



Minutes of Regular Town of Fremont Meeting

December 20, 2022

The regular meeting of the Board of Aldermen/Alderwomen for the Town of Fremont, NC was held at 3:00 p.m. on December 20, 2022. Present were:

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

Also in attendance were Town Administrator Tony Howell, Town Clerk Shannon Daly, Finance Officer Cathy Nichols, Public Works Director Brian Harvey, and Chief Paul Moats.

Those that were absent were Alderman Keith L. Spivey.

Quorum Present: Yes

Call to Order: Mayor Flowers called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Invocation: Mayor Flowers gave the invocation.

Pledge of Allegiance: 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 Keith Hardt as item #2 under speaker. Mayor Pro tem Artis wanted to amend the agenda to include Town Ordinance Workshop as item #4 under discussion and Ethernet Cord as item #5 under discussion. Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to approve the amended agenda. Mayor Pro tem Artis made the motion to approve the amended agenda. Alderwoman Lewis seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes: Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to approve the minutes of November 15, 2022, Regular Board Meeting. Alderwoman Jones made a motion to approve the minutes of November 15, 2022. Alderwoman Lewis seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment: Mayor Flowers opened the meeting for public comment and stated that if anyone would like to address the Board, they would need to come to the podium and state their name and address.

Larry Jones, the President of Norwayne Alumni and Friends, representing 106 E. Norwayne Alumni Way and 114 S. Goldsboro Street, addressed the Board. He stated that he attempted to present something to the County Commissioners today, but it wasn't in order so they did not have it opened for comments until January. He said that what he wanted to address was the issue about an Industrial Park in Northern Wayne County; and ask for their assistance with the CDBG-CV grant status. He said he spoke with Mr. McAllister, the Town Engineer, today, and he said we should be making progress next week on the CDBG-CV grant, because we had an advertisement that went out. He said hopefully that as we go into 2023, we will make more progress and Norwayne Alumni is committed to helping the Town of Fremont. He thanked the Board, staff, Chief Moats, and Mr. Harvey for their assistance this year.

Mayor Flowers closed public comment.

Public Hearing:

Ordinance Changes: 154.036 GB-General Business (B) Permitted uses and 154.037 HB-Highway Business (B) Permitted Uses

Mayor Flower opened the meeting for public hearing and asked Mr. Howell to explain the ordinance changes.

Mr. Howell stated that there is not a permitted use for accessory buildings in the General Business and Highway Business Districts. He stated he has spoken with the County Building Inspector, because we must consider the Fire Limits for these districts. He said the inspector said that an accessory building can be added if it is 20 feet away from a Fire District Building. He said all of Main Street and part of Hwy 117, where the buildings are connected, are in the Fire District. He said that the County Ordinance states that any building with any dimensions less than 12 feet will not need to be permitted. He said the way our ordinances are written, there is no room to permit accessory buildings in these districts. He said he is trying to facilitate good business and if an accessory building is needed, and it meets the criteria of not being within 20 feet of a building in the Fire District, the proposed ordinance change will allow for an accessory building.

There were no public comments.

Mayor Flowers closed the public hearing.

Speaker:

(1) Dr. Timmy Harrell, Assistant Superintendent of Support Services of Wayne County Public Schools.

Dr. Harrell stated that he would like to share some information concerning the new school that is being built in Fremont. He made several points which were:

- They are on schedule with the construction of the school and are planning to open the year of 2024/2025.

