



Minutes of Special Called Meeting April 6, 2023

The Board of Aldermen/Alderswomen for the Town of Fremont, NC held a Special Called Meeting at 2:30 p.m. on April 6, 2023. Present were:

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

Also in attendance was Town Administrator Tony Howell, Town Clerk Shannon Daly, Finance Officer Cathy Nichols, and Town Accountant Andrew Harris.

Quorum Present: Yes

Call to Order: Mayor Flowers called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

Invocation: Alderman Spivey gave the invocation.

Pledge of Allegiance: Alderswoman Lewis led all in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda: Mayor Flowers asked to amend the agenda to include the Ordinance Amending the Charter of the Town of Fremont to Redraw Municipal Election Districts as a Result of the 2020 Census. Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to approve the amended agenda. Alderswoman Lewis made the motion. Alderswoman Jones seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Action:

- (1) Ordinance Amending the Charter of the Town of Fremont to Redraw Municipal Election Districts as a Result of the 2020 Census**

Mayor Flowers asked to approve the Ordinance. Alderwoman Lewis made the motion. Alderwoman Jones seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

(1) Approve Redistricting Map

Mr. Howell stated that Mr. Livingston, the demographer, has made a correction to map 4 to include the annexed property for district 4. Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to approve the corrected map. Alderman Spivey made the motion. Alderwoman Futrelle seconded it. Mayor Pro tem Artis stated that the Board had mentioned the annexed property to Mr. Livingston and he said that it was not necessary to add it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion: Budget for Fiscal Year 2023 – 2024

Mr. Howell stated that we will be going over revenues and Fire Chief Brooks will be in later to go over his budget. He said that there are a couple of things about the rates that they have worked on and asked Alderman Spivey to present it. Alderman Spivey presented a slide presentation that shows the rates that we had from 2018 to present, and the differences to show how much we have increased the rates over that time period. There was much discussion about the rates and Alderman Spivey stated that this was not put together to say that we need to raise the rates, it was just to say that here's where we are at and where we are going, and to be used to help make a decision when we are looking at the budget.

Mr. Howell went over the revenues in the General Fund. There was some discussion about the revenues for cablevision TV revenues. It was determined that we have not collected it for 2 years and the amount is \$2,300 per year, which is a total of \$4,600 due to the Town. It was discussed that we may want to look at increasing the amount that we are currently charging them.

There was some concern that the Board did not know what revenues we have collected so far this year. Mrs. Nichols asked if they would like her to print them a copy and they said yes. Mrs. Nichols gave each Board member and staff the current budget to actual report.

There was some discussion about the ARPA funds. Mr. Howell said that all of the funds should be expended by the end of this year and most of it was put in salaries. He said if all of it is not expended by the end of this year, the law says that we have until 2026 to spend the funds.

There was some discussion about the \$5,000 revenue to the Police Department for monitoring the Solar Farm. The \$5,000 revenue was not on the proposed budget for this year. Mrs. Daly said it was on the budget to actual report under contribution to the Police Department and asked Mr. Harris shouldn't that be coded differently and he said that it needed to be recoded. She said that is not a contribution, it is a service that the Police Department provides.

There was some discussion that we need to delete the codes off of the proposed budget that we are no longer using, to make it easier to read.

There was some discussion about the old ATV shop and if we wanted to rent it or sell it. Mr. Howell said that there is someone interested in renting it for a used car lot.

There was some discussion about the revenues for the cemetery plots and the reason it was decreased was due to the fact that we are not able to sell plots at this time.

Mayor Pro tem Artis asked if we were charging late fees for rent and Mr. Howell said we were not. Mayor Pro tem Artis stated that we needed to start charging it and Mr. Howell agreed. Mrs. Daly said that code 10-3790-0000 may be the code that we need to code for late fees for rent. Mr. Howell said that we need to look at the rental contract and make some changes to it before we rent it out again.

Alderman Spivey had some questions about the revenues for the Candy Cane Kids and the Easter Egg Hunt. Mrs. Daly said that we do get in revenues for these events and they normally do not cost the Town. She said that she explained to Mrs. Long at Fremont Stars that if they would like a donation from the Town, they would need to send a request in writing explaining what they would like. She said that she received an email with multiple suggestions, from Mrs. Long, as to how the Town could contribute to the school. Mayor Flowers said that if we look at discretionary funds, he believes that the school has more money that we have, and to give us a list is something he has some difficulty with. Mrs. Daly said that this is something that we can discuss at the next meeting for the Board to decide what they would like to do.

There was some discussion about the \$1,500 that we get from Electricities and that we gave \$500 to the Daffodil Committee. Mr. Howell stated that we have not received the funds from Electricities as of yet.

There was some discussion about the inter fund transfers. Mr. Harris said that there is no proposed transfers for the budget. He said that there is no need for a transfer to balance the budget. Mrs. Daly asked if the \$70,000 listed as transfer from Electric fund need to be \$0 and Mr. Harris said yes. There was some discussion about the salaries that were budgeted for the Electric and Electric Administration funds.

Mr. Howell asked if there are any questions about the Electric Revenues. He said if the Board wanted to go up on the rates, then those figures will change.

Mrs. Daly stated that she did not realize that Mr. Harris had balanced our budget and was confused as to what revenues had increased, because they have not decided on increasing rates. She said each department has had an increase in expenses, so how did he balance the budget. Mr. Harris said he used the figures that Mrs. Nichols gave him. Mayor Pro tem Artis asked Mr. Harris if he checked over the numbers that Mrs. Nichols gave him and he said no, but they did look comparable to last year. He said there are some typos and they just found one for \$70,000. Mayor Pro tem Artis stated that we have a balanced budget. Mr. Harris said yes but that doesn't mean that you do not need to go up some on rates. Alderman Spivey said that we do need to increase

our fund balance. Mrs. Daly stated that she has a list of things that we may can do to bring in more revenue instead of going up on rates. She went over the list with the Board and stated that these are just ideas, but the Board can make a decision on these items.

Fire Chief Brooks joined the meeting.

Mayor Pro tem Artis stated that she asked Mrs. Nichols to provide a document showing where the proceeds from the sale of the fire truck went. She said Mrs. Nichols stated that Mr. Overton, our previous accountant, told her to put it to sales of surplus property. Mayor Pro tem Artis said that one of the conditions of getting the new fire trucks, was that the sale of the old fire truck would go toward the loan for the new fire trucks. Fire Chief Brooks stated that it was his understanding that the proceeds would go to pay off the old SR8 truck loan so that they would only have one loan payment. There was much discussion and it was determined that the \$15,000 needs to be used to pay on the old fire truck loan.

There was some discussion about the Fire Departments budget and Fire Chief Brooks answered all questions that the Board had.

Motion to Close Regular Meeting:

Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to adjourn. Mayor Pro tem Artis made the motion. Alderwoman Futrelle seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Encouraging Quote: “Real change, enduring change, happens one step at a time.” – Ruth Bader Ginsburg

The meeting ended at 5:10 p.m.

W. Darron Flowers, Mayor

Shannon L. Daly, Town Clerk