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Minutes of Regular Town of Fremont Meeting

March 16, 2021

The regular meeting of the Board of Aldermen/Alderwomen for the Town of Fremont, NC was held at 6:30 p.m. on March 16, 2021. Present were:

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

Also in attendance were Town Clerk Shannon Daly, Chief Paul Moats, Assistant Chief Greg Bottoms, and Billing and Collections Clerk Vanessa Brooks.

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 suggested that items #1, #3, and #5 under discussion be deferred for discussion at the next budget workshop. Alderman Ruffin made a motion to keep the agenda as is with not changes. Mayor Pro-tem Artis seconded it. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

Mayor Flowers opened the meeting for Public Comment.

There were no public comments.

Mayor Flowers closed the meeting for Public Comment.

Approval of Minutes

Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to approve the minutes for the Regular Board meeting and Closed Session meeting of February 16, 2021, the Special Called meeting and Closed Session meeting of February 18, 2021, the Special Called meeting/Budget Workshop of March 2, 2021, and the Budget Workshop of March 9, 2021. Alderman Mozingo made a motion to approve the minutes. Alderwoman Lewis seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to approve the minutes for the Special Called meeting and the Closed Session meeting of February 15, 2021 and the Closed Session meeting of March 2, 2021. Alderman Ruffin made the motion to approve the minutes. Alderman Mozingo seconded it. Two members (Alderwoman Jones and Alderman Spivey) were absent from meeting, because they were candidates for the Town Administrator position, and did not vote. Motion passed unanimously.

Speaker

Mayor Flowers introduced the new Town Administrator, David Anthony Howell. He stated that he had an undergraduate degree from Mount Olive College and has been employed with the Wayne County School system. He asked Mr. David Howell to make a comment. Mr. David Howell thanked the Mayor, Mayor Pro-tem, and Aldermen/Alderwomen for the opportunity to work with the Town of Fremont. He gave a brief synopsis of what his plans were and the expectations that he had for the staff and the Town of Fremont. He stated that he was excited and looked forward to working with everyone. Mayor Flowers stated that Mr. David Howell will officially assume the responsibility as Town Administrator on Monday, March 22nd.

Mayor Flowers asked the speaker from Electricities to introduce himself. Mr. Jason Thigpen, Manager of System Operations with Electricities, introduced himself and stated that it was a privilege to be able to meet with the Board. He gave some information about Electricities and his responsibilities. He presented the Board with a packet of information pertaining to Interconnection Standards and explained it. Carlos Atherton, who owns property at 405 E. Main Street, stated that he would like to install solar panels on his home. There was some discussion and Mayor Flowers thanked Mr. Thigpen for taking the time to meet with the Board on this topic and stated that we needed to do some more research on solar panels before making a decision on allowing solar panels in Fremont.

Information

Mayor Flowers stated that there is a Proclamation for Week of the Young Child in the agenda packet for information only.

Mayor Flowers asked Alderwoman Jones to speak on the Proclamation for Women's History Month of 2021. Alderwoman Jones gave some information about this proclamation and stated that it speaks of women everywhere and she wanted to highlight women that have played a role in the Town of Fremont's administration. She stated that Diane Spellman was the first woman of color hired in the Administration's Department and served as the Town Clerk until her retirement, but still works part-time with the Town. She said that Barbara Aycock was the first and only woman hired to be the Town Administrator and served in that role for 7 years before retiring to fulfill a vacancy on the

Wayne County Board of Commissioners. She stated that Joyce Artis is the first and only woman of color serving in the role of Mayor Pro-tem, and she was elected to this position in December of 2019 and is in her second term as Alderwoman for District 4.

Mayor Flowers stated that there was a new business on Goldsboro Street, Extravagant Nails. Alderwoman Lewis stated that it was a nice business and that they do a good job. There was some discussion pertaining to the old S&W building being purchased.

Mayor Flowers stated that the University of Mount Olive is offering scholarships and the flyers are in the agenda.

Mayor Flowers stated that the Health Department agreed that Town Hall could accept applications for the COVID-19 vaccinations and transportation can be provided if needed. He stated that there has been very poor turnover and asked if the Board could get the word out. He explained that it is a simple process; the citizen fills out the application at Town Hall, the application is faxed to the Health Department, the Health Department will contact the citizen after approval to set-up the appointment, and then transportation will be provided if needed. He stated that this is a free service to the citizens. Alderwoman Jones stated that at the last meeting Alderman Spivey stated that the citizens would have to meet at a central location and Gateway bus would pick them up, take them to Goldsboro, and then bring them back to that location. She stated that there are two organizations, Norwayne Alumni and Friends and St. James Church of Christ, who are trying to do something locally to bring the vaccine to Fremont. She said they are not going through the Health Department, because the Health Department wants everyone to come to Dixie Trail for the vaccine. She said she has contacted UNC and Goshen and is waiting to hear back from them.

