



THE DAFFODIL TOWN

## Minutes of Regular Town of Fremont Meeting September 19, 2023

The regular meeting of the Board of Alderman/Alderwomen for the Town of Fremont, NC was held at 6:00 p.m. on September 19, 2023. Present were:

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

Also in attendance were Director of Technology and Business Development Maurice Hester, Principal Project Manager/Municipal Engineering Michael McAllister, MPA, CPA Secretary, Local Government Commission Deputy Treasurer Sharon Edmundson, Director of Policy, Technology, and Operations, State and Local Government Finance Division Office Debbie Tomasko, Interim Finance Officer Ryan Marlar, Police Chief Paul Moats, Assistant Police Chief Greg Bottoms, Part time Town Clerk: Shannon Daly, and Town Clerk Junnie Williams.

**Quorum Present: Yes**

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

**Invocation:** Alderman Leroy Ruffin

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

### Approval of Agenda:

**Mayor Flowers:** 2 additional Items have been added to the Agenda. **First** is Eureka Sewerage under **Action** and the **Second** Item will be added in Closed Session, that's based on the Letter, you all have received.

**Mayor Flowers:** Is there a motion to approve the additions to the Agenda.

**Mayor Pro tem Joyce Artis:** Made the motion to approve the additions to the Agenda.

**Mayor Flowers:** Is there a seconded.

**Alderman Keith Spivey:** Seconded the motion.

**Mayor Flowers:** Are there any Discussions? If not, all those in Favor, please let it be shown by the raising of your hand. All were in Favor. Motion **passed unanimously**.

### Approval of Minutes:

**Mayor Flowers:** Next items are the approval of the Minutes for:

August 15, 2023 (Close Session Meeting),  
August 28, 2023 (Special Called Meeting),  
September 5, 2023 (Special Called Meeting),  
September 5, 2023 (Closed Session Meeting).

**Mayor Flowers:** Is there any Minutes the Board, would like to pull to be discussed and after that we will hopefully get a motion to approve the Minutes and its entirety.

**Mayor Flowers:** Is there a motion that we adopt the Minutes.

**Mayor Pro tem Joyce Artis:** Made a motion to approve the Minutes for August 15, 2023, August 28, 2023 and, both meetings on September 5, 2023 with its entirety.

**Alderwoman Annie Lewis:** Seconded the motion.

**Mayor Flowers:** Stated the motion and the second is in agreeance.

**Mayor Flowers:** Is there any Discussions, if not, all in Favor, Please indicated by the raising of your hands. Motion **passed unanimously**.

**Public Comment:**

**Mayor Flowers:** Open the meeting for public comments and stated that if anyone would like to address the Board, they would need to come to the speaker stand and state their name, your address, and your comment. The floor is now open to hear your comments. If there are no comments, we will close out this part of the Agenda Meeting. Public comments now closed.

**1) Speaker:**

**First Speaker** on the Agenda: **Maurice Hester, Director of Technology and Business Development** with Cape Fear Water Solution.

**Maurice Hester:** Presented a presentation of slides on the projector demonstrating some of the different types of products of service, Cape Fear Water Solution has to offer from filtering PFAS and Grease Treatments, Wastewater Extremes, Odor study of corrosion of your pumps as to providing Drinking water to citizens.

**Mayor Pro tem Joyce Artis:** Asked Maurice of the Rate Study quote previously of \$2,500 dollars, if the Town of Fremont was to contract Cape Fear Water Solution for any type of services to be done, what would that amount include in the Study for the Town of Fremont?

**Maurice Hester:** Responded the \$2,500 dollars would be the cost which includes the Study and the reading of the report to find where all the Sulfite exist, plus it includes, a calculation of, if you were to contract with us, what a treatment, would cost on a monthly or annual basis.

**2) Speaker:**

**Second Speaker** on the Agenda: **Michael McAllister, Principal Project Manager/Municipal Engineering, Inc.**

**Michael McAllister:** Addressed the Mayor and the Board Members of the Town of Fremont regarding the 2 Resolutions submitted to the Town of Fremont for the Merger/Regionalization Study and the DWI Application due date of October 2, 2023.

**Michael McAllister:** Stated the **first** Resolution is to acknowledging the Town of Fremont support to acquire the Sanitary Sewer Collection System currently owned by the Town of Eureka, NC., in which is something Michael McAllister stated the Major and the Board members of the Town of Fremont has already discussed beforehand and therefore all that would be needed, is to move forward in a motion and a Second to the motion.

**Mayor Flowers:** What does the **First Resolution** committee Fremont to?

**Michael McAllister:** Commits Fremont to moving forward in negotiation of the MOU, to acquire the System in Eureka, is pretty much what it is doing, and that's a successful negotiation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with something we are working on, we have another meeting next Tuesday, 9/26/23 to talk about that and it's also to fix's some of the systems in the Town of Fremont, anything we might want to apply later on and also an commitment to the ongoing Regionalization in the Wayne County Partners, that's still in the works.

**Michael McAllister:** Stated the **second** Resolution is to execute and file an application on behalf of the Grant Funding.

**Mayor Flowers:** What does the **Second Resolution** committee Fremont to as "Whereas" stipulated on the Resolution?

**Michael McAllister:** The **Second Resolution** is Authorizing, us to the Application and who the Authorized Representative will be. This is the Resolution that goes into all the funding Application. It's kind of a one thing fits all for Loans and Grants, so that's why you are seeing the word Loans.

**Mayor Flowers:** What advantage do, we have by approving these items for Fremont.

**Michael McAllister:** By approving these items particularly for Fremont acquiring the system of Eureka, the biggest benefit would be Eureka's fixing of their system, which has been a drag on the Town of Fremont for the lasted 15 years plus the

removal of irrigation infrastructure. Michael McAllister stated, you will see a really big improvement in what you send into to your spray fields and particular in what you are paying Goldsboro.