- The school system knew that there may be some concerns with the Town being able to provide three phase electric services for the school, due to timing, finances, etc.
- They want to be very good partners with the Town of Fremont and have had a very long relationship with Fremont.
- They need to have three phase electrical power on site by May 5th. If not, there will be additional cost overruns for the project.
- They have been investigating, but Wayne County School Board has not taken any vote or action on a service provider for power.
- They have looked at Tri-county as a power source.
- They have talked with the Utilities Commission and their attorney did not want to give them anything in writing as to whose responsibility it is to service or who has the right to service the school.
- Their legal counsel has been looking at general statutes and speaking with other legal advisors about it. They believe the school district has the right to chose which provider, because there are gray areas or interpretation within the statute, but who can say one way or the other when the Utilities Commission is saying that they are not going to put anything in writing.
- They are fastly approaching having to decide which provider they want to use.
- A letter was sent to Tri-County stating that the Wayne County Board of Education's Facilities Committee determined at its December 14, 2022, meeting that it would recommend to the Board of Education to have Tri-County provide electric service to the school. (Copy of letter was provided to Board and Mayor)
- Tri-County has single phase lines and would have to rebuild about 1 ½ miles of lines for three phase lines. They do have availability to a transformer at this time, and there would be no cost to the school district for them to rebuild the lines and install the transformer.
- The recommendation to use Tri-County will go to the Wayne County Commissioners on January 9th.
- He wanted to share all of this information with the Town so that there could be discussions about power opportunities and what the Town can potentially do. He did not want the Town to be caught off guard, but to be aware of the issues.
- They know that the Town has three phase power on Hwy 222, right in front of the school.
- Tri-County has not replied to the letter that was sent to them with the recommendation from the Wayne County Board of Education's Facilities Committee.
- Tri-County has a concern with being able to provide service within that area, because of the municipality's one mile jurisdiction outside of Fremont.
- There has not been anything behind the scenes happening to try to hurt the Town of Fremont.
- He will be happy to meet with the Board again, if needed, to discuss power and where they are.

Mayor Flowers stated that the Town wants to be a good neighbor, a good steward of its funds, and most importantly wants to protect the residents. He said if we give up all of our large vendors, an extra burden is going to be placed on the residents of Fremont, which should be shared with those that deal within this area, work within this area and go to school within this area. He said we were ready 2 months ago to comply with the electrical grid requirements in terms of availability of resources. He said finding money is nothing new to this Board. He said we are always trying to find money to spend on those things that are needed. He said we have three phase electric and had availability for a transformer, but we did not hear anything from the Board of Education or the County Commissioners and the time for that transformer has expired. He said we feel that we have some answers to the questions or concerns that they have. He said by allowing the Town to power the school, it would give us long term support in the school and also protect our residents and let there be a balance of financial responsibility, not just for the individual homeowner, but for the large vendor as well. He said that once the school uses another power source, like Tri-County, it opens a whole new area for them to come in and expand to be able to provide service to upcoming businesses. He said if we can provide the service, we not only should expect, but we deserve the support from the school to allow us to provide the electrical service. He said he would like to know why Fremont was excluded in the recommendation from the Wayne County Board of Education's Facilities Committee and requested that we be given authorization to meet with them to see if we can't convince them that the Town of Fremont will be the best one to provide the service to the school.

Mayor Pro tem Artis asked Dr. Harrell to go over the three reasons of concern that they have with Fremont not being able to provide the electrical service.

Dr. Harrell said that one concern is the financial ability to provide the infrastructure, the transformer and the connection to the phase three electric lines. He said another concern is the service ability over time if something happens and the power goes down, because the Town did not have a lineman. He said the third concern is the rates, because Tri-County's rates are substantially lower than the Towns' rates. He said that he does not think the opportunity has passed for the Town to try to get the authority to provide the electrical service for the school.

Mr. Harvey said that he has spoken with Mr. Grantham from Tri-County and he expressed the same concerns as Dr. Harrell spoke of. He said that Mr. Grantham does not have a transformer on the yard and will have to work with the same logistic process as we will have to work with. He said he has two quotes and waiting on another one, and we can have a transformer here within 14 weeks which will meet the time requirement. He said that he believes that we can get the transformer and install it at or under \$100,000. He said as for the concern with serviceability, that has always been a concern since we have had the old school. He said they have the same transformer as what is going in the new school and we have been able to meet all of the requirements of service to the old school. He said he is confident that we will be able to continue to meet the requirements for the new school. He said we have had to call in help from another municipality, but we

currently have two part-time linemen and one will become fulltime very soon. He said he is confident that he can get it done.

Mayor Flowers said that if we lose the revenue from the school, it would fall back on the residents, because we would have to increase the rates.

Dr. Harrell said that Tri-County has not responded yet and they may say, because of their concern of the municipality and the one mile jurisdiction, they may ask for something in writing from the Town before they will come into that jurisdiction. He said so it may come back to the Town that you have the right to provide service. He said that they really need power by May and more specifically what day in May it can be available. He said he will take the Town's request back to the School Board. He said the sewer lift station will go out for bids in January. He said the project is going well and it is going to be a beautiful school for the community and our children.

