

DRAFT MINUTES

**TOWN OF APEX
TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION
TUESDAY, MAY 16, 2023
3:30 P.M.**

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The Apex Town Council met for a work session on Tuesday, May 16, 2023 at 3:30 p.m. at the Apex Town Hall located at 73 Hunter Street in Apex North Carolina.

This meeting was open to the public. Members of the public were able to attend this meeting in-person or watch online via the livestream on the Town’s YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BmltSFfp-S4>

[ATTENDANCE]

Elected Body

- Mayor Jacques K. Gilbert (presiding)
- Mayor Pro-Tempore Audra Killingsworth
- Councilmember Brett Gantt
- Councilmember Ed Gray
- Councilmember Terry Mahaffey
- Councilmember Arno Zegerman
- Absent: None

Town Staff

- Town Manager Catherine Crosby
- Deputy Town Manager Shawn Purvis
- Assistant Town Manager Demetria John
- Assistant Town Manager Marty Stone
- Town Attorney Laurie Hohe
- Town Clerk Allen Coleman
- Deputy Town Clerk Ashley Gentry
- Human Resources Director Mary Beth Manville
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Director Linda Jones
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Coordinator Celeste Sherer
- Communications Director Stacey Galloway
- Compliance Manager Megan Simpson
- Chief of Police Jason Armstrong
- All other staff members will be identified appropriately below.

[COMMENCEMENT]

DRAFT MINUTES

1 **Mayor Gilbert** called the meeting to order at 3:33 p.m. and led the Pledge of
2 Allegiance. He acknowledged National Police Week 2023 and thanked police officers for
3 what they do for the Town of Apex, and thanked Chief Armstrong for everything he does as
4 well.

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6 **[AGENDA ITEM NO. 1 - HUMAN RESOURCES]**

7 **Human Resources Director Manville** gave a presentation of strategic plan updates
8 for the Human Resources Department.

9 **[Slide-1]**



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12 **Assistant Town Manager Stone** arrived at 3:34 p.m.

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14 **[Slide-2]**



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DRAFT MINUTES

1 [Slide-3]

Strategic Plan - Goal 1

Develop a comprehensive strategy to keep the Town competitive in attracting and employing a highly qualified and diverse group of candidates.

- Develop and implement a comprehensive employer branding plan that will highlight the attributes that make Apex the best place to work in the region
- Equip Hiring Managers with tools to make legally compliant, diverse and successful hiring decisions
- Establish the Town of Apex as a market leader in salaries and benefits

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4 [Slide-4]

Strategic Plan - Goal 2

Implement and maintain programs and policies that promote a healthy, safe and productive work environment.

- Overhaul new employee onboarding and orientation processes to ensure a rewarding and productive start as an Apex employee
- Enhance Apex safety programs to promote a safe and secure work environment
- Enhance Apex wellness programs to ensure a healthy work environment
- Review and update Town policies related to HR
- Ensure compliance with all applicable federal and state employment laws and consistent enforcement of Town policy
- Implementation of new Employee Survey

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7 **Mayor Gilbert** asked about workout times during the day for employees.

8 **Director Manville** said something that was recently talked about in the Personnel
9 Committee Meeting was for all employees to have the ability to take an hour out of their work
10 day to workout. She said this is already available for Fire and Police. She said there is an
11 option already for employees to take an hour to go to Wellness Programs. She said this may
12 be another opportunity the town can provide another wellness initiative, but the HR
13 department at looking at how this could be manager, and how continuity of services could
14 still be preserved.

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DRAFT MINUTES

1 [Slide-5]

Strategic Plan - Goal 3

Provide ongoing learning and development opportunities to allow Apex employees to perform at a high level and fulfill their career aspirations.

- Develop new comprehensive supervisory training program
- Build out an ongoing program of professional development opportunities for employees
- Finalize development and implementation of new Employee Performance Management program and processes
- Finalize development and implementation of new Career Pathing program

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3 [Slide-6]

Strategic Plan - Goal 4

Continue to explore and implement ways to effectively and efficiently run departmental operations.

- Evaluate and improve processes and customer experience through audits and new software solutions
- Develop and improve mechanisms for employee feedback on HR programs and offerings

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5 **Councilmember Zegerman** asked for a timeline on the opinion survey.

