

Town of Stantonsburg
Regular Board Meeting
October 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. Also present was Town Manager Brian Hawley, Town Clerk Alexis Whitley, and Town Attorney Slade Rand. Councilman Ken Horne arrived at 7:36 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 taking out Verkada presentations and adding a budget ordinance, and two budget amendments under New Business. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of the Minutes: *September 11th, 2023, regular session minutes were approved.*

Public Hearing:

Mayor Rhodes opened the public hearing for the Comprehensive Land Use Plan

The Council did not have any requests or changes.

Mayor Rhodes closed the public hearing.

Councilman Bynum made motion to adopt the Comprehensive Land Use Plan with the minor changes found by the Planning Board. Passed Unanimously.

Public Comment:

Town Manager Hawley entered in a letter from Jim Palumbo regarding some concerns he wanted to bring to the council's attention.

Roychester Reid, 265 Sheppard Ferry Road, Snow Hill, NC 28580, had concerns regarding an incident he was involved in at a local gas station here in Town in which Chief Rosario responded to where an employee asked Mr. Reid to leave the store. He previously asked and paid for the police report.

Leslie Thompson had questions regarding the CDBG update which Tarence Horne from UCPCOG will cover in his presentation.

Anthony Hardy, 102 Shelton Ave, Stantonsburg, NC 27883, has concerns regarding the Town Hall moving into the old medical building which backs up to his home. He is concerned that it will be a safety issue and that it is not a proper place for law enforcement.

Presentations:

Tirence Horne, UCPCOG, CDBG updates: The Town was awarded 1.2 million in rehab for housing rehab in the Town to rehab about 5 homes. To date – the Environmental Review has been submitted for approval by HUD required to get release of funds, so we are waiting for that response from HUD to give the okay to Commerce. All documents for Commerce have been submitted except funding approval conditions. To move forward as we wait, we're going to try and move forward with title opinions to make sure all homes have a clear title. No work can be done until we get the Release of Funds from Commerce.

Resident Leslie Thompson is concerned about the amount of time they give for a resident to move out for them to start demolition. Tirence states, on timeline, once funds are released a surveyor will be brought in to meet with individual homeowners to talk about home layout to see what fits their specific lot. From then they will know a closer timeline of how long it will take. As of today, Tirence is seeing it takes about 4 months. The grant pays for temporary location and the storage of their personal things. A house of comparable size must be put back on the lot.

Resident Annie Artis questioned if the grant is enough money for the houses being demolished. Yes – the money requested simply accounted for the 5 homes included in the application per Tirence. Once this project is underway the Town can apply for more money for additional homes. Title opinions will be done to determine eligibility as well.

Betsy Kane, UCPCOG, ARPA. Betsy discussed with the Town Council how ARPA funds should be used for the Town.

Financial Reports: *September:* Monthly Receipts: \$577,782.85 Disbursements: \$444,710.22 Difference: \$133,072.63. Report referred to our auditors.

Invoices for Payment: Councilman Mooring questioned a few invoices and Finance Officer, Victoria Lucas already sent those to him to answer his questions beforehand.

Councilman Harper made motion to approve invoices for this month. Passed unanimously.

Old Business: Crepe Myrtle Festival is ready to go. The Town had a meeting last Thursday with staff to make sure we are good to go with electric, help with tables, etc. Vendor spots will be marked Thursday. Mayor Rhodes asked that all council members be there at 12pm to be introduced from the stage. 37 vendors are down for this year's festival. Rain or shine.

Per Town Manager Hawley, sidewalks are done. We are going to entertain some more people in the future for sidewalk repairs. We do need to touch on another project to put concrete back where the Town had a water main break in front of the Fire Department. Also, at the Wastewater Treatment Plant one of the trucks helping with the Wastewater Treatment Plant cracked one of the sidewalks which also needs to be fixed.

Seal Building update: ECU was here a few weeks ago and left with a lot of information and data and will be putting their plan together. Tom White with NC State University will be providing the more technical side of the plan themselves. ECU will not be charging us as it will be a student project for them. The money from the grant will be used for NCSU to do the plan itself. Tom White and Town Manager Hawley will be revisiting this next week.

Speed limit signs are up in Wainsfield Subdivision and stop signs are ready to go but the posts are on back order. As soon as they come in, they will be put throughout Velverton due to speeding concerns.

