confirmation that the damage found was storm related. Projects under FEMA awarded to the town are set to be closed by March. Clerk reports that the town will not meet this deadline. However, the town can request an extension with the state. The state is allowed to extend up to 30 months. If the town does not think these projects will be completed within 30 months, then an extension request needs to be made to FEMA. Approval through FEMA is often denied. The clerk commits to begin working on these efforts with the state to close out the FEMA projects. Clerk reports on the disconnect that was last ran in November. Total amount of the disconnect list in unpaid water bills was \$9,490.91. Commissioner Nelson asks, "how many disconnects is that?" Clerk replies that this was a larger one, while she did not have the exact number, estimate was close to 30 residents. Clerk reports that we have been able to collect thus far \$6,882.35. Clerk clarifies of the roughly \$3,000.00 still unpaid, that includes residents who have been shut off long term and are still being charged the base rate, so that is not a fair number cause water is not being used on some of those accounts. Commissioner Nelson ask, "I thought once they were shut off you didn't charge anymore after that?" Clerk answers, "not that I am aware of, no. You don't charge only when you close the account." Clerk reports on recent complaints regarding a littering issue with a resident on Cemetery Street, an abundance of trash that is blowing into the yards of the neighbors. A call came into Town Hall while Commissioner Munsey was present, because maintenance staff was not at work that day the clerk asked Commissioner Munsey to take a ride out to Cemetery Street and set eyes on the house in question. Commissioner Munsey drove out to the home, spoke with the neighbors who were cleaning up the trash that had blown into their yard. Commissioner Munsey advised the residents to place their complaint in writing, send that statement to Town Hall and also encouraged them to attend a Board Meeting to voice their concerns in person. Commissioner Nelson asks "what's the address there?" Clerk answers, "309." Commissioner Munsey states that the when he spoke with the residents, they mentioned that they know Commissioner Reece, and Commissioner Munsey recommended they reach out to Commissioner Reece. Commissioner Munsey also suggested to the residents that they take photographs, email those to the Clerk or come to the meeting. Commissioner Nelson shares that there was just a similar incident recently on Factory Street. Commissioner Reece states "I was made aware of the one on Factory and I was talking to the sheriff and they took care of it, said the people picked it up. The sheriff told me if we have issues of litter getting in public right-away or on public street that he will have is officers go talk to the people, give them a warning, give them an opportunity to pick it up. If they continue to allow it to happen, then they will go to the next step. I feel like the thing to do in this situation is for you reach out to the sheriff and tell them about this address. And just have the deputy go talk to them. It worked over there." Commissioner Munsey asks, "so you don't have to pass an ordinance to do that?" Commissioner Nelson answers, "no." Commissioner Nelson asks, "where they there picking it up that day?" Commissioner Munsey states,

"stuff is blowing across the street into that camper. They were there together cleaning it up." Commissioner Nelson asks, "the people with the trash were not cleaning it up?" Commissioner Munsey answers, "right, the people across the street were.....I have been told that they are using that property, the guy that lived there is just using it as a landfill." Commissioner Reece agrees and states "I've been told that." Jordan Church states it is the same deal for the Factory Street property. Commissioner Nelson "I don't know about this time, unless it is still doing it. But definitely if it happens again, just go ahead and call the sheriff." Commissioner Reece states, "the sheriff said if it gets on right-away or road it is against the law." Commissioner Munsey adds "and that is inhibiting our maintenance guys and landscaping guys.... they literally had to mow Factory Street a couple of times because they couldn't set their blades all the way down. Jordan and Andy had to go out and clean it. So, they actually mowed Factory at least two times and they didn't charge us any extra." Commissioner Reece states, "in my opinion you don't need an ordinance if there is a law and the sheriff's department is willing to enforce the law. If we have a problem call the sheriff." Commissioner Munsey states, "just do that until it don't work no more, right? Until they quit going on out. Cause you were talking about doing something on Factory Street Kevin with that one place." Commissioner Reece states, "on Factory Street we have a law in place that has been in place. And then the previous, couple mayors back agree and the board at that time agreed addressing the issue with the rules that were already in place. A letter was sent and they started the process, and then we had a mayor that resigned and then nothing else ever happened.... That same place I am talking about have had 2, since I lived in my house that have OD'd and died. They had one that OD'd and they brought him back, 2-3 weeks ago, same place. I don't like that in my community. I don't like seeing people OD and die.... Whatever is going on over there is causing problems for all citizens, hand and hand..... As far as I know, we went into Closed Session and we as a board instructed our attorney to deal with the issues and the rules that we have. As far as I know that is where we are at." Commissioner Munsey states, "and we elevated Rachel's authority. So going forward so we don't have to deal with it at every board meeting let her just go ahead and call the sheriff's department." Commissioner Nelson says, "if somebody calls you about something like that, absolutely. Call the cops. I mean you don't need board approval for that." Commissioner Reece says, "if somebody is breaking the law, call the law." Commissioner Nelson continues, "along those lines, we have talked many time about Northside Park and we have talked many times about drugs at Northside Park. We have never had any kind of surveillance up there. I drove up there today on a whim and there was truck up there with a man and women. The women abruptly got out, threw some stuff in the trash can. I took pictures of it, it's needles. I got their tag, I got a description of the truck, I got a description of the people driving the truck, I called the law.... They didn't even know where the park was. This was a red and white F150 with a camper shell, late 80's early 90's. A man with a black beard and mustache. It has a red-headed girl in the truck with him. That park, we

