



Minutes of Regular Town of Fremont Meeting

July 19, 2022

The regular meeting of the Board of Aldermen/Alderwomen for the Town of Fremont, NC was held at 6:00 p.m. on July 19, 2022. Present were:

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

Also in attendance were Town Administrator Tony Howell, Town Clerk Shannon Daly, Public Works Director Brian Harvey, Assistant Chief Greg Bottoms, and Town Engineer Michael McAllister.

Quorum Present: Yes

Call to Order

Mayor Flowers called the meeting to order at 6:00 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. Mayor Pro tem Artis made a motion to approve the agenda. Alderwoman Jones seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Mayor Flowers asked if there were any corrections to be made to the minutes. Alderwoman Jones said that on the second page of the June 21, 2022 minutes, principles needs to be changed to principals. Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to approve the Regular Board Meeting minutes of June 21, 2022 with the correction and the Recessed Board Meeting minutes of June 22, 2022. Mayor Pro tem Artis made the motion. Alderwoman Lewis seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Alderwoman Jones stated that she did not understand a sentence on the second page of the June 22, 2022 Closed Session Meeting minutes. Mrs. Daly stated that the sentence she was referring to was an exact quote. Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to approve the Closed Session Meeting minutes of June 22, 2022. Alderwoman Jones made the motion. Alderman Ruffin seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Speaker

Mayor Flowers asked Pastor Shannon Marie Berry to speak. Pastor Shannon Marie Berry thanked the Board for asking Fremont Methodist Church to host the State of the Town Address, which was on June 28th. She said that she would like to offer the fellowship hall for Town events if there was a need for it. She stated that she had spoken with Mrs. Daly and wanted to offer her services to help the Town be accessible to everyone. She said she would be happy to video the Board meetings for livestreaming, set up our Facebook page to be able to monitor the comments before they are posted, show us how to post to Instagram, and update our website. The Board thanked her for her offering her technology services and Mayor Flowers said that Mr. Howell will be in touch with her to discuss how she can help the Town.

Mayor Flowers asked Mr. Craston Artis to speak. Mr. Artis stated that there are many opportunities in Fremont, such as, the CDBG grants, real estate development, 795 corridor and engaging with Electricities about economic development. He gave some background about himself and stated that he would like to help Fremont come up with a plan to go forward and map out what needs to happen multiple years down the road. There was some discussion and Mayor Flowers stated that Mr. Howell will stay in touch with him.

Mayor Flowers asked Michael McAllister to speak. Mr. McAllister stated that we were awarded a 4.5 million dollar grant for sewer rehab that will cover several issues that we are having in the Town, such as the manholes, pump stations, etc. Mayor Flowers stated that we were told that we had been awarded \$150,000 for sewer and \$150,000 for water. Mr. McAllister said yes we did and he said they are in the process of locating all the manholes, mapping out the water system and fire hydrants. He said they will do flow testing and create a hydraulic model for the water system, which we have never had and that should help identify some of the problems. He said all of that will feed back into this grant, because he will use the data that is collected for the sewer rehab.

Mr. McAllister stated that only 1/3 of the property that the school is being built on is in the Town limits and the rest of it is not. He said that we need to set a public hearing for next month to annex the rest of the property. He said we will also need to re-zone it after we annex it. (See Action Item)

Public Comment

Mayor Flowers opened the meeting for public comment.

Hazel Lewis who resides at 305 Norwayne Alumni Way, had concerns about the ditch, that runs from the Rest Home to Dock Street, needing to be cleaned. She also had concerns about the trees on Dock Street.

Mayor Flowers closed the meeting for public comment.

