



## **Minutes of Regular Town of Fremont Meeting March 21, 2023**

The regular meeting of the Board of Aldermen/Alderwomen for the Town of Fremont, NC was held at 6:00 p.m. on March 21, 2023. 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, Finance Officer Cathy Nichols, Public Works Director Brian Harvey, Chief Paul Moats, and Assistant Chief Greg Bottoms.

**Quorum Present: Yes**

**Call to Order:** Mayor Flowers called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**Invocation:** Alderman Spivey gave the invocation

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

**Approval of Agenda:** Mayor Flowers stated that there are two items that need to be removed from the agenda. He said that the first one is Bruce Johnson, under speaker and the second one is Dees Meadow Subdivision under action. Alderman Ruffin asked to add hiring someone to maintain the cemeteries as item #4 under discussion. Alderman Spivey asked to add invocation as item #5 under discussion. Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to approve the amended agenda. Alderman Spivey made the motion. Alderwoman Jones seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes:** Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to approve the minutes of February 21, 2023 Regular Board Meeting, February 21, 2023 Closed Session Meeting, March 7, 2023 Special Called Meeting, March 14, 2023 Special Called Meeting, and March 14, 2023 Closed

Session Meeting. Alderman Spivey made the motion. Alderwoman Jones seconded it. 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.

There were no public comments.

Mayor Flowers closed public comment.

**Speaker: Bruce Johnson, Red Lizard Technologies, Inc.**

- **Cameras for Electrical Substations**

Removed from agenda.

**Action:**

**(1) Ordinance Amending the Charter of the Town of Fremont to Redraw Municipal Election District as a Result of the 2020 Census (Map is attached)**

Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to adopt the Ordinance. Alderwoman Jones made a motion to adopt the Ordinance Amending the Charter of the Town of Fremont to Redraw Municipal Election District as a result of the 2020 Census utilizing map #4. Alderwoman Lewis seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

**(2) Dees Meadow Subdivision located at the intersection of Robert Peele Avenue and US 117**

**Items attached:**

- **Planning & Adjustment Board Minutes of March 14, 2023**
- **Memorandum from Michael McAllister**

Removed from agenda.

**(3) Minor Subdivision located at 725 NC Hwy 222 E.**

Mayor Flowers asked for a motion. Mayor Pro tem Artis made a motion to approve the recommendation from the Planning and Adjustment Board for the minor subdivision located at 725 NC Hwy 222 E. Alderman Ruffin seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

**Reports:**

**(1) Finance Report – Mrs. Nichols**

Mrs. Nichols stated that there was a correction to the net income in the electric fund. She said that she had not taken out the bill for Electricities, so the net income was \$5,815.06 instead of \$94,261.00. She said that changes the total income for February to \$189,520.06. She said that our checking account has increased, and it looks good.

Mayor Pro tem Artis asked if Fire Chief Brooks was here, because they had a question, they needed to ask him. Mr. Howell said that Fire Chief Brooks was unable to attend the meeting, due to an audit he was working on, but he would be available after the audit is completed.

**(2) Billing & Collections Report – Mrs. Daly**

Mrs. Daly stated that she added work orders to her report, because this shows the activity of connects, disconnects, and transfers. She also stated that she added two extra reports that had graphs to show the different ways we receive funds, such as how much we receive from cash, checks, and credit cards; and how much is from each service, such as utilities, taxes, zoning fees, etc. She asked the Board if they would like to continue to have these reports each month. The Board said they would.

Mrs. Daly gave her report:

1. Billing & Collections: The difference between what was billed versus what was collected is \$1,798.99. The amount owed to the Town at the end of January was \$4,710.91.
2. Vouchers: There was \$6091.37 owed to the Town for vouchers. The amount collected was \$1,962.42. The difference is \$4,128.95, which we will collect this month.
3. Budget Billing: There was \$954.68 billed and \$895.00 collected. This is a month that bills were higher than what we collected. We collected \$59.68 less than what was billed. There will be months where the amount collected (set monthly amount) will be more than what was billed and months where the amount collected is less. The goal is that the account will be balanced by the end of the year.
4. Cut-offs: There were a total of 7 cut-offs, which 4 were residence and 3 were businesses. As of today, all have been cut on except one resident, because they have moved.
5. Debt Setoff: There was \$983.85 put into Debt Setoff from delinquent accounts for the month of November, and there was \$0 collected in the month of February. Accounts have to be 90 days delinquent before they can be put into Debt Setoff.
6. Arrangements: There was a total of \$7,736.88 that was owed to the Town from arrangements and \$995.00 was collected, leaving a total of 6,741.88 owed. This amount is the total owed from 6 accounts, which were 5 residents and 1 business.
7. Work Orders: There were 2 connects, 6 transfers, and 5 disconnects for the month of February. As of today, 2 have been cut back on.

