

**TOWN OF STANTONSBURG**

DATE: May 11, 2020

Mayor Coley H. Rhodes called the regular monthly meeting to order via conference call due to Covid-19 at 7:00 pm. The following Council members were present: Ken D. Horne, Walter Bynum, Donnie Bass and Jackie Grice. Also present were Town Manager Gary Davis, Town Clerk Tabitha Bailey and Chief of Police Orlando Rosario. Many others were present from the public.

**Prayer:** Mayor Rhodes opened the meeting with prayer.

**A. Approve regular meeting minutes for March 2020:** All Council members voted to approve the meeting minutes for March 2020.

**B. Financial Report:**

*March Receipts \$339,205.05 Disbursements \$272,864.91 Difference \$66,340.14  
April Receipts \$253,482.48 Disbursements \$204,158.28 Difference \$49,324.20*

**C. Invoices for Payment:** April Meeting Total: \$58,922.51 May Meeting Total: \$72,769.81  
Councilwoman Grice made a motion to approve the invoices for payment. All Council members voted favorably.

At this time, Event Committee Chairman Jane Lancaster requested the Board's approval to have the annual Crepe Myrtle Festival on October 17, 2020. Mrs. Lancaster stated that she able to book the Embers for that date if the Council has no objections. Mayor Rhodes polled the Council and all Council members agreed with having the Crepe Myrtle festival on October 17, 2020.

Mayor Rhodes asked that Town Clerk Tabitha Bailey read a letter that Electrical Consultant Kevin O'Donnell sent to the Town. In this letter Mr. O'Donnell thanked the Council for the kind words they spoke concerning him at the March Board meeting. Mr. O'Donnell also stated that the Town Boards throughout the years were also responsible for the decisions that allowed the citizens to have lower electric costs.

At this time, Mayor Rhodes had Town Clerk Tabitha Bailey read a letter from Meredith Ezzard. Mr. Ezzard informed the Council that he was very pleased that the Council has followed through with having the Applewhite building painted. Mr. Ezzard also encouraged the Council to move ahead quickly with the reconstruction of the overhang to prevent the further deterioration of the beautiful wood on the lower part of the building.

**D. Public Present: N/A**

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

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

Mayor Rhodes informed the Council that Ms. Delois Drummond submitted a letter addressed to the Mayor, Town Manager and Council members. Mayor Rhodes stated that Ms. Drummond wanted this letter read at the Board meeting and asked that Town Clerk Tabitha Bailey read the letter aloud to the Council. In her letter Ms. Drummond expressed her concern regarding individuals riding their four wheelers through a nearby cemetery and also two dogs that are often loose and roaming through town. Ms. Drummond asked that these concerns be addressed. Chief Rosario stated that the incident with the four wheelers is under investigation and that animal control was called concerning the dogs.

**G. Parks & Rec: N/A**

**H. Appearance Committee:** June Shingleton informed the Council that the Appearance Committee is planning on painting the beauty shop soon and that the new garbage cans have arrived and have been placed around the Town. Also, the planters in front of the library have been planted. Mrs. Shingleton stated that the upper level of the Seal building has now been pressure washed, primed and painted. She also informed the Council that Steve Mooring designed, built and installed all the wooden shutters and door on the upper level of the Seal Building. Mrs. Shingleton stated that the Appearance Committee would like to move ahead and rebuild the shelter on the front of the Seal Building, This would allow them to begin work on the lower level of the building.

At this time, Dr. Philip Perkins spoke on behalf of the Appearance Committee and encouraged the Board to move forward with replacing the shelter on the front of the Seal building. Dr. Perkins stated that if the Town completes the work on the front of the Seal building it will encourage other residents and may eventually help bring growth to our Town.

After much discussion, Councilman Bynum made a motion to have Vasquez Home Improvement replace the shelter on the Seal building in the amount of \$19,406.00. Mayor Rhodes polled the Council on the motion with Councilman Bynum, Councilman Bass and Councilwoman Grice voting in favor of the motion. The motion passed with a 3-1 vote with Councilman Horne voting against the motion.

**I. Town Manager's Report:** Town Manager Gary Davis presented Budget Amendment #1 for the Council's approval. After reviewing the Budget Amendment, Councilman Bynum made a motion to approve Budget Amendment #1. (See attachment) Mayor Rhodes polled the Council with all Council members voting favorably.

