

Town of Stantonsburg

Board Meeting

March 13, 2023

Mayor Coley Rhodes called the monthly meeting to order at 7:00 PM. The following council members were present: Donnie Bass, Walt Bynum and Steve Mooring. Councilman Horne arrived at 7:37 PM. Also present was Barbara Aycock, Interim Town Manager, Victoria Lucas, Financial Officer, Tammy Webb, Deputy Town Clerk and members of the public. Attorney Slade Rand came in a little after 7:00 PM.

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 Bass to approve the agenda as written with an addition to go over the invoices for payment after reviewing the financial report. This item was left off the agenda. It was approved unanimously.

Public Present: Mayor Rhodes stated the rules for the public speaking this evening and began with a few facts that the public needed to be aware of in light of inaccurate rumors circulating around town about the police survey the board voted to pursue. The budgeted amount this year for the police department is \$400,100. Last year the police department's actual expenses were \$430,493.52. The chief recently requested a pay increase for all officers and in response to that, the board decided to hire an independent consultant recommended by the North Carolina League of Municipalities. From Four Star Strategies, Tony Pustizzi is the consultant. His analysis includes the overall management, organization, staffing, resource allocation, internal inspection, physical allocation, facilities and assets and liabilities, training, recruitment, retention, department goals, strategic planning, cost comparisons to like municipalities and data-driven suggestions. This assessment also includes other viable law enforcement options with pricing as well as the town's needs assessment outlining the cost of retaining the department. The assessment should be completed by the last of April 2023. Marie Edmundson, Carla Davis, Hubert Tyson and Ruth Hall spoke during this time.

Approval of the Minutes: Minutes for the February 13th –February 22nd meeting(s) as well as January 9 and February 22 closed session minutes were approved as written. Mayor Rhodes reminded the public that the minutes are posted on the town message board after their approval as well as announcements about meetings and upcoming events.

Financial Report: February: Monthly Receipts: \$419,664.95 Disbursements: \$276,032.45
Difference: \$143,632.50. Report referred to our auditors.

Invoices for Payment: Councilman Mooring made a motion to approve the invoices for payment. Motion passed unanimously. It was brought up by Councilman Mooring that we needed to see the breakdown of the PPA on our reports. It is not showing now, so we need to ask Logics to set us up to be able to report that information. Also, Mangum's bill was for the garbage truck service.

Departmental/Committee/Commission Reports: There was nothing to add to the Police, Appearance or Library reports. A reminder from the Event Committee for the Crepe Myrtle Festival to be held on October 14, 2023 from 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM and the Christmas Parade on December 2, 2023 at 4:00 PM. Councilman Mooring questioned whether an officer resigned because the council had not been told about that. It was confirmed that an officer had resigned leaving 2 officers to cover our town. The Fire Department and William McMurray, Fire Chief reported that 358 calls were responded to by our fire department last year. Wilson County Commissioners gave them \$1.5 million. First responder program just added 5 more certified to the 3 originally, so it's doing well. The fire department budget town and county is \$130,000.

Old Business: We had a Zoom call with Brightly (formerly Facility Dudes) about work orders. They shared with the board some data and information about their product.

The board agreed to meet April 11th, Tuesday at 7:00 PM for our next meeting since April 10th, Monday when our usual meeting would be is a holiday for Easter Monday.

Greenlight Update: Everything is ready for the go-ahead from the grant. They will put up a sign out on the large triangle coming into town when they begin. They will work on Stantonsburg until it's completed which will take a few weeks.

The board had a discussion about our inventory, how we did not have a list of the total inventory nor did we have inventory tagged. Councilman Mooring and Mayor Rhodes volunteered to look into a vendor for a barcode system or system of how to identify equipment, etc. They will report to the board their findings.

The Seal Building Grant of \$50,000 will soon be ready to release the money so we can begin on painting and replacing the decayed wood underneath the façade. Ben Farmer of UCPCOG has been in touch and will be reporting on that in the next couple of weeks.

The update on the CDBG Grant for \$1.5 million is that we are waiting for the list of the houses the grant will cover. Nothing significant is expected to be started before November because of the time constraints on the grant.

The Town Hall Grant of \$150,000 is still available for us. Mayor Rhodes submitted another and hopefully together we will have enough to move forward.

There was a report about the ordinance package that Code Wright is providing. It is due before the next fiscal year begins. Ms. Aycock brought up the need for the solar portion of these ordinances.

Town Manager Report: Ms. Aycock asked for the board's approval of the 5% probationary raise for Chris Hill, Durand Caviness and Jeff Hill. Councilman Bynum made such a motion and it passed unanimously. Ms. Aycock asked for the approved sale of the old tree truck. Councilman Bass said it was declared surplus many weeks ago so it is already declared surplus. Ms. Aycock also provided the board with budget highlights that need to be looked over before our budget workshop. Councilman Bass asked about the "wish lists" for the town departments. Ms. Aycock has already asked each department to put in writing their wants, ideas and suggestions for the budget. She also gave some statistics on our general fund being supplemented by our electric fund by almost \$400,000. She suggested we pay close attention to that because of the Local Government Commission's oversight. Gary Pittman was in last week and will be in after March 15th for more work.

Councilmen Reports: Councilman Mooring asked for the report on the debt set-off. Councilman Horne asked about the Dollar General status. Tammy reported they had asked about the signage permit so they were making plans.

There was a motion by Councilman Bynum to go into Closed session per our attorney. Motion passed unanimously.

After coming back into open session, Councilman Bynum made a motion to formally hire Victoria Lucas as the town's Financial Officer pursuant to her first day on the job. The motion passed unanimously. Councilman Bynum then made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously.