



**Minutes of Regular Town of Fremont
Meeting
February 16th, 2016**

The regular meeting of the Board of Aldermen for the Town of Fremont, NC was held at 7:30 p.m. on February 16th, 2016. Present were:

W. Darron Flowers, Mayor
W. T. Smith, Alderman
Leon Mooring, Alderman
Joyce C. Reid, Alderwoman
Annie Lewis, Alderwoman
Al Lewis, Alderman
Joyce M. Artis, Alderwoman

Also in attendance were Interim Town Administrator Barbara Aycock, Town Clerk Marti Jones, Finance Officer Shameshia Fennell, Public Works Director Tim Howell and Chief Paul Moats.

Quorum Present: YES

Call to Order

Mayor Flowers called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. All in attendance recited the Lord's Prayer. Alderwoman Annie Lewis led all in attendance in the pledge of allegiance.

Minutes and Agenda

Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to approve or amend the minutes of the January 19th, 2016 board meeting. Alderman Smith made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 19th, 2016 board meeting. Alderman Mooring seconded the motion. Any discussion? Alderwoman Artis stated she did have a discussion. She stated on page 3 of the minutes it stated that Alderwoman Reid did not oppose the Budget Amendment #5. It should read Alderwoman Artis. Alderman Smith rescinded his motion. Alderman Mooring rescinded his second to the motion. Mayor Flowers ask for a motion to approve the amended minutes. Alderman Smith made a motion to approve the amended minutes of the January 19th, 2016 board meeting. Alderman Mooring seconded the motion. No further discussion or comments. Motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to approve the agenda for the February 16th, 2016 meeting. Alderwoman Joyce Reid made a motion to approve the agenda of the February 16th, 2016 meeting. Alderman Annie Lewis seconded the motion. No discussion or comments. Motion passed unanimously.

Announcements

1) Mrs. Aycock will be attending ECU Commerce Fellows Scholarship Program on February 17th, March 16th and April 13th.

2) Presentation: Jeff Hill (Video)

Mrs. Aycock stated she would like for someone to give an introduction to Mr. Hill's presentation. Mrs. Fennell stated that Mr. Jeff Hill, of our public works team, recently saved a person's life and we wanted to share a video of his experience. Due to some technical difficulty the volume would not allow everyone in the audience to hear what the video was saying. Mrs. Fennell apologized for this and stated she could give an analogy of what happened for Mr. Hill. According to Mr. Hill, a young man had gotten shot near Mr. Hill's house and the bullet actually entered the man's back and came out of his stomach and Mr. Hill had to apply pressure over the wound for an extended amount of time. He cut the man's shirt off and used towels that people were bringing to him to control the bleeding. He kept the man calm and kept his heart rate down until the Police and Rescue arrived. Mr. Hill stated that it was very clear if he had not done these things the man possible could have died due to his injuries. The man was hospitalized for 4 weeks. The Town wanted to commend Mr. Hill for his bravery.

Mayor Flowers asked if the Board would like to make a motion to instruct the staff to develop and prepare a Resolution of Commendation and Appreciation to present to Jeff Hill. Alderman Mooring made a motion to instruct the staff to prepare the Resolution. Alderman Smith seconded the motion. No discussion. Mayor Flowers asked if the Board would object for Mrs. Aycock, in front of the staff, to present Mr. Hill with the Resolution or should we try to have him come to the next meeting. Mrs. Aycock stated she will try to have him come to the next meeting so we could present him with this in front of the Town. No further discussion. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Hearing

Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to open a public hearing regarding \$70,000 that the Board of Commissioners of Wayne County will loan to us at no interest to repair the Norwayne Lift Station.

Alderman Lewis made a motion to open the meeting for public hearing regarding the loan to repair the Norwayne Lift Station. Alderman Mooring seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Hearing pronounced open per Mayor Flowers.

Michael McAllister with Municipal Engineering stated that as most of us are aware the Norwayne Pump Station located at Norwayne Middle School has been on its last leg now

for the last 3 to 4 years and it has been patched together many times. Hydrogen Sulfide gas has eaten away and migrated up the control panel, the electrical wiring and pretty much everything. It is at the point now we need to do something and that is the reason for trying to get this money. Mr. McAllister stated a letter has been sent to the entire council concerning some hoops the Town had to jump through concerning the LGC and there are some things the Town can do to speed up the process. One of those things being a governing board we can declare this an emergency and will get us out of compliance with the General Statutes as far as the bidding goes.