Mr. Davis informed the Board that Police Officer Jose Rivera completed his 1-year probationary period of employment with the Town of Stantonsburg in April 2020. Mr. Davis stated that Police Chief Rosario has completed his evaluation of Officer Rivera and recommends that Officer Rivera be made a permanent full-time employee with the customary 5% pay increase. Town Manager Gary Davis recommended and that his pay increase be made retroactive to the pay period following the canceled April 13, 2020 Board

meeting. Councilman Bynum made a motion to promote Officer Jose Rivera to permanent full-time employment with the customary 5% pay increase and that it be made retroactive to the canceled April 13, 2020 Board meeting. Mayor Rhodes polled the Council and all Council members voted in favor of the motion.

At this time, Town Manager Gary Davis updated the Council on the Stantonsburg Well Project. Mr. Davis stated that A.C. Schultes broke their drill pipe at the threads while preparing to put in the permanent casing. A.C. Schultes tried for days to fish out forty feet of pipe and two drill bits, but were unsuccessful. Mr. Davis informed the Board that the driller was pulled off of the job and that they plan to return with a larger rig. This will require A.C. Schultes to move and start over and will be at the cost of A.C. Schultes. Mr. Davis did state that the Town had a good test hole and a good cone of water.

Town Manager Gary Davis requested a budget workshop be held May 28, 2020 at 7:00 pm. All Council members present agreed.

Also, Mr. Davis requested the Mayor set a public hearing at 6:30 pm prior to the regular meeting on June 8, 2020 to allow public comments on the proposed budget for FY 2020-2021. Councilman Horne asked that once the public has been heard at the public hearing, the Town Council be able to continue on into the regular meeting. Mayor Rhodes called for a public hearing on the proposed budget for June 8, 2020 at 6:30 pm and stated that once the public has been heard, the Board will continue on into the regular meeting. All Council members present agreed.

**J. Councilman Horne:** Councilman Horne asked Town Manager Gary Davis if he knew when the Town Hall will open back up to the public. Mr. Davis stated that due to the fact that business has continued as usual, he would play it by ear. Mr. Davis also stated that once he felt it was safe for employees and residents, the lobby would open back up to the public. Councilman Horne agreed that safety should come first.

Councilman Horne asked if there has been an increase in residents not paying their utility bills. Mr. Davis informed the Council that the number of people on the cut off list was ten times the normal amount this past month, but that the Town had received calls from residents who are trying to pay something toward their past due amount.

**K. Councilman Bass: N/A**

**L. Councilman Harper: N/A**

**M. Councilman Bynum:** Councilman Bynum asked Town Manager Gary Davis what the flags were for out by the water tank. Mr. Davis stated that the flags do not have anything to do with the Town.

**N. Councilwoman Grice:** Councilwoman Grice asked Town Manager Gary Davis what safety measures he has taken to protect the Town employees during this Covid-19 pandemic. Mr. Davis stated that the employees are trying to social distance as much as possible. Town employees have also been equipped with hand sanitizer and spray disinfectant. Mr. Davis also stated that the lobby has been closed to the public.

Councilwoman Grice asked who requested that Town attorney, Slade Rand, attend the March 9<sup>th</sup> meeting. Town Manager Gary Davis stated that both the Mayor and he felt that it was a good idea to have Mr. Rand attend to address issues that had come up due to complaints from the public about the Town's use of social media.

Councilwoman Grice asked if Ms. Drummond was told to send a letter to the Council and was Ms. Drummond aware of the meeting. Mr. Davis stated that Ms. Drummond took it upon herself to write a letter to the Council and requested that it be read to the Board. Councilwoman Grice asked if Chief Rosario was made aware of this letter prior to the meeting. Mr. Davis stated that Chief Rosario was given a copy of the letter and had responded to the letter by email. Councilwoman Grice stated that she felt that this should not be handled in open session and would like to discuss this further at a later time in closed session.

**O. Mayor:** Mayor Rhodes stated that she was not able to meet with individuals from the Upper Coastal Plain Council of Government on March 16, 2020 to discuss a possible two day workshop of brainstorming with the important Committees in Town because of the meeting being cancelled due to Covid-19. Mayor Rhodes informed the Council that she hopes to be able to reschedule this meeting for sometime in June.

Councilman Bynum made a motion to adjourn. Mayor Rhodes polled the Council with all Council members voting favorably for the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Tabitha Bailey  
Town Clerk, Finance Officer

Coley H. Rhodes, Mayor