Action

Public Hearing for Annexation for School Property

Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to have a public hearing on August 16th to annex the Fremont Stars Elementary School property. Alderman Spivey made the motion. Alderwoman Lewis seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Fremont Cemetery

Mayor Flowers asked Alderman Ruffin to speak about the Fremont Cemetery. Alderman Ruffin stated that we have rules and regulations that govern both Fremont and Elmwood Cemeteries. He said that Fremont Cemetery is not abiding by the rules and regulations and he wants the Public Works Department to clean up the Cemetery. He said it looks like a mini dump and he instructed Mr. Harvey to clean it up. Mr. Harvey stated that he knew how sensitive cemeteries are to family members. Alderman Ruffin told Mr. Harvey to do his part and they would take care of the families. Mr. Harvey said that he understood and he would enforce the Ordinances going forward. Alderwoman Jones pointed out Cemetery Ordinance §93.03 Obstructions on Cemetery Lots; Lot Trenches, Etc. Prohibited. She said that she has observed that people have put little fences around their loved ones, homemade tombstones, a baby crib, etc. on the cemetery graves. She said that we may need to try to contact them and let them know that this is not acceptable and to remove them, if not, the Town will remove them. Alderman Spivey asked if we could charge a fee for maintenance of the cemetery plots and it was determined that this is something that we can look into.

Town Fees

Mayor Flowers asked Mr. Howell to speak about the Town Fees. Mr. Howell said that we have a list of current fees and the proposed fees. He stated that the proposed fees was a suggestion from Mr. McAllister and Mr. Harvey and he recommended that the Board approve these changes. There was some discussion and it was determined that this be tabled until the next Board meeting.

Harrell Street Contract

Mr. Howell stated that a developer would like to install an alternative sewer system on Harrell Street to facilitate three houses. He said that at the last meeting the Board wanted to see a contract and he, Mr. McAllister, and Mr. Pridgen put together a contract and he is recommending the Board to approve the contract. Alderman Ruffin asked to put the addresses on the contract. Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to approve the contract and agreement made and entered into this the 19th day of July, 2022 by and between Lee Building & Electrical, LLC and Town of Fremont. Alderman Ruffin made the motion. Alderman Spivey seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Swimming Pool

Mr. Howell said that the Fremont Town and Country Swim Club is no longer in service and the pool is vacant. He said the pool is dilapidated and the Town has been maintaining the grounds for years. He said the County is foreclosing in August on the property because of back taxes of \$5,218.85. He said if we do not want the property, once it is foreclosed, then it would be owned by the County and the Town. He said the most the Town would have to pay would be \$1,625 for closing cost and administrative fees. He said the property is over 1 acre and there are a few options the Town would have for the property. He said if we acquired the property, we would immediately make it safe and wanted to know if the Board wanted to move forward in obtaining the property. There

was some discussion and it was determined that Mr. Howell will find out if there are any liens on the property and get some bids on removing the concrete.

Ordinance Change

Mayor Flowers asked Mrs. Daly to speak about the ordinance changes. Mrs. Daly explained the issues with the garbage and recycling cans. She asked the Board to consider changing the Garbage and Rubbish Ordinance and the Recycling Ordinance to state that after 1 written warning a \$25 penalty will be charged to the customer. Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to approve the changes presented to Chapter 50: Garbage and Rubbish (§50.18 Penalty) and Chapter 51: Recycling (§51.99 Penalty). Alderman Spivey made the motion. Alderwoman Futrelle seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Property Bid on 608 S. Goldsboro Street

Mayor Flowers asked Mrs. Daly to speak about the bid on 608 S. Goldsboro Street. Mrs. Daly stated that there was a bid for \$5,000 on this property and the tax value is \$2,750. She said that she has contacted the Board members for their approval of the bid, but she would like to have a motion so that it will be in the records as an acceptable bid. Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to approve the \$5,000 bid on 608 S. Goldsboro Street. Alderwoman Jones made a motion that the bid for \$5,000 for 608 S. Goldsboro Street, Fremont, be accepted. Alderwoman Lewis seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Security during Board Meetings

Mayor Pro tem Artis made a motion to purchase a metal detector wand for the Town Hall. Alderwoman Lewis seconded it. Alderman Ruffin suggested that we put up signs to notify the people and Assistant Chief Bottoms said that they can do that. Alderwoman Futrelle said this needs to be done before our next meeting. Alderman Spivey asked who is paying for it because it was not an item in our budget. Alderwoman Jones stated that it is such a small amount of money that she feels that it is immaterial. Mayor Flowers asked for all that was in favor of the motion raise your hands. Five were in favor: Mayor Pro tem Artis, Alderwoman Lewis, Alderwoman Jones, Alderwoman Futrelle, and Alderman Ruffin. One opposed: Alderman Spivey. Motion passed by majority. Mayor Flowers suggested that we have a policy and procedure for using the wand and Assistant Chief Bottoms said that he will look into getting a policy for this. Alderman Spivey said that the only reason why he is opposed to it is because there are a lot of unanswered questions. Mayor Flowers asked that the Police Department give them further direction at the next Board Meeting.

Contract for Auditor

Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to continue the contract with our current auditor. Alderwoman Jones made a motion that we hire Petway, Mills and Pearson to perform the audit for the year end of June 30, 2022 if allowed by the LGC. Alderwoman Futrelle seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

New Hire Pay and Raise for Two Employees

Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to approve \$17 per hour for the new hire and to authorize Mr. Harvey to split the \$1 per hour allocated between the two employees. Mayor Pro tem Artis made the motion. Alderwoman Futrelle seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Reports

Financial Report

Mayor Flowers asked Mrs. Daly to give the Financial Reports. Mrs. Daly went over the May Billed and June Collected and Expenses Financial Report. She said that she had spoken with the Finance Officer, Mrs. Nichols, and stated that all of the expenses and revenues for June had not been put in the system; therefore, the numbers were off. She said this is the reason why she did not fill in the entire report, because she did not have updated information. Alderman Spivey asked if she knew if June's bank statement had been reconciled and Mrs. Daly said that she did not think that so.

Public Works Report

Mayor Flowers asked Mr. Harvey to give the Public Works report. Mr. Harvey gave his report. The following was the report:

1. Repairs: Repaired water leak on chestnut. Installed meter to Goldsboro for sewer, expect electrical hook-up by the end of the month. Repaired service line to Methodist church, limb fell on it. C. Howell property drainage repair-monitoring.
2. Projects: Water taps for Owens Farm road and Davis Mill rd.
Pikeville cemetery water fountain.
Electric installation on Owens Farm rd, custom install quote in work.
Electric three phase installation out to Fremont Meadows-two phase's ntb extended out to new development. Approx cost 35-40K. Potential hidden costs- removal of pecan tree, underground primary, property easement/rental, transformers for lift station.
New School- sewer line cap, transformers for school and lift station, property lighting plan.
Spray field inspection complete, passed. Potential hidden costs going forward, soil samples, tree removal, seeding, fertilizer, cutting and removal of hay.
Power line tree trimming.
Baseball fields bathroom repairs.
Wayne and Aycock drainage.
Goshen drainage.
Sewer clean out 10%.
Storm water drainage cleanout- \$250.00/hr.
Radio read meters for water usage- \$150.00/meter.

Mayor Flowers asked when did we know that we were responsible for the transformers for the new school and Mr. Harvey said two weeks ago. Mr. Howell said that we are in contact with the school about them paying some or all of the cost, so it's not an absolute that we will have to incur these costs. Mayor Flowers said that we should not get involved in this, because we were not aware of these costs, nor did we approve these costs. He said our budget cannot handle these large amounts. Mr. Harvey said that they are working on getting the information concerning the transformer, which will be forwarded to the school board and hopefully it will be a pass through cost. He said that

the public works crew has been working for the last two weeks on moving the power lines to make room for the driveway to the school.

Mr. Harvey said that we passed the inspection on the Spray field; however, there were two concerns that the state has. He said one being the trees that are growing on the berms and the other one is the soil samples that we did not ensure that was taken in 2021. He said the last soil sample that was taken was in December of 2020 and according to our permit, we are to make sure soil samples are taken every year. He said that we are going to have a written contract with whomever that is going to take care of our Spray field, which will include soil samples, cutting and removing hay, etc., that have been done by handshakes in the past. He said we could take the soil samples ourselves, but either way we have to have a record of them and instead of waiting until December to do them, they are going to do them in October. He said the trees will be cut in the winter, because there are less dangers of yellow jackets and snakes, plus there will be no leaves on the trees and it will be easier to remove them.

