



Minutes of Regular Town of Fremont Meeting

June 15, 2021

The regular meeting of the Board of Aldermen/Alderwomen for the Town of Fremont, NC was held at 6:30 p.m. on June 15, 2021. Present were:

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

Also in attendance were Town Administrator Tony Howell, Town Clerk Shannon Daly, Finance Officer Cindy Rhodes, Public Works Director Tim Howell, Assistant Chief Greg Bottoms, Town Accountant Jimmy Overton and Town Attorney Brian Pridgen.

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 asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Mayor Pro-tem Artis wanted to amend the agenda to include the District 3 Board Seat as item #5 under discussion. Alderwoman Jones seconded it. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Public Hearing

Mayor Flowers opened the meeting for Public Hearing concerning the 2021-2022 Budget.

There were no comments.

Mayor Flowers closed the meeting for Public Hearing

Special Presentation

Mayor Flowers presented Nancy and Rachel Evans with the resolution naming the NC 221/I-95 Bridge in honor of Mayor Andy Evans. Mrs. Nancy Evans and Ms. Rachel Evans thanked the Board and staff for their support. Mr. Tim Howell shared his thoughts and feelings for Mayor. Andy Evans.

Approval of Minutes

Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to approve the minutes for the Regular Board Meeting of May 18, 2021. Alderman Spivey made the motion. Alderwoman Jones seconded it. Mayor Pro-tem Artis stated that on the last page it states that Mayor Pro-tem Artis asked Assistant Chief Greg Bottoms to give the police report. She said that she did not say this. Also, she asked what the heading meant after Closed Session that says Motion from Closed Session made in Open Session Voting by Mr. Tony Howell. Mrs. Rhodes said that Mr. Tony Howell had written the minutes from Closed Session. It was determined that Mayor Pro-tem Artis would be changed to Mayor Flowers and Voting by Mr. Tony Howell would be deleted. Mayor Flowers stated that he would like to thank Mayor Pro-tem Artis for presiding over the meetings during his absence and understood that she did a good job. Mayor Flowers asked Alderman Spivey and Alderwoman Jones if they agreed to the corrections and they said yes. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to approve the minutes for the Closed Session Meeting of May 18, 2021. Mayor Pro-tem Artis stated that Mr. Tim Howell was in the Closed Session Meeting, but was not listed on the minutes and he should be added. Alderman Spivey made the motion. Alderwoman Jones seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to approve the minutes for the Special Called Meeting of May 25, 2021. Alderwoman Jones made the motion. Alderman Spivey seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Information

Mayor Flowers stated that there is a new business at 127 E. Main Street. Mr. Tony Howell stated that Vintage Real Estate, LLC, which is a general contractor, bought the property at 127 E. Main Street. He said that as of now we do not know what type of business will be going in there, but once we do, we will inform the Board.

Mayor Flowers commented on the new construction going on all around Fremont. He stated that there are 10 houses on Hooks Road under construction and it appears that they are going to expand. He said that there are around 80 houses South West of Fremont that will be constructed, as well as 4 houses on Moye Street and 4 houses on 222. He said that we need to be aware of these houses and how they affect our electric, water, and sewer services.

Speaker

Mayor Flowers asked Mr. Pridgen to speak about the Ordinance amending the Town's Zoning Code. Mr. Pridgen stated that the State Legislature has required all municipalities

and counties to come into compliance with some state level changes concerning the zoning laws. He said they have created a new chapter in the General Statues that include updating old terminology and conflicting laws in regards to court cases, over the last 20 years. He said that these changes must be incorporated into our Zoning Ordinances by July 1, 2021. He said the changes are only administrative and procedural changes and does not affect zoning of any property in town. He said that he has incorporated the changes into our Zoning Ordinances and needs the Board to approve them. He stated that if the Board would like, they could combine the Board of Adjustment and the Planning Board. He said that the Board could decrease the number of members, making it easier to have a quorum for meetings and suggested 3 in town members and 2 ETJ members. Mayor Flowers asked Mr. Johnny Pippin, the Chairman of the Planning Board, for comments. Mr. Pippin stated that he understood the changes to the zoning ordinances and was in agreeance with combining both Boards and decreasing the number of members. There was some discussion. (See Action Item)