There were some questions about temporary service and temporary poles. Mrs. Daly and Mr. Harvey explained the difference in the two.

Alderwoman Jones asked what the status was on the United Health Care card. There was some discussion and Mrs. Daly said that our bank will accept checks written to the Town as Fremont Utilities. She said she would need to see what we needed to do to get put back on the list for our citizens to be able to utilize their United Health Care card to pay their utilities.

### (3) Public Works Report – Mr. Harvey

Mr. Harvey gave his report:

1. Repairs: Grapple truck- A/C repaired. Electric truck transmission pan and gasket repaired. Spray field truck- new tires. Bac-ho needs hydraulic repair in work. East circuit at Vance and main repaired. Multiple water leaks repaired, S Goldsboro 300 block, 305 south Sycamore, and 411 South Sycamore.
2. Projects: New School- Pass through costs billed to customer. Received payment. Spray field- Berm tree cutting complete waiting invoice. New contractor sourced for Spray field maintenance.  
Guard rails for Goldsboro st – requote coming as the contractor is unable to get the guardrails into the ground.  
Eureka #2 lift station leaking and not operating correctly. Bypassed station and manually pumping down every day. Repair sourced through KBS, \$15,895.00. Supply constraints have pushed the completion back. Repair scheduled for Monday 27 March.  
Eureka #2 and Eureka metering flow meters down. Procurement of new meters and installation being scheduled.  
Bar screen Repair/realignment starts tomorrow.  
Water distribution inspection complete. Recommendations for Backflow ORC and Backflow guidance.  
Asphalt repair on going, five more sections approved and scheduled. New services at Vance and Harrell – 6 units  
Library Colum repairs complete  
Graveyard cleanup complete.  
Spring cleanup week of 6 March-Dumpster issues Complete.  
Baseball fields bathroom repairs. Not complete.  
MLK park fence repair. Not complete.  
Goshen drainage. Not complete.  
Storm water ditch from Main Street to Vance st graveyard ditch. Needs survey and repair- impacting a resident's (Carolina Street) yard due to erosion.  
Barnes st at Goldsboro st storm water ditch needs survey and repair. Resident yard at risk of piping and erosion.  
Head walls need replaced on Sycamore and Vance. Balance rd culvers. Cross st ditch re-grade. South Sycamore to dock ditch needs surveyed and dredged.  
Graveyard drainage issues- Storm water grant study?
3. Response to Board inquiries: Approximate cost for sidewalk from NorWayne to Dollar Genarl is 24K
4. Requests to board: Approve funding or cut off bulk pickup.

Mr. Harvey stated that after the Daffodil Festival, Wayne County will pick up the dumpsters and we will no longer have that service for free. He said GFL can provide a dumpster for the Town at a cost of approximately \$2,400 for the rest of this fiscal year. He asked the Board if

they wanted to approve this or would they rather stop providing bulk pick up for the residents. There was much discussion and Alderwoman Jones made a motion to put \$2,400 in the current years' budget for a dumpster, so that the bulk pickup for residents can continue. Alderman Spivey seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

There was much discussion about the streets in Fremont. It was determined that Mr. Harvey is to continue to repair the troublesome areas using funds that we have available from Powell bill.

There was some discussion about the ditches in Fremont and Mr. Harvey said they are continuing to work on cleaning them out.

Alderwoman Jones asked if the library was completed and ready for use. Mr. Howell stated that it is not, because we have to have another mold test done. He said we have had two done and we need one more. Alderwoman Jones asked when it would be done, and Mr. Howell wasn't sure. Alderwoman Jones asked if we were going to be able to have classes this semester and Mr. Howell said we will not, and that Ms. Dawson is aware of the situation. Alderman Ruffin suggested that if we cannot have classes in the library, then maybe it be turned into a recreation center.