Alderwoman Jones stated that Dr. Harrell said that Tri-County rates are substantially lower than our rates and she wanted to know how much lower.

Dr. Harrell said that they used usages from Meadow Lane School, because it was the same size that the new school will be. He said that Tri-County's price was \$6,000 a month where ours averaged out to be \$11,000 - \$12,000 a month and he will be happy to share the rate sample that they did.

Mr. Howell asked how long it would take Tri-County to rebuild the lines for phase three electric service.

Dr. Harrell said that Tri-County can have a transformer within two weeks, and they would contract out the building of the lines and then their people will do the work from the lines to the school.

Mr. Harvey stated that the 14-week timeline for a transformer will not start until we pay for it. He said from January 9th, which is the County Commissioner's meeting, 14 weeks later will put us at the end of April. He said he just wanted everyone to realize the timeline.

(2) Keith Hardt – Civil Engineering

Mr. Hardt said that the Town has contracted him to do a long-range plan on the electrical grid. He said that Mr. Harrell was correct in what he was saying, but from the Town's standpoint, our electrical infrastructure can handle servicing the school with no problems. He said the comment of concern of having the ability to serve long-term, the Town has the benefit of having 120 to 150 trade people within a 25 to 50 mile radius that work for other cities. He said they are only a phone call away and that is part of the mutual aid agreement that the Town has and has had for over 40 years. He said this agreement is the first one created in the country and it is the best one in the country. He said he worked for 30 years in the municipality world, running electrical systems in Kinston and Washington, so he has had to handle these types of issues. He said as for having backup

for a transformer, the supply chain is going to get better, but there are municipalities that have electrical system spares that share with other municipalities. He said those cities that are much larger than Fremont, their role is to help those smaller towns that need help. He said Mr. Harvey and other staff have this information and they can use other municipalities as a resource. He said that the delivery time of 12 to 14 weeks for a transformer is a pretty good delivery time. He said that we could use the same resources that Tri-County uses to buy their equipment from; and Mr. Harvey said he knew that, but they do not have any transformers available at this time. Mr. Hardt said the big concern is the rates. He said that there are rates that we can adopt that mimic our wholesale rates. He said there was some rates that was developed for Fremont in the past that is available to be adopted, but there may need some tweaking done from Electricities, that will get us at the same rate or below Tri-County and Duke. He said it will require the school to use a generator, but it will provide substantial savings to the customer and the Town, because you are not buying power at that peak time. He said that all the points that were brought out this evening, by Dr. Harrell, he believes that we have a very competitive solution for each one of them that would allow us to be able to serve the school.

Mayor Pro tem Artis asked Mr. Hardt how they can convey the information that he just shared with them to the Wayne County Board of Education's Facilities Committee. Mr. Hardt said that Mr. Howell or Dr. Harrell would be the ones to answer that question.

Dr. Harrell said that he was happy to convey the information to the committee. He suggested that the Town put something in writing to the committee to address their concerns and state that the Town of Fremont, along with their providers, feel like they can service the needs of the school.

Action:

(1) Board Retreat – Mayor Pro tem Artis

Mayor Pro tem Artis stated that on December 21, 2021, Alderman Spivey spoke to the Board about going on a retreat. She said Alderman Spivey had no issues with her bringing it back up to the Board. She said she has asked Mrs. Daly to get some quotes for different venues, but in order for her to get that information she needs to know how many days or hours they would need the venue for. There was some discussion and it was determined that they would need 1 day for 8 hours.

(2) Budget Amendments – Mr. Howell

- **BA-3-2023** – Mr. Howell went over the budget amendment to appropriate NCDEQ AIA grant for engineering fees in water and sewer departments. Alderwoman Jones made a motion to approve BA-3-2023. Alderwoman Lewis seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.
- **BA-4-2023** – Mr. Howell went over the budget amendment for back pay and benefits due to Harold Grant. Mayor Pro tem Artis made a motion to approve BA-4-2023. Alderwoman Futrelle seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

- **BA-5-2023** – Mr. Howell went over the budget amendment to transfer funds to close out Sewer Line Rehabilitation Fund 26 and CARES ACT Fund 22. Alderwoman Jones made a motion to approve BA-5-2023. Alderwoman Lewis seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.
- **BA-6-2023** – Mr. Howell went over the budget amendment for salaries & benefits. Mayor Pro tem Artis made a motion to approve BA-6-2023. Alderwoman Jones seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

