



Wake Forest Board of Commissioners Work Session Meeting Minutes

The Wake Forest Board of Commissioners met on **Tuesday, June 23, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.** in the Board Room at Wake Forest Town Hall, 301 S Brooks Street.

Mayor Clapsaddle called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Mayor Ben C. Clapsaddle, Commissioner Sliwinski, Commissioner Faith Cross, Commissioner Keith Shackleford, and Commissioner Adam Wright.

Commissioners Absent: None

Staff Members Present:

Town Manager Kip Padgett
Assistant Town Manager Candace Davis
Assistant Town Manager Allison Snyder
Assistant Town Manager Aileen Staples
Town Attorney Nathan McKinney
Town Clerk Evelyn Wright
Deputy Town Clerk Ella Dowtin
Police Chief Julius Jefferson

Police Captain David Zick
Police Captain Chris Minor
Engineering Director Tim Watson
Human Resources Director Angela McCray
Director of Organizational Development
Lisa Hayes

1. Call to Order

2. Presentation of the Wake Forest Dam Construction Contract

2.1 Consideration of Approval for the Wake Forest Reservoir (Wake-176) Dam Improvements construction contract

Engineering Director Tim Watson presented a request for Board approval authorizing the Town Manager to execute a construction contract for the Wake Forest Reservoir Dam project, contingent upon final approval from FEMA. Mr. Watson noted that this

was not a formal presentation but rather a request to position the project for immediate construction once federal authorization is received. Mr. Watson gave a brief project background. In 2022, the Town received a \$2.175 million congressional appropriation to support the reservoir dam project. Since receiving the funding, staff have worked to complete project planning, design, and bid preparation. The project was advertised for construction bids in March 2026, with bids opened on June 2. Mr. Watson advised there were a total of five bids received, the bid amounts ranged from approximately \$7.6 million to \$10.4 million. The proposed construction schedules ranged from 10 to 13 months. Mr. Watson advised, in accordance with North Carolina General Statutes, the Town is required to award the contract to the lowest responsive bidder. The lowest responsive bid was submitted by Zachry Construction Corporation (referred to as "Zachry" during the presentation) at approximately \$7.6 million, with an estimated 10-month construction schedule.

ACTION:

Mover: Commissioner Shackleford moved to approve the Wake Forest Reservoir (Wake-176) Dam Improvements construction contract

Seconder: Commissioner Cross

Vote: Motion carried 4-0

3. BOC Vacancy Interviews

3.1 Interview and Possible Selection to Fill the Vacant BOC Seat- Below is a summary of the Board of Commissioners discussion regarding the questions, time allotment, and voting procedure. Please see the [June 23, 2026 Board of Commissioners Work Session- Special Called Meeting](#) video for additional information.

Mayor Clapsaddle introduced the agenda item for interviews and selection to fill the vacant Board of Commissioner seat. Mayor Clapsaddle explained the interview process and expectations for the meeting: five finalists were selected and are waiting downstairs in alphabetical order. The candidates will come to the podium individually for interviews and the Town Manager will ask prepared questions previously agreed upon by the board. Mayor Clapsaddle noted that candidates are sequestered to ensure fairness in the interview process. Mayor Clapsaddle asked the audience to remain quiet and respectful, stating that disruptions could result in individuals being asked to leave

the chamber. Mayor Clapsaddle requested the Town Attorney, Nathan McKinney, review the proposed motions and procedures for conducting the interviews and selection process.

Mr. McKinney explained that the board must approve two items before proceeding: the final set of interview questions and the interview and voting procedures for filling the vacancy. Mr. McKinney advised each candidate will begin with a 3-minute opening statement, answer a series of core questions asked by the Town Manager, have 2 minutes to answer each core question, have up to 1 minute to respond to follow-up questions from commissioners, and end with a closing statement with a maximum time limit of 5 minutes. Mr. McKinney explained the voting process per North Carolina law and Town ordinance. After interviews and board discussion, Commissioners will vote using a ballot method listing all five finalists. A candidate must receive at least three votes (majority) to be appointed. If no candidate receives three votes, additional rounds of voting will occur (up to three rounds total). Candidates receiving zero votes in a round will be eliminated. If no candidate receives a majority, the board may schedule additional interviews with remaining candidates or move to a motion-and-vote process for selecting among remaining candidates. Under the "Motion-and-Vote" method, Commissioners may make motions to appoint a specific candidate. Votes will be conducted via roll call vote. If a tie occurs, the Mayor may break the tie. If no candidate is selected, the Board must decide whether to conduct another round of interviews or restart the application and interview process. Commissioners discussed several procedural details before approving the process. The board approved the following structure: 3-minute opening statement, 2 minutes per question response time, 1 minute for follow-up responses, a maximum of 25 minutes for the question portion, and 5-minute closing statement.

ACTION:

Mover: Commissioner Wright moved to allow candidate interview questions.

Seconder: Commissioner Cross.

Vote: Motion carried 4-0

ACTION:

Mover: Commissioner Wright moved to accept the interview procedure and voting process except for the time limit.