spent money on the driveway. We need to spend a little money on some playground equipment. But that thing has a shelter, it has restrooms, it has room for people to have gatherings. Especially when this park down here is all full and can't nobody get in the thing. We need to give the people some kind of security knowing they are going to be safe." Commissioner Munsey asks "how much land is up there?" Commissioner Nelson answers, "it is close to 5 acres, I think. But the back of the shelter is back up against the property line. All that land is in the holler." Commissioner Munsey states "the complaint that most people tell me is that there nowhere to park up there." Commissioner Nelson says "if it is for a single party, it is fine. But if you want to get a whole bunch of people up there, no. Some grading could be done. Tim Blackburn brought up to me some time back that we would need to check and see where the tail lines are. If the tail lines aren't in the way, we can do some grading and re-shaping to make a little parking lot. Maybe make the place a little better for handicap or autistic children to go and play. And then we can get some new equipment in and actually have some use of that park. We need to get some signs up, telling people where that park is. Get people actually using that park and people won't be showing up to use their dang drugs. Right now, nobody is coming up there so they got carte blanche of the place." Jeff Jones states "Well #2, the road that goes right up to the shelter, that is on the scheduled to be knocked down and demoed cause that is no longer viable at all. So that obstruction will be out of the way." Commissioner Nelson continues, "we need signs down here on 268 saying where that park is, have a sign off Cemetery, and right there at the drive. And we need to talk about, the people that did the cameras in here. Ask them what kind of solutions they have. If nobody has an objection to this, of getting some kind of surveillance up there. If nothing else I have a cellular camera at my house, it is solar powered, it works off of any cellular company. You can put it up there, it is completely wireless. You can actually talk through the thing if you see somebody there. Something like that, you buy one time, pay a small fee a month to a cellular company and you've got great surveillance. We need to have something up there. Our citizens, they don't know where the park is, and the ones that do are either doing the drugs or are afraid of being there because of people doing the drugs." Commissioner Nelson continues regarding the cameras, "maybe have 2. One at the shelter and one at the bathrooms." Jordan Church states, "the bathrooms are going to need some work." Commissioner Nelson asks, "when you said a little bit of work, what?" Jordan Church answers, "one of them needs a new toilet, one of them needs a new sink. Definitely will need some painting. I think the light fixture was broken in one of them. Minor stuff. Before they can be opened, they are going to have to be addressed." Commissioner Reece then asks Town Clerk, "for transparency, we are operating around \$30k in the checking account right now, is that correct?" Town Clerk states that is correct. Commissioner Reece continues, "if we had to pull money, you think there is money to be pulled from some trust account." Clerk replies, "I know there is, yes." Commissioner Reece asks, "do you think the reason that we are so low is because of these mercy