There was some discussion about hiring someone that has a vacuum truck company to clean out the storm water drains and the culverts with a jetrod truck. He said that King's Plumbing charges \$250 per hour. Mayor Flowers asked how many lines we have and Mr. Harvey said he wasn't sure, but he guessed about 75. He said that all of them would not have to be cleaned out, but doesn't know exactly how many.

There was some discussion about changing out the water meters with radio read meters. He said that he has six in stock and would like to keep those in case we have an emergency and need them.

Mr. Harvey stated that there are some old trash cans that residents have that are being used for yard debris. He said that they cannot lift the cans up and empty them in the grapple truck, so they have to dump it on the ground and then get it up with the grapple truck. He said there are about 25 people that have them and he would like to get rid of them so that there is one way to operate and wanted the Board to know before he picks them up. He said he would also like the residents to put the yard debris in a pile in their yard next to the road and not in the road.

Mayor Pro tem Artis asked who was going to pick up the cost for the electric three phase installation at Fremont Meadows. Mr. Harvey said that the Town would not be responsible for this cost. Mr. McAllister said that he has given the developer the information and he has had no pushback from them and they are moving forward with getting permits to begin construction. Mr. McAllister said that he would call the developer tomorrow to make sure there is no problem and we should begin to see some dirt moving in about three months.

There was some discussion about the water fountain in Pikeville and it was said that we have a water line that runs through Pikeville that they can use.

There was some discussion about Goshen drainage and Mr. Harvey said that it would cost a lot of money to fix and maybe we can find some grant money that can help pay for it.

Police Report

Mayor Flowers asked Assistant Chief Greg Bottoms to give the police report. Assistant Chief Bottoms stated that there have been several incidents with businesses on Main Street. He said the Post Office and the old hardware store has had some windows damaged from citizens propping up their bikes on the windows. He said the building next to the bar, which is owned by the House of Furniture, had a window damaged deliberately by an individual. He said that warrants have been taken out and the owner has been informed. He said at the sweepstakes store, the owner had a family member that has autism and he had an episode and punched a window out. He said all of these windows have been either fixed or boards have been put up. He said there are some issues with the bar, but the Police Department has been advising them of the changes needed that will aide them in being able to run their business effectively. He said the calls of service has been up and he feels that this is because of it being the first year that the restrictions from COVID have been removed and people are out and about more. He said there have not been any major incidents in the past month.

Alderwoman Jones stated that maybe we can take a parking spot and put in a bike rack for people to park their bikes. There was some discussion about the Town having a bike rack years ago and Mr. Harvey said that he will check to see if he can find it.

Mayor Flowers asked if the Sherriff's Department comes to Fremont do they inform our Police Department. Assistant Chief Bottoms stated that not always and the Sherriff's Office has jurisdiction throughout the whole County. He said they can go anywhere in the County, they can make traffic stops, they can do any investigations that the chose to do throughout the County.

Recess

Mayor Flowers stated that they will have a five minute recess.

Discussion

Security during Board Meetings

Mayor Flowers asked Mayor Pro tem Artis to speak about security during Board Meetings. Mayor Pro tem Artis explained that the county offices have metal detectors for security and wanted to know how the Board felt about having a metal detector wand. There was some discussion. (See Action Item)

Professional Services

Mayor Flowers asked Alderman Spivey to speak about professional services. Alderman Spivey stated that in many meetings the issues with professional services has come up and it's in several places in our accounting codes; administrative, water and sewer, and electric. He said he did not know the extent of what professional services entailed so he asked Mrs. Daly to print out a list of these services. He went over the list and asked how many contracts for professional services have not come before the Board for approval. He stated that the Board should approve all contracts, but instead they are finding out that things have been done by a handshake. He said he would like to be as transparent as possible and know who we have contracts with and they should be written contracts that are approved by the Board. He said he would keep the Board informed as he finds out more information.

Board Retreat

Alderman Spivey stated that they had talked about a Board Retreat back in February or

March. There was some discussion and it was determined that Alderman Spivey will check on the availability of Capital Café for the Board Retreat.

Ordinance §96.04 Property to be Kept Clean or Free

Mayor Flowers asked Alderwoman Lewis to speak about the ordinance. Alderwoman Lewis said that there is a lot of work that needs to be done on the south end of Town. There was some discussion about residents not taking care of their property.