Discussion

Mayor Flowers stated that the next item is FEMA projects, which is old business. Mayor Pro-tem Artis pointed out that Mr. Tim Howell, the Public Works Director, nor Mr. Michael McAllister, the Town Engineer, are present to give an update on the FEMA projects. She asked Mrs. Daly if she had an estimate on the cost to complete the projects. Mrs. Daly stated that she has talked with Mr. Brian Taylor, the contractor, about all 3 projects. She said that Mr. Taylor stated that he was finished with South Street project except for the clean-up of the property. She said that Mr. Taylor will complete the clean-up, once it stops raining, and will move the equipment to Hillandale to complete what is left there. She said she has a detailed estimate that is broken down into the cost of covering the sewer lines and the cost of extending the pipe. She said that Mr. Taylor is waiting to be told what the Board would like him to do at Hillandale and once he is finished with that project, he will move on to Wayne Street. There was much discussion about what was completed on the projects and what was needed to complete the projects. Mr. Clark Howell, who lives at 511 N. Hillandale Drive, stated that he was told that the pipe would be extended to the end of his property by Mrs. Barbara Aycock. Alderman Ruffin suggested that the pipe be measured at Hillandale and compare that to the contract to make sure that it is correct. There was some discussion about how much money is left to be collected from FEMA. Alderman Spivey suggested that we allow Mr. Taylor to complete his work before making a decision. (See Action Item Section)

Mayor Flowers suggested that we defer item #2, Recognition Celebration for Town Administrator and/or Mrs. Barbara Aycock, until the end of the meeting so that we can see how much time we will have.

Mayor Flowers asked Alderman Ruffin to speak about the roads that need to be patched and/or paved which is old business. Alderman Ruffin stated that the employee that was supposed to have information about the roads is not attending the meeting. Mayor Flowers said that he had approved Mr. Tim Howell to be absent from the meeting and suggested that it can be discussed at the next budget workshop. There was some discussion about how many times the issue with roads has been addressed.

Mayor Flowers asked Mayor Pro-tem Artis to speak about the pine trees on Wayne Street. Mayor Pro-tem Artis passed around pictures of the driveway at 102 S. Aycock Street. She stated that Mr. and Mrs. Krell, who reside there, said that they purchased the house 2 years ago and were promised by Mr. Tim Howell that the trees on Green Street would be removed, because the roots had eaten up the driveway and they cannot use it. They have had to install a make shift drive on the other side of the home. Mayor Flowers asked if it was on Town property and is it affecting the electric lines. Alderwoman Annie stated that according to the pictures, the customer is responsible for the trees, not the Town. Mayor Pro-tem Artis stated that the customer was promised by Mr. Tim Howell that the Town would remove the trees. Mayor Flowers stated that he would like to hear both sides. Mayor Pro-tem Artis said that she was expecting Mr. Tim Howell to be here at the meeting. Mayor Flowers stated that we would try to have a response to the issue by Tuesday night at the budget workshop.

Mayor Flowers asked Alderwoman Lewis and Alderman Ruffin to speak about the ditches and drains. Alderwoman Lewis stated that the drain between her house and another ladies house on Ballance Road has water standing in it and needs to be cleaned out. She wanted to know if it was the Town's responsibility. It was discussed that it was a State Road and she would need to call the maintenance department at NCDOT. Alderman Ruffin stated that the culvert on Vance Street is stopped up and is causing flooding on S. Sycamore Street near Norwayne Alumni Building. He stated that the staff started cleaning the culvert but has not finished.

Action

Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to pay Mr. Taylor \$1,800 to cover the sewer lines at Hillandale. Alderman Mozingo made the motion to pay Mr. Taylor \$1,800 to cover the sewer lines. Alderman Ruffin seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously. Alderman Mozingo made a motion to defer making a decision to extend the pipe at Hillandale until further investigation. There was some discussion about having the information together by the budget workshop on March 23rd and having Mr. Tim Howell and possibly Mr. Brian Taylor attend the workshop. Alderman Ruffin seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Flowers said the next item is Deputy Finance Officer. Mayor Pro-tem Arits agreed with Alderman Spivey when he stated that it is very important to appoint a Deputy Finance Officer, because ours has been out a lot. Mayor Flowers stated that he would recommend to allow the new Town Administrator to be involved in that decision. Mayor Pro-tem Artis stated that the position is appointed by the Board. There was some discussion about the importance of having someone available to fill in for the Finance

Officer if she is out and not able to fill her obligations. Mayor Flowers stated that he is going to defer that to the new Town Administrator.

Mayor Flowers suggested that the next budget workshop be scheduled for next Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. He stated that Jimmy Overton, the accountant would be able to attend and he would have the complete budget for the Board. Alderman Mozingo stated that he would not be able to attend the workshop.

Reports

Mayor Flowers asked Chief Moats to give the police report. Chief Moats stated that there are no major incidents to report over the past month.

Mayor Pro-tem Artis stated that there is normally a financial report included the agenda packet and wanted to know why there was not one in this month's agenda packet. Mrs. Daly said that she thought Ms. Rhodes was going to have one prepared for the Board, but Ms. Rhodes did not give her one to include in the agenda packet.

Closed Session

Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to go into closed session for a personnel issue. Alderman Spivey made the motion. Alderman Mozingo seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Close Regular Board Meeting

Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to adjourn. Alderman Mozingo 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