spending situations, like with the water and stuff, that we weren't expecting?" Clerk answers, "I don't feel comfortable truly providing you an answer because I am not well versed in the budget yet. I think there obviously were expenses that came up that were not expected. Like with the wells, the PRVs, that stuff. What I don't have knowledge on yet, that I will get with Michael to get such, is we pull money from those trust funds but what puts that money back." Commissioner Reece asks, "if you could before the meeting on Tuesday, could you try and find that out? That is very concerning that we are that low." Clerk states, "I am going to. I have a concern for AP next week, so yes, I have to talk to him." Commissioner Munsey states, "I know this has been a controversial topic but that is why regarding the records laws, that is why this has to be accessible to the clerk. There are 5 accounts, 3 trusts and 2 grant accounts. If she had access, she could find those answers out." Clerk clarifies, "I do have access to the accounts, that is how I know what is in them. What I don't know, and this isn't necessarily because I feel like it is being withheld from me per se, I had just started when the budget was established. I did not attend that meeting. So, I don't know where the town creates their budget from." Commissioner Munsey states, "I can speak to that. I was the Budget Officer and I was never allowed access to those accounts. I had no way of, what I mean by that there was no scheduling on Michael's part. I reached out several times, I had no accessibility to those accounts, or to set a budget either with him or on my own. So that is a hinderance, is what I am saying. Like you are saying, it is not that it's mixed with intent but in the even something happened to Michael? We are dealing with death right now. How would we get access to these accounts, unless the clerk has access to them?" Commissioner Reece states, "she said she has access. The reason I brought that up; is I know we just had to fix that emergency water situation. And we haven't even gotten the bill for that. And then when I asked you today, financially how we stand. You told me we have around \$30k in the towns checking account. Now I am pretty sure that we approved up to \$15k to fix that emergency water leak. So, if that bill is around \$15k, we are going to have \$15k. So, that was alarming." Clerk states, "YVSA's bill is \$10k right now for last month, if we get your bill for the leak, plus the bill we owe YVSA, plus the bill we owe the guy who just did the walking track..." Commissioner Reece states, "we are not probably going to any money at all, unless we move it." The Clerk states, "correct." Commissioner Munsey says, "she should be able to access that, do it without Michael, because if something were to happen to Michael everything is locked up." Clerk says, "I can access it to move it. What I don't know is if we move that..." Commissioner Nelson says "how it gets replenished." Clerk replies, "exactly." Commissioner Nelson says, "I know there is grants and funding out there. I just don't know which ones come in and that is what you're saying." Clerk agrees, "that's what I'm saying. I have heard the term 'Powell Bill', we 'Powell Bill' money, but I don't know what that is, or when it comes in." Commissioner Reece states, "that is money for road maintenance." Clerk states, "right, but where does it come from, when do you get it, do you apply for it, do they just pull it.... where

does it? I know nothing about that." Commissioner Munsey asks "is it feasible, since she is taking classes already, to set up and let her take those classes so that she can learn how to do this sort of thing, as a back-up?" Commissioner Nelson replies, "that's what we pay Michael for. If Michael somehow or another gets incapacitated, I am sure he can call her and explain it to her if he can't be here for such a thing." Commissioner Munsey asks, "what if he is deceased, then what happens?" Commissioner Reece says, "if that were to happen Bobby, we would have you reach out to High Country Council and then get somebody down here to help us get through that." Commissioner Munsey states, "they are more about grants. Even with our treasurer, she doesn't have access to those accounts either." Commissioner Reece asks, "Helen?" Commissioner Munsey answers, "yeah." Commissioner Reece asks Commissioner Porter, "you have access to seeing anything we've got, right?" Commissioner Porter answers, "not really." Commissioner Reece asks, "have you ever asked and they told you that you can't see something." Commissioner Porter replies, "no. All I have access to is when they make out the checks, and then I check all that with the other paperwork that's 's with it." Commissioner Reece asks, "do you see the bank statements?" Commissioner Porter answers, "no." Commissioner Reece says, "we should make it a point that especially our Financial Officer gets a copy of every bank statement we got, every time it comes out." Commissioner Munsey states, "well I am just talking about transferring the funds." Commissioner Reece states, "I think we all should get copies." Commissioner Munsey states, "well copies are one thing but it is not going to help that fact that if something happens to Michael, and you are down to \$30k dollars but you got \$47k of checks going out and you can't make payroll, and it takes 30-90 days to get this all straightened out. Then what do you do?" Commissioner Nelson replies, "I think you start getting into a situation where you have too many cooks spoil the stew, when you have too much access." Commissioner Munsey clarifies, "I am talking about the clerk and Michael. I am not talking about everybody." Commissioner Reece states, "everybody should be able to see what we got. I didn't bring that up to have somebody go pointing fingers at Michael or the clerk. I brought that up to say that I am alarmed to say we have that little money in our checking account and I think everybody here needs to know that. Thank the lord that we have some way to move money. And to your point I believe that every employee that we have, we should always encourage them to get all the training, education and certificates they can. So, anything you can learn, through any of those local government commissions, whatever it is that you can learn to help the town. I am all for you learning, take all the classes that you can." Commissioner Munsey asks to the clerk, "so can you call Michael tomorrow and see how to transfer or get him or whoever has access to transfer?" Clerk replies, "yes, and I do have access to transfer." Commissioner Munsey asks, "so you just need permission to do it, is that what you are saying?" Clerk replies, "I don't necessarily feel I need permission. I want an understanding for how that money is going to get put back. And I am not saying that it is supposed to, and I don't know that. I am talking about the process as a whole. As I

