

Town of Stantonsburg

Board Meeting

October 10, 2022

Mayor Coley Rhodes called the monthly board meeting to order at 6:30 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 Clerk Tammy Webb and Tarence Horne representing Upper Coastal Plains Council of Government.

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

Approval of Agenda: A motion was made by Councilman Mooring to approve the agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

- A. Mayor Rhodes called the public hearing to order. Tarence Horne then explained the CDBG Grant and stated that because of the turnover in our town manager and town clerk, the grant information, public hearings and newspaper announcements were not submitted in time for the grant deadline of September 30, 2022. Upon recommendation from the Housing Selection Committee and UCPCOG, the town decided to go forward with the paperwork so we would be ready if they extended the time limit for filing or opened it back up in the spring or fall. He explained that he was here at the hearing to answer questions from the public and the board. There were no public questions, so he answered questions from the board members concerning rehab versus complete replacement, time constraints for the next opening round, ownership and eligibility for citizens, time limits on beginning of grant and compliance and preapplications. With no more questions, Councilman Harper made a motion to close the public hearing. The motion passed unanimously.

- B. The first order of business in the regular monthly meeting was a motion by Councilman Harper to apply for the CDBG Neighborhood Grant at the next opportunity. The motion passed unanimously.

- C. Councilman Harper made a motion to accept the members of the Housing Selection Committee to be Edwin Bynum, Amy Charles Windley, Walt Bynum, Coley Rhodes and Barbara Aycock. The motion passed unanimously.

D. Kevin O'Donnell (Nova Energy) arrived at 6:57 PM. He was next on the agenda to address the board concerning hedging to buy natural gas for our electric supplies. With gas prices fluctuating because of the pipeline constraints and Ukraine situation there could be an opportunity to hedge. Prices do seem to be going down. Duke just increased 18%. He needs a point of contact to lock in a price if the opportunity is there for the hedge. Councilman Bass recommended Mayor Rhodes as the point of contact. The board passed this motion unanimously.

E. **Public Present:** No public present wished to speak.

F. **Approval of Minutes:** *September 12 Regular Session Minutes Approved*

G. **Financial Report:** *September: Receipts: \$531,048.44 Disbursements: \$301,784.23 Difference: \$229,264.21 Report referred to auditors.*

Councilman Mooring questioned the wire transfers. After discussion about wire transfers it was determined by Kevin O'Donnell that Peak and CPP must be paid by wire transfer. Duke does not have to be paid by wire transfer.

H. **Invoices for Payment:** Councilman Mooring questioned the revenue statement missing from the packet, employee payroll checks and the monthly expenditures as well. Because this is the first packet prepared by this staff, some reports were not included, but they will be next month! There was discussion about the police grant. On the fire department, Cindy overpaid because she had neglected to pay the payments on time and when she tried to catch up, she overpaid. Ms. Aycock straightened it out. Discussion on Powell Bill account...10 account and 15 account. Ms. Aycock explained how this needed to be fixed and how she would correct it. There was much discussion about bills and invoices. The office staff has been trying to "catch up" on the delinquent bills, penalties charged for these, filing and paperwork neglected by the former finance secretary. Because so much time was spent on this discussion, it was requested by Ms. Aycock for the board to ask questions and submit emails (especially concerning the invoices) to the staff before the meeting if possible and to request information to be shared during the meeting so the information could be gathered ahead of time instead of having to search for answers during the meeting. Councilman Horne made a motion to accept the invoices for payment except for the 3 Truist checks and the Anita's charge. (It was determined the Truist checks were the 3 insufficient funds checks and the Anita's

charge was for the electrical informational postcards mailed to the citizens.) The motion passed unanimously.

James Coover requested a public comment because he did not hear the chair ask for public comments because he sat in the side room. He had questions about a grassy area in front of his house, garbage pickup, a snake and security. The mayor said she would respond to his questions.

