Town of Stantonsburg
Regular Board Meeting Minutes
April 13, 2026

The regular monthly meeting of the Stantonsburg Town Council was held at 6:30 pm on Monday, April 13, 2026, in the town hall with Mayor Coley Rhodes presiding.

Members present at the meeting included Mayor Coley Rhodes, Mayor Pro Tem Powell Dew, and Councilpersons Jackie Grice, Carla Davis, and Eartha Butler. Town representatives present included Town Manager Brian Hawley, Utilities Superintendent Roger Sullivan, Town Clerk Christie Cobb, and Attorney Gabe DuSablon. Councilperson Skip Covert was unable to attend due to a family emergency.

Guests in attendance included Wilson County Deputy and sheriff candidate Bobby Knight, and citizens, John Hunt and Donnie Garris.

Call to Order and Opening

Mayor Coley Rhodes called the regular meeting to order at 6:30 pm, led the Pledge of Allegiance, and offered the prayer, requesting guidance, wisdom, and respectful communication as the Council conducted town business.

Approval of Agenda and Prior Minutes

During agenda consideration, Mayor Pro Tem Powell Dew expressed concern regarding the length and number of items scheduled for the evening and stated that the volume of material would hinder deliberate consideration. Mayor Pro Tem Dew proposed postponing the procurement policy, ethics policy, AIA grant application, rate stabilization fund, and surplus property disposition to a future meeting. Town Manager Hawley advised that the AIA grant resolution required action that evening in order to meet established deadlines and avoid forfeiting grant eligibility. After discussion, Council proceeded with votes on the agenda. The motion resulted in a tie vote with Councilpersons Dew and Grice for the amended agenda and Councilpersons Butler and Davis against. Mayor Rhodes voted to break the tie and proceed with the agenda as presented.

A subsequent motion to approve the agenda resulted in a 2–2 vote, with Councilpersons Butler and Davis for, and Councilpersons Dew and Grice against, and Mayor Rhodes voted in favor of approval.

The Council next considered approval of the submitted minutes from both the previous regular meeting and the workshop session. Following a motion by Mayor Pro Tem Dew, and no requested corrections or additions, the minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

Presentation

Town Manager Hawley presented a draft Procurement and Purchasing Administrative Policy and Procedure Guide prepared using guidance from multiple municipalities and recommendations consistent with state requirements. He explained that the draft addressed purchasing thresholds, formal and informal bidding procedures, surplus property disposition, contract awards, bonding requirements, and conflicts of interest. Council discussed the source of certain provisions and the practical application and enforcement of the policy. Mr. Hawley stated that the draft was presented for Council review and feedback and would serve as a governing framework for staff once adopted. Council indicated that additional review would be needed prior to adoption.

Mr. Hawley also presented a draft Town Council Code of Ethics, stating that state law requires every municipality to maintain an adopted ethics policy. He advised that no prior resolution adopting such a policy could be found in Town records. Council discussion focused on enforcement provisions, particularly language regarding potential remedies for violations by elected officials. The council questioned the legal and practical implications of disciplinary measures referenced in the draft and agreed that revisions would be necessary. Councilperson Grice made a motion to conduct an additional meeting or workshop dedicated to reviewing and refining the ethics policy. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

Citizen Donnie Garris addressed Council and introduced Bobby Knight, candidate for Wilson County Sheriff. Deputy Knight discussed his background in law enforcement, transparency initiatives, drug enforcement priorities, and commitment to community policing. He stated his commitment to open communication with citizens and elected officials.

Citizen John Hunt addressed Sheriff Candidate Knight, questioning his past professional experience. He then addressed Council, expressing appreciation for Council's efforts and emphasizing the importance of community-oriented law enforcement.

Financial Reports and Approvals

Town Manager Hawley presented the monthly financial report, noting total revenues of $369,539.73 and disbursements of $592,990.73, resulting in a negative variance attributable to initial major expenditures for the Town Hall renovation and elevated seasonal utility costs. Mr.

Hawley advised that electric utility costs had begun to stabilize and that current projections indicated the Town would conclude the fiscal year with a small surplus. Council asked detailed questions regarding individual disbursements, legal fees, audit costs, and utility refunds, and staff responded accordingly.

Councilperson Jackie Grice made a motion to approve the March invoices. The motion passed unanimously.

Following discussion and clarification of funding sources, Councilperson Eartha Butler made a motion to approve the Lemar painting invoice for $3,150. Councilpersons Butler and Grice voted for approval, Councilpersons Davis and Dew voted against. With the vote resulting in a two-to-two tie, Mayor Rhodes cast the deciding vote to approve the expenditure.

The council reviewed the invoice from Beverly Stroud, CPA, for $3,262.50 for audit preparation services. Councilperson Butler made a motion to approve the invoice, with a second by Councilperson Grice. The motion passed unanimously.

Departmental Reports

Utilities Superintendent Roger Sullivan provided a departmental report highlighting the recent hiring of two first-class linemen, which fully staffed the electric department. He reviewed recent sewer repairs, right-of-way maintenance, compliance activities, equipment repairs, and overall system improvements, noting that much of the work was accomplished in-house.