(3) Redistricting Electoral Districts – Mr. Howell

Mr. Howell stated that we received information from the Board of Elections in Wayne County that we need to revisit the electoral maps and our Town attorney has recommended a demographer who will assess Fremont’s electoral districts. He said that the lines may not need to be moved at all, or possibly slightly. He said our attorney gave us a service agreement contract with Richard Livingston, which is in the agenda packet. He said at the most it will cost \$3,000, but it would cost half of that if we do not have to redistrict. There was some discussion and Mayor Pro tem Artis made a motion to approve the contract. Alderwoman Futrelle seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

(4) Changes to Ordinance – Mr. Howell

- **§154.036 GB-General Business (B) Permitted Uses**
- **§154.037 HB-Highway Business (B) Permitted Uses**
- Mr. Howell stated that the Planning and Adjustment Board approved the recommendation to change these two ordinances, pertaining to accessory buildings. He said he would like to add a citing to each ordinance referencing ordinance §154.185. There was some discussion. Mayor Flowers asked for a motion. Alderwoman Futrelle made a motion to approve the changes to §154.036 GB-General Business (B) Permitted Uses and §154.037 HB-Highway Business (B) Permitted Uses and to add the citing referencing ordinance §154.185. Alderwoman Lewis seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

(5) Late Penalties & Cut-offs for Businesses – Mr. Howell

Mr. Howell stated that we have a few businesses that use a form of payment that can encompass the bill running through a headquarters located out of town. He said that the Post Office is one of these businesses and when they get their bill, it has to go through all of their channels in order to pay the bill. He said sometimes, depending on when we get the bills out, their payment will not get mailed to us before the due date and a late penalty and cut off penalty gets added to their bill. He said because we always try to produce, attain, and promote businesses in town, we thought it would be a good suggestion that we give them until the end of the month to pay their bill. There was much discussion, and it was determined that we should find out if we can mail the bill to the corporate office and bypass the local business in order to speed up the process. Mrs. Daly said she would check to see if this was possible and bring the information back to the Board next month.

Reports:

(1) Finance Report – Mrs. Nichols – Mrs. Nichols gave the financial report.

- She stated that she has given out an updated financial report that needed to be replaced in the agenda.
- She said all reports are current and are showing good balances.
- She said the cash accounts are in good shape.

Alderman Jones asked when the year-end audit will be completed. Mrs. Nichols said that we had hoped that we would be further along than we are, but our auditor is waiting on some things from our CPA. She said she is hoping that the information will be completed and turned in to the auditor within a week or so.

Mayor Pro tem Artis asked Mrs. Nichols if she knew when the auditor will be giving the report to the Board and Mrs. Nichols said she did not know. Mr. Howell said that the auditor is waiting to get some information from our CPA.

Alderman Ruffin said he understood that the auditor had some questions and wanted to know what the questions were. Mrs. Nichols said that her understanding is that there are some issues with the way the CPA prepares things, and the auditor wants them done differently and more clearer.

(2) Billing & Collections Report – Mrs. Daly – Mrs. Daly stated that we collected \$235.52 less than what we billed, but we are owed \$5,131.24 from vouchers and cut-offs. She said the cut-offs are separated into residents and businesses. She said as of yesterday, there are 3 residents that are still cut off and will not be cut back on because they have moved. She said that 1 of them had a deposit that was applied to their account, and we owe them a small amount and the other 2 did not have deposits and they owe us \$642.04. She said there is 1 business that is still cut off, which is a church who requested to be cut off, and they owe us \$152.29. She said there is a total of \$794.33 that is owed to the Town, which consists of 2 residents and 1 church, but everything else has been collected for the month of November. She said that we will probably not get that money, being that there is no deposit on the accounts, and it will be turned over to debt setoff. She said that she made a change to the debt setoff report; and explained the process of having to wait 60 days before a collection letter is sent, and then wait another 30 days with no payment, before the amount can be put into debt setoff. She said that she sent \$249.50 to debt setoff for the month of August, and we received \$381.00 in the month of November from past delinquent accounts.

(3) Public Works Report – Mr. Harvey – Mr. Harvey gave the public works report.

