



Minutes of Regular Town of Fremont Meeting

June 16, 2020

The regular meeting of the Board of Aldermen/Alderwomen for the Town of Fremont, NC was held at 6:30 p.m. on June 16, 2020. Present were:

W. Darron Flowers, Mayor
Beatrice Jones, Alderwoman
Keith L. Spivey, Alderman
Ricky Mazingo, Alderman
Joyce M. Artis, Mayor Pro-tem
Leroy Ruffin, Alderman
Annie Lewis, Alderwoman

Also in attendance were Town Administrator Barbara Aycok, Town Clerk Shannon Daly, Accounting Clerk Cindy Rhodes, Public Works Director Tim Howell, Chief Paul Moats and Assistant Chief Greg Bottoms.

Quorum Present: Yes

Call to Order

Mayor Flowers called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Alderman Spivey gave the invocation.

Alderwoman Lewis led all in attendance in the pledge of allegiance.

Approval of Agenda

Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Alderwoman Lewis made a motion to approve the agenda. Alderman Spivey seconded it. Mayor Flowers asked if there was any discussion and Alderwoman Jones asked if the LGC letter could be added to the agenda for discussion. Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to approve the amended agenda. Alderwoman Jones made the motion to approve the amended agenda. Mayor Pro-tem Artis seconded it. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Public Hearing

Mayor Flowers opened the meeting for Public Hearing concerning the 2020 – 2021 Budget.

There were no comments and Mayor Flowers closed the Public Hearing.

Public Comments

Mayor Flowers opened the meeting for Public Comments.

Phyllis Edmundson stated that she was representing the Rotary Club of Fremont. She stated that the Rotary is a service organization and when the COVID-19 Pandemic hit, they wanted to do something to help. They decided that they could make face masks for the community and they have been distributed to Goshen Medical Facility and Fremont Pharmacy. She stated that they were free and each mask is individually wrapped. She presented Chief Moats with face masks for the Fremont Police Department. She said as an individual and a Rotary Club member she wanted to thank him and the police department for all they do to protect the Fremont community; and hoped the face masks will help to keep them safe as they protect our community. Chief Moats thanked Mrs. Edmundson on behalf of the police department and said that the face masks are needed to help keep them safe.

Mayor Flowers asked Alderman Spivey if he would speak about the Prayer Walk that they had on Saturday and stated that it was one of the nicest things that the town has had in the last 20 years. Alderman Spivey stated that the idea was birthed by Pastor Sutton from St. James Church. He stated that Greenville had a Prayer Walk a couple days before and he spoke with Pastor Sutton and they felt that in light of all the protests that have been taken place around the nation and around the world, a prayer march would be a great way to show unity and harmony in the community. He said looking back at Martin Luther King's non-violent protests and marches, we wanted to show that there are people in this community that care and wants to see harmony and unity. He wanted to publicly thank Chief Moats and his officers for their support. He stated that after speaking with Mrs. Aycok about the Prayer Walk, Chief Moats contacted him immediately and enthusiastically asked if the officers could walk with them. He said by all means, yes and stated that the officers were out in full force. He said there were approximately 100 people, who were singing and laughing and having a good time. He thanked everyone for helping and said that it was a good time. Mayor Flowers stated that there was a good cross-section of the community represented and Alderman Spivey agreed. Alderman Spivey stated that the Mayor came out and walked as much as he could and stated that the Mayor said that he would not have missed this for the world. Mayor Flowers stated that there was enthusiasm and it made you feel good to live in Fremont, especially living in the age that we are in now.

Approval of Minutes

Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to approve the minutes for the Budget Workshop of May 19, 2020. Alderwoman Jones made a motion to approve the Budget Workshop minutes of May 19, 2020. Alderman Spivey seconded it. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to approve the minutes for the Regular Board Meeting of May 19, 2020. Alderman Spivey made a motion to approve the Regular Board Meeting minutes of May 19, 2020. Alderwoman Lewis seconded it. Alderwoman Jones pointed out that the minutes stated 2.5 kw increase for demand and the budget states 3 kw increase. It was determined that the minutes were correct, but a mistake was made in the

budget. Mrs. Aycock said that the budget will be corrected. Mayor Pro-tem Artis had some questions about the budget and some other concerns about personnel and asked for a Closed Session to discuss the issues. Mayor Flowers noted that we would have a Closed Session to address the concerns. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to approve the minutes for the Closed Session meeting of May 19, 2020. Alderwoman Lewis made a motion to approve the Closed Session minutes of May 19, 2020. Alderman Mozingo seconded it. Alderwoman Jones wanted to discuss the minutes and Mayor Flowers stated that they would have to go into Closed Session to discuss them. Motion failed. Two approved; Alderwoman Lewis and Alderman Mozingo. Four opposed; Alderwoman Jones, Alderman Spivey, Mayor Pro-tem Artis, and Alderman Ruffin.

Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the Special Called meeting of May 26, 2020. Alderman Ruffin made the motion to approve the minutes of the Special Called meeting of May 26, 2020. Alderman Spivey seconded it. Alderwoman Jones stated that she would like to change the wording on the last page that states that he (Mayor) would like to have some orderliness during the meetings to there was some confusion during the meetings, because people were having a hard time hearing each other. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Information

Mayor Flowers stated that the information items were self-explanatory.

Action

Mayor Flowers stated that there were some issues concerning the budget. Alderwoman Jones re-stated that on page 3 of the budget letter it says that there is an increase in demand kw by 3 and the minutes says 2.5 kw. Mrs. Aycock stated that the budget will be changed to 2.5 kw. Mayor Pro-tem Artis referenced page 2 of the budget letter and asked if the 5 million gallons of sewer that cannot be accounted for is per day or per month. Mrs. Aycock stated it was per month. Mayor Flowers asked Mrs. Aycock if she could add per month to the budget letter and she said yes she would do that. Mayor Pro-tem Artis stated that she wanted to discuss the statement on page 3 of the budget letter that refers to all towns must have a finance officer. Mayor Flowers said that if she is wanting to discuss an employee that it would have to be done in Closed Session, but if it was about the position it could be discussed in Open Session. Mayor Pro-tem Artis said that she would like to discuss it in Closed Session.

Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to approve Budget Amendment #6802. Alderman Spivey made a motion to approve Budget Amendment #6802. Alderwoman Lewis seconded it. There was some discussion about how budget amendments work. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously. Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to approve Budget Amendment #6803. Alderman Spivey made a motion to approve #6803. Alderwoman Lewis seconded it. There were some discussion about issues with ditches and sewer lines, GoldLeaf, and FEMA. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously. Alderman Spivey asked if there would be more budget amendments and Mrs. Aycock said that there would be some more and we would be having a Special Called meeting to approve them.

Mayor Flowers stated that the ordinances that need to be approved were Title IX: General Regulations, which prohibits indoor furniture from being kept outside and Title XI: Business Regulations, which incorporates Pikeville's ordinance on door-to-door activities with our ordinance. Alderwoman Jones asked if we have a lot of door-to-door activity in Fremont. Chief Moats said that we do have some but adding this to our ordinance will allow us to regulate it better. He stated that if it is required that a person come to Town Hall to get a permit before they go door-to-door, it will allow us to know all the information about them and to know if there is an intent for criminal activity. Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to approve incorporating Pikeville's ordinance on peddlers with our ordinance. Alderman Spivey made a motion to approve it. Alderman Mozingo seconded it. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously. Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to approve adding a paragraph pertaining to prohibiting indoor furniture from being kept outside. Mayor Pro-tem Arits asked if there were a lot of inside furniture being kept outside. Chief Moats stated that there is quite a bit of it. Alderwoman Jones asked how the residents are informed that they are not allowed to have it. Chief Moats said that Officer Siemion does abatements and first he will try to contact them personally and then send them an official letter explaining the ordinance. He said if they have not removed the furniture within the allotted time, then the town will remove it. Alderman Mozingo asked who incurs the costs if the town removes the furniture. Chief Moats said that the owner of the property would pay all costs and it would be explained in the letter that would be sent to them. Alderman Ruffin stated that this used to be in the ordinance. Chief Moats said that we had researched the ordinance and it was not in there. Mayor Pro-tem Artis asked if this is associated with the furniture that is sitting out on the corner at the roadways. Chief Moats said that if it is set out to be picked up by the town, then that would fall under the Public Works Department. There was some discussion about addressing the issue of property being left by the road. Alderman Spivey made a motion to approve adding the paragraph pertaining to prohibiting indoor furniture from being kept outside. Alderman Mozingo seconded it. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Reports