Alderwoman Jones asked about the status of the drain issues in the Goshen parking lot. Mr. Harvey said that it has not been fixed, because it is a huge project and there are no funds to do it at this time.

#### **(4) Police Report – Chief Moats**

Chief Moats stated that the 2013 Dodge Charger patrol car had to have the suspension and the water pump fixed.

He said that they are making last minute preparations for the Daffodil Festival. He said that he spoke with the committee about having golf carts to provide a ride for those that need it from where they park to downtown. He said that the committee is limited in resources and cannot do that this year, but he recommended that they have an overflow parking for handicapped next year, and provide golf cart rides to and from that area only. He said this year, they will be able to pull up next to Capital Café to drop off those that need to be dropped off. He stated that they will have 6 to 7 officers working the festival.

He said he had a call from Mr. Wilkins concerning the property at 202 Dock Street that is abandoned. He said that the house is in bad condition, and he was told that someone has been going in and out of the house. He said they are going to address the issues with the owner and ask them to secure the house to prevent anyone from being able to go inside the home.

#### **(5) Cemetery Report – Mayor Pro tem Artis**

Mayor Pro tem Artis stated that she had a cemetery report, but failed to give it to the Town Clerk before the agenda packets were delivered. She informed the Board that she will email the report to them.

**Discussion:**

**(1) Date for visiting businesses (April 7<sup>th</sup>, April 11<sup>th</sup>, or April 19<sup>th</sup>) – Alderman Ruffin**

Alderman Ruffin stated that he would like the Board to decide on one of the dates to visit the businesses that they were not able to visit previously. After some discussion it was determined that they will meet on April 11<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m. at Aggie's.

**(2) Animal Control Ordinance – Alderwoman Jones**

Alderwoman Jones stated that dogs have taken over some of the walking trails. She said that she saw a dog going after two individuals and she started blowing her horn to try to distract the dog. She said the owner finally came out of the house and got control of the dog. There was much discussion about the issues we are having in the Town with dogs. Chief Moats said that the citizens need to contact them, immediately, when they see a dog running loose so that they can address the issue with the owner. He recommended that walkers carry mase instead of a stick, because a stick may make the dog more aggressive. He said that we need to update our animal control ordinance. Alderman Spivey suggested that we put in on the agenda for next month or the following month.

**(3) Town of Eureka Sewer Charges – Alderman Spivey**

Alderman Spivey stated that he would like to table this until he does some more research.

**(4) Maintenance of Cemeteries – Alderman Ruffin**

Alderman Ruffin stated that he thinks the best way to solve the problems we are having in the cemeteries is to hire someone, either part-time or full-time. He said he would like to act on it at the next Board meeting. Alderwoman Jones asked what that position entailed, and Alderman Ruffin said it would be cutting grass, weed eating around the grave stones, etc.

**(5) Invocation – Alderman Spivey**

Alderman Spivey said that there was a lawsuit where the mayor called on certain individuals to give the invocation. He said a female asked the mayor why he didn't call on a female to give the invocation, and it was not taken seriously. He said the female sued and won the case. He said he wanted to bring this up and suggest that there are others capable of giving the invocation other than Alderman Ruffin and himself. Mayor Flowers asked the Alderwomen if they would like to give the invocation and all declined.

**Information:**

**(1) A Proclamation on Women's History Month – Alderwoman Jones**

Alderwoman Jones said that it is Women's History Month and this is a time when we continue to advance gender equity and equality and celebrate the contributions of women throughout our history and honor the stories that have too often gone untold.

