



Minutes of Regular Town of Fremont Meeting

September 15, 2020

The regular meeting of the Board of Aldermen/Alderwomen for the Town of Fremont, NC was held at 6:30 p.m. on September 15, 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 Aycocock, Town Clerk Shannon Daly, Billing and Collections Clerk Vanessa Brooks, Public Works Director Tim Howell, Assistant Chief Greg Bottoms and Town Engineer Michael McAllister.

Quorum Present: Yes

Call to Order

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

Alderman Ruffin gave the invocation.

Alderwoman Lewis led all in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda

Mayor Flowers stated that he wanted to amend the agenda to add Delinquent Utility Billing under Action. Mayor Pro-tem Artis said she would like to add Work Sessions under Discussion. Alderman Ruffin said he would like to add Mosquito Spraying under Discussion. Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to approve the amended agenda. Alderman Spivey made a motion to approve the amended agenda. Alderwoman Lewis seconded it. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Public Comments

Mayor Flowers opened the meeting for Public Comments.

Durwood and Grace Daniels lives at 102 E. South Street. Mr. Daniels thanked the Board and staff for their part in helping with addressing and implementing the ordinances pertaining to Mr. Wooten's properties. He said it not only has helped him and Mr. Wooten, but it has helped the whole Town of Fremont.

Mayor Flowers closed Public Comments.

Approval of Minutes

Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to approve the minutes for the Regular Board Meeting of August 18, 2020. Alderman Spivey made a motion to approve the minutes for the Regular Board Meeting of August 18, 2020. Alderwoman Lewis seconded it. No discussion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Information

Mayor Flowers stated that the Planning Board Meeting Minutes for September 8, 2020 are attached in the agenda.

Mayor Flowers stated that Fall Cleanup will be October 12th – October 16th.

Discussion

Mayor Flowers welcomed Mrs. Aycock back and said that she was missed.

Mayor Flowers stated that we have always celebrated Trick-or-Treating and have followed Wayne County's schedule, but thought it should be discussed due to COVID-19. He asked if we had heard anything from Wayne County and Mrs. Brooks stated that she had talked with the City of Goldsboro and it had not been a decision made yet, but it should be determined by either the meeting of September 21st or October 5th. Mayor Flowers asked the Board what they would like to do. (See Action Section)

Mayor Flowers stated the next item is the North Carolina Community Development Block Grant. He stated that Mayor Pro-tem Artis sent an email out today, but that email was pertaining to the CARES Act, not this grant. He said he wanted to clarify that and say that we got \$20,000 from the CARES Act. He said the North Carolina Community Development Block Grant is from the Department of Commerce and it allows you to request up to \$900,000 for COVID-19 relief. He stated that Alderwoman Jones sent a copy of the Governor's letter about this grant to Mrs. Aycock and she formed a committee to work on the grant, which has met twice. He stated that we would work in conjunction with Norwayne Alumni, who is a 501 (c)(3) organization, to meet the needs of the community. Mayor Flowers asked Alderwoman Jones to speak about this grant. Alderwoman Jones stated that she had read where the governor had signed a bill for \$1.75 million dollars and the Town could receive up to \$900,000. She stated she contacted Mrs. Aycock to see if we could qualify for this money and Mrs. Aycock got in touch with Mr. McAllister and they began meeting, along with Mr. Larry Jones from Norwayne Alumni, to start putting things together for this grant. Mayor Flowers asked Mr. Jones if he would like to speak. Mr. Jones stated that he appreciated the opportunity to share in a partnership with the Town of Fremont. He said they see the opportunity that it can enhance the community in terms of serving the public and help with some financial issues that some of the population has created for the Town of Fremont. Mayor Flowers

stated that Mrs. Aycock was the driving force behind this and she stated that Norwayne Alumni will be the driver of this and we would be just tagging along. Mr. McAllister stated that this grant is up to \$900,000 and will need to be spent out within 30 months. He said that is was part of the CARES Act, which was a law (116-136) signed on March 27th for 27.5 million dollars. He stated that our town qualifies because the poverty rate is 56.7%. He said that before we can apply for this grant, we have to have two public hearings, which have to be advertised ten days in advance. He said that we are looking at September 28th and October 8th at 5:30. There was some discussion about how the money would be used for the town and who would be over distributing the money. Mayor Flowers pointed out that this grant is a competitive grant and we need to move on this quickly. (See Action Section)

Mayor Flowers stated that we have talked about the yard debris ordinance several times. Alderman Spivey said that he thought we were supposed to be having a workshop pertaining to the yard debris ordinance. After some discussion, it was determined that a workshop would be scheduled for October 15th at 6:00 and pizza would be served.

