

**TOWN OF STANTONSBURG**

DATE: April 12, 2021

Mayor Coley Rhodes called the regular monthly meeting to order at approximately 7:00pm. The following Council members were present: Jackie Grice, Donnie Bass, Ben Harper, Walt Bynum and Ken D. Horne. Also present were Town Manager David Beaman, Town Clerk Tabitha Bailey, Chief of Police Orlando Rosario and Sergeant Crystal Jackson. Members of the Stantonburg Fire Department and the Appearance Committee were also present. There were several people from the public in attendance.

**Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and Prayer:** Mayor Rhodes led the Pledge of Allegiance and opened the meeting with prayer.

**A. Approve minutes of last month's open and closed session meetings, March 2021:** All Council members voted to approve the open and closed meeting minutes for March 2021.

**B. Financial Report:**

*Receipts \$351,323.01 Disbursements \$342,512.52 Difference \$8,810.49*

**C. Invoices for Payment:**

Councilman Bynum made a motion to approve the invoices for payment. All Council members voted favorably.

At this time, Kevin O'Donnell, of Nova Energy Consultants, addressed the Council. Mr. O'Donnell informed the Board that the Town has saved approximately \$1,463,450 since switching to Carolina Power Partners in 2018. Mr. O'Donnell also stated that the Town of Stantonburg should be able to go another couple of years before having to consider increasing electrical rates.

Mr. O'Donnell informed the Council that the Town's substation transformers will need to be replaced in approximately twenty years and recommends that the Town put aside \$50,000 per year now, specifically targeted for the transformers.

**D. Public Present:** Marie Edmundson informed the Council that the Stantonburg Community Building is a separate entity from the Town and, other than receiving \$150 per month from Senior Affairs, is financially supported by rentals. Mrs. Edmundson stated that she was made aware that the Board has approved a conditional use permit for an events center in Stantonburg at the old Dollar Tree location and wanted to express her regret and disappointment in this decision. At this time, Jo Ann Lucas, a member of the Planning Board, stated that she was against approving the conditional use permit due to the fact that it would hurt the Stantonburg Community Building and her concern for residents living

behind the events center. Mrs. Edmundson also stated that she is concerned that, because alcohol use will be permitted at the events center, this will cause problems for residents and the Stantonsburg Police Department. Mrs. Edmundson informed the Council that the Stantonsburg Community Building has served thousands of meals to senior citizens and served the community for over twenty years. Mrs. Edmundson wanted to assure all those present that the Stantonsburg Community Building will continue to serve and provide to those in need and will work diligently to keep the doors to the Community Building open.

**E. Fire Department: N/A**

**F. Police Report:** Chief of Police Orlando Rosario presented the police report to the Town Council.

Chief Rosario informed the Council that April 12<sup>th</sup> was the first day that the Stantonsburg Police Department conducted business in its new location at 107 S. Main St. in Stantonsburg.

Chief Rosario also stated that the Stantonsburg Police Department hosted a Covid vaccine clinic at the new Police Department on Main St. April 12, 2021 from 8:00 am to 11:00 am.

At this time, Jo Ann Lucas commended Chief Rosario and the entire Stantonsburg Police Department for doing a fine job protecting and serving the residents of Stantonsburg.

**G. Parks & Rec:** Bill Edmundson informed the Council that the Parks and Recreation Committee has purchased and placed ten crepe myrtle trees by the benches in the Stantonsburg Park. Mr. Edmundson also stated that the Parks and Recreation Committee are looking for assistance to possibly cover the playground equipment with some sort of canvas shelter.

**H. Town Manager's Report:** Town Manager David Beaman informed the Council that the Town has currently spent \$4,800 moving the Stantonsburg Police Department to their new location on Main St. Mr. Beaman stated that he is expecting to spend an additional \$2,600 on signage and a new door. Town Manager David Beaman reminded the Council that the new police department building currently sits on three lots and recommends recombining those lots so that there will be one address.

Mr. Beaman stated that he plans on setting up a budget workshop at the May 10, 2021 Board meeting and a public hearing in June regarding the proposed budget for FY 2021-2022.

