



Minutes of Regular Town of Fremont Meeting June 20, 2023

The regular meeting of the Board of Aldermen/Alderwomen for the Town of Fremont, NC was held at 6:00 p.m. on June 20, 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 Robert Jones, Town Clerk Shannon Daly, Chief Paul Moats, Assistant Chief Greg Bottoms, and Town Engineer Mike McAllister.

Quorum Present: Yes

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

Invocation: Alderman Ruffin gave the invocation.

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

Approval of Agenda: Mayor Flowers stated that item #9 under action needs to be removed. Alderman Spivey asked to replace item #9 under action with the library issue. Alderwoman Jones asked to add Information after reports. Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to approve the amended agenda. Mayor Pro tem Artis made the motion. Alderwoman Lewis seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Consent Agenda:

- (1) Budget Amendment BA-9-2023
- (2) Budget Amendment BA-10-2023
- (3) Budget Amendment BA-11-2023
- (4) Budget Amendment BA-12-2023
- (5) Rates & Fees Schedule

Mr. Jones stated that the consent agenda are items that have already been discussed and agreed upon previously. Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda. Alderman Spivey made the motion. Alderman Ruffin seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes: Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to approve the minutes of April 18, 2023 Regular Board Meeting, April 18, 2023 Closed Session Meeting, May 11, 2023 Special Called Meeting, May 11, 2023 Closed Session Meeting, May 16, 2023 Regular Board Meeting, May 16, 2023 Closed Session Meeting, May 31, 2023 Special Called Meeting, May 31, 2023 Closed Session Meeting and June 7, 2023 Emergency Called Meeting. Mayor Pro tem Artis made the motion. Alderwoman Lewis seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment: Mayor Flowers opened the meeting for public comment.

- (1) Oscar Mooring, who resides at 304 W. Wayne Street, represented the Rotary Club and stated that they are interested in establishing and facilitating a farmer's market in Fremont. He said he will be on the agenda for next month to talk more about this idea.
- (2) Walter Bunch, who resides at 306 Norwayne Alumni Way, stated that he would like to know what the status was on getting the no thru truck signs put up at his property. He stated that this was approved a few months ago and since then there has been two trucks that have run through his yard. Mr. Jones stated that the signs will be in on Monday and they will be put up immediately.

Mayor Flowers closed public comment.

Speaker: Reginald Hall – Rental at 219 E. Main Street

Mr. Hall stated that he is the owner of H & H Auto Sales and he is renting the property owned by the Town at 219 E. Main Street. He wanted to know if the Board would be willing to sell the property; and if they would allow him to have 3 cars instead of 2 cars that was agreed upon in the contract that he has with the Town. Mayor Flowers stated that it would need to be put on the agenda for the Board to discuss next month before a decision can be made.

Action:

(1) System Development Fee Analysis – Mr. McAllister

Mr. McAllister stated that it was his understanding that the Board has been briefed on this proposal. Mayor Flowers asked how the \$21,500 will be paid. Mr. Jones said this amount, as well as, the other two proposals, have been budgeted for in the FY 2023/2024 budget. Mayor Flowers asked for a motion. Alderman Ruffin made a motion to adopt item #1 for \$21,500 to be paid out of next year's budget. Alderman Spivey seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

(2) Engineering Services Proposal for Sanitary Sewer Residential Flow Allocation Reduction Study – Mr. McAllister

Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to approve item #2 for \$8,500. Alderman Spivey made the motion. Mayor Pro tem Artis seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

(3) Engineering Services Proposal for Revisions to the Town's Water & Sewer Ordinance – Mr. McAllister

Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to approve item #3 for \$4,800. Mayor Pro tem Artis made the motion. Alderwoman Futrelle seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

(4) Subdivision at Robert Peele Avenue - Mr. McAllister

- **Preliminary Plat**
- **Minutes for Planning & Adjustment Board Meeting**

Mr. McAllister stated that this preliminary plan has been approved by the Planning and Adjustment Board and Mr. Sanderson, the engineer who was present, has complied with everything that he and the Town has requested him to do. Mayor Flowers asked for a motion. Alderman Ruffin made the motion. Alderman Spivey seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

(5) Ordinance 93.05 – Mr. McAllister

Mr. McAllister stated that our ordinance did not have anything concerning burial containers for our cemeteries. He said he added the correct verbiage to the ordinance. Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to approve the revised ordinance. Alderman Spivey made the motion. Alderwoman Lewis seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

(6) Ordinance 53.004 – Mr., McAllister

Mr. McAllister stated that our ordinance did not have anything concerning allowing people to put in septic tanks if we cannot provide sewer service. He said he added it to the ordinance. Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to approve the revised ordinance. Alderman Spivey made the motion. Mayor Pro tem Artis seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