Mayor Flowers stated that the next item is the 4-Way Stop Sign on S. Sycamore Street and Norwayne Alumni Way. Alderman Ruffin stated that we need to have a public hearing and it was determined that a public hearing would be advertised for the next board meeting.

Mayor Flowers stated that the next item is the New Holland Power Star 100 Tractor. Mrs. Aycock stated that our tractor is about 22 to 23 years old and we are spending more on maintenance for that tractor than what a payment for a new tractor and sideboard would be. She stated that most likely a USDA Grant/Loan would be 55% grant and 45% loan. She said that if we got a 10 year loan it would cost \$4,080 yearly and if we got a 20 year loan it would cost \$2,040 yearly. She stated that right now USDA has the money available, but their fiscal year ends the end of October and if we wait until that time, there may not be any money available. Alderman Ruffin asked why there was only 1 bid and Mr. Howell said that we have 2 more bids coming in. Mayor Pro-tem Artis asked if this new tractor would fix the problems that we are having with ditches, and Mrs. Aycock said it should improve them. Mr. Howell said that the tractor we have now is a 6 foot reach and what we want to buy is a 16 foot reach. There was some discussion. (See Action Section)

Mayor Flowers asked Alderman Ruffin to speak about spraying for mosquitos. Alderman Ruffin asked about the mosquito sprayer and Mr. Howell stated that they still have it and that the schedule for spraying is from July to September. Alderman Ruffin asked if we have sprayed and Mr. Howell said no because they were having trouble with the sprayer, but it is working now. Mayor Flowers asked when can he spray and Mr. Howell said they try to spray two days a week. Mayor Pro-tem Artis asked if they could get the condition of the equipment, because she was unaware of problems with the tractor. Mr. Howell said that he could get them a list of the equipment and how old they are. He said the mosquito sprayer was given to us by the state about 25 years ago.

Action

Alderman Mozingo said he would like to make a motion to defer Trick-or-Treating to the next meeting. Alderwoman Lewis seconded it. Alderman Spivey asked if there was a

policy concerning Trick-or-Treating. He said he understood that we normally follow Wayne County's schedule, but he wanted to know does the Town of Fremont have their own written policy concerning Trick-or-Treating. Mrs. Aycock said that the Police Chief normally finds out the schedule from Wayne County and from the churches and then he puts out a schedule of the times, but she said she has not seen a policy pertaining to Trick-or-Treating. Mayor Flowers said that there is an ordinance on curfews for underage children that relates to Trick-or-Treating, but that's all that we have pertaining to it. He stated that this year is unique because of COVID-19 and that's why we are having a discussion about it. There was some discussion. Mayor Flowers asked if all were in favor of deferring it until the next meeting. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to have a public hearing on September 28th and October 8th at 5:30. Alderman Spivey made a motion. Alderman Mozingo seconded it. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Alderman Lewis made a motion to move forward with the process of applying for a USDA Grant/Loan for a tractor and sideboard. Alderman Spivey seconded it. Motion passed. Four were in favor: Alderman Jones, Alderman Spivey, Alderman Mozingo, and Alderman Lewis. Two opposed: Mayor Pro-tem Artis and Alderman Ruffin.