Alderman Mooring ask Mr. McAllister to tell the audience what would happen if that pump station collapses. Mr. McAllister replies that everything from Fremont, Eureka, CBA, Norwayne, Northeast and the Airport would not be able to get to Goldsboro and this would be catastrophic. This pump station is the most critical link in our infrastructure. This station pumps out all of the sewage that cannot go into the lagoon. It is imperative that we get this fixed as quickly as we can.

Alderwoman Artis asked where the sewer would go if this happened and with numerous replies it was answered it would go to the ground, back up into the homeowners' pipes and would just be a disaster. Also, the State would fine the Town a lot of money.

Mr. McAllister stated he is watching out for any other grants or monies that may become available to help us but this is a priority right now to get this fixed.

Mr. McAllister stated that he went to the County Commissioners meeting and the County was delighted to help the Town and was very helpful.

Mayor Flowers stated that for the purpose of this public hearing we are talking only about the acceptance of \$70,000 from the County.

Alderman Lewis asked how long it would be before we could get the money.

Mrs. Aycock stated she has to apply to the LGC which meets again in March and we will try to get on that meeting. Hopefully, we can get this 25 page application finished and mailed out by Monday and get on their March meeting.

Per Mr. McAllister, if the Board approves this as an emergency we would not have to get bids for the work and can expedite some of this. A proclamation will have to be done next month.

Mayor Flowers stated for those who didn't know the LGC (local government commission) supervises the finances of local municipalities and local governments and by law they can check on the Town's finances.

Alderman Artis ask why we could not just get the money from the County without involving the LGC.

Mrs. Aycock stated because we were taking out debt and anytime you do that the LGC has to become involved, plus due to the past financial history of the Town they have to be notified.

Mayor Flowers asked for any other questions or comments.

None noted at this time.

Public Hearing Closed per Mayor Flowers

Public Comment

Public Comment Session Opened per Mayor Flowers

Eloise Artis from 205 S Sycamore Street stated she had received a letter about sewage leakage. She asked “how did the Town determine that a leakage is on one’s property and how do you know it wasn’t the people who were digging at her property last week that did not cause the leak?” Mr. Howell stated a camera was ran down the main sewer line and when we get to every individual tap we can see the water running out of the tap and that is rain water meaning there is a leak.

Mayor Flowers asked Mrs. Artis about someone working in her yard last week. She replied yes someone was digging. Mr. Howell stated the camera work was completed before the digging was done in her yard.

Mrs. Artis also stated she called the city hall today and was informed she would need to get a plumber to look at her situation. She asked why the city could not designate one or two plumbers to look at everyone’s situation and fix the problem for everyone.

Another audience member also stated that maybe if we had one plumber they could perhaps do the work at a discounted rate for the citizens.

It was noted so far there are at least 35 houses with sewer leak issues.

Mrs. Fennell stated we have talked about finding plumbers to reference people to but the only bad side to this is the resident itself would have to be responsible for cost to fix the situation. All the Town can do is give the citizens a list of plumbers that may be of service to them.

Mrs. Aycock explained that a leak of ¼” can put through 14, 952 gallons a day through that small hole.

Mrs. Artis states that giving the citizens 30 days to fix the problem is not enough time to fix this.

Mrs. Aycock stated that we will give the citizens more time, but the leaks will have to be fixed. If any citizens have issues with doing this in the 30 days they can come in to see her and she we will be glad to work with them.

Alderwoman Artis asks how the citizens can divert their sewage.

Mrs. Aycock states there is no way. If there is a hole the ground water is going to go through that hole and the more pressure with the ground water the larger the hole is going to be and pretty soon the hole will be big enough the sewer will start backing up into the homeowners home. Mrs. Aycock explained that if the residents were to fix their individual leaks this would help the Town and the citizens themselves financially. If the LGC were to come to Town, because of the negative balances the Town has had in past years, they could take over the finances of Fremont and make costs go up and raise rates and we do not want this to happen. By fixing these issues we hopefully can at least keep sewer rates at what they are now and hopefully lower them. If we keep having these loses every year the LGC is going to come in and increase rates and Mrs. Aycock states her goal is to manage the finances instead of raising rates because she believes it is unfair to raise the rates to cover expenses if you can manage better.

Jennifer Montague from 201 S Charles Dr. states she also received a letter about a leak and she wanted to know since it is over 30 people how is it not a Town problem? She says she does not understand how the Town is making an individual pay for this.

Mr. McAllister stated the Town is only in charge of the line from the right of way to the main line in the street. Some of the causes of the leaks are due to roots, material the pipes are made out of and age of the pipes.

Mayor Flowers stated the sewer lines have been the major priority of the Board since he has been Mayor due to the high cost and money lost.

Alderman Smith stated he had been on the Board for 24 years and this was and is still the highest priority of the Board.