Discussion

Mayor Flowers stated that the next item is the FEMA projects which is old business. Mr. Tony Howell stated that the last project to be completed is on E. Wayne Street. He stated that there is \$33,730 remaining for this project. He said he has several quotes; one from T.A. Loving for \$102,100, another from J. Smith Civil for \$104,950, and the lowest bid from Brian Taylor for \$33,730. There was discussion about the huge difference in bids. Mayor Pro-tem Artis asked that Mr. Pridgen look at the previous contract between the Town and Mr. Taylor. (See Action Item)

Mayor Flowers asked Mr. Tony Howell to speak about pine trees on Wayne Street. Mr. Tony Howell stated that Hubble Directional Following has signed the contract and will be working on removing the trees next week. It was discussed that there will be 4 trees removed at the cost of \$4,300. The reason for the 4 trees being removed is because they have torn up the road and driveway, and it was promised to Mr. and Mrs. Krell, 3 years ago, that they would be removed.

Mayor Flowers asked Mr. Tony Howell to speak about solar panels. Mr. Tony Howell stated that he has had some discussion with Electricities and he is recommending to the Board to have a committee to further review an interconnection agreement for our citizens. He has asked Alderman Spivey, Mr. Tim Howell, Mr. Ray Bostic, and Mrs. Daly to be part of this committee to ensure that we have covered everything; and to come up with a plan to present to the Board. He said there will be a meeting on July 7th with Electricities and we should have some information for the Board at the next Board meeting.

Mayor Flowers asked Mayor Pro-tem Aris to speak about the District 3 vacancy. Mayor Pro-tem Artis asked if we have received an official resignation from the District 3 Seat. Mr. Tony Howell said that yes we had. Mayor Pro-tem Artis asked the Board how they would like to handle filling this position. It was determined that we would follow the same procedure as we had when we filled the District 2 Seat. Mayor Flowers stated that the information on the District 3 Seat should be included on the agenda at the next Board meeting.

Action

Alderwoman Jones made a motion to approve the changes to the Zoning Ordinance and to combine the Board of Adjustment and Planning Board to be 5 members. Alderman Spivey seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Alderman Ruffin made a motion to accept Mr. Taylor's quote of \$33,730 to do the job on E. Wayne Street with the stipulation that he has the authority to modify the proposal if needed. Alderwoman Jones seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to approve the 2021-2022 Budget. Alderman Spivey made the motion. Alderwoman Jones seconded it. Alderman Ruffin asked Mr. Overton to give an account to the changes that have been made over the past month. Mr. Overton said that he would give a summary of the budget. He stated that the General Fund was \$1,011,801; the Fire Department Fund was \$124,243; the Water/Sewer Fund was \$1,373,647; and the Electric Fund was \$1,610,959. He said that the increases were .01 for property tax, 5% for water and 17.5% for sewer. He said that there were no changes to the electric and garbage rates. He said for the Fund Balance he added \$4,600 debt service for the tractor loan. He said he added \$6,100 to the General Fund to cover the additional debt services. He said there was a transfer from the Water Fund to the General Fund of \$74,681 to reimburse the General Fund for administrative services and \$45,000 transferred from the Electric Fund to the General Fund. He said that the Town is contributing \$17,772 to the Fire Department. There was a position in the water department that was eliminated and another position in Public Works that was taken out of the budget. He said the budget is in balance and complies with the NC General Statutes and if approved by the Board, we will need to send a copy to the LGC. Mayor Pro-tem Artis asked which two positions were eliminated. Mr. Tim Howell said one in the water department and one in the sewer department. Mr. Overton said that there is \$30,000 left over in the Water Fund to transfer to the Fund Balance. He said that the rate increases will go into effect July 1st. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to cancel the Budget meeting on June 29th. Alderman Spivey made the motion. Alderwoman Lewis seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Reports

Mayor Flowers asked Ms. Rhodes to give the Financial Reports. Ms. Rhodes stated that the Financial Reports show what we billed in March and what we collected in April. She said that she included explanations of some of the totals at the bottom of the report and asked if there were any questions from the Board. Mayor Pro-tem Artis asked if the title was correct, because last month it stated March Billed and April Collected. Ms. Rhodes said that it was a mistake and it should say April Billed and May Collected. She stated she has the cash balances for each account. There was some discussion about the GASB Reports and the surplus on the sewer accounts. Ms. Rhodes said the surplus is because she paid two bills last month.