Mayor Flowers referenced an email that was sent by Mr. Walter House wanting to address the Board about splitting the cost for moving the power pole on the property they have purchased. Mr. Tony Stone, who is in partnership with Mr. House, stated that he wanted to compliment the staff. He said that the Board is fortunate to have the staff running the town and it has been a pleasure to work with a town like Fremont. He said that they were wanting to develop and build 4 houses on Moye Street, but originally there were two utility poles that needed to be moved. He said after talking with Mr. Howell, only one pole needs to be moved which will cost \$6,300. He is requesting the town to pay ½ the cost of relocating the utility pole. There was some discussion. Alderman Spivey made a motion to accept the proposal of paying ½ of the \$6,300 with the stipulation that if construction does not start within 120 days of relocating the utility pole, the Town will be reimbursed. Alderman Lewis seconded it. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Flowers commented that there was an issue with a citizen that had made a contract with the Town for their delinquent utility bill. He stated that the citizen did not pay the contract monthly amount; therefore, the contract was cancelled and the total balance was due. Also, their utilities were disconnected. He stated that he and Alderman Jones discussed this and decided to have the utilities turned back on until the Board could look at the issue. After much discussion, Alderman Ruffin suggested that we leave everything as is and bring it back to the table next meeting. Alderman Mozingo made a motion to keep the contract as is and if payment is not made within 24 hours, then the utilities need to be cut off. Alderman Ruffin seconded. Motion passed. Four were in favor: Alderman Spivey, Alderman Mozingo, Alderman Ruffin, and Alderman Lewis. Two opposed: Alderman Jones and Alderman Artis.

Reports

Mayor Flowers stated that there has been a lot of growth in the Town of Fremont over the past 24 months. There was some discussion about the new businesses which are the four houses being built on Moye Street, the new business in the old ACME building, a new Dollar General will be built next to the old one, Ormonds may move to the old Dollar General, the antique store and Grill on Main Street, a cleaning business on Goldsboro Street, possibly new houses on Pippin Street and possibly a new business in the old flower shop on Main Street.

Mrs. Aycock stated that the money that we are getting from the CARES Act will cover the expense of the new sound system and hopefully pay for a TV for the lobby area, so citizens can hear the meeting if they have to sit in the lobby.

Mayor Flowers stated that the Town received a plaque for Municipal Electric Safety Award for 2019. This award was for no lost workday cases and was given to us from Electricities.

Mayor Flowers asked Mr. Howell if he had anything to report for Public Works. Mr. Howell said he was having computer problems and he would like to wait until next meeting.

Mayor Pro-tem Artis asked who was doing the repair work on Norwayne Alumni Way. Mr. Howell said Brian Taylor. She stated there was a serious hole and maybe we need to put a cone there. She wanted to know when the repairs would be completed and Mrs. Aycock said right now he is working on Hillandale and they like to have several places to patch, because they have to have the concrete truck come. Alderman Ruffin asked how much the cost was and Mrs. Aycock said that the money is coming from FEMA.

Mayor Flowers asked Assistant Chief Bottoms if he had a police report. Assistant Chief Bottoms stated that the suspects, from the two break-ins, were taken into custody the night after our previous Board meeting and the majority of the property has been returned to the victims. He said that the 2018 GCC (Governor's Crime Commission) grant has finally come open and he is talking with the radio company in order to get the handheld units. He said that the 2019 award packet came in and they have sent it back last week and waiting on it to open up. He said that it appears that we are going to get the 2020 grant also.

Alderwoman Jones stated that there is a dog next door to her that is running loose and Assistant Chief Bottoms asked her to call the police department if she sees it running loose again. He stated that he would let the officers know to watch out for the dog.

Mrs. Brooks stated that the Fire Department won a Tri-County grant for \$8,000 and it will be used to repair the light tower on the SR8. She stated that this grant will cover the majority of the expense.

Mayor Pro-tem Artis asked Assistant Chief Bottoms if the phone calls came to his walkie talkies and he said that the calls come to the cell phones that are provided by the Town. He stated that after 5:00, the phone calls will go to the cell phone of the officer on duty. Mr. Howell said that if the officer doesn't answer then it goes to communications.

Alderman Spivey asked what the status was of selling the fire trucks. Mrs. Aycock said she had not heard anything and Mrs. Brooks said that Fire Chief Brooks has had a couple of people ask, but she could find out.

Close Regular Board Meeting

Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to adjourn. Alderwoman Lewis made a motion to adjourn. Alderman Spivey seconded it. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

W. Darron Flowers, Mayor

Shannon L. Daly, Town Clerk