Alderwoman Artis asked how we are going to enforce the letter that were sent out.

Mrs. Aycock stated we are going to work with the citizens in getting it done in a timely manner and having a plan in place of when it is going to be done, but we are very willing to work with them, they just need to come see us. We will get together a list of plumbers for reference for the citizens.

Mr. McAllister added that the Town needed a copy of the invoice from the plumber or citizen after work is completed so we know that it has been fixed.

Public Comment Session Closed per Mayor Flowers

Open Regular Board Meeting

Mrs. Aycock and Mr. Howell provided the Board and the audience with a video of a manhole that was found to be leaking tremendously. The manhole was not even on the Town's maps. It is located at the Missionary Baptist Church. The water is just running through the pipes straight into our sewer lines and is not getting metered until it goes to Goldsboro. Per Mr. Howell this is a dead end manhole so they went upstream and plugged the main line. It has been stopped right now but it hasn't been fixed but will need to be. Also, they have found some that are actually worse than the one being shown and these are at residential services.

A) Rev. Reynolds Report on Renewal Place

(Not present)

B) Mr. Keith Spivey (Step Grant Report)

(Not present)

C) James Upchurch from DOT

Mr. Upchurch is here to give an update on the CTP (Comprehensive Transportation Plan) long range planning for metropolitan areas such as Wayne County. This is a 30 year plan and they partner with local communities to help with improving transportation and access to areas around Town. After talking with Board Members and citizens in Fremont, Mr. Upchurch stated that new sidewalks are shown to be needed in certain areas of Town. He showed a slide presentation which documented what areas would benefit from these sidewalks.

Alderman Mooring asked who would fund these projects.

Mr. Upchurch stated the DOT does not make allowances for sidewalks so the responsibility financially would be on the Town itself. He states there are sometimes grants that do become available but they are a matching fund grant.

Mayor Flowers asked where the Town goes from here after the recommendations.

Mr. Upchurch responded that he would give a proposal for the recommendations and the proposal would have to be adopted to proceed and to keep in mind this is a long range plan and the funding is a separate issue. There are 3 levels of adoption for this plan: 1) Town, 2) County and 3) DOT. This is a small piece in the whole Wayne County piece.

Mayor Flowers states there is nothing obligating the Town financially at this point. As far as the expectations of the Board at this point Mr. Upchurch will be prepared to give his recommendations at next month's meetings and we will go from there. Fremont would be considering sidewalks only no bike paths or bus transportation at this time. If anyone has any questions his information is available and he would gladly discuss any questions with anyone.

Action Items

F) Andrew Harris 2014-2015 Audit Report

Mr. Harris complimented the staff on a wonderful job with the audit. For the second year the audit has improved and Mrs. Aycock and her staff need to be commended per Mr. Harris. Mr. Harris reviewed the government communications letter and stated he encountered no significant difficulties during the audit, there were no uncorrected misstatements and there were no disagreements with management. He reviewed the audit report and stated the Town of Fremont received an unqualified opinion which is the highest form of assurance you can receive on a set of financial statements. Mr. Harris reviewed the audit and highlighted on some areas. All questions answered per Mr. Harris and Mrs. Aycock. The audit is available for public review at the Town Hall.

Alderman Mooring made a motion to approve the 2014-2015 Audit as presented. Alderwoman Lewis seconded the motion. No discussion. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Alderman Mooring stated he would like to thank Mrs. Aycock and the staff on their hard work. Mayor Flowers also commended Mrs. Aycock and the staff.

D) CSX Agreement: Railroad Parking:

Mrs. Aycock stated she would recommend tabling this due to not having the fence height and measurements.

Mayor Flowers asked if everyone recognized the discussion.

Alderman Smith stated if we have to put a 4ft high fence 15 feet from Railroad it would take up most of the parking and that would not do us any good at all.

Mrs. Aycock agrees with this and therefore suggest tabling it at this time due to no benefit to the Town.

Alderwoman Artis asked if we did sign the lease could we regulate and enforce the parking.

Response was we would be able to with what little space we had left.

An agreement was made to table the issue until next month.

E) Resolution for Local Government Commission to borrow the \$70,000 at 6 years at .025 interest.

Mayor Flowers stated the Board has been presented with a resolution to borrow the \$70,000. A public hearing was held to borrow the \$70,000 which is provided in the agenda. Mayor Flowers asked for any questions or concerns.

Alderman Mooring asked about the 6 years at .025 interest.