Town Manager David Beaman informed the Council that Carolina Power Partners has awarded the Town \$1,000 to use as the Town sees fit. Mr. Beaman suggested using the funds to help residents who may be struggling with their utility bills. Mr. Beaman requested that the Board allow the Town Hall to determine those that are in need that do not normally receive assistance. All Council members agreed.

**I. Appearance Committee:** June Shingleton stated that the Appearance Committee has purchased (6) 18-inch lights to be placed under the shelter of the Seal Building and they

hope to have them installed soon. The Appearance Committee is also in the process of having a company design a sign for the Stantonsburg Cemetery and the park.

**J. Councilman Horne:** Councilman Horne asked Mayor Rhodes why it was necessary to hold the Town Hall meeting at the Stantonsburg Community Building. Mayor Rhodes stated that she felt it would allow more room for social distancing.

**K. Councilman Bass:** Councilman Bass asked Town Manager David Beaman what the status was on the equipment that the Town purchased with the Cares Act Grant. Mr. Beaman stated that Computer Central is storing the equipment until all of the items have arrived. Councilman Bass stated that he feels the Town should install the equipment that Computer Central has received, instead of waiting for all materials to arrive. This will allow the Town to conduct Board meetings at the Town Hall and make use of the equipment that was purchased with the Cares Act Grant.

Councilman Bass requested that something be done with the frames around the bathroom doors at the park where they are beginning to rust.

At this time, Councilman Bass stated that the Board needs to discuss plans for the old police department building. Councilman Bass reminded the Council that the Town recently replaced the HVAC in that building and suggested something be done before the mold and mildew begin to infiltrate the new system.

Councilman Bass also stated that he would like to see some streets paved in Stantonsburg.

**L. Councilman Harper:** Councilman Harper asked what the status was with the Town's cat problem. Town Manager David Beaman stated that the Wilson County Sheriff's Department had to stop trapping the cats when the weather got too cold, but that he will follow up with them and see when they can come back out to catch some more.

**M. Councilman Bynum:** Councilman Bynum stated that at the March 8<sup>th</sup> Board meeting, he made a motion to have the office staff work Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm beginning March 15, 2021. Councilman Bynum stated that all Council members, with the exception of Councilman Bass, voted in favor of the motion and the motion was passed. Mr. Bynum then stated that the next day, most of the Board members had changed their minds and requested that the office hours stay the same, with those hours being Monday through Thursday 8:00 am to 5:00 pm and Friday 8:00 am to 12:00 pm. Councilman Bynum asked Councilman Horne specifically what made him change his mind. Councilman Horne stated that he spoke with the employees and got their feedback. Councilman Horne also stated that he was made aware that the current schedule had been in place for over ten years. Councilman Bynum then stated that there was plenty of time to have any necessary discussion at the previous meeting. Councilman Bynum informed the Council that he thinks he knows where the problem is, but that he is not going to say. At this time, Jamie Bailey requested that Councilman Bynum say what he thinks the problem is. Councilman Bynum stated that it is just his opinion. Mr. Bailey suggested everything be brought out into the open. Mr. Bailey stated that the office hours have been the same for over ten years and

asked Councilman Bynum why it was so important now, that the office staff work from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm on Friday. Councilman Bynum stated that the Town Hall is a public service. Mr. Bailey informed Councilman Bynum that these hours have worked for many years and have never been a problem. Mr. Bailey informed the Council that something happened and all of a sudden the office hours are no longer acceptable. Mr. Bailey stated that this affects him because his wife works in the Town Hall. Mr. Bailey also pointed out that the office staff is visibly present in the office and gets the job done. Jo Ann Lucas stated that the Town employees do a fine job and deserve to be able to work their normal schedule. Also, Cynthia Russell advised the Town Council to listen to the Town's employees when making decisions on matters such as these.

**N. Councilwoman Grice: N/A**

**O. Mayor: N/A**

Councilman Harper made a motion to adjourn. All Council members voted in favor of the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Tabitha Bailey, Town Clerk

Coley H. Rhodes, Mayor

