

Town of Stantonburg
Regular Board Meeting Continued
January 14, 2025

Mayor Coley Rhodes called the monthly Town Council meeting to order at 6:30 PM. The following council members were present: Jackie Grice, Steve Mooring, and Eartha Butler. Also present was Town Manager Brian Hawley and Town Clerk Alexis Whitley. Council member Ben Harper and Mayor Pro-tem Donnie Bass were absent.

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

Approval of Agenda: Councilwoman Grice made a motion to approve the agenda. Passed unanimously.

Approval of the Minutes: Regular Board Meeting Minutes of December 9th: Mayor Rhodes requested that on page 4, “discuss” be corrected to “discussion”. Minutes were approved as written. Closed Session minutes of December 9th were approved as written.

Old Business: Manager Hawley discussed the medical equipment at 312 S Main Street property. Wilson Medical will be out tomorrow at 1:00pm to walk the building to identify equipment that needs to be removed and the following week will be removing those items.

Manager Hawley discussed the fence at 310 S. Main Street. The fence across the back of the property has been moved off of the town’s property line but the side of the fence still needs to be adjusted. Manager Hawley met with Mark Whitley, the chair of the Appearance Commission, regarding the landscaping needs at 312 S Main Street.

Manager Hawley discussed the out-of-order bathroom in the town hall that is expelling sewer gases. Repairing the toilet would cost approximately \$2,900.00 and closing it off would be approximately \$300.00. Councilwoman Butler made a motion to close off the toilet in the bathroom that is expelling sewer gases. Passed unanimously.

Councilwoman Butler mentioned the library having the same issues with their trap door area smelling. Manager Hawley will check into this.

The council discussed 911 calls and the information that Manager Hawley provided. It was reiterated that this subject has been on our agenda for many months and since we have an adequate response to concerns, this needs to no longer be discussed.

Manager Hawley discussed abandoned properties on N Main Street. Letters were sent to the property owners. Someone interested in purchasing these properties cleaned them up. The town has not received a response from the property owners.

Manager Hawley discussed the Electric Department Inventory Program. He stated that inventory is sorted out for the 2021-2022 audit, which will allow departments to move over to an excel format to keep track of inventory. This should be done at the end of each fiscal year. The process for the 2022-2023 audit has already been started.

Manager Hawley discussed the lease agreement for 101 N Main Street. He stated that insurance was obtained, and he will speak with the tenant regarding a monthly rent to finalize the lease. The council discussed the monthly rent for the property. Manager Hawley will present details at the next meeting.

Manager Hawley tasked all departments with a list of all assets including real property and personal property that belong to the town. Items that the town can depart with including equipment, older vehicles, and buildings will be identified. He will present this for the council review at the February meeting.

Councilman Mooring requested any and all costs associated with the development of the new solar policy including time spent.

New Business: Manager Hawley discussed the quote from 252 Contracting to repair a section of road surface at the intersection of East Commercial Avenue and South Saratoga Street which will be funded with Powell Bill funds. Councilwoman Grice made a motion to move forward with the quote from 252 Contracting to repair a 25x25 foot section of the road surface at the intersection of East Commercial Avenue and South Saratoga Street. Passed unanimously.

Manager Hawley presented a resolution for approval to assign water/sewer reserve funds for the Lead Service Line Inventory NCDEQ loan. The state will not release any additional funds until the town is caught up on audits. If the town uses their own reserves, they will release funds. This project does not have to be within a certain timeframe. This money will help the town get the project done in a more efficient way. The project is being done at an 85% principal forgiveness.

Councilwoman Butler made a motion to approve the resolution to assign water/sewer reserve funds for the Lead Service Line Inventory NCDEQ loan. Passed unanimously.

Manager Hawley and Mayor Rhodes discussed the Budget Retreat. Mayor Rhodes will contact each council member to see what dates will work best. The Budget Retreat is usually held sometime in March and during a weekend so everyone can attend. Mayor Rhodes will decide on breakfast and lunch for that day.

Manager Hawley discussed a gambling venue request. He will speak with Town Attorney Rand on how to proceed.

Department Reports:

Water: The ERT's have been purchased and received from Black Creek with a full 20-year (10-year full replacement and the 10-year prorated factory warranty). We have enough water meters to complete this phase of Briar Farms and will have approximately 25 extras in inventory. The Central Coastal Plain Capacity Use Area (CCPCUA) permit renewal was submitted by the December 31st deadline. The Town produced and treated 138 million gallons of drinking water last year. This is about 4 million less than what our permit limit is. Eight lead testing kits have been given out to customers that have requested kits. All reports, sampling, routine maintenance have been performed without any issues or violations.

Sewer: Flash Point Automation is making repairs to the R.A.S. pumping station at WWTP, has ordered the equipment for this project. The start date is the end of January. It is estimated that it will take 8 hours to complete. Reports, sampling, and routine maintenance have been completed for December with no issues or violations.

Councilman Mooring discussed the capacity permit renewal and the permit limit for water and sewer services. He also had questions regarding the capacity limits for further development. Manager Hawley stated that the town was awarded \$2,000,000.00 from the State for a well and waterline project but the problem is finding a new well. Wilson County purchasing water from the town was discussed along with regionalizing services regarding water supply and other services in town. Manager Hawley will investigate the increased capacity if Wilson County does not purchase water from the town and will report to the council.