Town Manager Reports

Town Manager Brian Hawley provided updates on multiple initiatives including the well testing requirements, sewer rehabilitation planning, stormwater master plan completion, Town Hall renovation status, audit progress, public safety coordination with the Wilson County Sheriff's Office, and information technology services.

The Manager then reported considerable progress in the CDBG-Housing program, noting that two homes are ready to proceed with demolition then modular installation.

Old Business

The Council considered adoption of the Stormwater Master Plan, which had been developed at no cost to the Town through state assistance. Town Manager Hawley explained that the plan identified critical drainage issues and established project priorities. Upon motion by

Councilperson Eartha Butler and second by Councilperson Carla Davis, the Town Council unanimously approved the plan.

New Business

Council addressed the Town website update and ADA compliance proposal submitted by Computer Central in the amount of $1,281.00. Town Manager Hawley explained that the update was necessary to meet accessibility requirements. Mayor Pro Tem Dew made a motion to approve the website update with a second by Councilperson Grice, which passed unanimously. The Council expressed the desire to seek multiple bids for future technology services when feasible.

After discussion, Mayor Pro Tem Dew made a motion, seconded by Councilperson Davis to approve an engineering services agreement with Davis Engineers & Consultants, effective May 1, 2026, following staff explanation of the transition from prior consultants and anticipated scope of work. The motion passed unanimously.

Town Manager Hawley proposed the submission of an application for an Asset Inventory and Assessment (AIA) grant in the amount of $150,000, intended to support utility rate studies and long-term infrastructure planning. Mayor Pro Tem Dew made a motion to approve a resolution to submit the AIA funding grant proposal. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Eartha Butler, which passed unanimously.

Proposed Budget Amendment #0426 was suggested to adjust the electric fund to reflect updated revenue projections. Councilperson Eartha Butler made a motion to approve Budget Amendment #0426. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Grice and passed unanimously.

A second budget amendment was discussed to make corrections related to the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) accounting to align with multi-year grant requirements. Mayor Pro Tem Dew made a motion to approve Budget Amendment #0526. Councilperson Davis seconded the motion and passed unanimously.

Discussion followed regarding surplus property previously used by the Police Department. Councilpersons expressed differing views regarding disposition of the equipment given unresolved public safety planning considerations. Upon motion by Mayor Pro Tem Dew and second by Councilperson Davis, the Council voted to table the surplus property item until further decisions regarding law enforcement services were made, with Councilperson Butler opposed.

The Council also discussed a proposed Electric Rate Stabilization Fund. Members requested additional explanation and a more detailed presentation regarding the fund's structure, funding sources, and usage. Councilperson Butler made a motion to table the item pending further information. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Grice and passed unanimously.
Town Manager Hawley presented the current Rate and Fee Schedule and led the discussion for projections for the schedule in the coming Fiscal Year. The council asked for more information and

research to base decisions for the fee schedule. The consensus of the board was that the item would be tabled for further information and review.

The Council reviewed an application to appoint a new member to the event committee. Councilperson Butler made a motion, seconded by Councilperson Davis. The council unanimously approved the appointment of Sarah Nichols to the Town's Event Committee, citing her participation in recent successful community events.

A contract to audit accounts from Nunn, Brashear, and Uzzell was reviewed for auditing services for Fiscal Year 2024 in the amount of $22, 500. Councilperson Davis made a motion to approve the contract pending attorney review. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Butler and passed unanimously.

Council Comments

Councilperson Jackie Grice requested information about the outstanding bill for the previous grocery store. The account is currently in Debt Set-Off. She also requested the names of attorneys currently retained by the Town. Cauley-Pridgen is the only firm currently representing the Town of Stantonsburg in legal matters.

Mayor Pro Tem Powell Dew inquired if another budget workshop was scheduled, which was not. He asked about the membership on the Planning Board/Board of Adjustments. He stated that he received a complaint about the future placement of the Town Historic Marker. He inquired about the status of construction at the new town hall, which is awaiting a new inspection. He requested that the future minutes include more detail when contracts and bids are approved.

Councilperson Eartha Butler requested recognition of businesses contributing to community events be highlighted in upcoming newsletters.

Councilperson Carla Davis gave updates and asked for input about the Crepe Myrtle Festival 2026 including plans for band entertainment. She discussed the option of sponsorships and business donations to make the event a success.

Mayor Coley Rhodes shared information about recent training opportunities and discussed dates for a special-called meeting to discuss tabled topics and items needing further review.

Closed Session

Upon completion of open-session business, Councilperson Grice made a motion seconded by Councilperson Butler to enter closed session to discuss legal and contractual matters. The motion passed unanimously and the council entered closed session pursuant to NCGS 143-

318.11 (a)(6) for personnel budget pay discussion and NCGS 143-318.11 (a)(3) to consult with an attorney.

A motion to enter back into open session was made by Councilperson Butler. Councilperson Grice seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

No further open-session actions were taken.

Adjournment

With no further business, Councilperson Butler made a motion to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Councilperson Grice and passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:45 pm.

Approved by:

Coley Rhodes, Mayor	Christie Cobb, Town Clerk