

Town of Stantonsburg
Regular Board Meeting
August 14, 2023

Mayor Coley Rhodes called the monthly board meeting to order at 7:00 PM. The following council members were present: Walt Bynum, Ben Harper, and Steve Mooring. Also present was Town Manager Brian Hawley, Town Clerk Alexis Whitley, Town Attorney Slade Rand, Sergeant Rivera, and members of the public. Virtually present was Louis Davis with UTEC. Councilman Donnie Bass arrived at 7:02 PM and Councilman Ken Horne arrived at 7:56 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 Bynum to approve the agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of the Minutes: *July 10, 2023, regular session minutes were approved.*

Public Comment: Jimmy Thompson, resident of 105 E. Macon Avenue, requested an update on the Neighborhood Revitalization as he is one of those condemned grant properties. William Whitley, Helen Whitley, and Daniel Whitley, residents of 101 Moyton Avenue, came before the board to discuss a Solar Interconnection Agreement.

Presentations:

Town Manager Hawley joined a zoom call with Louis Davis from UTEC to discuss their approach on a Solar Interconnection Agreement.

After a discussion between The Whitley's, The Council, and Louis Davis from UTEC the Council decided to table the Solar issue until a later date so it can be discussed more in depth. Councilman Bynum made a motion to table this issue to have a solution for a Solar Agreement. Motion passed unanimously.

Town Manager Hawley presents a quote for a barrier for the parking area at the park. Moyer Fencing gave us an estimate for a physical structure other than ropes, etc. It is 200 LF to cover the area along with a 12-foot gate. He presented some options that Moyer Fencing offered and Moyer quoted \$8,730.00 for the fencing presented. The County has a grant program and Town Manager Hawley requested \$2,000 to help with the cost of the fencing. Councilman Bass wants to entertain a quote for black chain link fencing along with Councilman Harper wanting to get other quotes from Seegars and Fairfield Fencing to have 3 different options.

Financial Report: *July:* Monthly Receipts: \$367,083.95 Disbursements: \$320,098.61 Difference: \$46,985.34. Report referred to our auditors.

Invoices for Payment: Charres Painting costs for the Seal Building work is coming out of Grant money we received and the repairs for the small shop is coming from repair funds we have. Councilman Bass confirms that the Southern Corrosion is an annual cost and not quarterly. Councilman Bass asked about

Norfolk Southern RR -- it is an annual fee; we lease the property across the street from Town Hall. Councilman Bynum made motion to approve invoices. Passed unanimously.

Old Business: Speed limit signs have been ordered and we are waiting for them to arrive along with the posts. Stop sign replacements will be ordered in 2 weeks. Per request of council, we received word that we were added to the Distressed Unit List.

New Business: Tax assessors came in and sent information over, Resolution has been generated for the council to consider and approve. The Resolution signifies approval of Wilson County Tax Reconciliation for '22- '23 fiscal year through June 30 of 2023. Councilman Mooring made motion to accept and approve the Resolution for the Wilson County Tax Reconciliation for '22- '23 fiscal year through June 30 of 2023 for the Town.

Volunteers for the Crepe Myrtle Festival are needed.

Town Manager Hawley ask the Council to waive the park fee for the First Baptist Church Picnic, and Mayor Rhodes request we do so for all in town churches including ETJ. Councilman Bynum made motion that the Town waive the park fee for all in town churches. Passed unanimously.

Solar Interconnection agreement has been tabled. Town Manager Hawley presented a budget amendment as things are being moved around based on Gary's recommendation for the fiscal year end June 30, 2024. Increases and decreases are discussed. Councilman Harper made motion to accept budget amendment 2/24. Passed unanimously.

Department Reports:

The sewer department has an automatic bar spring motor that needs some maintenance, which should be completed within the next week. 2,000 gallons of sludge has been hauled off this past week. First haul off this fiscal year. Annual proficiency testing done, that report will be provided by the end of August. This testing is required to maintain lab certifications. Jeff Hill was added to collections for ORC, Josh Pulley was removed.

Water Department well #4 in process of receiving maintenance. It is our lowest producing well which has motor issues and it is offline but is not affecting our ability to maintain what we need to do. Possible line has become disconnected. It is under warranty. All monthly reports have been completed and we have a new employee, Edwin Gurkins, starting this Thursday to take Josh Pulley's place providing that all testing and paperwork comes back okay.

For Park/Rec: the park signs are in and will start to be placed tomorrow. Town Manager Hawley is working with American Sports lighting for the light covers. He is working with the previous person who did the park lighting to see if we can just find replacements.

Public Works: The Town had an event Friday morning to do clean up down Main Street with some of the employees. Town Manager Hawley said we hauled off 4 buckets full of dirt and sediment and they only made it to in front of the medical center. The Town plans to do this a couple more times this year. Sidewalk project, we should receive estimates tomorrow, seal building demolition was completed, and the holes were filled by Mr. Robert Watson and his team so the barricades could be removed.