Seconder: Commissioner Cross

Vote: Motion carried 4-0

ACTION:

Mover: Commissioner Wright moved to set the timing as three-minute opening statement, two minutes response time per question- not to exceed 25 minutes, five-minute closing statement, and one minute per question time limit to respond to Commissioners follow-up question(s).

Seconder: Commissioner

Vote: Motion carried 3-1

The interview of candidates commences.

Below is the list of questions asked of the five candidates during the interview and a summary of the candidates' responses. Please see the June 23rd Board of Commissioners Work Session- Special Called Meeting video link ([June 23, 2026 Board of Commissioners Work Session- Special Called Meeting](#)) on the Town's Public Meetings Portal page for additional information.

BOARD VACANCY – CORE QUESTIONS

- *Please take a moment to make an opening statement. Include anything you like.*
- 1. *What is your understanding of the council-manager form of government, and how do you see the respective roles of the Board of Commissioners and the Town Manager?*
- 2. *What measures would you use to determine whether Wake Forest is succeeding as a community?*
- 3. *What do you see as the biggest growth-related challenges facing Wake Forest today, and how would a Commissioner address those challenges?*
- 4. *As commissioner, how would you approach your decisions regarding budgets and development?*
- 5. *How would you approach a situation where you strongly disagreed with the majority of the Board?*

6. *How would you build productive working relationships with fellow commissioners, the Mayor, and Town staff?*
 7. *What role should public engagement play in decision-making, especially when opinions in the community are divided?*
 8. *What unique perspective, experience, or skill would you bring to the Board of Commissioners?*
 9. *What is your view on the role of social media in public service, and how would you balance using these platforms for community engagement against the risks of public misinformation, digital division, and official transparency?*
 10. *What is your understanding of the rezoning process? In particular, what is your view of the UDO in shaping future decisions and how Staff, the Planning Board, and the BOC work through this process?*
 11. *Municipal governments are frequently impacted by state legislation that can either restrict local authority or preempt local ordinances. What is your philosophy on the balance of power between the Board of Commissioners and the General Assembly, and how would you advocate for our town's autonomy when state mandates conflict with our local priorities?*
- ***Closing Statement***

Abigail Black

Please see the June 23, 2026, Board of Commissioners video at [June 23, 2026 Board of Commissioners Work Session- Special Called Meeting](#).

1. Ms. Black stated that the council-manager form of government, as established under North Carolina General Statutes, assigns policy-making responsibilities to the Board of Commissioners while the town manager oversees administration, staffing, and day-to-day municipal operations. The candidate emphasized the distinction between governance and administration.

2. Ms. Black stated that community success should be evaluated through both quantitative data and resident feedback. While performance metrics can indicate whether programs are functioning effectively, Ms. Black emphasized that public input is necessary to understand how policies affect residents and whether unintended consequences exist. Ms. Black expressed the importance of maintaining ongoing communication with the community when evaluating municipal initiatives.
3. Ms. Black identified limited available land, preservation of open space, recreation needs, and continued population growth as primary challenges. Ms. Black discussed balancing development with quality of life and affordability while preserving recreational opportunities. Ms. Black also referenced pending state legislation that could affect local authority over residential development and emphasized responsible management of remaining land resources.
4. Regarding budgeting, Ms. Black praised the Town's recent budget for avoiding a property tax increase and stated a commitment to fiscal responsibility based on professional experience managing company finances. Ms. Black emphasized minimizing waste, avoiding unnecessary debt, requesting audits when appropriate, consulting staff, and seeking public input to identify priorities. Regarding development, the candidate stated that commissioners' authority is governed by state law and the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), noting that development decisions must operate within those legal parameters.
Follow-up: When asked what constituted waste in the budget, Ms. Black stated that programs failing to meet expectations should be reevaluated rather than continually funded, citing the concept of sunk cost. Ms. Black acknowledged not having specific examples and indicated additional research would be necessary before identifying individual programs.
5. Ms. Black stated a preference for discussing issues before formal meetings whenever legally permissible, with the goal of reaching consensus prior to votes. When asked how they would respond after being on the losing side of a vote, Ms. Black stated she would accept the outcome graciously.
6. Ms. Black emphasized communication as the foundation of productive relationships with fellow commissioners, the mayor, and town staff. Ms. Black noted the importance of understanding Open Meetings requirements while using appropriate opportunities such as retreats and individual discussions to build relationships. Ms. Black also emphasized relying on staff expertise regarding operational capabilities and municipal resources.

7. Ms. Black stated that public engagement is essential, particularly during issues involving differing community opinions. The candidate encouraged focusing on areas of common agreement while maintaining respectful dialogue on divisive issues. Ms. Black emphasized that elected officials should actively seek community input because the Board represents a growing population with diverse perspectives.

Follow-up: When asked where effective public engagement occurs, Ms. Black referenced public open houses and personal experiences conducting neighborhood surveys regarding the proposed social district. Ms. Black stated that residents appreciated having opportunities to express their opinions directly.

Additional Follow-up: When asked what the Town is doing well and where improvements could be made, Ms. Black stated that the Town effectively promotes meetings, events, and Parks and Recreation activities. However, Ms. Black believes additional outreach to nearby residents should have occurred regarding the social district proposal and cited personal efforts to collect neighborhood feedback.

