

Town of Stantonburg

Board Meeting

January 9, 2023

Mayor Coley Rhodes called the monthly board meeting to order at 7:00 PM. The following council members were present: Donnie Bass, Walt Bynum, Ben Harper and Steve Mooring. Councilman Horne arrived at 7:39 PM. Also present was Deputy Clerk Tammy Webb and members of the public.

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 Bynum to approve the agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Present: Linda Mooring addressed the board commenting on the Christmas lights, parade, Christmas Tree Lighting and appearance and festivities during Christmas.

Approval of the Minutes: *December 12, 2022 closed session minutes were approved. December 20, 2022 minutes were approved. December 12, 2022 regular session minutes were approved.*

Financial Report: *December:* Monthly Receipts: \$422,425.62 Disbursements: \$399,584.75 Difference: \$22,840.87 Report referred to our auditors.

Invoices for Payment: During the discussion, Josh Pulley's training was questioned as well as Alex Aycock's qualifications and work. This information will be provided at next month's meeting. Councilman Mooring questioned the gas/fuel consumption totals as well as Summerlin Oil totals. These will also be addressed at the next board meeting. It was also requested that ALL credit card statements be included in the board member's packet as well as the Truist card information which was included this month. There was discussion about signing out the credit cards. It was a consensus that the office generates a new form with the PO approved for the purchase before the credit card is checked out. Councilman Bass questioned the Fire Department payment and necessary financials the town needs in order to pay their quarterly payment. All these issues will be addressed at the next board meeting. After this discussion and questions, Councilman Mooring made a motion to approve the invoices for payment. The motion passed unanimously.

Departmental/Commission/Committee Reports:

Police Report: Chief Rosario reported that the check for the grant came in today. That's the one that started out with the radios and ended up with laptops. It was a reimbursement to the

town. There was also a question about the 3 officers that only earned approximately \$48.00 each. Rosario stated that they were scheduled to work at the Shop With a Cop. When asked about the application of overtime pay only when at least 5 different employees work during a pay period, Chief Rosario said that was not his understanding and that "he had never seen that in his life." His understanding is that the board has full authority to designate pay as they see fit.

Library/Park/Rec Report: Eartha Butler sent the report to each individual board member with a resignation letter from the Park and Rec Chair position.

Appearance Committee: Linda Mooring, Chair, discussed the painting options for the library and will report as it gets closer to the actual work.

Event Committee: Nothing new to report.

Old Business: Mayor Rhodes asked for discussion about the Police request for salary increases. Councilman Bass began the discussion about the pay of part time employees. Councilman Mooring stated statistics about our 3 officers earning \$10,000, \$8,000 and \$6,000 for the month of December and cited that being on the UAL list from the League of Municipalities with the requests for how the town is going to remedy our budget to avoid pulling from our electric fund to serve our police department are a point of concern. Last correspondence stated that March 2023 we need to have a preliminary budget to show that we have reduced our general fund. It was mentioned again that a CD was cashed in to pay toward our electrical fund because \$398,000 was transferred to our general fund from our electrical fund. A discussion ensued about the police department and the budgeted amount of \$400,000+. Councilman Bynum asked for a breakdown of salary versus overtime. He stated that we definitely need to be competitive with our salaries. It was also discussed that the board did not know until a couple of months ago, that we are not covered at all times by our Stantonburg Police. There are times when The Wilson Sheriff Department covers us and our police are not on duty. It was realized that the board does not have all the data or answers for this situation, so it was decided by a consensus that an independent study of our police department needs to happen. Taxes have not gone up, but salaries have. It was agreed that we need to have knowledge and guidance to make appropriate, wise decisions and the best way is to have a non-biased study of our situation with recommendations about how to fix it. It was decided for the mayor to contact the League of Municipalities, Upper Coastal Plains, Sheriff's Association and several places to quickly get this started.

The lien on the Thompson house is not complete because we still need our attorney's costs in order to finish the lien.

The work order firm Fidelity Dude is in the process of getting us information on the work order system online. More information will come at next month's meeting.

A copy of our new utility billing was passed around and the mayor asked if everyone received their CALL ONE message about the billing and leveling.

There was a discussion about Gary Davis and his charges to the town for emails and phone calls. The emails have been pulled and the office is going through them to eliminate the unnecessary ones and direct the others to the proper source so there does not have to be an in between person.

The mayor relayed the current costs of materials for our light poles, yard lights and wire to the board. There was a motion by Councilman Bynum which passed unanimously to adjust these rates. Included as an attachment are the rates the board passed to be assessed in the future.

The mayor relayed to the board the information received today by text on a home that is putting in solar. It was sent to Kevin O'Donnell and Kevin is advising us on this with possible help from town engineer, Mike Taylor. An update will be given at the next meeting.

Councilman Bass requested an update of our town website and an update of our applicant's replies.

The mayor distributed information about a leaf trailer to be used for vacuuming debris from our streets and sidewalks. This comes from our Powell Bill Fund and we have the monies for that. After offering 3 options, one of which was suggested by our Maintenance Manager, Robbie Watson. Ben Harper offered to research this and confer with Robbie to decide on a new or used trailer for our maintenance team to use.

The Meeting dates and holiday schedule for 2023 was approved unanimously after Councilman Bynum made such a motion.

Councilman Horne made a motion to go into closed session. Passed unanimously.

Councilman Mooring made a motion to adjourn at 10:00 PM after going back into open session. It passed unanimously.

Tammy Webb, Deputy Clerk

Coley H. Rhodes, Mayor