

## TOWN OF STANTONSBURG

DATE: December 6, 2021

Regular Meeting

Mayor Coley Rhodes called the regular monthly meeting to order at approximately 7:00pm. The following Council members were present: Donnie Bass, Ben Harper, Walt Bynum, and Jackie Grice. Council member Ken Horne was not present for this meeting. Also present were Town Manager David Beaman, Deputy Town Clerk Patsy Godwin, and various members of the public.

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

### A. Approval of November 2021 Minutes:

Regular Session Minutes: All Council members voted to approve the regular session minutes.

Closed Session Minutes: All Council members voted to approve the closed session minutes.

### B. Old Business:

- Elementary School Closing: Town Manager David Beaman stated that "Save Our School" signs have been purchased. The town will be selling at cost, to recoup the funds, if anyone is interested in purchasing for their yard. Mayor Rhodes discussed School Board meetings coming up. She asked the council members to attend the meeting on December 13 to show united front to save our school.
- Library A/C and Heating Unit: Town Manager David Beaman shared that unit has been replaced. He shared the cost was over the library's budget, so he has a budget amendment to cover the overage. (See Town Managers section for vote of approval.)
- Christmas Parade: Mayor Rhodes discussed the Christmas Parade events and tree lighting.

### C. Swearing In of Re-Elected and New Board Members:

Before swearing in the re-elected and new board members, Mayor Rhodes took the time to thank outgoing Council Member Jackie Grice for her time and service to the Town of Stantonburg. She will be missed. Mayor Rhodes then proceeded to swear in:

Re-Elected Council Member Donnie Bass

Re-Elected Council Member Ben Harper

Newly Elected Council Member Steve Mooring

### D. Financial Report:

November: Receipts \$260,183.09 Disbursements \$171,450.91 Difference \$88,732.18

**E. Invoices for Payment:** After some discussion Council Member Bynum made a motion to approve the invoices for payment. All were in favor, passed unanimously.

**F. Departmental/Committee Reports:**

- **Police Report:** Police Chief Rosario gave an update on the status of grants that he has applied for. He also stated that the staffing for the Police Department is now at 100% with hire of Elijah Munoz-Terry, our new police officer. Chief Rosario also discussed the Shop with a Cop program. He stated this program is funded by donations and the department will be taking the kids shopping for Christmas on December 18<sup>th</sup>.
- **Parks & Recreation Committee:** Eartha Butler was very happy to report that this committee is an active and hardworking compassionate group of people. She thanked David for getting the pedestrian counter for the park which shows the walking activity in the park. She shared some statistics they have gathered. She also stated she would be emailing some photos of park equipment she saw in Greenville to possibly purchase with the grant money we received. Ms. Butler added the next meeting will be January 6, 2022, at 7:00 pm.
- **Appearance Committee:** Linda Mooring gave an updated on the park and cemetery signs. Hopefully, they will be installed before the Christmas parade.

**G. Kevin O'Donnell – Nova Energy Consultants:** Mr. O'Donnell shared his projections for the rising costs of natural gas via Skype. He also stated that demand is greater than the supply which is the cause of the rising costs. He stated that to cover the overages he is recommending a 15% increase on our electric rates to help cover at least half of the rising rates with the remaining half to come out the Town's Rate Stabilization Fund. We can look to re-assess rates again in Spring, Summer, and the Fall. With no further questions, Mayor Rhodes asked for a motion to approve the 15% rate increase for electricity across the board for the Town of Stantonsburg. Council Member Harper made the motion. All were in favor, passed unanimously.

**H. Town Manager's Report:** Town Manager, David Beaman, presented the following items:

- Discussed the Electric Department Tree Truck. He handed out a side-by-side comparison of the Altec and Versa Lift trucks and warranties from each and discussed the options to purchase. After all discussion was completed Council Member Harper made the motion to move forward with securing the funding and the purchase of the Altec truck. All were in favor, passed unanimously.
- Discussed the Shingleton property by the cemetery. The family has reached out to him regarding purchasing the property for the cost of the taxes owed. He recommended not moving forward with the property because it would be more of a liability to the town. The Council Members agreed.
- Next David shared the 2022 meeting dates and holiday schedule. He stated that he added Veteran's Day because this is a State and Federal holiday. Council Member Bynum made the motion to accept the 2022 meeting dates and holiday schedule. All were in favor, passed unanimously.