8. Ms. Black highlighted coursework in civics and economics, legislative training, policy research experience, and participation in a national policy fellowship. Ms. Black stated these experiences would provide practical policy knowledge and contribute to collaborative decision-making as part of the Board.
9. Ms. Black stated that public officials should prioritize factual accuracy, complete information, and source verification when communicating through social media. Ms. Black emphasized presenting information objectively so residents can form their own conclusions while minimizing misinformation.
10. Ms. Black described the UDO as the framework governing land uses and zoning classifications throughout the Town. Ms. Black explained that rezoning decisions involve the Planning Department, Planning Board, and Board of Commissioners, with amendments to the UDO occurring through established processes. Ms. Black also discussed recent state legislation affecting local zoning authority, including restrictions on downzoning without property owner consent, and stated that maintaining communication between the Town and property owners is important throughout the process.
11. Ms. Black stated that municipal authority is derived from powers granted by the North Carolina General Assembly. When state issues affect local priorities, Ms. Black advocated communicating with state legislators to represent community

concerns and request legislative changes or flexibility. Ms. Black cited the toll road issue as an example of matters requiring advocacy at the state level.

- ❖ When Mayor Clapsaddle asked about the time commitment required for serving as commissioner, Ms. Black stated that flexible work responsibilities would allow full participation in Board meetings, constituent engagement, legislative outreach, and other commissioner responsibilities throughout the term.

Ms. Black concluded by emphasizing lifelong residency in Wake Forest, working in a family-owned local business, and extensive independent study in civics, budgeting, economics, public policy, municipal government, and legislative processes.

Ms. Black highlighted:

- Experience researching municipal governance, including the Town Charter and Unified Development Ordinance.
- Public education efforts through articles, a podcast, and civics instruction.
- Legislative and policy-writing experience gained through formal training and a national fellowship.
- A commitment to fiscal responsibility based on personal and professional financial management.
- Familiarity with state legislation affecting municipalities.
- Previous service on the Urban Forestry Advisory Board, including leadership responsibilities and development of an urban orchard proposal.
- A commitment to accessibility, public engagement, transparency, and building trust between residents and local government.

Also, Ms. Black stated that commissioners are public servants whose effectiveness depends on communication, listening to residents, and maintaining strong community relationships, and expressed confidence in being prepared to serve effectively on the Board.

Joan Falvey

Please see the June 23, 2026, Board of Commissioners video at [June 23, 2026 Board of Commissioners Work Session- Special Called Meeting](#) . Ms. Falvey expressed

appreciation for the opportunity to interview and stated a continued commitment to serving the Town of Wake Forest. She noted having gained additional knowledge and experience since the previous interview by completing the Planning 101 course and continuing service on the Historic Preservation Commission and the Wake Forest Downtown Board. Ms. Falvey stated that these experiences provided a greater understanding of the role of a commissioner and how it aligns with prior professional experience. Drawing on ownership of a local business, Ms. Falvey described the goal of creating a "third space" a place outside of home and work where residents can gather, build relationships, and foster community. Ms. Falvey stated that Wake Forest already serves as home, workplace, and gathering place for many residents and expressed a desire to help strengthen those community spaces through service on the Board.

1. Ms. Falvey described the Board of Commissioners and town management as serving complementary roles, comparing them to a theater production in which leadership provides guidance while operational staff carry out implementation. Ms. Falvey stated that commissioners provide oversight and policy direction while recognizing the limitations of municipal authority. She noted that while the Town cannot control who purchases or develops private property, it can influence development through zoning, land-use regulations, and consideration of impacts such as traffic, neighboring properties, and environmental concerns. Ms. Falvey characterized the Board's role as establishing the framework within which the community develops.
2. Ms. Falvey stated that measuring community success is challenging because it is impossible to satisfy every resident on every issue. Rather than relying solely on measurable outcomes, she emphasized the importance of engaging directly with residents, listening to concerns, connecting people with resources, and working collaboratively to solve problems. Ms. Falvey identified relationship-building as a personal strength and stated that community success is reflected in stories of positive outcomes, including successful small businesses, environmental preservation, and balanced growth that protects community assets while supporting economic vitality.
3. Ms. Falvey identified traffic congestion as one of Wake Forest's primary growth challenges. She acknowledged that many transportation decisions are outside the direct authority of the Board of Commissioners but stated that the Town can work collaboratively with developers and the North Carolina Department of Transportation to encourage improvements. Ms. Falvey emphasized the importance of clearly communicating to residents which issues fall within

municipal authority, and which require coordination with outside agencies.

Ms. Falvey stated that maintaining public confidence depends on demonstrating that community concerns are being heard and that local officials are actively pursuing available solutions.

4. Ms. Falvey stated that budget decisions should be evaluated individually while considering overall financial priorities. Drawing upon experience operating a small business, she explained that effective budgeting requires prioritizing essential needs before discretionary expenditures. Ms. Falvey referenced exercises completed during the Planning 101 course involving budget prioritization and stated that limited resources require difficult decisions to ensure the Town's highest priorities are funded first.