- He stated that the 400 amp temp service has not been connected at the new school. He said that we bought 4 aught triplex wire from Stantonsburg for the cost of \$974. He said 2 water taps are complete. He said we have a 3 inch water meter quote. He said we have 2 quotes for the 1500 kva transformer, which one of them is around \$53,000, and he believes that we can get the required power to the school for under \$100,000.

- He said the soil samples are complete and received for the spray field so that we will have them for the next inspection. He said the berm tree cutting will hopefully be complete next week, if the parts for the mulcher comes in. He said the cost will be \$150 per hour and he expects that it will take about 32 hours, which is an approximate cost of \$4,800. He said we have a new contractor that will maintain the spray field, which requires cutting and removing the hay in the field, and it doesn't look like there will be a charge to the Town for that service.

Mayor Flowers asked who the contractor was and Mr. Harvey said Steve Hooks.

- He said that we are still waiting for the signed contracts for the guardrails on Goldsboro Street.
- He said that Alderman Ruffin has asked for a 3-year and a 5-year plan for the Town, at the last Board meeting, and it is in the works. He said we have contracted out a power grid study and that will be in a 5-year and 10-year plan, because electrical power infrastructure is relatively expensive and a 5-year and 10-year plan will work better. He said the AIA study for the sewer and water should be a plan that they can follow, which should be back in April to May timeframe.
- He said Alderman Jones, Mr. Howell, and himself attended the Regionalization Workshop for water and sewer. He said that they will be working toward reducing our cost or increasing the capacity of sewer that we can send to Goldsboro.
- He said at the last Board meeting Alderman Ruffin asked for asphalt or street repairs to begin using Powell bill money. He said he has his first five quotes: South and Pine Street, Friendship Drive, Goldsboro and South Street, Goldsboro and Norwayne, and Goldsboro and Wayne Street. He said the total price for all five of them is \$7,500 and with the approval from the Board, he will move forward with those projects. He said the remainder of Powell bill funds can be used as we find other projects.

Mayor Flowers asked if that would use up all of our Powell bill money and Mr. Harvey said no it will not, because we have \$48,000 right now. Mrs. Nichols said we will receive \$20,000 in December.

Alderman Ruffin wanted clarity on the five projects and Mr. Harvey said that the paving will only be the intersections, because they are the most rough and he thought that would be a good starting point. There was some discussion about the five projects and other streets within the Town that needs repairs.

Alderman Ruffin asked about the street at Dr. Blackman's house and Mr. Harvey said that he did go look at it after it rained. He said the resident contends that it's the Town's responsibility to make that repair, which he thinks a catch basin that ties into our existing storm drain at Aycock and Wayne Street would fix the problem. Mr. Harvey said that he agrees and also thinks this will fix the problem,

but he doesn't think that it is the Town's responsibility, because he thinks that it is a driveway run-off issue. Mayor Pro tem Artis said that the resident feels that due to the way the roads are made, it makes the water run off into his driveway, and that is not his fault so the Town should correct it. Mr. Harvey said roads are constructed to allow water to run off the sides, which is crowning, so the road is doing what it is supposed to do. He said that the residents' property is lower, on both sides of his driveway, than the surrounding areas, so that's why the water is pooling there. He said that there are other people's property that has the same issue and he doesn't see this as a Town's responsibility, unless the Board approves to have this corrected. Mayor Flowers asked about the status of the storm water grant money that can cover these types of issues. Mr. Howell said that Mr. McAllister is applying for a \$400,000 grant for a study that will identify all the problems, before we can get a grant to fix the issues with storm water.

Mayor Flowers asked for a motion. Alderwoman Jones made a motion that \$7,500 be granted from the Powell bill money for the five intersections named by Mr. Harvey. Alderman Ruffin seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

- He said that there is an issue with houses not having house numbers visible on the houses and this causes a delay with meter readings. It was discussed that there is an ordinance that pertains to this and it will need to be addressed with the citizens.