6 **Human Resources Director Manville** said she is meeting tomorrow with the N.C.
7 School of Government to discuss it. She said the target date is getting it out by mid to late
8 August.

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DRAFT MINUTES

1 **[Slide-7]**

What's Happening Now

- Compensation Study
- Career Pathing
- Performance Review Revamp
- Employee & Supervisor Compliance Training



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3 **[Slide-8]**

FY24 Action Plan

- Implementation of formalized New Hire Orientation Program
- Development of in-house Training Programs
- Roll-out of New Employee Benefits
 - Peak Lifestyle Reimbursement
 - Peak Paid Time Off
- Implementation of Safety Software
 - Automation of Accident Reporting
 - Increased Safety Metrics

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6 **Mayor Gilbert** asked if the Peak Lifestyle Reimbursement includes childcare
7 expenses.

8 **Director Manville** said yes it does. She said it is up to \$1,200 employees can use for
9 various wellness-related expenses, including childcare.

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DRAFT MINUTES

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2 **[Slide-9]**

Highlights

- 1 Marketing & Recruitment as Employer of Choice
- 2 Improved New Hire Experience
- 3 Workforce Development & Succession Planning
- 4 Enhanced Employee Engagement

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5 **[Slide-10]**

Questions?

- High Performing Government
- Economic Vitality
- Responsible Development
- A Welcoming Community
- Environmental Leadership

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8 **Councilmember Gray** asked if the town has a formalized or informalized grievance
9 process internally, and how those work. He asked how much the town is spending on
10 professional development programs. He said he would like her assessment to whether or not
11 it's the appropriate amount. He said he wants to make sure the town is investing enough. He
12 added that she could email him with some of these details, as well.

13 **Human Resources Director Manville** said Human Resources has \$25,000.00
14 organizational development to spend on town wide things. She said there are training
15 budgets within each department that are more position specific, but she doesn't have those
16 numbers on her right now. She said there is commitment from staff to utilize these programs.
17 She asked Councilmember Gray if he would like the total number from the Departments.

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1 **Councilmember Gray** said he would like the total numbers from the Departments. He
2 said it seems like cross-training is an important goal, and he wants to see if potentially more
3 money needs to be directed towards these concerns. He said in 2025 the town is going to hit
4 another wave, so if the town needs to start putting money into development sooner to take
5 advantage of that next wave.

6 **Town Manager Crosby** said departments are in their evaluation process of
7 development planning. She said within departments there are certain required professional
8 skills and certifications, but the town wants to take the next step and provide employees
9 recourses for skills to allow them to be able to move up in their careers. She said staff would
10 be taking a comprehensive look at training and development.

11 **Councilmember Zegerman** echoed Councilmember Gray's questions regarding
12 grievances, and would also like that information.

13 **Councilmember Mahaffey** asked what the hiring environment looks like for the town.

14 **Director Manville** said she's seeing resignations slowing down. She said the town
15 currently has 50 open positions, and that number has been consistent. She said the open
16 positions she's seeing currently are either people retiring or being promoted. She said she
17 doesn't have exact numbers on voluntary separation. She added it can also be due to adding
18 new positions, as 50 new positions were added last year, and close to that many are set to be
19 added this year. She said getting total staffed is becoming difficult. She said the recruitment
20 process takes about 60 days, and she is hopeful for it to be shorter. She said she hired 8
21 people this past week, and it's been consistent almost every two weeks with the town hiring
22 almost in double digits.

23 **Councilmember Gantt** said it's common in government work for people to be
24 promoted for being good at their job or for having been there a long time, and are not
25 necessary a good fit for a managerial position. He said he didn't know if this was an issue in
26 Apex specifically or not, but wanted to know if there were things being done to consider this
27 in hiring practices.

28 **Director Manville** said it's in both the public and private sector. She said that's exactly
29 what she wants to address in this process. She said promotions might have been based on
30 seniority in the past but wants to address the new expectations. She said the town wants to
31 ensure it promotes and hires people based on the right fit for the goals and community of the
32 town, and not just considering seniority. She added that she wants they want to be clear with
33 employees on what they can do to prepare for potential promotion opportunities.

34 **Councilmember Gantt** asked if there were options for people who did excel at their
35 jobs but did not want to manage people to still advance their careers.

36 **Human Resources Director Manville** said yes, there will be career progression
37 opportunities for people in this situation as well, and that they want the path to include
38 opportunities for salary and responsibility in growth without necessarily adding on
39 supervision roles.