Follow-up – Debt

When asked about municipal debt, Ms. Falvey stated that debt is sometimes a necessary part of responsible financial management and infrastructure investment. She observed that projects such as transportation improvements require significant funding and stated that debt should be managed carefully rather than eliminated entirely or allowed to grow without oversight. She characterized debt as a tool that should be used responsibly to support long-term community investment.

5. Ms. Falvey stated a preference for collaboration and compromise while recognizing that differing viewpoints strengthen the decision-making process. Ms. Falvey stated that disagreement among commissioners is healthy and appropriate and that consensus should be sought whenever possible. However, she also stated that when holding a strong conviction on an issue, they would maintain their position even if it differed from the majority.
6. Ms. Falvey stated that building relationships is one of her strongest skills and described herself as a connector of people. Ms. Falvey noted having existing working relationships with many elected officials through community involvement and emphasized finding common ground through personal interaction. She also described relationships as a form of wealth, explaining that meaningful friendships and collaborative partnerships create stronger communities. Ms. Falvey stated that productive working relationships contribute to more effective discussion, idea-sharing, and decision-making.
7. Ms. Falvey stated that commissioners are selected to represent residents while also exercising independent judgment on behalf of the entire community. She emphasized the importance of hearing public input but stated that elected

officials must ultimately evaluate competing viewpoints and make decisions through discussion, compromise, and deliberation. Ms. Falvey acknowledged that communities contain diverse perspectives and that commissioners are responsible for balancing those interests when making final decisions.

8. Ms. Falvey highlighted a diverse professional background that included experience in musical theater, event production, business ownership, and community leadership. Using theatrical production as an analogy, Ms. Falvey described the commissioner's role as ensuring that behind-the-scenes operations function effectively so that public services appear seamless to residents. She emphasized her experience coordinating complex events, managing logistics, maintaining public safety, and anticipating operational needs before problems arise. Ms. Falvey stated that attention to detail, planning, and operational coordination would contribute positively to Board service.
9. Ms. Falvey described social media as an important tool for public engagement, particularly for younger residents who increasingly communicate through digital platforms. Drawing on experience operating a small business, Ms. Falvey stated that public communication should be welcoming, respectful, and carefully worded to avoid unnecessary division. She emphasized maintaining civil discourse, discouraging hostile interactions, and using social media to encourage civic participation while addressing misinformation appropriately.
10. Ms. Falvey stated that the Unified Development Ordinance serves as an important framework for land-use decisions and explained that rezoning requests should be evaluated individually based on the proposed use and its impacts. She identified considerations including commercial versus residential zoning, multi-family development, traffic impacts, neighborhood compatibility, and compliance with applicable requirements. Ms. Falvey stated that rezoning decisions require careful review of each proposal against established standards before determining whether changes are appropriate.
11. Ms. Falvey stated that municipalities are required to operate within state law and acknowledged that local governments are ultimately subject to state authority. When conflicts arise between local priorities and state mandates, Ms. Falvey stated that the appropriate response is to build relationships with other municipalities and governmental entities while advocating through communication with state officials for legislative changes or additional local flexibility.

- ❖ When Mayor Clapsaddle asked about the significant time commitment required of commissioners, Ms. Falvey described current involvement on the Historic Preservation Commission, the Wake Forest Downtown Board, multiple Downtown Board committees, Mayor Clapsaddle's Roundtable, community events, and professional responsibilities. She stated that appointment to the Board of Commissioners would require resigning from several current volunteer positions, allowing greater focus on commissioner responsibilities. Ms. Falvey further noted having an empty nest, a supportive spouse who helps operate the family business, supportive staff, and flexible scheduling, all of which would allow sufficient time to fulfill commissioner duties.

Follow-up

Commissioner Cross inquired about the time Ms. Falvey has been a resident of Wake Forest, NC. Ms. Falvey confirmed having lived in Wake Forest for approximately 12 years.

Ms. Falvey concluded by emphasizing a long-term personal investment in Wake Forest through homeownership, business ownership in a historic downtown building, raising a family in the community, and extensive volunteer service. She stated that increasing involvement in community organizations has strengthened personal commitment to the Town and highlighted ongoing collaboration with local organizations, including the Renaissance Centre and the DuBois Alumni Foundation. Ms. Falvey also discussed interest in neighborhood quality-of-life improvements, citing concerns about traffic speeds near the new Juniper Avenue park and expressing support for lowering the speed limit to improve pedestrian safety for children and families. Finally, Ms. Falvey stated that continued community involvement has deepened appreciation for Wake Forest and expressed a desire to continue supporting the Town's growth, preservation efforts, public safety, and overall quality of life through service as a commissioner.

Daniel Hupp

Please see the June 23, 2026, Board of Commissioners video at [June 23, 2026 Board of Commissioners Work Session- Special Called Meeting](#) . Mr. Hupp thanked the Board for the opportunity to interview and introduced himself as a 20-year resident of Wake Forest. He highlighted his family's long-term commitment to the community and expressed appreciation for his wife's support despite her absence from the meeting. Mr.