Alderman Ruffin asked Mr. Harvey to give him the update on the school, because he came in late. Mr. Harvey gave him the update. There was some discussion and Mr. Harvey volunteered to create a letter to the School Board, which was suggested by Dr. Harrell. Alderwoman Jones pointed out that our next meeting is on January 17th and the next School Board meeting will be on January 9th and Mr. Harvey said that it will take 12 to 14 weeks to get the transformer. She said that we may need to have an emergency called meeting to allow Mr. Harvey to order the transformer if we are going to provide the power to the school. Mayor Flowers said that the issue is that we are now under all of this pressure, none of it was generated by us. He said if they would have involved us when they started having discussions about Fremont spending money, we would have had plenty of time to do anything we wanted to do, but they didn't and now we are in this situation. He said that if he has to pay for power from Fremont, he doesn't understand why the school shouldn't have to when they are just two blocks away from his house, and the school is in Fremont. He asked the Board if they wanted to move forward with trying to get the power for the school and all agreed.

Mayor Pro tem Artis made a motion to allow Mr. Harvey to draft a letter to the Board of Education allowing them to know that we are interested in powering the school. Alderwoman Jones seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

(4) Police Report – Chief Moats – Chief Moats gave the police report:

- He said all of our holiday events went smoothly as far as traffic control and safety is concerned.
- He said they are addressing the issue of hiring police officers. He said they are in the process of going through the hiring process with a female applicant, who will be a part-time employee that will cover some of the weekend hours. He said they are also looking at another applicant with 30 years of experience, who would like to work part-time.
- He said they are still advertising for the full-time sergeant position, but there is a shortage of officers across the county and state, which makes it more challenging to fill that position.
- He said there is nothing more to report and wishes everyone a happy and safe holiday season; and they will be out in full force to make sure that they provide safety during this time.

(5) Cemetery Report – Mayor Pro tem Artis – Mayor Pro tem Artis said on Friday, November 2nd, Alderwoman Jones, Alderwoman Lewis, Alderwoman Futrelle, Mr. Howell and herself viewed a webinar concerning a cemetery software. She said the take away from the webinar is that we would have to provide all of the information to them and the cost was roughly \$5,000. She said \$2,500 is the initial start-up cost and \$2,500 is an annual fee. She said the purpose of this webinar was to get a feel of record keeping for our cemeteries and it was decided that we will continue to use the excel spreadsheets that we are currently using. She said there are some things that we have to do to make our records official. She said Alderwoman Jones made a suggestion to reach out to some colleges to see if they would be interested in formulating the software for the Town. She said that she reached out to Wayne Community College, Wesleyan College, and Mount Olive College. She said at this time Mount Olive College is the only one somewhat interested in doing this.

She said she sent to the Board the cost and sample of the cemetery sign that we want to erect at both cemeteries and Mr. Howell was able to obtain some quotes for the sign. She said one quote from 243 Signs out of Wilson is \$290 for a 80 x 48 and another quote is \$92 for a 36 x 24. She said that does not come with posts or installation. After some discussion it was determined that we will get 7 signs, 4 signs for Elmwood and 3 signs for Fremont, which will be written in English and Spanish, and the public works department will install them.

Discussion:

(1) Dilapidated Houses – Mayor Pro tem Artis – Mayor Pro tem Artis stated that Fremont has had its woes economically and financially over the last decade. She said that now that

we are doing better, she would like to know the Board's thoughts on dealing with dilapidated houses and buildings. She said our Billing and Collection's Clerk, Monique Lewis, is willing to ride around and get a list of vacant houses that are dilapidated, after which, the list will be brought back to the Board to discuss it at our next meeting.

- (2) **Back-up Plan for Immediate Needs – Alderman Ruffin** – Alderman Ruffin said there needs to be a back-up plan for having someone in place in case someone leaves the Town. He said that he has spoken with the Town Clerk and she was working on that within her department. Mrs. Daly stated that she had suggested that Mrs. Nichols become the Deputy Town Clerk and she could become the Deputy Finance Officer for the purpose of having a back-up if one of them had to be out. She said she thought Alderman Ruffin was going in another direction in wanting to hire a part-time person that could be trained for multiple positions. Alderman Ruffin said that we need to look at hiring a part-time person to train and have on standby for when someone leaves, they can be brought in. He said we don't need to be scrambling to keep Fremont alive and stated that the Board needs to think about this.
- (3) **Cameras for Electrical Substations – Alderman Ruffin** – Alderman Ruffin said that they all know what happened with the substation in Steadman. He asked if the Board thinks that we need to put cameras on the substations. Mayor Flowers said that he thinks that is a question for the Chief, but the paper stated that a rifle was used and if a rifle was used a camera would not do a lot of good. Alderman Ruffin said that shell cartridges were found in that area and a camera would have picked them up and he thinks that the Board needs to consider putting up a camera. Chief Moats said that cameras have their pros and cons. He said there are rifles that can reach up to 800 yards with accuracy, but also, you have the closer assaults on these types of facilities. He said a good thing about a camera is that it gives you a time stamp on when the event took place, it could possibly identify the vehicles in the area, and it can allow you to review the footage from weeks prior of someone that would ride by to check out the targeted facility. He said that we would need to get with our IT person to see how a camera can be installed and how the footage can be stored. There was some discussion and Mayor Flowers suggested that Alderman Ruffin and Chief Moats get together to discuss this further and report back to the Board next meeting. Chief Moats said that he will get with the IT person to get the logistics of it.
- (4) **Town Ordinance Workshop – Mayor Pro tem Artis** – Mayor Pro tem Artis stated that they were supposed to send some dates and times to the Town Clerk that they would be available for a workshop to discuss the Town Ordinance. She said that she would like to meet the 2nd Tuesday, January 10th at 5:00 p.m.