I. Departmental/Commission/Committee Reports

Police Report: Chief Rosario addressed the board about the “environment” of the police. The Police Dept. Is currently short an officer and requested overtime pay and said they have been getting it, but with new staff, not now. Stated he has never gone over budget, that the police department is the only department that does not have overtime pay, and that “with little or no cost to the taxpayers of Stantonburg” he has laptops, bodycams, canine unit, tasers, military surplus equipment, new police department acquisition, and grants. He stated he has never come before the board asking... only looking for help and that he never requests a lot. When questioned about the military truck still being parked on town property he stated that “Bear” owner of the Tadoo business gave the new owner permission to park on his property. He was asked to get it moved. When asked about the marking of the newly acquired police car, he stated we did not have a large enough fleet of vehicles to leave one at A+ Graphics for the length of time for them to fix it. He said he would get it done soon. When asked by the mayor if the town was covered 24/7 by the Stantonburg Police Department he replied we were not. When asked if we were covered on weekends, he stated we were “covered up to midnight every single weekend and every other weekend.” It was not known that our police dept was not covering the town every weekend and it was asked why, with all the part time officers we have. It was noted that Wilson is on call (free of charge) when we don’t have coverage by our department. Chief said he would update the phone numbers and people for 911 because Gary Davis was called at 3:00AM Saturday evening for a situation that occurred when our department wasn’t working.

Parks and Recreation: Eartha Butler, chairperson, gave a report about their meeting. Their concerns were about the cleanliness of the park bathrooms, the cameras, the hand-sanitizer stations, concrete parking blocks and the budget. Ms. Aycock offered to print a budget whenever Ms. Butler wants to come in and said she would go to the December 1st meeting if possible.

Library: Excited and expressed thanks for the lights and was asking about the painting to come.

Appearance Commission: Reported about the painting inside the library and replacing the carpet. Paint is already purchased by the commission. Painter is being secured.

Event Committee: Five big food trucks, 22+ vendors, stage, dancefloor, tent, tables, chairs, our electric department on call and already have panel and electric needs taken care of. JR Davis and The Embers for music and things are looking promising for a great festival!

- J. **Old Business:** Discussion of Leveling for the electric bills. Programing needed for doing this and updating the billing. Consensus to find out the price for going forward with this and email for board approval.
- K. **Town Manager Report:** Gary Pittman, auditor will be scheduling time with Ms. Aycock to begin going through the books. Martin Anderson and our auditors in the past has agreed to do this audit this year for \$27,500. Discussion about auditors' prices. Discussion by Councilman Bynum to get our books "right and cleaned up." Ms. Aycock stated she and Gary Pittman will go ahead and get a letter about our audit being late to Sharon Edmundson to be proactive and let them know why it will be late.

Ms. Aycock proposed a Public Works Department Building to house our employees where they can work together. Staff has been working separately not helping each other and being protective over their territory. It would promote working together. The former Police Department building is available. Councilman Bynum made a motion to move the public works into our building. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Aycock went over the fact that there were no viable applicants for our positions advertised except water. We will discuss in detail in closed session.

- L. **Councilmen Concerns:** Councilmen Bynum and Bass had no other comments or questions. Councilman Mooring asked for a log of board actions during each meeting. Discussion about resolutions added to the minutes. One Drive to be continued for minutes. Cemetery discussion about person who marks graves. Decided a map of the cemetery would be posted in the public works building and Jeff can be in charge of that and when water new employee comes, they can post a schedule of on call person for cemetery. Recognized Roger for good report. Discussion on penalties water department has received in the past. Lonnie Smith's vacation was wrong and the new system has taken care of that. Councilman Horne asked for clarification on the traffic accident on the corner of Saratoga Street and Highway #58 that misplaced a guy wire this past weekend. He also asked about the garbage truck. He asked about the park rental fee and where it was going. Councilman Harper asked about the Call One and the public positive interest. He also asked about the Seal Building and the grant for \$50,000. He also asked about responding to the public. Town Attorney responded about the reasons not to react, to only listen and not invite negative dialogue. The purpose is to have the public ask questions and he recommended not to comment.
- M. **Mayor:** Requested a cleaner for the town hall so employees don't have to do it. After discussion, the board decided not to grant the proposal because this person was not insured.

Councilman Bynum made a motion to go into closed session for NCGS 318.11.a.6. Motion passed unanimously.

After leaving closed session, Councilman Harper made a motion to go back into open session. This motion passed unanimously. Councilman Bynum made a motion to raise Roger Sullivan's salary to \$29.42 per hour; Lonnie Smith's salary to \$20.99 per hour and Robbie Watson's salary to \$21.01 per hour. This motion passed unanimously. Councilman Horne made a motion to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 10:42 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tammy Webb

Deputy Town Clerk

Coley Hunt Rhodes

Mayor