Hupp stated that his interest in public service has grown through years of community involvement, beginning with volunteer activities such as youth soccer officiating and continuing through approximately six years of service on the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Advisory Board, where he currently serves as chair. He highlighted the Board's recommendation to expand youth membership eligibility from only 11th and 12th grade students to include 9th and 10th grade students, noting that the change was intended to increase youth civic participation. Mr. Hupp also cited completion of the Citizens Academy, participation in the Planning 101 program, and involvement in ribbon-cutting ceremonies for several parks and greenway projects. He emphasized that listening to residents is one of the most important responsibilities of a commissioner and stated that he has continued preparing himself to serve through education and civic engagement

1. Mr. Hupp acknowledged that he was unable to fully answer the question and stated candidly that he did not have a clear understanding of the council-manager form of government or the respective roles of the Board of Commissioners and the town manager.
2. Mr. Hupp stated that one measure of success is feedback received from residents regarding Town decisions and services. As an example, Mr. Hupp referenced positive public reaction to the recently adopted municipal budget, particularly appreciation for decisions affecting taxation. He indicated that listening to residents' perspectives provides an important indication of whether the Town is meeting community expectations.
3. Mr. Hupp identified continued population growth as Wake Forest's most significant long-term challenge. He observed that North Carolina continues to experience substantial population increases and stated that Wake Forest must prepare for continued growth by addressing housing needs. Mr. Hupp emphasized that housing availability and planning for future population growth will be important responsibilities for the Board as the community continues to expand.
4. Mr. Hupp stated that budget decisions should begin with collaboration between commissioners, the town manager, and staff. He indicated that he would carefully review budget line items to identify opportunities for efficiencies and cost reductions. Mr. Hupp emphasized the importance of maintaining flexibility during budget discussions, stating that commissioners should be willing to modify their initial positions after hearing ideas and recommendations from fellow Board members and staff.

5. Mr. Hupp stated that when disagreements arise, he would seek respectful conversations with individual commissioners and the mayor to better understand differing viewpoints. Drawing on his experience with the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Advisory Board, Mr. Hupp described discussions surrounding development of a skate park. He explained that some members were initially skeptical but changed their views after hearing public input regarding community demand following closure of a previous skate facility. Mr. Hupp cited this example as demonstrating the value of open discussion and willingness to reconsider initial opinions.
6. Mr. Hupp emphasized the importance of developing personal relationships with fellow commissioners and Town staff. He referenced previous interactions with individual Board members through community activities and shared interests, stating that familiarity and communication help strengthen collaboration. Mr. Hupp also stated that maintaining a positive attitude and appropriate sense of humor contributes to productive working relationships while recognizing that the responsibilities of public office require professionalism and respect.
7. Mr. Hupp stated that meaningful public engagement requires actively seeking input from residents before making decisions. As an example, he described serving as president of his homeowners' association during the COVID-19 pandemic when the board considered whether to reopen the neighborhood swimming pool. Rather than making the decision independently, the HOA surveyed residents, collaborated with health officials and the pool management company, implemented safety protocols, and ultimately reopened the facility. Mr. Hupp stated that the experience demonstrated the importance of consulting affected residents and making collaborative decisions rather than acting unilaterally.
8. Mr. Hupp cited his professional experience with the American Red Cross, where he gained experience in budgeting, disaster response, and assisting individuals during emergencies. He also discussed overcoming a personal hearing disability and stated that the experience has strengthened his openness, resilience, and willingness to listen to diverse perspectives. Mr. Hupp described himself as approachable and community-oriented, noting his appreciation for local restaurants, events, and entertainment while expressing long-term commitment to Wake Forest as his permanent home.

9. Mr. Hupp stated that social media can serve as an effective communication tool but should be used responsibly because public officials represent both themselves and the municipality. He emphasized that online communications should remain respectful and recognized that public officials should expect criticism and differing opinions. Mr. Hupp stated that while social media can be useful, he also values direct, face-to-face conversations with residents.

Follow-up

When asked about his experience as chair of the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Advisory Board, Mr. Hupp stated that he has occasionally responded to inaccurate information shared on social media by directing residents to official Town resources and providing factual information. He also emphasized the importance of recognizing the distinction between expressing personal opinions and speaking on behalf of the Advisory Board or the Town, stating that he is careful not to create confusion regarding his official role.

10. Mr. Hupp referenced his recent participation in the Planning 101 program, where he learned about the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). He described the UDO as a planning document that helps shape the community's future development and stated that ongoing discussions regarding updates to the ordinance will be important for the Board. Regarding rezoning, Mr. Hupp stated that commissioners must carefully evaluate requests to determine what best serves the community while considering future planning objectives.
 11. Mr. Hupp stated that maintaining communication with state and local elected officials is important to understanding legislative developments affecting Wake Forest. He observed that Wake Forest has grown significantly in both size and influence over recent years and emphasized the importance of collaborative relationships with state representatives to anticipate legislative changes and advocate for community interests
- ❖ When Mayor Clapsaddle asked about the significant time commitment required of commissioners, Mr. Hupp explained that family considerations previously prevented him from pursuing elected office. Now that his children are adults and he and his wife are empty nesters, he stated that he is able to dedicate the necessary time to commissioner responsibilities, including meetings, community events, and public engagement. Mr. Hupp stated that he has observed commissioners' participation at community events and expressed a commitment to maintaining a similarly active presence throughout his term if appointed.