Mr. Harvey asked the Board if he could be excused from the meeting because there was a report that there are electrical lines sparking. The Board excused Mr. Harvey.

(5) Ethernet Cord – Mayor Pro tem Artis – Mayor Pro tem Artis stated that Pastor Shannon Marie Berry will speak on this.

Pastor Shannon Marie Berry said that her Christmas request is an Ethernet cable network dropped into the Board room to help stabilize the livestreaming. She said right now we are streaming successfully through the Town's Facebook, but she would like it to be a more stable live stream. She said she continually gets a notification that there is a slow Wi-Fi detected and the Ethernet cord will allow a better connection while livestreaming. She said this will get the Town ready for when they want to purchase their own equipment and start livestreaming. She said once we get our own equipment, we can look at livestreaming other events such as the Christmas Tree Lighting, or the parade, because the equipment is mobile.

Mayor Flowers thanked Pastor Shannon Marie Berry for all that she does for the Town.

Alderman Ruffin said that he has an idea of doing a Daffodil drop for New Years. Pastor Shannon Marie Berry said that it can be livestreamed as well.

Alderswoman Jones stated before they move on to information, Mrs. Daly mentioned something earlier that would simplify the job between she and Mrs. Nichols and that was to make one of them Deputy Finance Officer and the other one Deputy Town Clerk, so that if one of them is out or unavailable the other one could do the other job without any type of confusion or complications. There was some discussion. Alderswoman Jones made a motion to add another dimension to Mrs. Nichols' and Mrs. Daly's positions; and that is that Mrs. Nichols will have dual roles of being the Finance Officer and the Deputy Town Clerk, and Mrs. Daly will have dual roles of being the Town Clerk and the Deputy Finance Officer and they would act only in the absence of the other. Mayor Flowers asked if both ladies were in agreement and Mrs. Daly said yes they were. She said that she, Mrs. Nichols and Mr. Howell have discussed this. Mayor Flowers asked Mr. Howell to speak on this. Mr. Howell said that he thought it was a good idea to have cross-training and it would not be a conflict with segregation of duties. He said that it is the most plausible solution, because they work together on so much already, so he would recommend it. Mayor Pro tem Artis wanted to clarify that they would only act in the added positions when the other one is out and not available and Mr. Howell said that was correct. Mayor Pro tem Artis seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Mrs. Daly stated that they would need to be sworn in and it was determined that it could be done at work and not in an official meeting.

Alderman Ruffin brought up that Mr. Harvey stated that Mr. Hardt said that Electricities could look at the rates and help with the school. Mr. Hardt said that Electricities is already working on a rate study for Fremont. He said that Fremont has a rate that has not been adopted and that the structure of that rate will allow the school, with the assistance of a back-up generator, to save energy cost and it will be competitive with the rates that Tri-County or Duke would have. He said that the rate schedule will be available to us without any cost.

Information:

(1) Open Meetings Law Requirements for all Public Bodies – UNC School of Government.

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

Open Session: Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to adjourn. Alderwoman Jones made the motion. Alderwoman Lewis seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting ended at 6:14 p.m.

Encouraging Quote: “When hardships come into your life it breaks you for a while, but when it is done with you, you evolve into a new person.” – Madalsa Sharma

W. Darron Flowers, Mayor

Shannon L. Daly, Town Clerk