

Town of Stantonsburg
Regular Board Meeting
February 12, 2024

Mayor Coley Rhodes called the monthly board meeting to order at 7:00 PM. The following council members were present: Donnie Bass, Eartha Butler, Jackie Grice, and Steve Mooring. Also present was Town Manager Brian Hawley, Town Clerk Alexis Whitley, and Town Attorney Slade Rand. Councilman Ben Harper was absent.

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

Approval of Agenda: Councilman Mooring made a motion to approve the agenda amending the actual date. Passed unanimously.

Approval of the Minutes:

Councilman Mooring had concerns about the motion regarding the Hero Mold Estimate now that the estimate was not accurate after being voted on and was corrected by the company after minutes were written. The council did not want to move forward. He also requested on page 3 that “Anthony” be more specific as to who we were speaking about. On page 5 the sentence speaking of UDO needs to be a part of the previous paragraph where planning was mentioned.

January 8th, 2023, regular session minutes were approved as amended with changes to page 4 where Anthony was mentioned from Anthony and Tabb, P.A. – changed to John Anthony from Anthony and Tabb, P.A. Also, amended with changes to page 5 where the UDO statement regarding Betsy Kane helping with planning for Downtown. – move statement regarding UDO up to the same paragraph as planning was mentioned.

Public Comment:

None.

Presentations: Louis and Ted from UTEC presented the Residential Standby Rate for the Solar Interconnection Agreement to the Council.

Councilman Harper was absent due to a work obligation, Mayor Rhodes asked for a motion to excuse him from the meeting. Councilwoman Grice made a motion to excuse Councilman Harper from the meeting. Passed unanimously.

Outgoing council members were to be presented with a plaque and letter for their dedication to the Town. Walt Bynum was present, and Ken Horne was absent.

The council discussed the Residential Standby Rate for the Solar Interconnection Agreement. The town currently has one customer who would like to be a Residential Standby customer. Councilwoman Butler made a motion to adopt the Residential Standby Solar Interconnection Agreement. Passed unanimously.

Financial Reports: *January:* Monthly Receipts: \$403,990.15 Disbursements: \$342,373.87 Difference: \$61,616.28. Report referred to our auditors.

Invoices for Payment: Councilwoman Grice asked if the Truist credit card is the only credit card the town has – Town Manager Hawley stated that the town also has the Walmart credit card. Councilman Mooring had concerns that there was not a Walmart Credit Card Statement even though there is a \$0 balance. He would like to see the monthly statement unless we do not have a statement to provide. Councilman Mooring questioned the North Carolina Safety Conference invoice. Town Manager Hawley stated that was the NC Flagger’s Safety Course which was shared cost between Stantonsburg and the Town of Fremont. Councilwoman Grice made a motion to approve invoices. Passed Unanimously.

Old Business: An amendment needed to be made to July 11th, 2023, minutes for board appointments. Mayor Rhodes presented a slate of candidates back in July and the town council reached a consensus. The new slate was approved as written. Councilman Bass had questions regarding the purpose of the Library Board. Councilwoman Grice had questions regarding the process of board appointments. Councilman Mooring made a motion to accept the amended minutes. Vote 2 to 2. Councilman Mooring and Councilwoman Butler were for. Councilman Bass and Councilwoman Grice voted against. Mayor Rhodes voted to accept the amendment to break the tie. Amendment passed.

Town Manager Hawley would like to update the ordinances and he recommends that during our budget retreat the committee/commission process be discussed.

New Business:

The Solar Interconnection Agreement was addressed by the council during presentations previously.

Town Manager Hawley presented the resolution to accept the Duke LifePoint Purchase agreement to move forward with the purchase. Town Manager Hawley, per the council’s vote last month, made an offer to Lifepoint. LifePoint accepted the offer. Both Town Attorney Slade Rand and Manager Hawley reviewed the Professional Services Agreement. Councilman Mooring made a motion to adopt the resolution to accept the Duke Lifepoint Purchase agreement. Vote 2 to 2. Councilman Mooring and Councilwoman Butler were for. Councilman Bass and Councilwoman Grice voted against. Mayor Rhodes voted to adopt to break the tie. Resolution adopted.