start to expand on my own interest and knowledge, understanding the financial end. I could transfer that money right now and it would by all means be there by Monday. I am going to have to transfer money. With all due respect, I didn't necessarily feel I needed to ask permission because if you want me to cover these things, then that is what I have to do. I am not grasping where the money originated from in those trust funds." Commissioner Munsey recommends "reach out to the folks that we met with regarding grants, and the group that you and I and Helen met with. Reach out to them and see what they recommend. Even Mr. Greene with the League of Municipalities. Reach out to him and see what they recommend to cover all these concerns that you have. Does that work for everybody?" Commissioner Nelson says, "I don't have a problem with that. It just seems to me, just ask Michael." Clerk says, "I am going to pick his brain as well, absolutely. He is a go-to for me also. And just quickly too, I did start showing, well Ms. Helen and I had a conversation regarding statements that we get from the trust accounts specifically. Putting them in a folder, we get them once a month, I have shown her the past 2 months. She has something that I receive in paper, I created a new folder to file for this calendar year. I have listened and heard her answer some of these questions over the past few months. And her feelings of not having access or understanding. And I don't think she feels it necessarily is withheld but not, so I am working with her and making more of an effort to provide that."

**7. ORC Report:** Jeff Jones reports a tap install on Hunt Road about 2 weeks ago, short side, no problem. I met with Travis at the leak on a Saturday. The leak that was in the guy's driveway was a continuation of the service still running down the road. We marked the road and deleted the service. Commissioner Nelson asks "is there anymore leak at all going on right there?" Jeff Jones states, "no, we are clear and dry." Clerk interjects that she spoke with the resident Thursday, the contractor has already come back and repairs the area of his driveway that was disturbed and that he was very happy with the results. Commissioner Munsey asks Jeff, "how many feet or miles is that asbestos pipes there that need to be replaced.....To replace all that we have adopted from Elkin, what are we talking about?" Jeff Jones answers that he would have to get with Wooten the engineering firm but believes they provided a rough estimate of around \$100 a foot, and X amount of dollars per fire hydrant. So, if it's a quarter mile, 5,280 feet in a mile, take that a quarter and times that by 100. Commissioner Munsey asks, "would they (Elkin) have that in a blueprint from when it was originally put in?" Jeff Jones states he can ask but doesn't know. Commissioner Munsey states, "if this stuff is going to continue to breakdown, you are going to spend \$10-20k a year to fix it over the years. Wouldn't it be a good idea to just try and get an estimate on what it would be to get it all replaced, and fix it all?" Jeff Jones replies, "I agree. I think John from Wooten; we are getting ready to submit for a grant to replace all these services lines on that road." Clerk states, "I believe that paperwork just went in." Jeff Jones says, "it is a grant and 100%. Something to do with the funding that they pulled up for

lead line service replacement." Commissioner Munsey states, "I know the last time I spoke with Eddie Settle he said don't come asking Raleigh for anything, it is dried up. Until the federal government releases it." Commissioner Munsey asks Commissioner Reece, "he told you the same thing?" Commissioner Reece states, "no he told me something different." Jeff Jones states "there is a pot of money and we are putting our name in that pot to see if we can get selected. Wooten is putting together a scope, and working an assessment on what that project." Commissioner Reece states "I completely agree with you Bobby that we need to fix those bad lines that we adopted from Elkin. Pretty much every leak that we get, costs a lot of money, and comes from those lines. To my understanding we were losing 14,000 gallons a day on that leak, for I don't know how many months. And then we had to pay Elkin for those 14,000 gallons." Commissioner Munsey asks, "what about that \$1.8 million in that other grant?" Commissioner Reece begins, "I have already asked can we use some that money for that. I have not gotten the answer, but I have asked." Commissioner Nelson states, "we as a board at one time voted, because we had so many people put down deposits for water service from the town that never got it and never got their money back. We as a board voted to go back to all those people, give them their service if they still want it and give them their \$100 back. On election day I was hit up, by people on election day, I have a card right now from a gentleman who talked to me on election day, who paid that money, who knows how long before that, years before that, to get water service out to him, and never got it." Commissioner Munsey states, "I am fine with giving people water service. I just want to get them old lines replaced." Commissioner Nelson agrees, "absolutely, that stuff will be done regardless." Jeff Jones states, "I agree that we need that line replaced." Commissioner Munsey speaking to Jeff Jones, "it's about a ¼ of a mile, we are not talking about 7, 8, 9 miles? Can you work with Wooten and Rachel and see if we can use some of that \$1.8, or whatever we need to do and try get all that..." Jeff Jones states, "my understanding is when we had that meeting in here, if we had to move to get it spent that was one of those things they were looking at." Commissioner Munsey asks, "Rachel did you loop back with Wooten to see exactly where all these funds, I know you said the \$3.5 is already appropriated with projects, right?" Clerk answers, "The \$1.8, there is no plan yet for that. It is not a matter of saying to Wooten can we spend some that on this. If I understand it correctly, we can spend that money on anything. The board has to decide, vote, create an assessment management plan of how that money is going to be spent. Wooten doesn't tell you how to spend the money." Commissioner Munsey asks, "now can you work with Jeff, with the board's approval, and you guys try to get an assessment and work with Wooten on getting that replaced, and try to use some of that? Is that ok guys, will that work for you Chris?" Commissioner Nelson replies, "yeah." Jeff Jones states, "I know they are hard and fast working on the meter bid; they are hard and fast working on that line from 268, from Money Road into town.... From my understanding here in the next week or so, this goes to another point. On Wednesday at 2:00 I have a TEAMS meeting with

them to discuss the layout, so that we can finalize that price and we can bring to you guys for the discussion. We have Bobby and I 100% agree with you replacing that line. It needs to get the hell out of our system." Commissioner Munsey, "I would like it, if you guys are ok with it, let Rachel touch base with whoever. And try and get this thing done." Jeff Jones states, "I will try and reach out to Cameron, John, whoever." Commissioner Munsey "this is the whole thing, one thing that put us under Mr. Greene's notice is that we lost that money 2023-2024 \$160,000.00 in revenue, however that translates. We are on a good track. Got the 2 leaks fixed, the tower fixed, I just don't want to put us back on that list if we can get this thing done and fixed." Commissioner Nelson "I don't disagree with you Bobby. But we got to know what we are talking about, how much we are talking about, and how long it is going to take to do. Those are all questions that we need to have asked and answered pretty quick." Jeff Jones "and this is my understanding, with the 268 line, the well project, the meters and stuff like that, the money that has to be spent by the end of the year is gone. That is my understanding." Clerk interrupts, "well it is gone in the sense of estimated cost but it is not gone in the sense that it is spent. That's the difference." Jeff Jones, "correct, it is all appropriated currently." Commissioner Reece "so the work gets done and the bill gets sent..." Clerk states, "and paid." Jeff Jones, "by October." Commissioner Munsey, "the \$3.5." Commissioner Reece, "the second part of the money, that money doesn't have that timeline, it's that first bulk." Jeff Jones, "yes sir." Commissioner Reece, "Jeff can you explain, I was trying to tell some citizens, specifically Mr. Masterson outside. We were all really worried when you told us about uranium. We had this meeting with some other officials. And there are some updates on that, and maybe wasn't as bad as we thought. Can you explain that to us and can you explain that proposal about treatment." Jeff Jones "we are having a meeting on Tuesday, 2:00 on TEAMS. As far as my understanding is, the treatment people, the engineer, and one of their environmental guys we're meeting with, how the layout is going to be." Commissioner Reece asks, "if a citizen wanted to watch that meeting, are they allowed?" Jeff Jones answers, "I assume they can but we send out to invites only. This is a design kind of meeting; they are not going to get much out of it. My understanding is when we are done with this meeting, they are going to come here publicly and talk. Not that we are trying to hide anything.....Let me ask Cameron on Monday and I will get back to you probably Monday afternoon." Commissioner Munsey suggests, "or just record it. See if they will let you record it." Commissioner Reece, "well I know we can record it." Jeff Jones, "I think it records it anyways. I will have to check on how to access it afterwards. The radium they found in the well.....when we broke the rock, we have to test the water for, actually about 5 items we check radiology wise. We were just out of the state limit. If they say, this is just numbers, I don't have the exact numbers here, if the limit is 5, we were at like a 5.1. So right now, we do not think that flushing it is going to result us, because this is a brand new well with fresh cut rock, that we are going to get under 5. Now the treatment, this treatment will bring us below that limit