Follow-up

When asked what other qualities are essential for commissioners beyond listening, Mr. Hupp identified:

- Active participation in community events.
- Bringing constructive ideas for improving the Town.
- Collaborating with businesses, residents, and fellow commissioners.
- Remaining flexible and open to differing perspectives.
- Working cooperatively to achieve shared goals for the community.

Mr. Hupp concluded by thanking the Board for the opportunity to interview and outlined his readiness to serve immediately if appointed. He highlighted positive working relationships with Parks and Recreation staff developed through his advisory board service and stated that he understands the importance of coordinating commissioner interactions with staff through the town manager. Mr. Hupp discussed advocating for the inclusion of an American Sign Language interpreter during Independence Day celebrations, describing accessibility and inclusion as important priorities. Also, Mr. Hupp emphasized continued participation in community meetings, work sessions, and public events, stating that staying engaged provides valuable understanding of community priorities. He discussed Wake Forest's continued growth within the larger Raleigh region and stated that the Town should proactively address housing affordability and future development. He expressed interest in learning more about accessory dwelling units (ADUs) as one potential housing strategy.

Mr. Hupp outlined several goals for his first 90 days in office:

- Establish regular public listening sessions titled "Discussions and Donuts with Danny" to increase commissioner accessibility and encourage resident feedback.
- Meet with local and state elected officials to discuss infrastructure, transportation, and regional growth challenges.
- Maintain a strong focus on listening, learning, collaboration, and public engagement.

Mr. Hupp pledged to devote his full effort to serving Wake Forest throughout the remainder of the term and closed with a quotation emphasizing the importance of listening: "When people talk, listen completely." He thanked the Board for its consideration and yielded the remainder of his allotted time.

(10 minute recess)

Mayor Clapsaddle called the meeting back to order and resumed candidate interviews.

Joseph Longoria

Please see the June 23, 2026, Board of Commissioners video at [June 23, 2026 Board of Commissioners Work Session- Special Called Meeting](#) . Mr. Longoria thanked the Mayor, Board of Commissioners, Town Manager, Town Clerk, and town staff for their service and organizing the interview process. He summarized his background in military service as an Army Blackhawk pilot and Air Mission Commander, his current work in defense logistics and data science, and his prior public service on the Wake Forest Board of Adjustment, Wake County Energy Citizens Advisory Board, and North Wake County Baseball Association. Mr. Longoria highlighted that his experiences reinforced the importance of listening, respecting established processes, and maintaining a long-term perspective. He discussed his family, faith, and upbringing in a small Texas community where his parents instilled the importance of civic engagement and public service. Mr. Longoria stated that Wake Forest's primary challenges include managing growth, infrastructure, and preserving community character while planning responsibly for the future.

1. Mr. Longoria demonstrated an understanding that the Mayor and Board of Commissioners establish policy while the professional Town Manager oversees daily municipal operations. He stated that the Board is responsible for:
 - Adopting the annual budget and Capital Improvement Program (CIP)
 - Setting property tax rates and fees
 - Adopting ordinances and Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) amendments
 - Making land use decisions, including rezonings and annexations
 - Appointing and overseeing the Town Manager and advisory boardsHe added that while elected officials may have differing viewpoints, Wake Forest has successfully managed expectations and municipal operations through effective governance. Mr. Longoria noted that citizen feedback is an indication of public engagement and that continuous improvement should remain a priority.
2. Mr. Longoria stated that community success should be measured using objective data and measurable outcomes. He identified key indicators including:

- Demographic trends
- Quality of life
- Household income
- Business and corporate investment
- Educational opportunities
- Long-term economic planning

Drawing on his background as a data scientist, Mr. Longoria emphasized that decisions should be driven by data rather than assumptions. He also noted that budgeting requires careful planning and that public service is motivated by community improvement rather than financial compensation.

3. Mr. Longoria acknowledged traffic congestion as an important issue but stated that growth planning extends beyond transportation. He emphasized the need to plan for:

- Public safety infrastructure
- Fire protection and emergency services
- Supporting facilities and equipment
- Overall municipal infrastructure

Mr. Longoria stated that elected officials should present honest assessments, develop practical options, and communicate openly with residents even when preferred solutions may not be popular.

4. Mr. Longoria stated that he would begin by meeting with each department to understand its operational needs. He would then:

- Consult with fellow commissioners
- Rely upon the experience of current Board members
- Seek guidance from the Town Manager and staff
- Recognize the significant learning curve for new commissioners
- Focus on gradual, well-informed improvements rather than dramatic changes

Mr. Longoria emphasized collaboration and thoughtful decision-making throughout the budgeting process.

5. Mr. Longoria explained that disagreement is inevitable and discussed the importance of respecting differing viewpoints. Drawing upon personal experiences involving differing religious and social perspectives during his military service and earlier life, he emphasized:

- Respecting differing opinions
- Remaining firm in personal convictions while remaining open-minded

- Building understanding between opposing viewpoints
- Acting as a bridge between differing perspectives

Mr. Longoria described relationship-building as one of his primary strengths.