Alderwoman Jones said she wanted to celebrate our Mayor Pro tem, Joyce Artis. She said Mayor Pro tem Artis has always had dreams and aspirations of becoming a public servant and furthering the knowledge and education of children. Before her accident in 2001, in which she and her brother were severely injured, she worked for the Wayne County Public schools for 15 years. After moving to Fremont, North Carolina, in 2006, she began to set her sights on serving her community. In 2007, she supported the Fremont Library partnership program, and both she and her husband, Isaac, organized the neighborhood watch for the community in which they lived. They would meet monthly and would invite guest (i.e., police chiefs, officers, a former Mayor) to speak on various topics. In 2009, she joined the Northern Wayne Concerned Citizens of Fremont, where she serves as treasurer. In 2014, Mrs. Artis also served as the Wayne County Democratic precinct chair for District 1 (Fremont). She hosted monthly meetings and several forums. In November 2015, she ran for and won the District 4 seat, and currently serves as Mayor Pro tem of the Town of Fremont. She enjoys serving her constituents, community, and Town. Mrs. Artis made history by being the first woman of color to ever hold the office of Mayor Pro tem for the Town of Fremont, North Carolina.

Mayor Pro tem Artis said that she would like to recognize Alderwoman Beatrice Jones. She said Beatrice Jones grew up in Fremont, NC. She graduated from Charles B. Aycock High School in 1971. Afterward, she attended North Carolina Central University in Durham, NC where she majored in accounting and received a Bachelor of Science in Commerce. She later obtained a Masters of Arts in Public Affairs and Human Service Administration from Rider University in Lawrenceville, NJ. Ms. Jones is a past member of Epsilon Upsilon Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority in Trenton, NJ, where she was initiated in 1988. She served in various positions in the Chapter including serving as the Chapter's 21<sup>st</sup> President (1999-2000). She also served as the secretary for the New Jersey Chapters (Cluster IV) and a Committee Chair on the North Atlantic Regional Committee. Ms. Jones was also a Board Member of the Ivy League Educational Foundation Inc., the Chapter's non-profit Foundation.

Since moving to North Carolina, Ms. Jones has joined the Alpha Kappa Sorority, Inc., Epsilon Phi Omega chapter in Goldsboro, NC. She is one of two elected members at large and serves on the Social Action and Connection Committee, which she previously chaired. Beatrice is a Life Member and has been in the Sorority for 34 years.

Ms. Jones has held other leadership positions in numerous professional and community organizations such as Board Chair at Henry J. Austin Health Center (a Federally Qualified Health Center), Trenton, NJ; Past President, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Mercer County, NJ; Past President, Mercer County Community College's

Program Advisory Board; Past Chair; Treasurer and Founder, New Jersey African-American Heritage Festival Committee; Vice president of the National Congress of Black Women, former Director of Finance and Social Activities for the Trenton Chapter of the National Association of Government Accountants, former Voting Member of the Public Broadcasting Management Association, Inc, and former member of the New Jersey Affirmative Action Officers Council. Ms. Jones is a life member of the North Carolina Central University Alumni Association, Inc., and serves as President of the Goldsboro, North Carolina Chapter, Treasurer of the Regional IV Committee, and treasurer of her class reunion committee. She is also a member of the NCCU Booster Club, which raises money for sports and sports activities, a member of: National Association of Parliamentarians, Inc., a life member and treasurer of Norwayne Alumni & Friends, Inc., and a Life Member of the NAACP.

- (2) Reception for Mr. Howell on Thursday, April 6<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. in the Board Room**  
Mayor Flowers stated that we need a committee to oversee the reception for Mr. Howell. Mayor Pro tem Artis, Alderwoman Futrelle, and Alderman Spivey volunteered to be on the committee.
- (3) Daffodil Festival will be on Saturday, March 25<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**
- (4) Town Hall will be closed on Monday, April 10<sup>th</sup> in observance of Easter.**
- (5) Calendar for the month of March and April**

**Closed Session: Personnel - General Statute § 143-318.11(6)**

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

**Open Session:**

Mayor Flowers asked for a motion. Mayor Pro tem Artis made a motion to accept Alderman Spivey's proposal of an hourly rate of \$25 an hour to serve as the Interim Town Administrator starting immediately. Alderwoman Jones seconded it. Alderman Spivey recused himself. All others favored. Motion passed unanimously.

**Motion to Close Regular Meeting:**

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

The meeting ended at 9:05 p.m.

**Encouraging Quote:** "Not all positive change feels positive in the beginning."– Unknown



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W. Darron Flowers, Mayor

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Shannon L. Daly, Town Clerk