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1 **Town Manager Crosby** said one thing the town has been doing the past two years is
2 have someone come in and do a leadership challenge with the leadership team.

3 **Mayor Gilbert** thanked Human Resources for their presentation.
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5 [AGENDA ITEM NO. 2 - DIVERISTY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION DEPARTMENT]

6 **Director Jones** gave a strategic overview plan of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
7 Department.



8 [Slide-1]



10 [Slide-2]

Department Overview

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Department provides consultation and education to ensure a community of belonging, diverse representation among employees, and that residents have equitable access to services.

	Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Director <i>Linda Graham Jones</i> (Hired 2/21/2022)
	Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Coordinator <i>Celeste Sherer</i> (Hired 3/20/2023)

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[Slide-3]

DRAFT MINUTES

Strategic Business Plan – Goal 1 (Workforce)

Build and support a more diverse, inclusive, and equitable workforce in which employees reflect diversity at all position levels.

- Obtain and analyze Town's workforce demographic profile to identify opportunities to increase workforce diversity
- Identify and address bias in talent acquisition process
- Create connection and sense of belonging for all employees

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[Slide-4]

Strategic Business Plan – Goal 2 (Procurement)

Ensure policies and spend reflect the Town's value to create an equitable entrepreneurial ecosystem with purposeful inclusion of suppliers/vendors that represent the diversity of our community and region in bid opportunities and procurement contracts.

- Increase opportunities for diverse vendor participation in town procurement through targeted networking and marketing programs
- Engage with M/WBE's to identify needed support services to increase the capacity of Minority & Women-Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE)

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[Slide-5]

Strategic Business Plan – Goal 3 (Culture)

Build the foundation needed to create and sustain a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community.

- Ensure a welcoming organizational culture
- Ensure a welcoming community culture

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[Slide-6]

DRAFT MINUTES

Strategic Business Plan – Goal 4 (Education & Awareness)

Provide consultation on how to engage diverse communities and populations and outreach, education, and engagement on Town's services, programs, procedures, and policies where applicable

- Provide consultation to departments in developing a strategy to increase the diversity of residents participating in town activities and processes

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[Slide-7]

What's Happening Now?

- Georgetown Executive DEI Certification
- ICMA Institute on Race, Equity and Inclusion
- DEI & Apex Police Department Partnership with Cultural Assessment
- Language Access Plan
- Cultural Events



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[Slide-8]

FY 24 Action Plan

- Language Access Plan
- Certified Welcoming Designation
- Policy Review
- Special Events
- Training & Development
- DEI Advisory Committee
- M/WBE Engagement



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DRAFT MINUTES

1 **Town Manager Crosby** said the Certified Welcoming Designation is something that
2 is growing in the community and is an 18-month designation. She said there are specific
3 criteria the town has to meet to get it. She said DEI training and development process is a
4 tiered approach, HR is starting the process that all employees will have to go through
5 training, then Director Jones will do the learning needs assessment. She said the town is
6 possibly looking at bringing that as a part of the Employee Engagement Survey to get an
7 understanding of what are the “blind spots” the town isn’t seeing as it relates to diversity. She
8 said there will be requirements built into training.

9 **[Slide-9]**



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11 **Councilmember Zegerman** asked how the DEI complaints would be different from
12 formal complaints.

13 **Director Jones** said it could be around protected classes or there could be non-
14 discrimination piece around protective classes.

15 **Councilmember Zegerman** asked then why would it be sperate from another HR
16 grievance process.

17 **Town Manager Crosby** said there are protected classes that are separated out
18 because the background finding process may be different. She said some organizations have
19 it set up as part of HR but it can be done as a parallel investigation process.

20 **Human Resources Director Manville** said the process will start with HR then DEI will
21 be pulled in if needed. She said it’s important to know in HR to understand if a grievance is
22 about discrimination, or if it’s a more management related complaint. She said they can work
23 closely with DEI

24 **Mayor Gilbert** thanked DEI Director Jones for her presentation.

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26 **[AGENDA ITEM NO 3. - COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT]**

DRAFT MINUTES

1 **Communications Director Galloway** gave a strategic plan update for the
2 Communications Department.