Mrs. Aycock stated the interest is what you have to pay Wayne County to handle the loan. It is a onetime payment for administering the loan. The Wayne County Board approved the loan for 6 years according to Mrs. Aycock instead of 5. Alderman Mooring made a motion to accept the Resolution dated February 16th, 2016 authorizing the Town to borrow \$70,000 at 6years at a 0.25 one time interest payment. Alderman Smith seconded the motion. No discussion. All in favor none opposed. Motion passed unanimously.

Mrs. Aycock stated to please thank the Board of Commissioners of Wayne County for holding this money for over a year for the Town of Fremont due to us trying to get the 100% grant which we were unsuccessful at.

Reports

Financial Summary

Electrical Report: Mrs. Fennell stated last month's electrical report had an error. Where it reads purchased and collected for NCEMPA: purchased amount should read \$578,480.76. Difference should be \$416,435.16. No questions on the electrical.

Water Report: We billed more than collected but this is due mainly to arrangements and vouchers that due to being collected later in the month will not show up until Februarys' reports. All arrangements and vouchers have been paid at the present time.

Mayor Flowers stated he wanted to remind everyone that Wayne Water District cost are still not correct due to them not billing the Town the right amount. Calls have been made to them with no response at this time.

Sewer Report: In November, as well as January, we actually paid more to Goldsboro in sewer cost than we collected. Also, we did not bill as much as we paid out. This is due to the heavy amount of rainfall. When the rainfall increases the amount we spray automatically decreases, therefore, our bill to Goldsboro increases. Mayor Flowers stated to keep in mind we now have made 3 schools, the Airport and Eureka fully accountable for the flow coming in. Any free flow of water coming in is ours now.

Alderwoman Artis asked why there is a difference in the number of bills sent out to different services in the same month. It was explained some citizens only receive certain services due to where they are located in Town.

Solid Waste Report: Amount collected is also due to the arrangements and vouchers for that month.

Late Penalties: We receive these when customers do not pay their bill on or before 10th of every month.

Cash Trending: In June we went out in the negative in the water and sewer utility fund whereas now we are in the positive again. The electrical funds is continuously growing. Mrs. Aycock stated we are continuing to trend up on cash. For 8 years the general fund has been in the negative. It has taken the Town 2 years to get the general fund in the positive and it is hard to bring the general fund up because this is Taxes and you cannot just increase rates to build this fund up. This occurs per Mrs. Aycock from managing the funds and watching your spending.

No questions or discussion.

Tim Howell, Public Works

Mr. Howell gave a slide presentation beginning with some words of encouragement from a citizen on Facebook and of projects that have been completed or are being worked on at the present. The major water cutoff did not occur on Monday February 15th but will be done on Wednesday February 17th, from 9pm until. Citizens were notified. The public works dept. worked diligently during the ice storms by managing tree limbs with heavy amounts of ice and repairing any electrical issues. Street edging will be done with at least 2-3 streets done per month. A lot of ditches have been cut back and worked on. TV inspections will continue.

Mayor Flowers stated to extend to the Public Works Dept. our appreciation for the work they did during the bad weather and continue to do daily.

Chief Moats

Chief Moats stated the police department has had no major incidents in the last 30 days. The police department has been very proactive and doing their jobs and providing the citizens with the services they pay taxes for.

Mayor Flowers asked if there was anything else that needed to be brought before the Board. Everyone acknowledge the slide presentations and liked being able to see the progress the Town is doing.

Alderman Artis stated no new business was called for but she had one thing that she would like to add. She stated she would like to make a motion for the Fremont Town Board to implement a Roll Call Method of taking votes which is a way the Board Members would vote yes or no on special items. The Mayor or Clerk would call out the names of the Board Members to help especially when there are two Alderman or Alderwoman with the same name. She stated she would like to make a motion to implement a Roll Call for the Town of Fremont.

Mayor Flowers stated this is the purpose of adopting an agenda, to add issues such as these so that everyone would be prepared for them.

Alderman Artis stated she understood this but was waiting for the New Business to be called and it was not called because a lot of things happened tonight and we were really pressed for time.

Mayor Flowers stated he would like to clarify this by stating that once the agenda is approved we have to follow the agenda, so from this point on you can add it to the agenda and it will not be overlooked.

Alderman Artis acknowledged this.

Mayor Flowers asked for a second to the motion of having a Roll Call with your name being called to vote yes or no instead of raising your hand.

Alderman Mooring stated he would like to make a change and go with raising your hand unless there is a difference in the voting.

Mayor Flowers asked for a second to the motion.

Motion failed due to lack of a second.

Alderwoman Lewis stated if there were no further discussion she would make a motion to adjourn. Alderman Mooring seconded the motion. No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

W. Darron Flowers, Mayor

Martha A. Jones Town Clerk