Town Clerk, Alexis Whitley, presented her Annexation Sufficiency Report and Findings. Properties in question are Phase 2A along Sand Pit Rd and Phase 2B along Peacock Bridge Rd.

Town Manager Hawley presented the resolution to affix a date for a public hearing on the question of annexation. Councilwoman Grice made a motion to accept the resolution affixing the date of a public hearing on March 11th at 7:00 pm on question of annexation pursuant to G.S. 160A-31. Passed unanimously.

Town Manager Hawley presented the Non-Power Agencies Board of Commissioners. We needed a replacement for the alternate position on the board. Mayor Rhodes asked the council who would like to volunteer. Town Manager Hawley is interested if he can. He will reach out to see if the alternate must be a town council member. It was the prerogative of the council to table this discussion until the March meeting.

Town Manager Hawley and Finance officer Victoria Lucas have worked together with Truist on getting Direct Deposit and Positive Pay, which provides additional fraud protection. They have met with staff as well to talk about the process and concerns that our employees have. Councilman Bass made a motion to pursue the Truist Direct Deposit and Positive Pay. Passed unanimously.

Town Manager Hawley presented the NCLM Grant Resolution. NCLM is in partnership with Whitt O'Brien's LLC, and they are providing grant services to local governments all over NC. Funding is paid through ARP monies. Each municipality is allotted \$30,000 in support services. This will provide grant services to help find and secure grants for downtown revitalization, infrastructure, parks, and other things. Services are free of charge until they reach the \$30,000 threshold. There are additional ARP monies available for some areas as well. Councilwoman Butler made a motion to accept the resolution. Passed unanimously.

Pressure Washing estimates were presented. Three companies came out and returned estimates to clean from the corner of Travis down in front of town hall and down Main Street on each side stopping near The Cottage. Funding will come from the Powell Bill fund. Our public works department will pressure wash other parts of the sidewalks. Councilman Mooring made a statement regarding the public works department. He states that grass cutting season is approaching and that is a full-time job, but during the off season there should be a big chunk of time available for other things. He states we should maintain sidewalks during the off season when there is more time available. Councilman Mooring and Councilwoman Butler would like to investigate purchasing the equipment for our Public Works to maintain our sidewalks. The council also requested a process explanation with each estimate as well as chemicals used. Councilman Mooring recommended Duke's Power Washing since he has done the library before. Councilman Bass agreed we should get an estimate from someone we have had experience with or know more about. It was the prerogative of the board to table this until the March meeting.

Department Reports:

The Water/Sewer Department: **Wastewater:** Jet line cleaning was completed in January, approximately 3000 feet cleared out. Routine maintenance was completed with no issues. Flows are still elevated but are continuing to drop. All samples and reports were completed with no violations. **Water:** LSLI Loan/Grant paperwork has been submitted. Request for funds for a \$2.6 million grant has been received and a meeting with the Town Engineer is to be scheduled. Routine flushing on Woodbridge and Denver Dr. has been completed. All samples and reports were completed with no violations.

For Park/Rec: Lights were replaced, and timers adjusted. A chain was added to keep the gate secured.

Public Works: Two grave sites were addressed due to sinking. They have been pruning and cleaning up piles. Power cords were collected from Christmas lights. NCDOT has a list of potholes to hot patch. No definitive timeline due to temperatures.

Electric Department: A rotten pole behind Saratoga Town Hall was placed. Power lines were extended along Sand Pit Rd. Flood light at town hall was replaced. The bulb in the flood light at the triangle was replaced.

Police Report: Police report for the month of January reviewed.

Manager's Report:

Our sam.gov has been updated. For the CDBG grant, staff has updated all documents and systems that were required for the funds to be released.

For the Seal Building, ECU has completed their work and released the report. NCSU has not provided our town with a scope, so Ben Farmer and Town Manager Hawley have met with two planning firms for the next phase of the project.