3 **[Slide-1]**



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5 **[Slide-2]**



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7 **[Slide-3]**

Strategic Business Plan – Goal 1

Communicate Apex's programs and initiatives to keep the community informed of what we're doing, and why

- Develop editorial calendar with input from all departments
- Connect audience to the people behind the services
- Create strategy for special event communications / promotion

A photograph of a utility worker in a yellow safety vest and white hard hat working on a utility pole. The pole has a white box and wires. The background shows trees and a blue sky.

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1 **Councilmember Gantt** asked if her department works with Wake County and their
2 Communications department to inform residents across the county versus municipal
3 functions.

4 **Communications Director Galloway** said yes, her department works with many of
5 the local Wake County jurisdictions. She said one thing they're worked closely with Wake
6 County on is Emergency Communications, since a lot of that is housed with the county. She
7 said they're working to develop a new resident guide, that helps people moving into the area
8 understand what the state, Wake County, and Apex governments all do and have
9 responsibility and jurisdiction over.

10 **[Slide-4]**

Strategic Business Plan – Goal 2

Increase organizational awareness through internal communications

- Facilitate information sharing that builds organization-wide knowledge
- Participate in internal teams (ie. Change Management, ERP)
- Adjust internal comms strategies based on employee feedback

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12 **Councilmember Zegerman** said he doesn't see communication plans around major
13 projects.

14 **Communications Director Galloway** said it's coming in the presentation.

15 **Councilmember Gray** asked how much communication she is having with the other
16 departments.

17 **Communications Director Galloway** said she talks to Police often and Parks and Rec
18 has active communications with their department regularly.

19 **Councilmember Gray** asked is there a consistency of messaging and communication.

20 **Communications Director Galloway** said her team is working on that and she will
21 talk about it more later.

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DRAFT MINUTES

1 [Slide-5]

Strategic Business Plan – Goal 3

Guide the community through uncertain situations with effective communications planning

- Develop a crisis communications plan
- Train and develop relevant staff on the plan




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3 [Slide-6]

Strategic Business Plan – Goal 4

Build community connections by creating interest in Apex's Past, Present, and Potential

- Develop plan to celebrate 150th
- Engage staff and community members
- Promote the celebration year in ways that connect with all audiences



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5 [Slide-7]

What's Happening Now

Departmental Support

- Apex Cares
- Big Branch
- Budget Public Hearing / Document
- Lead & Copper Rule Revisions
- Open Enrollment
- Stormwater Assessment
- Subdivision Maintenance
- Text WATER

Special Events

- Memorial Day
- Pride Festival
- Juneteenth Festival
- July 3rd and 4th

Video / Social Series

- Hot Takes
- Hey, Did you Know?
- Monthly event calendar / mid-month Passport Round-up
- Ask the Expert

Branding

- Brand guidelines update
- Powerpoint templates

Regular / Ongoing

- Monthly eNewsletter
- Zencity - gauge community sentiment

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DRAFT MINUTES


1 **Mayor Gilbert** asked why the Town of Apex is not having a Latino Festival. He said he
2 has heard from others in the community that people think Apex is not putting it on.

3 **Director Jones** said she had a meeting with Pastor Jose and he indicated that this
4 years Latino Festival will be put on pause. She said that Pastor Jose wants to have the
5 branding to be consistent and line up with Hispanic Heritage Month in September, and other
6 functions didn't align. She said it will resume next year.

7

8 **[Slide-8]**

What's Happening Now



1 Beaver Creek Commons at Zeno DR Stop Light Installation
63.8K accounts reached
1.2K reactions

2 National Lineworker Appreciation Day
3.9K accounts reached
137 reactions

3 Subdivision Maintenance Video
3.4K accounts reached
85 reactions

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10 **[Slide-9]**

FY 24 Action Plan

- Onboard Public Safety PIO
 - Develop media request process
 - Build media relationships
 - Begin research for crisis communications
- Finish out the 150th celebration year
 - Party in the Peak
 - Video Vault
 - Community Tours
- Conduct Resident Satisfaction Survey
 - Explore alternative vendor / method
- Create Social Media Plan
 - Identify tone, voice, and purpose of each platform
 - Use analytics to drive strategy



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DRAFT MINUTES

1 [Slide-10]



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3 **Councilmember Zegerman** commented on the town needing to keep the
4 community engaged and informed, especially on bigger projects and reasons may projects
5 may be stalled or delayed.