Electric Department: Durand and Jeff met with Town Manager Hawley and Durand was promoted to Supervisor of the department. The Town was offered \$10,000 on the old bucket truck, Town Manager Hawley recommended that we move forward to liquidate that asset. It does not have to be ran publicly. Councilman Bynum made motion to sell the old bucket truck for \$10,000.00 and that Town Manager Hawley takes care of this with Town Attorney Slade to make sure it is sold "as is." 1:11

Police Report: July police report reviewed.

Manager's Report:

Town Manager Hawley had a call with East Carolina University today. Both ECU and NC State are interested in working with us on the planning part of our Grant for the Seal Building. A meeting on August 28th with NC State. Their team will be here to discuss this, and it has been presented by both to work collaboratively through the Council of Governments to support this aspect.

The Town received feedback through a survey conducted to get ideas for this site.

Students from ECU and NC State will do the planning, but their professors will still oversee the project. We will help them achieve things as well as helping us do the same at a lower cost. We did not hear from many planning firms that wanted to take on this project.

Town website is still a work in progress, and we are continuing to update that.

A new employee, Robert Givens, will be starting for the Code Enforcement/Ground Services position once all testing and paperwork comes back okay.

We have a Tri-Town meeting on August 29th in Black Creek with the engineer that handles all 3 areas.

Mr. Gary Pittman will be here again Thursday and they are continuing to work on our information, but they do not have a definitive date on when they will be finished.

Town Clerk, Alexis Whitley inquired about Trunk or Treat. Councilman Harper suggests working with the First Baptist Church in doing it together since they already have Trunk or Treat. Town Clerk, Alexis will pass this by the Event Committee and see what their thoughts are. There are no objections from The Council.

Town Manager Hawley and Tirence from UCPCOG spoke regarding the Neighborhood Revitalization Grant. There were some issues with the inspections regarding some of the above ground tanks and those have hopefully been addressed and inspectors should be back out to approve. Once approved they will release funds to move forward with that project.

Unifirst contract goes until 2025. It is a 5-year contract. If we don't request to stop the contract when it is time for renewal, it automatically renews. They were able to reduce the bill to \$150-\$170 dollars, we were paying \$460 per week. The only possible way to get out of the contract is to buy ourselves out of it but he is unsure what that cost would be. Town Manager Hawley recommends holding out until 2025 unless the Council wishes to do otherwise. He is unsure of where they cut the cost, but he did request they stop dropping some items. Old employees come off and he does not plan to add new employees.

The mosquito machine is up and running. Request for chemicals was sent out today and those chemicals will be \$179 dollars for 2.5-gallon containers and will take 6 containers to do entire town. It will be

about \$1,080 for chemicals and one of their associates will come to calibrate the machine. Mr. Gurkins, who we just hired, has a certification in pesticides so he will be our go to guy to treat the Town. Councilman Harper asked how many treatments it is. Per Town Manager Hawley that cost is for 1 treatment. They recommend .5 ounce per acre and to do it twice a year. Councilman Mooring questions effectiveness. Town Manager Hawley can reach back out to Clarke chemicals to see what other options are. Councilman Harper would like to investigate other chemicals as well.

A public hearing is scheduled for August 24th for a special use permit for a property located at 6209 NC Hwy 58, Stantonsburg which is in our ETJ and zoned residential/agricultural and they are looking to place a manufactured home there. The public hearing sign has been posted and adjacent property owners have been notified via certified mail.

Mayor Rhodes asked The Council if they have any other questions.

Councilman Bass questions the police report as we did not dig into it. He is concerned regarding the school alarms that are continuously being set off after we thought the problem was resolved. Town Manager Hawley will get with Wilson County Manager to discuss this recurring issue. Councilman Mooring is concerned that the Town is being charged for these 911 calls – we should not be, and Town Manager Hawley will double check this. The school should be getting billed.

Councilman Bass requests to get Board Meeting Packets closer to the beginning of the week before the meeting.

Councilman Harper questions the feral cat issue. The animal control officer brought feral cat brochures and some information regarding their TNVR program, the only issue for now is the weather. They do not trap during certain weather conditions. Anybody interested in participating in the community cat caregiver program can contact the County. The Town is looking into generating an ordinance to keep others, not a part of the program, from feeding feral cats.

Councilman Horne wants to know a timeline regarding the curb clean up and Main Street cleaning before the end of the year. Town Manager Hawley states it is not easy to keep this up as most homeowners should be keeping this up themselves in front of their properties. We don't have the team to do as much as we want. He does think the street sweeper should go out once a week. The Town has reached out to outside sources, and we are awaiting an estimate for that.

Town Manager Hawley states that our budget does allow for a part-time person to help with trimming the cemetery, cutting grass, and to mainly help the Sanitation/Streets department and he is currently looking at hiring someone to help.

Councilman Harper made motion to go into closed session. Passed unanimously.

Councilman Bynum made motion to go back into open session. Passed unanimously.

Councilman Bynum made motion to approve the 6-month Merit Raise for Finance Officer, Victoria Lucas. Passed unanimously.

Councilman Harper made motion to adjourn. Passed unanimously.