Town Manager Hawley wants to reach out to NCDOT about a few "No Parking" signs for outside of the downtown area in a few spots where vehicles are parking along the road in areas causing conflict for vehicles passing through. Also, to reach out regarding the intersection of Commercial Ave and Saratoga St. regarding visibility at the stop sign. Town Manager Hawley met with the residents of the corner house to talk with them about trimming their Crepe Myrtle trees to help with visibility at the stop sign.

Park fence: The posts have been installed and the fence should be finished before the Crepe Myrtle Festival.

New Business: The Uniform Policy needs to be updated and Town Manager Hawley will provide an updated draft policy to the Town Council at the November meeting. The Town is looking into the Guardian Boot Company to come out and measure our employees and get them in the proper footwear needed.

Bench Dedications: Someone visited Town Hall wanting to dedicate a bench and Town Manager Hawley cannot find a policy on this, but he wants to get something in place to start doing bench dedications again. Previously, there was a problem with the cost of the last bench dedication and the bench ended up costing way more than the person anticipated.

The Town needs a purchase order threshold. Town Manager Hawley has been making purchase orders for any amount. Possibly anything over \$100 or \$500 will need a purchase order – whatever the council wishes. Councilman Mooring asks what the policy is and so far, everything has been getting a purchase order. The Town does not have a specific policy. Councilman Bynum questions what Town Manager Hawley recommends – he recommends \$500. Currently the Town has one credit card that gets signed out and signed back in. The auditor recommended that department heads get credit cards so things are more controlled and we know where to pin point when problems do occur.

The council agrees with a \$500 threshold and Town Manager Hawley will put together a policy and present it in the November meeting for the Council to vote on.

On the advice of our accountant, Gary Pittman, and Finance Officer, Victoria Lucas, they believe that it will be in the best interest of the Town not to renew the Colonial Insurance Plan at the first of the year. Employees can still get the extra coverage, but it will not be through the Town.

Councilman Bynum made motion that we discontinue the colonial insurance plan with the Town. Passed Unanimously.

Town Manager Hawley presents a Merit Pay increase for Town Clerk, Alexis Whitley. Councilman Mooring made motion to approve this increase. Passed unanimously.

NCLM City Vision – Courses are good for Town Council and Town Staff and will be in Winston Salem in April of 2024. Town Manager Hawley asks the Council for their opinion on whether he should plan for this event. Councilman Bynum wants Town Manager Hawley to investigate the online/computer/zoom options – They are mainly in person, but he will check. Mayor Rhodes and Councilman Mooring is interested in attending.

Mayor Rhodes brought to Town Manager Hawley's attention that the November Board Meeting falls on a federal holiday – Veterans Day – and they want the Town Council to consider moving it to the next day, November 14th instead of the 13th. Councilman Bynum made a motion to move the Town Meeting to November 14th.

Town Manager Hawley had a conversation with Gary Pittman about the ARPA Budget Ordinance. Per Gary, these monies would be put in the General Fund because it is the most appropriate fund for it to go to. The monies can be appropriated for other projects as well. Town Manager Hawley and Gary talked about where the money was spent. There was a premium payment awarded September 2021 and the remaining items would've been Administrative Payroll and Police Department Payroll.

To keep from losing any of the money, the General Fund is the best place to put the ARPA fund, so you do not worry about the timeline of finishing a project or losing it.

Councilman Harper made motion that we accept the ARPA Budget Ordinance for ARPA money to go into the General Fund. Passed unanimously.

Budget Amendment 8/24 based on Gary Pittman's recommendations when we were moving things around. We are staying inside the General Fund with General Fund Money and then staying in Water and Sewer Fund with Water and Sewer Money – because of moving departments the Town Council must approve the amendment. The amendment is decreasing a portion of Streets Health Insurance, Sanitation Retirement, and Water Part Time Salary and then increasing parts of the General Fund, Streets Part Time Salary, and Sewer Professional Services.

Councilman Horne made motion to adopted Budget Amendment 8/24. Passed Unanimously.

Budget Amendment 9/24 has a typo that needs to be corrected. This amendment is to add a line item for expenditures and revenues for the Grant we received for the \$150,000 for the Town Hall project. The money is here we just need the Town Council to approve this so that we can start business as soon as the Town Council is ready to move forward.

Councilman Harper made motion to adopt 9/24 Budget Amendment.

Councilman Mooring questioned all the budget amendments. Per Town Manager Hawley as we move forward in getting our books straight, we are having to move some things around. If money gets moved within the same department the Town Manager can make those amendments without the Town Council's approval.