with the filtration they use. I have an idea because they say it is like a green sand filter, which I am familiar with. Not that I have had a bunch of time on them, but I understand the concept and the maintenance that needs to be done to this item. My understanding is this system is very similar to the green sand filters. It will basically filter that particulate out of the water to whatever level that they deem safe. That is already a set standard for the whole state. I believe it is an EPA regulation, so it is nationwide." Commissioner Munsey asks, "so that well is going to be able to used then?" Jeff Jones, "my understanding is like yes there is going to be some cost for the filtering equipment to be put on it, but the maintenance...I have about five questions that I am going to be asking them and that is one of them. Right now, we have the funding, they say it is not high cost, but what is that cost. And this is why I asked them to have these people on here so that we can have a special meeting." Jordan Church asks, "is there waste?" Jeff Jones answers, "yes there is waste off it and that is another problem I have with it because now we have filtered something that is now radioactive. But being that it is at this low level, this is where I told them you are going to have to act like I'm a third grader. I want to be fully, where I can convey this to you guys and the residents and feel confident that I feel this is the way it can be done." Commissioner Munsey asks, "is that a better way to go rather than drilling a whole new well?" Jeff Jones answers, "the problem with drilling another well Bobby, I think we probably would need to find another well but we don't have time. That is the bottom line, bottom dollar, we do not have time. We can still get this filter; the well developed in our timeframe. Right now, us moving along, if it makes sense or just abandoning it. I have only been pushed this far so far. I know we were asking about Elkin, being full Elkin, I haven't heard any word." Commissioner Reece states, "I just don't think Elkin is going to play ball with us." Jeff Jones states, "no, I agree with you Kevin. So, I think at this point and time we just need to take the money from them. Ultimately what this well is going to produce, we are going, I like having that emergency connection if catastrophic things happen. Or if we do have catastrophic, we can sectionalize, use their water while we are making a major repair, or something like that. I will know more. And here is what I will do, I will say by Friday of next week I am going to send an email out to Rachel and have her forward that out to you guys. I am going to write a synopsis, send that out to Rachel and have her get it out to you. I will try to have it to her before end of business day Friday. It will be like the minutes from the meeting I am having with them. Also, I will have, if we can give a link out to review that meeting. I will have that all inclusive in an email to Rachel by COB on Friday."

Jeff Jones reports the "Booster Station Alarm we had two over this last month. We brought this up several months ago and gave you a quote putting the mission unit on to the Water Tower. I know you guys tabled it, I think. Or we just didn't discuss it or bring it on to the agenda. I just wanted to let you know that this is, we had two this month. I don't remember having any in November, but two this month. I just want to

keep this up there. I don't think it is truly a problem right now, but it is something we need to keep in the mind front. I know part of the new well system, when they start fully developing that, that is going to be encompassed into what we are doing. So, my personal opinion I would like to nurse it as much as we can. But I want you guys to be aware that this could be an option, that we might have to execute now, if it gets bad."

Jeff Jones reports on the Pleasant Hill Community Center, "we had things ready to go somewhere in May 2024, Michael told me not to until we passed our budget in July. I will take responsibility, some of that fell off my radar to get that stuff purchased. That is one of those lines in the section that we are talking about, and he is going to place a new parking lot and stuff like that. We've had set up to where we are going to have a guy re-bore the road and put a new line in there because of the new asphalt they are putting in and everything so that we can have new stuff in there. Cause I don't want to pull up and have us pay for something the man just put down, that is a cost on us. We are at the point where we have the materials, I am waiting on a guy named Kevin, a guy that we have been contracting to bore our long side services. I think it is like \$600.00 and he digs it out. All we have to do is basically be the man labor to throw the stuff in the hole. He told me it would be about two weeks from when I talked to him, either Monday or Tuesday. He is backed up because a lot of his crew had the flu lately, it has put him back behind. We are trying to get him here next week."