6. Mr. Longoria stated that productive relationships begin with getting to know colleagues personally and professionally. He emphasized:

- Understanding individual priorities
- Setting aside personal ego
- Seeking compromise
- Maintaining focus on improving the town rather than individual recognition

Mr. Longoria characterized problem-solving as a diplomatic process centered on serving the community.

7. Mr. Longoria described public engagement as the "pulse" of the community while recognizing that public opinion may include both meaningful feedback and misinformation. He stated that commissioners should:

- Listen carefully to residents
- Maintain an open mind
- Recognize the diversity of the community
- Avoid attempting unrealistic solutions
- Work toward practical consensus and long-term understanding.

8. Mr. Longoria shared an experience from military service in which a commander selected him for an important assignment based on his ability to manage relationships rather than technical expertise alone. He stated that his strengths include:

- Relationship-building
- Collaboration
- Humility
- Focusing on mission accomplishment over personal recognition
- Helping others succeed

Mr. Longoria stated these leadership qualities would benefit the Board of Commissioners

9. Mr. Longoria stated that transparency is important but must be balanced with accuracy. He emphasized that:

- Official information should be fact-based
- Accurate information should be released promptly
- The Town should avoid publishing incomplete or misleading information

- Communications should be coordinated with legal counsel and staff when appropriate
 - Public trust depends upon providing reliable information in a timely manner
10. Drawing upon his service on the Board of Adjustment, Mr. Longoria discussed the role of the Unified Development Ordinance in guiding development decisions. He noted:
- The community is approaching significant build-out with limited undeveloped land remaining.
 - Development should preserve a cohesive community rather than fragmented growth.
 - Commissioners should rely upon staff recommendations, planning professionals, and objective data when making decisions.
 - The Board of Adjustment evaluates variances and appeals within the framework established by the UDO
11. Mr. Longoria stated that maintaining productive relationships with members of the General Assembly is essential. He emphasized:
- Building bipartisan relationships
 - Promoting Wake Forest's growth and strengths
 - Advocating for the Town's priorities
 - Working collaboratively with state officials to advance local interests
- He stated that advocacy should focus on the long-term success of the community rather than individual political interests.
- ❖ When Mayor Clapsaddle asked about the significant time requirements of serving as a commissioner, Mr. Longoria stated that he had discussed the commitment with his wife. He indicated that:
- Public service requires active participation rather than criticism from the sidelines.
 - He understands the long-term consequences of Board decisions.
 - Having recently completed graduate business studies, he is accustomed to managing significant time commitments.
 - He is prepared to meet the responsibilities associated with serving as commissioner.

Mr. Longoria stated that he served approximately one year on the Board of Adjustment before resigning to attend graduate business school. He explained that the experience taught him:

- The importance of asking questions
- Learning from experienced members
- Applying the Unified Development Ordinance consistently
- Balancing development requests against established standards
- ❖ When Commissioner Wright asked municipal debt, Mr. Longoria stated that debt should generally be avoided but recognized that borrowing is sometimes necessary. He stated that officials should:
 - Evaluate economic conditions
 - Consider staff recommendations
 - Understand the impact on taxpayers
 - Work collaboratively to minimize financial burdens while addressing community needs

Mr. Longoria thanked the Board for the opportunity to interview and stated that he understands the responsibility associated with serving as a commissioner. He summarized the qualifications he would bring to the position, including:

- Military leadership experience
- Service on local boards and commissions
- A disciplined and fair decision-making approach
- Long-term strategic thinking
- Commitment to integrity, humility, and consistency

Mr. Longoria concluded by stating that Board decisions directly affect the future of Wake Forest families, including his own, and pledged that, if appointed, he would be prepared, listen carefully, and serve the community with integrity and dedication.

George McDaniel

Please see the June 23, 2026 Board of Commissioners video at [June 23, 2026 Board of Commissioners Work Session- Special Called Meeting](#) . Mr. McDaniel thanked the Mayor and Board of Commissioners for the opportunity to interview. He offered a brief opening statement, expressing appreciation for the opportunity to speak.

1. Mr. McDaniel stated that he views the Board of Commissioners and the Town Manager as working together to make decisions that are in the best interest of the Town. He described their shared responsibility as moving Wake Forest forward through collaborative decision-making and effective governance.

2. Mr. McDaniel stated that community success should be evaluated through feedback from residents. He identified several indicators of success, including:
 - Citizen participation in Town-sponsored events.
 - Strong attendance and community involvement at Town activities.
 - Public support for Town initiatives.
 - The Town's ability to engage residents in community life.

He stated that active participation by residents demonstrates that the Town and its leadership are serving the community effectively.

3. Mr. McDaniel identified balancing rapid population growth with existing infrastructure as one of Wake Forest's greatest challenges. He specifically referenced:

- Traffic congestion.
- Business growth.
- Residential development.
- Managing the impacts associated with continued population increases.

Mr. McDaniel stated that commissioners should carefully evaluate all available information before making decisions, recognizing that no decision will satisfy every resident but emphasizing the importance of making balanced decisions in the Town's best interest.

