

**TOWN OF STANTONSBURG
BOARD MEETING
SEPTEMBER 12, 2022**

Mayor Coley Rhodes called the regular monthly meeting to order at 7:00 pm. The following council members were present: Donnie Bass, Walt Bynum, Ben Harper and Steve Mooring. Councilman Ken Horne arrived at approximately 7:30 pm. Also present were Interim Town Manager Barbara Aycock, Deputy Town Clerk Tammy Webb, Town Attorney Slade Rand, Nova Energy Consultant Kevin O'Donnell, Town Engineer Mike McAllister and various members of the public. A motion was made by Councilman Bynum to approve the agenda. It was passed unanimously.

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

A. Electrical Presentation:

Mayor Rhodes introduced Kevin O'Donnell as our Nova Energy Consultant. He spoke at length about the new item on the monthly billing statement, the charge (PPA), what it was for, the fluctuation and what we could expect in the future. He also explained "budget billing" or "leveling" as a possible solution for billing. The public was encouraged to call in to request this service if it was something they wanted. He then took questions from the public. This lasted an hour.

B. Public Present:

Because there were several in attendance that wanted to speak, mostly concerning the electric rates that had already been addressed, the time for each speaker was reduced to 3 minutes per person capping the entire time to 30 minutes. Everyone who signed up to speak had a turn. Marie Edmundson addressed a newspaper article, electric rates and offered DSS information. Debra Horne thanked the town for the signage on her street that she had been requesting. Tabitha Bailey asked for justification for a 5% COL increase for employees while increasing electric rates. Powell Dew had concerns about meeting minutes not reflecting actual meeting dialogue, trash pickup only once a week, electric workers resignations, Powell Bill funds, Covid funds, unmarked police car, Gary Davis's role and expenses. James Coover asked about trash once a week and why he was billed for twice a week, grass growing across the street (not on town property) with poisonous snakes and a bobcat being cited. Barry Geller asked for the citizens to know about why the town manager resigned. Attorney Slade Rand replied to this question saying NC Statutes prohibit disclosure about resignations which are not public record and stated that what he was demanding was asking for state law to be broken. Kristina Anderson addressed the speeding on Commercial Ave and on Main Street and the town website to be addressed. Douglas Johnson addressed the "demand charge" and the electric department.

C. Approval of Minutes:

August 8, 2022-Regular Session: Approved with 3 changes.

D. Financial Report:

August: Receipts \$517,155.72 Disbursements: \$436,066.37 Difference: \$81,089.35

E. Invoices for Payment:

After some discussion, Councilman Harper made a motion to approve the invoices for payment. All were in favor; passed unanimously.

F. Resolutions:

Mayor Rhodes introduced our engineer from Municipal Engineering, Mike McAllister. He discussed three (3) resolutions. The first #0822.1 is to ask for 50% or more forgiveness by resubmission. The second is for a new well that is time sensitive and 50% loan, 50% grant. The third is for a \$400,000.00 100% grant for our stormwater system. Councilman Bynum made a motion to approve these three (3) resolutions. The motion passed unanimously.

G. Departmental/Committee/Commission Reports:

Police Report: Chief Rosario had nothing to add to his report. Councilman Mooring questioned why his report was only partial, missing much information. It was determined that two (2) pages were omitted. Chief Rosario said he would get the pages omitted to the board (which he did before the end of the meeting).

Parks and Recreation Commission: Eartha Butler had to leave early so there was no report.

Library: Eartha Butler, Librarian, had to leave early, but gave her report to Councilman Bass to deliver. The library had 315 patrons in August, 4 cards, 67 used computers and 27 volunteer hours. The lighting is 97% finished and the electrician will be coming before next month to finish.

Appearance Commission: Linda Mooring complimented the board on the lighting in the library saying how much more welcoming it looked. She also mentioned the street signs, painting, etc. that she will be meeting with our town manager about in the next few days to get a plan about when and who will be completing these projects the commission has been requesting.

Event Committee: Jane Lancaster was not present because of a death in the family. Mayor Rhodes mentioned that the message board in the middle of town is loaded with information about our Crepe Myrtle Festival October 15th, meeting dates, board meeting minutes and electric rate information.

H. Old Business: Councilman Mooring mentioned the grants for Renovation of the Town Hall and the CDBG Grant for \$950,000.00 for rehab and rebuilding needed properties in town. He also commended Robbie Watson, Billy Hawkins and Chris Hill on the clean-up of Yelverton Street.

I. Town Manager's Report: Barbara Aycock asked for board approval on the \$23,333.34 (Stantonsburg's portion) of the Tri-town transformer. Black Creek and Lucama have paid their portion. Councilman Bynum made such a motion and it passed unanimously.

A. Councilmen Concerns: Councilmen Bass, Bynum, Harper, Horne and Mooring had nothing to add. Mayor Rhodes brought up the need for new signage in our town stating that the police department had made a list of all signage that was needed approximately 3 years ago and it was a concern for safety issues in our town. After some discussion, Councilman Mooring made a motion to approve new signage (covered monetarily by the Powell Bill) for our town. This motion passed unanimously. Councilman Horne reiterated that the town board does have the best interest of the citizens at heart and have prolonged these increases as long as we could. There are state obligations about amounts of money towns must keep in their accounts for emergencies and other responsibilities. He also stated that we have great employees and, even though we cannot pay the most, because of their loyalty to our town we pay as much as we can afford to keep them. He also added that we all have these issues of increased prices and together we can get through this.

Barbara Aycock also requested a motion to approve the purchase of the remote reading devices (ERTS) the electrical department needs. Councilman Horne made the motion to purchase 80 of these and the motion passed unanimously.

There was a motion by Councilman Bynum to go into closed session (NCGS 318.11.a.6) for personnel matters. It passed unanimously.

After leaving closed session and coming back into open session, there was no further business so Councilman Harper made a motion to adjourn and it was passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:25 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tammy Webb, Deputy Town Clerk

Coley Hunt Rhodes, Mayor