Jeff Jones reports another that "fell off with the holidays, is the fire hydrant on Factory Street. It is on the schedule for Monday, mid-morning and shouldn't take but an hour or so." Commissioner Nelson asks "you going to have to cut water?" Jeff Jones answers, "no sir, just at the fire hydrant." Commissioner Munsey asks, "fire hydrants, do they have to be inspected every so often?" Jeff Jones answers, "this is a new thing to me 10 years ago when I first came up here. I always worked at bigger towns and we have fire hydrant crews that went out and inspected, maintained them, flow them and all this other stuff. Now when I got to Booneville, I met with the fire department, what they did when they went out and actuate the fire hydrants they have to because of your fire codes, they have to flow them every so often and stuff like that. Well, I had a good relationship with our fire department where they are saying 'hey this is messed up you want to come look at it.' And we would go out and service it. I have had conversations with the fire chief here in Ronda, we do have a pretty relationship with Ronda and even Pleasant Hill and when they have problems with a fire hydrant they will call and notify us."

**8. Maintenance Report:** Jordan Church reports that he performed disconnects this month, most were turned back on. Meter readings were completed for December billing. Performed routine maintenance and liter pick-up at the cemetery and River Park. Jordan reports that with the recent passing of Andy Waddell, he will make more of a conscious effort to pick up on the park clean-up duties that Andy was performing. The

new walking track is completed down at River Park. Regarding the drainage issue on Factory Street, Jordan reports that he met with contractor Randy Queen at Factory Street on a dry day, when it was not raining. Jordan reports that during his site visit with Randy an empty tractor trailer and he watched first hand a section of the road buckling under the weight of an empty tractor trailer. Based on Randy's recommendation, town spoke with the factory proposing a solution to possible re-direct some of the drainage into the retention pond at the factory, to avert it from continuing to run and erode Factory Street, as well as avoid directing it across 268. Commissioner Nelson states, "problem is running into that retention pond, it is just going to overflow." Jordan replies, "well the guy at the factory said he believes it has an overflow valve on it, but is not sure what it is running to. Randy said tomorrow it is supposed to rain and he wants to get eyes on it when it is raining, he will be out there tomorrow, he is in talks with the DOT, to have them back out there and get a gameplan. He will give me a call after this weekend, and get back with me to see what the gameplan is."

Commissioner Nelson asks, "so you are saying an empty tractor trailer had drove by and literally squished the water out of the pavement?" Jordan said, "the road caved. So, you can imagine if it rains for 3 or 4 days straight and a loaded truck comes through there." Commissioner Reece states, "one of the reasons I have been trying to meet with folks from the state, the DOT and the county. That's a major employer, Ronda Precision Fiber. We all know how many semis go in and out of there. You cannot come down Factory when, because when they try to make those sharp turns pulling their trailers, they going to get hung up in the trucks. That road is not made for that. So, if that sink hole that we are pretty confident is there, caves in, it is going to shut down that entire factory, completely. And that is why I have been meeting with them, because for economic development they need to help us fix that problem. When you all see that I am traveling, that is where I am going." Jordan states, "until I put my eyes on that I did not realize the gravity of the situation. It is a whole lot worse than I thought it was."

Commissioner Nelson states, "when that has to be done, it is going to have to done quick, fast, and in a hurry." Jordan asks if the factory is closed on the weekends? Commissioner Nelson states, "if somebody is dropping a trailer, or picking up one that is already loaded they can do that, nobody else has to be there. It is possible for trucks to make it up and down that road, if you know what you are doing. If you have your axels in the right place. If you don't meet anybody flying around that blind curve, on the wrong side of the road, like most of them are." Commissioner Munsey states, "well Rachel said that Wooten is looking at paving, and upgrading all the streets, and all that." Rachel states, "that was voted on in Octobers meeting that within 6 months there were supposed to give the town an engineering study of drainage issues, throughout. So yes, they are supposed to be working on that." Commissioner Munsey asks "does that fall under the responsibility of the town to get the road apart or can we force them (the factory) to help pay for some it?" Jeff Jones states, "I think Kevin is in the right direction with the economic development."