4. Mr. McDaniel stated that budget decisions should be heavily informed by Town staff and departmental expertise. He explained that he would:

- Consider recommendations from staff.
- Evaluate what programs and services are working effectively.
- Identify areas needing improvement.
- Balance competing priorities within available financial resources.

He acknowledged that budget limitations require difficult decisions and that it is not possible to fund every desired initiative without increasing taxes. Mr. McDaniel emphasized making the best use of available resources.

5. Mr. McDaniel stated that disagreements are a natural part of collaborative decision-making. He explained that commissioners should:

- Stand by their convictions when appropriate.
- Clearly express the reasons for their position.
- Accept that Board decisions do not always require unanimous agreement.

He indicated that respectful disagreement is an expected and healthy part of Board governance.

6. Mr. McDaniel stated that effective working relationships develop by getting to know colleagues both professionally and personally. He emphasized:

- Regular conversations outside formal meetings.

- Attending community events together.
- Learning about one another's backgrounds and perspectives.
- Building trust through personal relationships.

He stated that stronger relationships ultimately contribute to a more effective governing body.

7. Mr. McDaniel described public engagement as one of the most important responsibilities of elected officials. He stated that commissioners should:

- Listen carefully to all residents.
- Hear differing viewpoints when the community is divided.
- Ask questions to better understand concerns.
- Seek common ground whenever possible.

He emphasized, however, that commissioners must ultimately make decisions based on what is best for the Town as a whole, even when opinions differ.

8. Mr. McDaniel stated that his background provides a diverse perspective through experience in:

- Military service.
- Law enforcement.
- Business ownership.
- Employment with a nearby municipality.

Mr. McDaniel explained that these experiences have given him the ability to work with individuals from diverse backgrounds, communicate effectively with various groups, and better understand differing perspectives when making decisions.

9. Mr. McDaniel stated that public officials must exercise caution when using social media. He emphasized that:

- Information shared should be factual and verifiable.
- Public communications should never rely on rumors or hearsay.
- Social media should primarily be used to promote Town events, public information, and educational content.
- Accuracy and credibility are essential in official communications.

10. Mr. McDaniel stated that he has practical experience working with zoning and Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) processes through his current employment. He explained that:

- UDO regulations incorporate municipal, county, and state requirements.
- Rezoning requests involve proposals that may differ from existing development standards.
- Some rezoning requests are appropriate while others may not be.
- The Planning Board's recommendations should be carefully considered alongside each applicant's proposal.

- Commissioners should evaluate whether proposed rezonings provide a benefit to the Town.

11. Mr. McDaniel stated that municipal ordinances and state laws must work together. He acknowledged that actions by the General Assembly can affect local governments and stated that when proposed state legislation negatively impacts the Town, commissioners should:

- Communicate directly with state representatives.
- Present factual information supporting the Town's position.
- Clearly explain how proposed changes would affect Wake Forest.
- Advocate for the Town through objective information rather than simply expressing disagreement.

He stated that providing well-supported information offers the best opportunity to influence legislative decisions.

❖ When Mayor Clapsaddle asked about the time commitments associated with serving as commissioner, Mr. McDaniel stated that his current employment provides sufficient flexibility to attend meetings, retreats, and Town events. He explained that:

- His employer allows time away from work for committee responsibilities.
- He already serves on multiple state and national committees requiring similar scheduling flexibility.
- He does not anticipate conflicts preventing him from fulfilling commissioner responsibilities.

Mr. McDaniel stated that he has lived in Wake Forest for approximately nine years.

When asked about his committee service, he explained that he currently serves on:

- The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) committee responsible for developing portions of the National Electrical Code (NEC).
- An international committee responsible for developing mechanical fuel gas standards.

He noted that these committees develop codes affecting a broad range of public safety and infrastructure issues, giving him experience making decisions with significant public impact.

Follow-up

When Commissioner Wright asked about municipal debt, Mr. McDaniel stated that he had not previously considered the issue in a municipal context. He responded that:

- Debt is sometimes necessary when sufficient funding is unavailable.
- Governments should borrow only when necessary.
- Debt should be minimized whenever possible.

- Borrowed funds should be repaid as quickly as practical.
- When debt is required, officials should clearly explain the reasons for taking on the obligation.

Mr. McDaniel thanked the Board once again for the opportunity to interview. He remarked that participating in the interview process was a unique experience and that he appreciated the opportunity to meet the Board members in a formal setting beyond casual interactions within the community. Mr. McDaniel concluded by expressing his gratitude for the Board's time and consideration.

Upon completion of the interviews, Town Clerk Evelyn Wright distributes three rounds of ballots resulting in a tie. Mayor Clapsaddle broke the tie by announcing the appointment of Daniel Hupp and Mr. Hupp was immediately sworn in to fill the remaining term of the Board of Commissioners vacant seat.

4. Adjournment

The Board of Commissioners adjourned the meeting at 9:26 p.m.

Duly approved in open session this 14th day of August 2026.

(ATTEST)


Evelyn Wright, Town Clerk




Ben C. Clapsaddle, Mayor