Mayor Flowers asked Mr. Tim Howell to give the Public Works Report. Mr. Tim Howell stated that the surplus list (1985 Mobile Sweeper, 1989 580K Case Back Hoe, 2004 Ford Crown Vic, 2006 Ford Crown Vic, and 185 pieces of 6' PVC pipe) are items that are surplus and that we have gotten 1 bid on each of them. Mr. Tony Howell said that we have received the funds for the PVC pipe today in the amount of \$3,700 and we have

gotten a verbal bid for \$400 for the 2 police cars and sweeper. Alderman Ruffin asked if there would be a problem with a Board member bidding on these items. Mr. Pridgen said that the Board could bid as long as they are not involved in the process, but it is recommended that you don't, because it appears that there could be a conflict of interest. There was discussion about the new tractor needing to be fixed, due to the pressure valve to the mower being wrong; and concern about the tractor being exposed to the outside elements without a cover or it being housed in the garage. There was discussion about the grapple truck being down but now it is fixed. Mayor Flowers gave Ms. Lucille Jones, a citizen, an opportunity to speak. Ms. Lucille Jones stated that the park equipment needs to be fixed and the trash cans need to be emptied at MLK Park. Mr. Tim Howell said that he will make sure the public works employees start emptying the trash cans. Mr. Tim Howell said that we need to decide how to spend the Electricities Betterment Funds for \$5,000. He said it has to be used for electric purposes only. Mayor Flowers said that if there is no objections he would like Mr. Tony Howell to make a recommendation to the Board. Mr. Tim Howell said that the water tank is due for an interior washout inspection in July, which we have a contract for.

Mayor Flowers asked Assistant Chief Greg Bottoms to give the Police Report. Assistant Chief Greg Bottoms stated that there are no major incidents to report over the last month. He said that his department is aware that July 4th is coming up and are prepared for it. He said they did have a call for fireworks this past weekend and they were in compliance with state law. He said that the last grant that he has applied for is progressing as normal and he is anticipating that he will receive those funds, but will know for sure within the next few months. Mayor Flowers stated that there are some issues around town with grass not being cut and that this needs to be addressed. Assistant Chief Greg Bottoms said that he will get with the Code Enforcement Officer to discuss the concerns, but there have been some letters sent out concerning this according to our Ordinances. Mayor Flowers suggested that they look at the corner of Dock and Moye Street. Assistant Chief Greg Bottoms said that they are aware of this issue and it is being addressed. Alderman Spivey stated that he has seen the County Sheriffs' presence quite a bit in Fremont. Assistant Chief Greg Bottoms stated that they have calls outside of Fremont and sometimes they have to come through Fremont to get to the calls. He stated that they also come through to handle civil processes. Alderman Spivey thanked Assistant Chief Greg Bottoms for all that his department does.

Closed Session

Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to go into Closed Session for a personnel issue. Alderman Spivey made the motion. Alderwoman Jones seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Open Session

Mayor Flowers asked for a motion. Alderwoman Lewis made a motion to waive the water and sewer usage on the Fremont Rest Center account. Alderman Spivey seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Pro-tem Artis stated that something needs to be put in place for when there is a concern and the Public Works Director doesn't address it; and asked who should be responsible. Mayor Flowers stated that if Mr. Tim Howell doesn't address it, then the concern needs to go to Mr. Tony Howell.

Alderman Ruffin stated that there needs to be a written policy on how to handle water leaks in the future and asked Mr. Tony Howell to have something in writing for the Board to approve at the next Board Meeting.

Close Regular Board Meeting

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

W. Darron Flowers, Mayor

Shannon L. Daly, Town Clerk