In the Police Department, we have a police officer that we are potentially making an offer to once paperwork is completed.

Department Reports:

The Water/Sewer Department: On Sept 23 tropical storm passed through and the phase 3 powerline feeding the Wastewater Treatment Plant broke. It caused a loss of power and we got that fixed and the guys have been out to tighten those wires to prevent them from flapping together again. The generators did kick in and operated just fine. All 9 generators were checked days prior in preparation for the storm. The Town received 2.3" of rain fall and our plant handled that well. No concerns with any of the equipment. We stayed within compliance of our permit levels. We conducted proficiency results for

field lab certifications which must be done annually, and all were passed and acknowledged by DEQ. All required sampling and reporting were complete with no violations to report. Water Update – The fence around the water tower was completed by Moye Fencing on September 13th. Edwin Gurkins completed his C-Well certification class and will be taking his state exam at the end of October. No issues to report for our water during tropical storm apart from power loss. Volatile organic compounds for Well 3 disinfections by product sampling, all tests were completed, and all results were well below all the limits. One small water leak at 509 S Main Street a week ago or so which was prepared by Lonnie. Approximately 25 water meters were changed in September. We have about 573 water customers, and we've changed approximately 370 water meters so far. All sampling and reports were completed as required.

For Park/Rec: Fence installation started today. Staff met regarding Crepe Myrtle Festival and assignments were given to include closing roads. The Town met with Verkada and on core about the security camera system that we discussed. We went out to the D-to-D site for measurements to run lines over for the camera installation so we can see how the system works. While they were here, we found out they have equipment that would automatically lock and unlock doors so we are pricing to see what it would cost for the bathroom doors.

Public Works: Robert and his team got into a bunch of weed control items done and they have been trimming bushes and hedges and been preparing the park for the festival and helped put out banners and signage for the festival. We have been cleaning up the shop yard. A team approached us about the equipment on the Railroad and some equipment in the shop yard such as scrap items. They are paying the Town to get these scrap pieces. Councilman Bass questioned if there was coordination between these individuals and the homeowners adjacent to the railroad equipment because they are out past dark torching pieces off the equipment. – Town Manager Hawley will check on that. The contract for this equipment has nothing to do with the Town, it is between the individuals and the Railroad. All liability falls on them and the Railroad. The new Holland Tractor is being serviced if it hasn't already been back - will check with Robert.

Electric Department: Town Manager Hawley met with Durand and Jeff after meeting with Bartlett Engineers. They are almost ready to start Phase II and the Town has estimated the number of poles, transformers, and wires needed. We will place an order soon for those materials and the money will come out of the Capital Outlay that is already planned in the budget for the Electric Department. The Tropical storm did cause a few small issues, but we did prepare very well. We still have power lines and transformers that need to be upgraded. Our Electric Department provided mutual aid to Fremont because of a pole being split due to a storm.

Police Report: September police report reviewed. Chief and Town Manager Hawley have had some good meetings over the last week or so. The Chief will update Town Manager Hawley every Monday on things. Town Manager Hawley would be happy to send an update every week to the council on the new things he receives.

Manager's Report:

Roger and Town Manager Hawley will be in Louisburg on Wednesday attending a Lead Pipe Class. The lead pipe survey is due in October of next year.

The Town got an update on Thursday from the insurance claim for the well. They said it will be about 7-14 days for the reimbursement to hit, but it will be applied back to where the expense came from – Capital Outlay.

Roger and Town Manager Hawley reviewed the 2017 Capital Investment Plan, it has a lot of outdated information, so Roger is helping to get that updated.

Town Manager Hawley wants to speak to the Councilman members one on one if they are available throughout the week.

Councilman Mooring questioned an inspection report that was included from the Engineer that does inspections on the substations, which is Mike Taylor. Town Manager Hawley hasn't had time to review that. The Town also has Louis and Ted from U-TEC, and we also have Mike Taylor that does the Tri-Town stuff. They do similar things, but Louis and Ted do not provide services for the other two towns. Possibly talking about eliminating one in the future. He is also concerned that certain things were not noted in the report and some lines have no entry. Town Manager Hawley states that Mike has always done things this way.

Town Manager Hawley said he would be tracking the PPA stuff. The PPA was stopped this past billing period. He presents the Town revenue to the Council and states we are still on track.