(7) Resolution 2023-3 (ARP Funding) – Mr. McAllister

Mr. McAllister stated that the resolution, which is required by the state, is the acceptance of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) funding in the amount of \$4,462,360. Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to approve the resolution. Alderwoman Jones made the motion. Mayor Pro tem Artis seconded it All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

(8) Budget Amendment BA-8-2023 – Mr. Jones

Mr. Jones stated that this budget amendment was a leftover from the big budget amendment that was approved at the last meeting. He stated that it is to cover hospital benefits and we are moving money from the vehicle tax line item, because we collected more taxes than what we budgeted for. Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to approve BA 8-2023, Alderman Spivey made the motion. Mayor Pro tem Artis seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

(9) Library – Alderman Spivey

Alderman Spivey stated that he had sent an email to the Board about the County wanting to turn the old Dolllar General into a public library, but they wanted the Town to forgo the taxes and to cover the utility costs. He said he failed to look at the zoning for that property and it is zoned as highway business that does not allow libraries. He said he will coordinate with the County and Mr. Jones to help figure out what needs to be done. Mayor Flowers said that we need to defer action until we get a definitive plan on what we need to do.

(10) Contract for Nunn, Brashear, & Uzzell, P.A. – Mr. Jones

Mr. Jones stated that this is the contract for the same auditor that we had last year. Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to approve the contract for \$11, 250 for the next year. Mayor Pro tem Artis made the motion. Alderman Ruffin seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

(11) Dumpsters for Bulk Items – Mr. Jones

Mr. Jones stated that we no longer have a free dumpster from the County. He said the quote that GFL gave him is in the agenda packet. He said we have two options: number one, we could no longer offer bulk good pickup services or number two, we would need to increase our bulk good fees to cover the costs. There was some discussion and it was determined that Mr. Jones will get a dumpster to clean up what we already have and see if we can do a month to month contract for 3 months in order to get an accurate cost to the Town. He said after we determine the cost, we may need to increase our bulk good fees.

(12) Budget for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 – Mr. Jones

Mr. Jones went over the budget and pointed out some changes he made to re-code certain line items. He said he feels that our budget is stronger this year than last year and he is excited about it. He said he wants to start doing things that people can actually see, because we have a lot of growth coming to the Town.

Mr. Jones stated that he would like to offer the lineman an additional position as Assistant Public Works Director and increase his pay by \$3.75 per hour. He stated that the increased salary is in the budget. Alderman Ruffin stated he would like to break out that position from the budget and look at it at the next meeting.

Mr. Jones stated that he would like to consider separating the Fire Department out from the Town's budget, because they have not been good stewards of the Town's finances. There was much discussion on how that could be accomplished and it was determined that we would look at this further at a later date.

Public Hearing: Fiscal Year Budget 2023/2024

Mayor Flowers opened the meeting for public hearing pertaining to the budget.

Ralph Wilkins, who resides at 203 N. Dock Street, had concerns about increasing the rates. Mayor Flowers said that when rates are raised by the entities that provide services, then we pass that on to the citizens. Mr. Wilkins asked how would increasing the bulk fees affect the citizens.

Mr. Jones said that it will only affect people that will use the bulk goods pickup service and you will only be charged if you use it.

Mayor Flowers closed the meeting for public hearing.

Budget Approval:

Mayor Pro tem Artis said that inside city water and sewer rates did not change. Mayor Flowers asked for a motion to approve the Budget. Alderman Spivey made the motion to approve the budget. Mayor Pro tem Artis seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Reports:

(1) Finance Report –Mr. Jones

Mr. Jones stated that we have been very busy and the budget to actual looks good. He said we will have some adjustments next month and we will be busy setting up the new budget in the system so that the new rates will go into effect July 1st.

(2) Billing & Collections Report – Mrs. Daly

Mrs. Daly gave the April Billing and the May Collections Report. The following was her report:

1. **Billing & Collections:** The difference between what was billed versus what was collected is (\$1,872). The amount owed to the Town at the end of March was \$1,535.
2. **Vouchers:** There was \$2,436 owed to the Town for vouchers. The amount collected was \$1,327. The difference is \$1,109, which we will collect this month.
3. **Budget Billing:** There was \$631 billed and \$895.00 collected. This is a month that bills were lower than what we collected. We collected \$264 more 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 14 cut-offs, which 12 were residents and 2 were businesses. As of today, all have been cut on except 3 residence, 1 has moved, but has been reconnected with a realty agency, 1 has moved away, and the other one is incarcerated.
5. **Debt Setoff:** There was \$203 put into Debt Setoff from delinquent accounts for the month of February, and there was \$105 collected in the month of May. Accounts have to be 90 days delinquent before they can be put into Debt Setoff.
6. **Arrangements:** There was a total of \$4,618 that was owed to the Town from arrangements and \$829 was collected, leaving a total of \$3,790 owed. This amount is the total owed from 5 residents. The business that we had an arrangement with has now closed and did not pay the balance that was owed in the amount of \$2,697.82. This will be put in Debt Setoff if payment is not received.
7. **Work Orders:** There were 5 new connects, 0 disconnects, and 6 transfers for the month of May