Mayor Rhodes and Councilwoman Butler completed the Essentials of Municipal Government.

The NCDOT Crosswalk list was submitted.

The Ice machine arrived at the shop. We will be installing it over the next two weeks.

As we approach our Budget Retreat, Manager Hawley recommended a budget retreat committee to get the council involved in choosing a place to have it. Councilwoman Grice recommended the Council of Governments and Councilwoman Butler recommended a nice hotel with a conference area.

Mayor Rhodes and Councilman Mooring are interested in the NC Mainstreet Conference. We will submit those names tomorrow. Town Clerk Alexis Whitley would like the Mayor and Councilman Mooring to be present to choose the certain trainings they want to attend when registering.

Manager Hawley plans to meet with the fire chief to discuss the support for the fire department to modernize things in the future. Manager Hawley will report back to the council. The council requested to see the fire contract.

Councilman Mooring mentioned the LSLI program and that we qualify for 75% principal forgiveness, and he wants to know what the other 25% would be. Manager Hawley stated we are trying to move 100% of that to grant status.

Comments from Mayor and Council:

Councilwoman Grice had questions regarding the Viable Utility Training and wanted to know how to pay for it. She also requested an update on speaking with a resident who previously approached the board with concerns. Per the resident, his concerns with the railroad crossing were previously addressed.

Councilwoman Butler saw in the July Minutes the Code Red system and wanted to know if we had that. Town Manager Hawley confirmed that the town is part of the Code Red system, and any resident can sign up for it as well.

Councilwoman Butler also mentioned the new position posted for a Lineman Apprentice. Manager Hawley states that we do have a position open, and we have quite a few applicants interested.

Regarding the police officer position that is open, Councilwoman Butler recommended that we offer a sign on bonus or an incentive to recruit more applicants. We have part-time officers, but they only work when they can to support us.

Councilwoman Butler has concerns, based off internal controls, regarding where our employees get gas and how it is managed. Summerlin Oil Company fills our big tanks behind the shop and there is a

logbook for any time someone gets fuel and the amount they get. Most diesel is used by the electric department.

Councilman Bass echoes Councilwoman Grice and Councilwoman Butler's concerns. He questions what CSX is doing to fix our third railroad crossing. NCDOT can also help to address issues dealing with railroad crossings and how to approach CSX.

Councilman Mooring had concerns regarding the tattered flags at town hall and at the triangle, but they have already been replaced. He also has concerns about USIC invoice and 811 monthly fees. The invoices were going to an old email; therefore we were not receiving them, but we are catching that up.

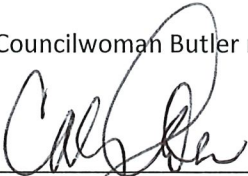
Councilman Mooring has concerns about the golf cart ordinance in town and wants clarification. Town Manager Hawley states there is an ordinance, but it needs to be updated. We adjust our rate schedules from time to time and it does not match the ordinance. Town hall must be paid before approaching the police department to get the inspection and sticker.

Councilman Mooring has concerns about our audits regarding a new law. Manager Hawley states that there is a period to go through before the state withholds anything. Gary Pittman said he would be finished by January, but some things have come up that have set us back on that timeline. Manager Hawley has been searching for an alternative moving forward. We cannot begin this past year until the previous year audit has been complete and reached the next phase. We have been in contact with someone as an alternative.

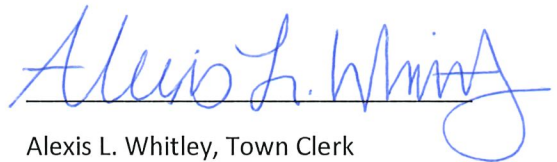
Mayor Rhodes does not have anything.

Councilwoman Grice asked if we have any employees close to retirement and if we have a plan in place if that were to occur.

Councilwoman Butler made motion to adjourn. Passed unanimously.



Coley H. Rhodes, Mayor



Alexis L. Whitley, Town Clerk