- Requested a motion to schedule a public hearing regarding the Briar Farm Phase 1 annexation for January 10, 2022, at 6:30 pm before our regular council meeting. The council agree to having the public hearing before the January meeting at 6:30 pm with the regular meeting to follow.
- David then discussed the budget amendment for the costs of the replacing the library A/C and Heating unit. Council Member Bynum motion accept the budget amendment. All were in favor, passed unanimously.

**I. Public Present:**

- Mike Barnes came before the Council with a few complaints regarding Police Chief Rosario. Town Manager David Beaman stated he would follow up on this incident.
- James Palumbo came before the Council to discuss purchasing 107 & 109 W. Main Street for his business. He stated he works for Smart Play USA; they stamp logos on tennis balls used for promotional purposes. He is currently under contract to purchase 105 W. Main Street and needs more space. A discussion ensued regarding the police department and needing to relocate back to the building they occupied previously at 114 E. Commercial Avenue. It was stated that repairs have been made on the building and only cosmetic changes need to be completed. Town Manager David Beaman stated we needed to consult with our attorney on the legalities of selling. Council Member Bynum made the motion that we move forward with the sale of the building for \$50,000.00 pending lawful procedure by the town attorney. There were 2 votes of No (Council Member Bass and Council Member Harper) and 2 votes of Yes (Council Member Bynum and Council Member Mooring). With the absence of Council Member Horne, Mayor Rhodes voted Yes to move forward with the sale pending the approval of our attorney.

**J. Closed Session:**

The council went into closed session at 8:30 pm to discuss personnel issues.

**K. Open Session:**

Open session resumed at 9:20 pm. Mayor Rhodes asked if there was motion regarding Patsy Godwin going part-time. Council Member Harper made the motion that Patsy Godwin go to part-time status pending her retirement working 20 hours per week with dental and vision paid. All were in favor, passed unanimously.

- L. Councilman Mooring:** Questioned the cost of Greenlight. David stated we are still working on all the details.

- M. Councilman Bass:** Commended the appearance and staff on the Christmas lights and how the town looks. It looks beautiful. He then questioned the fire department reports why we not getting. He also stated that we need to start acting on the police department remodel and the paving.

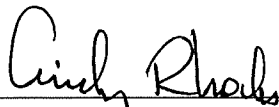
- N. Councilman Bynum:** He stated someone had approached him about the Christmas angels on the poles and why they are not going to the creek bridge along Main St. He

stated we needed to look at for next year's budget. He then asked about the paving in park. David is waiting on contractors to get back with him.

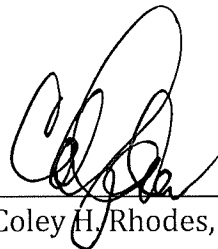
- O. Councilman Horne:** Was not present for this meeting
- P. Councilman Harper:** Asked about the façade and where are at with this. Mayor stated that we were cleaning it up for the Christmas parade. She also stated she will mention it to the appearance commission.
- Q. Mayor Rhodes:** We need to elect a new Mayor Pro-Tem. Council Member Mooring nominated Council Member Bynum to be the new Mayor Pro-Tem. Council Member Harper asked Council Member Bass if he wanted to continue as Mayor Pro-Tem. He stated he hasn't had to do anything with that role since the mayor was very active. Council Member Bynum accepted the nomination. Mayor Rhodes asked for a motion to accept Council Bynum the new Mayor Pro-Tem. Council Member Harper asked if we should hold off on this vote since Council Member Horne was not present. There was some more discussion about tabling because this is a council member matter. Council Member Bynum removed his name from the nomination and recommended that Council Member Bass continue as Mayor Pro-Tem. Mayor Rhodes stated that we have a quorum, and we need to vote on one motion at a time. Motion number one: to accept Council Member Bynum as Mayor Pro-Tem. 1 vote Yes (Council Member Mooring), 3 abstained from voting (Council Members Harper, Bass and Bynum), Council Member Horne was not present. Motion two: Since he removed his name from the nomination, Council Member Bynum recommended Council Member Bass continue as Mayor Pro-Tem. 3 votes Yes (Council Members Bynum, Harper, and Mooring), 1 abstained (Council Member Bass). Council Member Horne was not present for this vote. Mayor Rhodes stated that Council Member Bass will continue to be Mayor Pro-Tem.

With no further business Mayor Rhodes asked for a motion to adjourn. Council Member Bynum made the motion. The meeting adjourned at 9:40 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Cindy Rhodes, Town Clerk



Coley H. Rhodes, Mayor