Ditch on S. Goldsboro Street

Alderwoman Lewis had concerns about the ditch on S. Goldsboro Street. She said someone could run off in the ditch because the road is narrow and they may not be paying attention. Mr. Harvey said that they have put some rock in the ditch in the past, but there are quite a few storm water ditches that need some re-engineering work that will be expensive. Alderman Ruffin stated that they had, in the past, put reflectors in the ditch on Norwayne Alumni Way to warn people and he suggested to do the same at the ditch on S. Goldsboro Street. Mayor Flowers stated that this issue needs to be handled by Mr. Harvey.

Fremont Elementary School

Mr. Howell said that they are negotiating the cost concerning the unforeseen costs. Mayor Flowers said that we should not have any other financial responsibility except for the basic connections for the sewer, water, and electric. He said they may want us to have other financial responsibilities, but we should say no and several Board members agreed. He said that only about 15% to 20% of children that will be going to the school will be from Fremont; and the other 80% to 85% will be coming from other areas. He said that Fremont should not have any more of a financial responsibility than the other 80% to 85% have and he has no problem saying that. Mr. Harvey said that he thinks that we should cap off and move the sewer back, because if we don't we will be paying for the water that overflows into it. Mayor Flowers agreed

Contract on Rescue Building

Mr. Howell referenced the contract that was in the agenda packet and stated that at the last meeting, he was asked to check with our attorney to make sure that the Rescue building would revert back to the Town, once the building is vacated. He said that the last time he talked with Mr. Lassiter, they will be out by the end of September. He said that we have spent \$800 on insurance for the building to make sure it would be covered until the end of the year. He said according to Mr. Pridgen, the contract states that the building will come back to the Town, and he is checking to make sure there are no liens on the property. He said Fire Chief Brooks had stated that he would like to use the building for the Fire Department to house some of the fire trucks and Mr. Pridgen stated that could be possible because the Fire Department is one of the Town's departments. Mayor Pro tem Artis asked if the Fire Department pays for utilities and Mr. Howell said no they don't and Mayor Pro tem Artis said then the Town would have to pay for the utilities on the building and Mr. Howell said that is correct.

Grant Writer for Downtown Revitalization

Mr. Howell stated that he did some investigating on grants and he contacted a grant writer that writes grants for Fire Chief Brooks. He said that this person does not get paid unless we are awarded the grant and it would be 2% of the awarded grant. He said that she thinks a good grant for us is the Rural Transformation Grant which includes downtown revitalization, and community enhancement for economic growth. He said this grant would cover the expenses of installing a charging station for electric cars. He said that he has sent a letter to the property owner on Hwy 117 to see if he would like to sell the property, because this may be a good location for the charging station, but he hasn't heard anything from him yet. He said that the grant will be 100% funded and that we can apply in December. He said he can get a contract from the grant writer for the Board to approve. There was some discussion about having a grant administrator

Mr. Howell asked the Board if they would approve Mrs. Pearson as our auditor to complete our audit for the fiscal year of 2022. There was some discussion. (See Action Item)

Alderman Lewis stated that we need to put a sign with park hours at the MLK Park.

Alderman Ruffin said that he would like signs put up at the cemeteries and stated that he would get the correct wording to Mr. Howell to have the signs made.

Mr. Howell asked Mr. Harvey if he wanted to speak about the new hire salary and the raises for current employees. Mr. Harvey wanted to make sure the Board was in agreeance to paying the new hire \$17 per hour and giving two employees a 50 cent per hour raise. Mayor Pro tem Artis asked if the Board had approved \$18 an hour for the new hire and he wanted to give the new hire \$17 per hour and take the other \$1 and divide it up between two employees and Mr. Harvey said that was correct. Mr. Harvey said that he would like to make it active on the 26th, but wanted to make sure it was OK. (See Action Item)

Closed Session

Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to go into Closed Session for a personnel issue (General Statute § 143-318.11(6)). Alderman Spivey made the motion. Alderman Lewis seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Open Session

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

The meeting ended at 9:20.

W. Darron Flowers, Mayor

Shannon L. Daly, Town Clerk