6 **Town Manager Crosby** said the Community Engagement Team and 311 will fall
7 under the Community Development Department. She said they will work with
8 Communications, and this will be spearhead by Assistant Town Manager John.

9 **Assistant Town Manager John** said there is a work session on this coming in June
10 and she will provide more detail then.

11 **Councilmember Gray** asked Director Galloway if her department is focused on all
12 aspects of communication timelines. He asked would the communications department need
13 more people to do the work.

14 **Communications Director Galloway** said her department is finding their way right
15 now. She said her department has grown from one to four and possibly adding a fifth in a
16 short span of time. She said her department is still trying to figure out where the strengths are
17 and how they play off each other, and that she is working on her role in developing the team.

18 **Councilmember Zegerman** said its impressive how much ground that her team
19 covers.

20 **Councilmember Gantt** said the growth of the Communications Team has been great
21 since he first joined the Council in 2017.

22 **Mayor Gilbert** thanked Communications Director Galloway for her presentation.

23

24 [Agenda Item No. 4 - Apex Police Community Advisory Board (APCAB)]

25 **Compliance Officer Simpson** gave an overview of what is the Apex Police
26 Community Advisory Board and how its being incorporated with other boards. She said she

DRAFT MINUTES

1 did receive negative feedback about the name of the board and it has been changed to
2 Police Advisory Board. She said a lot of questions came up for the background check
3 regarding this advisory board and deferred to Chief Armstrong.

4 **Chief Armstrong** said he had received feedback that a youth representative be
5 present on this board. He said there is also a background check involved, and explained that
6 someone's criminal history does not make them ineligible to participate to work with youth.
7 He said its to make sure there are not any conflicts that could be problematic for the town.

8 **Councilmember Gray** said his concern with background checks is it could become a
9 barrier to many people, and that he's pretty certain most child sex offenders would try to stay
10 away from police as much as possible. He said for many crimes, he is a believer that people
11 should be able to participate fully in society if they have been convicted and already served
12 their time.

13 **Councilmember Zegerman** asked could the requirements be lightened to just check
14 of a sex offender registry instead of pulling the background.

15 **Chief Armstrong** said he could but he has challenges with that. He said he isn't
16 concerned about a case of someone serving if they had been previously convicted of theft.
17 He said a scenario he would be concerned about is if one member on the board has been a
18 victim of domestic violence, and they bring in somebody that has been arrested or charged
19 for doing something like that. He said that would be the challenge this board would face. He
20 said victims of domestic violence don't always want to go to conviction. He said the
21 background is not looking to exclude anyone based on having a prior conviction, but rather
22 from a larger perspective to create a board that can work together comfortably and safely. He
23 said people who serve on this board who have been victims of certain crimes and want to
24 become an advocate should be protected by a system that other prevents other people from
25 joining who may have been a perpetrator of what they went through. He said a criminal
26 record in general would not negatively impact an individual from being able to join.

27 **Councilmember Gray** said he understands and appreciates that point, but that
28 anybody can file a complaint for any sort of crime without it being fully vetted that may show
29 up on a background check.

30 **Town Manager Crosby** said it would be up to Council, and that with the exception of
31 the police academy the training will be done during the week.

32 **Ms. Simpson** said there has been added language to clarify the hours of training and
33 for the two-year initial terms which will be staggered. She said the individuals will complete
34 the training of what's offered within the two years during those meetings.

35 **Councilmember Gantt** asked if there was conflicting feedback.

36 **Ms. Simpson** said yes, but she said most of it is formation, terms, and membership
37 questions.

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1 **Mayor Gilbert** asked if there will be a process that the community can weigh in
2 before anything is put in place.

3 **Chief Armstrong** said it's up to Council.

4 **Councilmember Gray** said a public hearing for this would be a good idea.

5 **Councilmember Mahaffey** and **Councilmember Zegerman** liked the idea of
6 bringing it to public hearing and then voting on the board.

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8 **[ADJOURNMENT]**

9 Mayor Gilbert declared the meeting adjourned at 5:02 p.m.

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17 Allen Coleman, CMC, NCCCC

18 Apex, Town Clerk

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20 Submitted for approval by Apex Town Clerk Allen Coleman.

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22 Minutes approved on _____ of _____, 2023.

Jacques K. Gilbert
Apex, Mayor