Commissioner Munsey then shares with Commissioner Nelson that he is working on possible grant offerings with High Country Council to possibly utilize for improvements made at North Park. Commissioner Reece asks, "have we gotten any money from High Country in a long time?" Commissioner Munsey answers, "not to my knowledge but I have only been up there for a year. But you have to submit to get it. I have brought several back for Rachel to place on the website, helping with the elderly around town. But nobody has hit on it, have they?" Rachel states, "I got a couple calls but I don't know what the outcome was. And I spoke directly with the rep." Commissioner Nelson asked Jordan, "you are equipped to go up there and found out where the tail lines are up there correct? For the septic." Jeff Jones answers that he can help Jordan with that. Commissioner Nelson states, "it is no big rush. But if you can let us know where the tail lines are, that lets us know how much digging we can do and where we can do it and if it is even feasible to do anything.... Other than where that building sits, its useless land unless you bring out a load of dirt and build a bridge over the creek. And that can be done but you are talking about a lot of money." Commissioner Munsey suggests, "why don't we ask Rachel the next time she sends out water bills to include a proposal to the residents asking how many people would utilize that park if we spent money up there." Commissioner Nelson states, "people don't even know it's up there so how are they going to tell you if they can utilize it."

Jordan ends his report sharing of a resident reaching out to him about speeding cars driving through on Maple Street. Jordan is requesting permission from the board to order No Thru Traffic signs to place on both ends of Maple Street. Commissioner Reece states, "I think that he has the authority to go ahead and order signs." Jordan clarifies that the cost of purchasing these signs does fall within the monthly allowance that the maintenance and clerk have to spend without approval. When needing to fix or replace an existing sign maintenance will not bring that before the board for approval. However, when a request comes through to install something new, process has always been to bring that request before the board to confirm that the board agrees. Commissioner Reece requests that if allowed he would "like to make a motion that if our maintenance person knows that we need a sign for safety, or to replace a sign, or put up a new sign, that he has the authority to go ahead and do it. He does not have to bring it to us. If they allow me to do that as an Action Item right now, I would do it right now." Commissioner Nelson asks, "can I amend your motion? Can I say Ms. Rachel or Mr. Jordan, if it is in their dollar amount for the town, what does it matter what it is? This woman talks to every person in this town, at some moment in time or another. She knows more than we ever will. And he (Jordan) is out there taking care of all the problems that she took the phone call on. I don't have a problem with them having the ability, within their dollar amounts, to take care of whatever the issue is. Now, if it is encroaching on that dollar amount, pick up the phone and say hey can we all talk about it. And then we will make a decision on that. But other than that, if it is in

your budget and it is for the betterment of the town, do it." Commissioner Reece asks, "can you make that clear in the minutes that we are in agreement? I don't think we need to micromanage when it comes to a sign. If you know you need it, it needs to go up." Jordan then ends the maintenance report.

From the audience, Victor Varella asks to address the board, "Mayor Bengé had asked me to proof read and edit this 'Ronda Community Emergency Plan'. Do you guys still want me to do that?" Commissioner Nelson answers, "we don't have to have a vote on that Victor. You are a private citizen; you are welcome to look over anything. Any suggestions you have that are beneficial, are absolutely welcomed. I think it is a good thing that we try to come with an emergency plan to go over, and come to an agreement on all of it. Everybody, I think all the citizens need to know it, once we have an approved one. Yes, go right ahead. And whatever you get done, I literally got this Sunday when I spoke to her. You look over that, I will look over this, and anybody else who wants to look over it, we will look over it." Mr. Varella asks if there is an electronic version available. The clerk offers to scan and email him a copy.

Commissioner Reece asks before the conclusion of the work session to say something to Mr. Varella and Commissioner Munsey, "when I first got that text, I thought it was you (Varella), you (Munsey), me, and him (Nelson). I didn't realize that she (Porter) was included. And then when I realized that I got to thinking 'oh my god if I keep responding I am violating Open Meeting laws', so I shut up cause it was 3 commissioners. What I just wanted to tell you was don't take no disrespect to that, I thought I was doing something wrong. I stopped when I realized there was 3 commissioners in that communication and it was about the town.....So I just want you to know that." Mr. Varella states, "that is a question for the attorney, I think electronic communications are ok." Commissioner Reece, "but the main thing is, I just wanted to make sure you all knew why I just didn't answer you."

Commissioner Nelson moves on regarding next action, to enter into Closed Session. "In Lieu of the conversation earlier we had about funds, it was on here to have a Closed Session about your evaluation tonight. I want to move that to Tuesday night, and hopefully Mr. Boaz will be here and you will be a little more apprised of what is going on. Everyone show up Tuesday night with the plan of evaluating Ms. Rachel."

Commissioner Nelson confirms that starting this coming Tuesday, both future Board Meetings and Work Sessions will begin at 6PM.

Commissioner Nelson adjourns and all stand in agreement.

*Rachel DeGroat*



Rachel DeGroat, Town Clerk