(3) Public Works Report – Mr. Jones

Mr. Jones stated that public works has been busy. They have picked up debris that was left on a vacant property and we were able to bill someone for that. He said that there is a bridge at Elmwood Cemetery that is closed due to it needing repaired. He said they are cutting a lot of grass and everyone is in good spirits and working hard.

Alderwoman Jones pointed out that we approved to have a part-time seasonal person to work in the cemeteries and asked did we hire someone. Mr. Jones said no. There was some discussion that David Herring, who is part-time, was asked to take that position, but he only wants to work two days a week. Alderman Ruffin asked Mr. Jones to talk with Mr. Herring to see if he will work three days a week in this position.

Mayor Pro tem Artis asked if there is a specific time that the limbs are trimmed. Mr. Jones said they do that every week.

Alderman Ruffin asked what the status was on getting the light poles on Hwy 117 equipped to be able to hang Christmas wreaths. Mr. Jones said that they just got in the weather caps for the electrical boxes and they are currently working on them.

(4) Police Report – Chief Moats

Chief Moats stated that Assistant Chief Bottoms has been working on code enforcements and most people are cutting their grass. He said they are still trying to fill the full time position and have been for about 10 months without any candidates. He said every department is dealing with shortages and they are trying to come up with some incentives that may help in filling that position and to help keep current staff, and he will bring that back to the Board next month. He said they are addressing issues at the 700 block of S. Goldsboro Street and he wants the public to know that they are addressing it on a daily basis, within the guidelines of the law, and making sure we are not violating anybody's civil rights. He said they have made criminal charges from this address due to various violations of the law, however, the owner is currently incarcerated and it is difficult to regulate without the owner. He said they are keeping a check on the property on a daily basis. He said they found that the water meter was tampered with and a \$500 penalty has been assessed to the account. He said he would like the community's help and assistance if they see anything at this residence to please let them know.

(5) Cemetery Report – Mayor Pro tem Artis

Mayor Pro tem Artis said that the cemetery report is in the agenda packet and she hoped everyone has read it and if there are any questions she will be glad to answer them. She said she would like to thank Mr. McAllister for his help with wording the amended cemetery ordinance.

Information:

(1) 2nd Annual State of the Town Address – Alderwoman Jones

Alderwoman Jones stated that the 2nd Annual State of the Town Address is scheduled for Tuesday, June 27th from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. at St. James Church of Christ located at

514 Memorial Church Road in Fremont. She said last year is was at the United Methodist Church and this year they wanted to move it and needed a large enough place to accommodate the anticipated number of citizens. She said last year we had around 80 in attendance and this year we are hoping to have at least that many or more. She said they have put out signs around Town to advertise for this event.

(2) The YMCA of Goldsboro Mobile Market Food Distribution – Alderwoman Jones

Alderwoman Jones stated that last year we had an arrangement with the YMCA of Goldsboro for their Mobile Market Food Distribution. She said that they close around December to January because of the winter months, but they are ready to come back to Fremont. She said their first day will be Wednesday, July 12th from 10:00 – 11:00 at the old Fremont library site at 202 N. Goldsboro Street.

(3) Mobile Health Van – Alderwoman Jones

Alderwoman Jones said that a while back they were working with someone to bring a mobile health van to Fremont, but was unsuccessful. She said she is going to continue to look into that a little more to see if that is an option for us, because there is a need for those services for our citizens.

(4) Deputy Finance Officer / Deputy Town Clerk Position – Alderwoman Jones

Alderwoman Jones said that she has been sending the posting to various organizations and stated to the Board if they know of any other organizations to let her know so that we can send them the posting as well. She said we need to make that job position known to as many people as possible.

Alderwoman Lewis asked to speak with Mr. Jones in private. After the brief meeting, Mr. Jones informed the Board that the time limit to take action on the property at 202 E. Main Street, owned by Mr. Wooten, has expired. He said he spoke with the County Inspector today and he has not received anything from Mr. Wooten either. He said we will have to talk with the attorney to find out what our next steps will be on the property.

Motion to Close Regular Meeting:

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

The meeting ended at 7:35 p.m.

Encouraging Quote: “We must be willing to get rid of the life we’ve planned, so as to have the life that is waiting for us”– Joseph Campbell (1904-1987), American writer

W. Darron Flowers, Mayor

Shannon L. Daly, Town Clerk