

**TOWN OF STANTONSBURG**

DATE: September 14, 2020

Mayor Coley Rhodes called the regular monthly meeting to order at 7:00pm. The following Council members were present: Jackie Grice, Donnie Bass, Ben Harper and Walt Bynum. Councilman Ken D. Horne arrived at approximately 7:12 pm. Also present were Town Manager Gary Davis, Town Clerk Tabitha Bailey, Fire Chief William McMurray and Chief of Police Orlando Rosario. There were several present from the public.

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

**A. Approve regular and closed meeting minutes for August 2020:** All Council members voted to approve all meeting minutes for August 10, 2020.

**B. Financial Report:**

*Receipts \$374,066.71 Disbursements \$398,242.89 Difference \$24,176.18  
Notable disbursements: Annual insurance payment of \$66,925.*

**C. Invoices for Payment:**

Councilwoman Grice made a motion to approve the invoices for payment. All Council members voted favorably.

At this time, Mayor Rhodes thanked the Stantonsburg/Moyton Fire Department for allowing the Stantonsburg Town Council to hold their monthly Board meeting at the Fire department for the month of September.

**D. Public Present:** Jimmie Young addressed the Council regarding an incident that occurred on February 10, 2020. Mr. Young stated that he has been a truck driver now for forty years and had never received a ticket his whole life. Mr. Young informed the Council that on February 10<sup>th</sup> he was driving a log truck coming from Eureka headed north toward Stantonsburg. He stated that when he approached Watery Branch Church Rd., there was a barricade pulled off to the side of the road, so he assumed that the road was open. After driving on towards Stantonsburg, Mr. Young then approached Red Hill Rd., where there was another barricade pulled partly across the road. At this point, Mr. Young stated that he would have had to backup his log truck all the way to Watery Branch Church, which would have been very dangerous. Mr. Young then stated that he witnessed an SUV coming from Stantonsburg and assumed that the road was not closed. Mr. Young stated that he then proceeded towards Stantonsburg. When Mr. Young approached the bridge in Stantonsburg there were cones across the road and he was met by Chief Rosario. Chief Rosario then informed Mr. Young that he was under arrest. Mr. Young informed the Council that he had never been arrested in his life. Mr. Young stated that Chief Rosario informed him that his log truck would be towed. Mr. Young proceeded to tell Chief Rosario that he had an

individual that could go pick up his truck to prevent it from being towed. Mr. Young stated that Chief Rosario told him that he would not allow that because he was going to make an example out of him. Mr. Young then stated that, on the way to jail, Chief Rosario got on his loud speaker and told passing cars to slow down. Once Mr. Young got out of jail, he was receiving phone calls notifying him that his picture was on Facebook in handcuffs. Mr. Young stated that he felt it was completely unnecessary to have had his picture on Facebook and expressed how much this had hurt his family. Mr. Young informed the Council that there was approximately 12 inches of water on the road that day and that he was in no danger going through the water. Mr. Young made the Council aware that he has obtained a lawyer and that all he is requesting that the Town reimburse him for the \$550 that was required to get his truck out of the impound.

Teresa Young, Mr. Young's wife, then addressed the Council and made them aware of how much this hurt their family by having this incident posted on Facebook. Mrs. Young stated that Chief Rosario could have given her husband a ticket instead of placing him in handcuffs, posting it on Facebook and then insisting that his truck be towed.

Councilman Bynum informed Mr. Young that there was a rumor going around Town that he was related to Mayor Rhodes and asked if that was true. Mr. Young stated that he has never seen Mayor Rhodes before in his life. Councilman Bynum stated that he appreciated Mr. Young for clearing that up.

#### **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 he is requesting the removal of Officer Nicholas White from probationary status with the customary 5% pay increase with the approval of the Town Manager and Town Council.

Police Chief Rosario is also requesting that he be considered for a certification bonus for receiving his Advanced Law Enforcement Certificate back in 2017.

At this time, Chief Rosario enquired on the status of Take-Home Car policy for the Police Department. Councilman Bynum asked Town Manager Gary Davis if Chief Rosario has spoken with him about the Take-Home Car Policy. Mr. Davis stated that Chief Rosario has discussed the policy with him in some detail, but that he had received the proposed policy at the same time as Council. Councilman Bynum informed Chief Rosario that he needs to speak with the Town Manager in full detail about his request before bringing it to the Council.

At this time, Town Manager Gary Davis informed the Board that Police Officer Nicholas White had completed his 1-year probationary period of employment with the Town of Stantonburg in August 2020. Mr. Davis stated that Police Chief Rosario and Sergeant Jackson had completed their evaluations of Officer White and he recommends that Officer White be made a permanent full-time employee with the customary 5% pay increase. Town Manager Gary Davis recommended that his pay increase be made retroactive to August 20, 2020. Councilwoman Grice made a motion to promote Officer Nicholas White to permanent

full-time employment with the customary 5% pay increase and that it be made retroactive to August 20, 2020. All Council members voted favorably.

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

**H. Town Manager's Report:** Town Manager Gary Davis presented (4) utility extension requests. After careful review, Councilwoman Grice made a motion to grant all utility extension requests with the stipulation that extension request #4 be paid by September 25, 2020. All Council members present voted favorably.