Councilman Horne questions the public hearing for the Land Use Plan, the council approved it. He also wanted information regarding the public hearing for the property on Greenwood Avenue which is scheduled for the 18th at 1:00pm. Letters are being sent tomorrow regarding the variance for the property where a modular will be placed. Councilman Horne questioned the fence being done before the festival – Town Manager Hawley clarified that it should be completed by then.

Councilman Horne wanted to make sure the bathrooms will be fully functional at the festival. Town Manager Hawley states that bathrooms will be checked, and more trash cans will be put out.

Councilman Horne wants to know what Town Manager Hawley thinks regarding the letter presented during the public comment section. Town Manager Hawley stated that Chief Rosario was out of the area teaching a training course when the incident happened which was brought from out of town. Deputies knew he was not in Town. Three sheriff deputies arrived on the scene to disburse the disturbance. From his perspective anything can happen, anywhere, at any time. It would have been nice to have another officer in Town, but we do not have a huge police department.

Councilman Harper questioned Town Clerk Alexis Whitley about trunk or treat which she brought up previously as a possible event. Alexis stated we did not do this year since it was so late. He also brought up the road closure signs to see if we ever got any because we can use them for the festival. Town Manager Hawley did let the council know that the money from the State – the Powell funds can be used for things such as that. The only thing the Town has now for flooding, road closures, etc. are cones.

Councilman Bynum requested if regular trash containers can be put out at the cemetery instead of the blue barrels. We need trash cans with tops, so things don't blow out of it. Councilman Mooring also brought up that fire ants are back in the cemetery.

Town Manager Hawley states that Robert Givens has been giving Robert Watson's team a hand for trash pickup while one of our employees is out.

Councilman Bass has concerns about potholes along Main Street which is typically maintained by NCDOT and then some potholes on Tyson Dr. Per Town Clerk Alexis Whitley, NCDOT is pretty good about fixing potholes on Main so she will put in a request for those and mention the rest to Robert through a work order.

Town Manager Hawley wants a list of things for public works to take care of.

Councilman Mooring brought up a returned check and that the individual was supposed to pay it in full within two weeks and he wants to know if that occurred. Per Town Manager Hawley, it did occur, and he is due tomorrow for this month's bill but where we need to be is where we are. Also, the light on the flag at Town Hall needs to be replaced. He also requested a list of streets that the street sweeper has swept.

Town Manager would like to be more proactive in handling the streets, but the Town cannot keep up and are currently playing catch up.

Councilman Mooring brought up the Purchase Power Adjustment charges and the revenue that was made for the Town but also wanted to thank the Town as a consumer for taking the PPA charge to \$0.00.

Town Manager Hawley appreciates the Council for accepting his recommendation on lowering the charges.

Councilman Bass wants to know what the Piggly Wiggly changed their name to – It has been changed to Carolina Food Market. Also questioned what the update is on Lil Nick Nick's because they recently visited the Town months back about permits and wants to know when they are opening.

Councilman Horne has concerns about the soccer nets at the park. The soccer net closest to Main Street has a big hole in it and needs to be replaced or fixed. Town Manager Hawley states we will do what we need to do, such as patching or replacing.

Mayor Rhodes wants the public works crew to work on edging the Town since mowing is slowing down and they will have more time and before Christmas add mulch across the road as well.

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

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

Town Manager Hawley presented the 3 appraisals for two buildings and a lot owned by the Town. The Town received an offer for the building next door, 110 E Commercial Ave. The offer came in at \$15,000 and has been received from a family member of an employee.

Councilman Mooring states that we should move forward one building at the time. We should purchase the medical center for the new Town Hall first then move forward with liquidating buildings.

Councilman Horne has concerns regarding how things will go since the offer is below appraisal value and from a family member of a Town Employee.

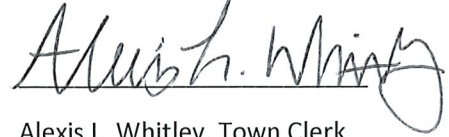
The property still must go through upset bids per Town Attorney Slade Rand.

Councilman Harper made motion to accept the offer of \$15,000 for 110 East Commercial Ave and start the upset bid process. Vote 4 to 1; Councilman Mooring was dissenting vote. Motion carried.

Councilman Harper made motion to adjourn. Passed Unanimously.



Coley H. Rhodes, Mayor



Alexis L. Whitley, Town Clerk