Mayor Flowers asked Mrs. Aycock to give the financial report. Mrs. Aycock stated that Wayne Water District has gone up 5% each year since she has been here and is going up 5% in October and 5% in July so in the coming year they are going up 10%. Mayor Flowers stated that this is the 3rd year they have gone up 5% on their rates and we have increased our rates the 2nd year only. Mrs Aycock stated that the Department of Energy was going up .16 per kw. She stated that this is on the meter that comes in to Electricities that produces our power. She said that Goldsboro is looking at a 15% water and sewer hike. Alderman Ruffin stated that we need to revisit the budget before we adopt it. Mrs. Aycock stated that we can do budget amendments in July before it is incorporated to correct it. Alderman Spivey referenced the letter from the Department of Energy that stated that the June 2020 invoice will reflect the new rate of \$1.5424 kw. He asked if that rate has already been billed to Electricities and now trickled down to us. Mrs. Aycock said yes it has. Alderman Spivey commented that the solar panels are not helping the town and Mrs. Aycock agreed. Mayor Flowers stated that the only benefit we get is that the police department gets \$5,000 per year to monitor it. Mrs. Aycock said that she had gotten quotes for microphones for the Board Room, per Alderwoman Jones' request. There was some discussion about the need for microphones and how many we may need.

It was determined that Mrs. Aycock will get some more quotes and it will be addressed at the Special Called meeting.

Mayor Flowers asked Mr. Howell to give the Public Works Report. Mr. Howell showed pictures of yard debris at several different residences, which are not in compliance with our ordinances. Mayor Flowers stated that we should look at the ordinances and make some changes to how much the town will pick up. There was some discussion about how much it cost the town to pick up yard debris and if there should be a charge to the customer for the removal of the yard debris. Alderman Mozingo stated that he would like to know how much it cost the town to haul the debris off versus how much we charge the customer. He also asked if we could get a burn permit to burn the debris at the spray field. Mr. Howell stated that he has applied for a burn permit. Mayor Flowers pointed out the garbage financial report and showed that we are losing money on garbage and yard debris. There was more discussion about the cost and issues with the yard debris.

Mayor Flowers asked Mrs. Aycock to address the financial report that had a correction. Mrs. Aycock referenced the cash trending report and stated that the new report was corrected. She went over the report and explained that the setback is due to the COVID-19 and people not being able to pay their utility bill. There was some discussion about how many people and how much was owed on their utility bills. Alderwoman Jones asked Mrs. Aycock if there was any money that the town can receive to help with this issue and Mrs. Aycock said not that she knew of.

Mayor Flowers asked Chief Moats to give the police report. Chief Moats commented about the situation going on in the nation concerning the issues between law enforcement and the citizens, the affects it has had on our town, and how his department is handling it. He assured the board that his officer's care about the people in the town and there have been no complaints about them using excessive force. He stated that he is interested in police reform and he is currently going through the policy and procedure manual making sure it does not allow choke holds and that it has proper instructions on using tasers to conform to the federal government reform. He stated that all of his officers care about all the citizens and that they are well-rounded, respectable, and they make good sound decisions. Alderman Spivey stated that he thought that the biggest thing that came out of the prayer walk with the officers were that the majority of the people there saw them as human beings first and didn't see them as cops. Chief Moats stated that he has talked with his officers and explained the proper interactions with citizens, which is to listen, have respect and compassion, and to treat everybody equal.

Alderwoman Jones referenced an email that was sent by Mrs. Aycock concerning an incident that happened at the Speedway with employees. She has some concerns about the actions of employees when faced with possible altercations. Chief Moats stated that he has spoken with Mrs. Aycock and that they will be having some training with the Public Works staff to ensure that they understand the proper protocol when faced with different types of situations.

Alderman Ruffin asked Mr. Howell if he had the video of the sewer lines. Mrs. Aycock said that we do not have the video ready because we have more to do. Mr. Ruffin asked if they have checked the lines on Green Street and Mr. Howell said yes and that there were no lines.

Break

Mayor Flowers stated that we are going to have a break before going into Closed Session.

Closed Session

Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to go into Closed Session to discuss Closed Session minutes from May 19th meeting and a personnel issue. Alderman Spivey made a motion to go into Closed Session. Alderman Mozingo seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Action

Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to approve the Closed Session Minutes for the meeting of May 19, 2020. Alderman Spivey made a motion to approve the Closed Session Minutes for the meeting of May 19, 2020. Alderwoman Lewis made a second. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Flowers asked Alderwoman Jones to speak about the LGC letter. Alderwoman Jones stated that she would like to make a motion to table the discussion and response to the LGC letter until we get the final letter from Jimmy Overton. Alderman Ruffin seconded it. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Close Regular Board Meeting

Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to adjourn. Mayor Pro-tem Arits made a motion to adjourn. Alderwoman Lewis seconded it. All were in favor and motion passed unanimously.

W. Darron Flowers, Mayor

Shannon L. Daly, Town Clerk