Town Manager Gary Davis informed the Council that the Town can utilize Sourcewell, a cooperative purchasing group, to make a purchase for a new line truck. Mr. Davis stated that the Town has located a line truck through this process and, with the Council's permission, are ready to proceed with a purchase. Town Manager Gary Davis informed the Council that the Town has located a 2020 Versalift demo line truck. This demo line truck has 7,000 miles, but will have an as new warranty. Mr. Davis is requesting the Council's permission to enter into a contract with Sourcewell to utilize their competitive purchasing process to purchase a Versalift line truck not to exceed \$204,000 plus applicable tax. Mr. Davis stated that he had hoped to have a contract with Sourcewell ready to present to the Council at the Board meeting, but due to Covid-19 they are extremely backed up. The consensus of the Council was to put this on the agenda for the September 22<sup>nd</sup> special meeting in order to give Sourcewell time to provide Mr. Davis with a contract.

Town Manager Gary Davis informed the Board that Councilman Bass has made him aware that there are some good paving prices at the present time. Mr. Davis requested permission from the Council to allow Councilman Bass and himself to get together and see what kind of price the Town can get in order to do some paving in Town. The Council agreed.

**I. Appearance Committee:** Linda Mooring informed the Council that the library has been pressure washed.

At this time, Mayor Rhodes informed the Council that she had a virtual meeting on September 3, 2020 with Bruce Naegelen, Ben Farmer, Ron Townlee and Robert Hyatt of Upper Coastal Plains Council of Government. Mayor Rhodes stated that during this meeting, they came up with an Economic Development Plan for the Town of Stantonburg. Mayor Rhodes also stated that because the Town is in the process of hiring a new Town Manager, it would be best to wait on going ahead with these plans until we have a new Town Manager. Mayor Rhodes informed the Council that Bruce Naegelen prepared and Economic Assessment of Understanding Memorandum with a start date of February 2021 and a completion date of April 2021. Mayor Rhodes stated that she is requesting the Council's approval to go ahead with this Economic Assessment Planning. After some discussion, Councilwoman Grice suggested getting the hourly rates and any other expenses that may be charged by the Upper Coastal Plains Council of Government before the Board makes a decision. Mayor Rhodes agreed to get that information and present it at the next Board meeting.

Mayor Rhodes informed the Council that the ad for a new Town Manager was posted on the League of Municipalities' website on August 27, 2020. Mayor Rhodes also stated that the search committee for the new Town Manager would meet September 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> to go through the applications that have been received. Also, Mayor Rhodes would like to have a special meeting on September 21<sup>st</sup> to discuss the Town Manager position further. Councilwoman Grice stated that she would not be able to meet this week with the search committee. Councilman Harper and Councilman Horne stated that they will look at their calendar and let Mayor Rhodes know if they can meet in Councilwoman Grice's place. After some discussion, it was decided to have the special meeting for the Town Council on September 22, 2020 at 7:00 pm at the Town Hall.

Mayor Rhodes informed the Council that Ben Farmer of Upper Coastal Plains Council of Government created a Town Manager survey for residents to fill out. Mayor Rhodes stated that this survey has been placed on the Town of Stantonburg website and posted outside the Town Hall door. This will allow the Council to get feedback from residents and see what qualities they wish to have in a Town Manager.

Mayor Rhodes asked the Council if there were any questions regarding the list of repairs to Town owned buildings that Councilman Bass had requested. After some additions to the list there were no other questions. (See attached.)

**J. Councilman Horne:** Councilman Horne stated that the timers on the lights at the park need to be adjusted.

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

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

**M. Councilman Bynum:** N/A

**N. Councilwoman Grice:** Councilwoman Grice made a motion to go into closed session to discuss personnel. All Council members voted favorably.

**O. Mayor:** Mayor Rhodes informed the Council that a reporter from the Wilson Daily Times has called and is planning on doing an interview with Town Manager Gary Davis regarding his retirement. At this time, Mayor Rhodes asked Town Clerk Tabitha Bailey if she would be willing to be in charge of Mr. Davis' retirement party. Mrs. Bailey agreed, but stated that she wasn't sure if she could do it without crying.

Mayor Rhodes stated that she will be using the Call One to inform residents about the Town Manager survey on the website.

At this time, Councilwoman Grice asked Town Manager Gary Davis what his thoughts were regarding the Police Department's Take-Home Car Policy. Mr. Davis stated that he has mixed feelings. He thinks the estimated numbers are low and the fact that there would not be police cars in Town at given times could be an issue. Although, Mr. Davis also stated that statistics show that a Police Officer take more pride in their vehicle when they take them home. Councilwoman Grice suggested doing a 90 day trial and see how it works out. Councilman Harper requested that Town Manager Gary Davis and Chief Rosario sit down and go through and finalize the policy and also come up with some type of monthly report to see what it will be costing the Town. Mr. Davis stated that they would meet before the next Board meeting and bring it before the Council. All Council members agreed.

Councilwoman Grice requested that Town Manager bring a copy of the section of the personnel policy regarding certification bonuses to the October 12<sup>th</sup> Board meeting.

At this time, the Council went into closed session to discuss personnel.

Mayor Rhodes declared the meeting back into open session at approximately 9:14 pm.

Councilman Harper made a motion to adjourn. All Council members voted in favor of the motion. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:16 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Tabitha Bailey, Town Clerk

Coley H. Rhodes, Mayor