Parks and Recreation: Councilwoman Bulter suggested to add more trash cans around the park. Manager Hawley asked if the town should have the on-duty officer stop in while people are out and about at the park to make sure they aren't leaving trash everywhere.

Councilwoman Grice complimented how great the town looked during Christmas and wanted to thank the Appearance Commission and the mayor for all of the hard work. She also asked if the Appearance Commission is planning to do spring cleaning week as last year. Mayor Rhodes will take this to the Appearance Commission.

Public Works: Mulch was placed all around town for the Christmas Parade and festivities. Assisted the electric department with clearing the rights of ways. Received communication from ERG and EPA regarding storm water system support. ERG said the town will have documents to review sometime in January. Assisted Appearance Committee with beautification and placing angels. Billy Hawkins assisted during the Christmas parade.

Electric: Crew has been busy installing angels on our electric poles as well as underground electrical for the Briar Farms. Replaced batteries at the D-to-D substation (shared costs). Replaced a bad transformer in Saratoga. Replaced three faulty lightning arrestors. Replaced a broken service pole on Pelt Rd. Crew has been tasked to cut identified limbs. Will be working with the public works department to clear right of ways.

Councilwoman Grice asked Manager Hawley if he is planning to hire another person for the vacant position. Manager Hawley stated he is waiting to see if that position is warranted.

Councilwoman Grice asked if all supervisors are in attendance for the Department Head meetings. Manager Hawley confirmed that they are. She also asked which departments were responsible for the most overtime. Manager Hawley reported that the electric and police departments have the most.

Police: Department report reviewed.

Councilman Mooring requested that the future police reports differentiate in town and out of town calls and citations. Manager Hawley will meet with Chief Rosario to redesign the police report.

Town Manager's Report: KayCee has received two days of formal training with Beverly Stroud. The total expense is \$625.00. Ryan has finalized the FY23 bank reconciliations to prepare for Danna's field work for the FY23 Audit. Danna and Ryan are preparing the final documents for the FY22 audit. The town staff has received 10 inquiries about the town hall project. It is likely the overall cost will exceed \$400,000 at this point. The town council has \$248,844.97 remaining from the town hall grant and there is \$198,000 set aside for future projects, this totals \$446,844.97, as well as reserves that may be considered to assist

in any construction. Staff has already started working on the FY25/26 budget and will be presenting a budget workshop schedule to the council at the February meeting.

Comments from Mayor and Council:

Councilwoman Butler requested a copy of the current personnel policy, Code of Ordinances, and a copy of all of the approved and certified 2024 Minutes. Councilman Mooring voiced his concerns about the many different copies of the ordinance book and the need for an authorized copy only to be circulated. The Town Clerk, Alexis Whitley, will be providing a current copy of the ordinances and personnel policy.

Councilwoman Butler asked if the town monitors the town's gas. Manager Hawley stated that the pumps at the shop are secure, and employees must keep track of the amount of fuel they use on the fuel log. Manager Hawley discussed having the drivers log their miles. He can then compare it to GPS information that is provided. The council agreed that this would help tremendously. Councilman Mooring stated that the GPS in the town vehicles can track the mileage.

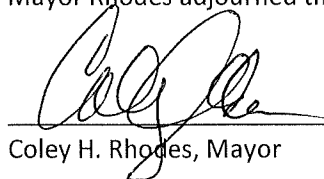
Manager Hawley discussed the missing GPS that has been found. Councilwoman Grice asked if there were any other anomalies other than that and manager Hawley stated that there have been a couple of trips outside of the town's jurisdiction that have concerned him that he will be addressing.

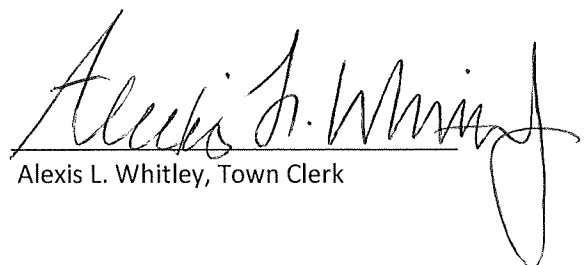
Councilman Mooring mentioned that since the solar or renewable energy pilot program resolution signed, he would encourage expediting a rate study for the electric rates being charged to the other 99.9% of our electric customers. He wanted to remind his fellow board members that the electric fund realized close to \$1 million dollars in profit last year and his opinion is that this should become priority as they will soon be working on the budget for the next fiscal year. With all of the increases that were imposed on citizens this year, this is one area where the town can provide relief. He requested a vote on this to instruct the town manager to prioritize this for a reasonable completion date before the end of the year. He would like to prioritize this. Manager Hawley made the board aware that he will be meeting with Louis at UTEC on this and other items as well this Thursday. He is trying to nail down the cost-of-service study as a standard rate study will not provide as much data and information. They are trying to see if other towns would like to participate due to the cost. His goal is to get it to the council before the budget retreat. He believes a standard rate study is covered in our agreement with UTEC.

Councilman Mooring made a motion to get the town manager to prioritize a rate study for the electric rates being charged to the other 99.9% of our electric customers to be prepared before the budget retreat. Passed unanimously.

Manager Hawley reminded the council that the rate drop isn't a bad thing because the power purchase adjustment is still there if needed to cover any spikes in costs.

Mayor Rhodes adjourned the meeting at 9:35pm.


Coley H. Rhodes, Mayor


Alexis L. Whitley, Town Clerk