**Mayor Flowers:** So the adoptions of the **First Resolution** is merely making a commitment of intent, not assuring any actions other than intent.

**Michael McAllister:** Yes sir, everything is contingent on a successful negotiation for the funding, so that's really what you are doing, you are just announcing that, we intend to comply in good faith to move in this direction.

**Mayor Flowers:** Do we have a motion that we adopt **Resolution 1**?

**Mayor Pro tem Joyce Artis:** I make a motion that we approve **Resolution 1**.

**Alderwoman Beatrice Jones:** I, second the motion.

**Mayor Flowers:** Is there any discussion? If not, all those in Favor, please indicated by raising of your hands?

**5 Board Members** are in **Favor** and **1 Board Member, Opposed:** Alderman Leroy Ruffin. **Mayor Flowers:** Resolution 1 - **Approved.**

**Mayor Flowers:** Now we have **Resolution 2** and Michael McAllister in regards to the last "**Whereas**" on the first page of the **Second Resolution** can you clarify "the Town of Eureka through the LGC will request Grant Funding, ect..."

**Michael McAllister:** Yes, a copy of **Resolution 2**, will be attached to Eureka's Application in the process of the Grant Funding, because what the State is looking for is Documentation to commitment, such as documentations of minutes, approvals of Resolutions, this will help strengthen Eureka's Application.

**Mayor Flowers:** Is there a motion that we approve **Resolution 2**?

**Alderwoman Beatrice Jones:** I make a motion that we approve **Resolution 2**.

**Alderwoman Annie Lewis:** I, second the motion.

**Mayor Flowers:** Are there any discussion? If not, all those in Favor, pleased let it be shown by the raising of your hands? Motion **passed unanimously.**

1) Action:

Easement - Dr. Jesse Blackman

**Mayor Flowers:** stated a request for release of Easement to be returned back to his family and asked that Mayor Pro tem Joyce Artis, speak in behalf of Easement in regards to Dr. Jesse Blackman.

**Mayor Pro temp Joyce Artis:** Dr. Blackman contacted me, a month or so, in which he had already spoken with Alderman Spivey and Alderwoman Jones, close to 4 months ago, and at that time he was inquiring about a piece of property in which Dr. Blackman had conveyed to the Town of Fremont, over 20 years ago. Dr. Blackman stated that he was promised once the Property was no longer needed by the Town that it would be returned back to him.

Dr. Blackman is needing the release of Easement in order to sell the Property of 10 acres, he is trying to sell and so I contacted our Town Attorney Brian Pridgen, who contacted Mr. Mike McAllister and they were able to determine that we the Town of Fremont could give the Property back to Dr. Blackman because the Property was no longer in use and so I have the presented Resolution in which our Attorney Brain Pridgen, stated we must pass or approve in order for this to be done.

**Mayor Flowers:** Are there any questions or discussions on this? Is there a motion for the Resolution?

**Mayor Pro tem:** I make a motion that we pass the Resolution.

**Alderman Keith Spivey:** I second the motion.

**Mayor Flowers:** All those in favor let it be shown by the raising of your hands?  
Motion **passed unanimously.**

**Mayor Flowers:** Approval of Declaration of Abandonment and Release of Easement. Is there any Discussion? Do we have a Motion that we approve the Declaration of Abandonment and Release? Is there a Motion?

**Alderman Leroy Ruffin:** I make a Motion that we approve the Declaration of Abandonment and Release of Easement.

**Alderwoman Annie Lewis:** I second the Motion.

**Mayor Flowers:** Is there any Discussion? If not, all those in Favor let it be shown by the raising of hands? Motion **passed unanimously**.

2) Action:

**Mayor Flower:** The next item has been added to the Agenda for the Board Meeting on this evening regarding the Eureka's sewerage and a mix's-up concerning the Rate charges for Eureka customers. Sharon Edmundson of the LGC is here in the Audience to speak in behalf of the apparent mix's-up.

**Sharon Edmundson:** A couple of months ago a meeting was held based on the Budget process for Fremont/Eureka Sewerage/MOU, and a decision was made to charge Eureka the outside residential retail rate as a Bulk Rate which would increase the Rates for Eureka, over a 100%. We have worked with the Board on a couple of different occasions to try and to bring the Rates down and back to a more recent Bulk Rate, because Eureka is not a Retail Customer, they are a Bulk Government Customer. I also know that Fremont is in the process of having a Rate Study completed and we will very much like to work with the Town of Fremont on determining, based on the Rate Study, what that Rate to Eureka should be. Obviously, we don't expect Fremont to take a loss on Eureka Sewer services, but we also can't afford a 110% increase in Rates. I know at one of the meetings, we talked about just doing an interim Rate increase of 4% or 5%, based on the increase you have received from the Town of Goldsboro and then again, once the Rate Study is complete, we will work with the Town of Fremont to determine mathematically sound Rate for Eureka.

**Mayor Flowers:** The floor is open, let us have discussion for a period of time.

**Sharon Edmundson:** The original proposal for the Town of Eureka, which was actually adopted by the Town of Fremont on June 21<sup>st</sup> there was a base Rate to Eureka of 1,700 dollars a month and then per thousand gallons \$32.46 cents and again that was over a 110% Rate increase to Eureka in which we were going to have to pass on at least some of that to the Customers and this would of made the Bill impossible for Eureka Customers, so we asked the Board to reconsider.

**Mayor Flowers:** Mrs. Edmundson made reference to the Goldsboro charges to Fremont for sewerage and their increase was 4% this year and over a period of time the Board has been working on making Adjustments to the Rates and including other items as well, in which we have received Rate increases from almost all our Vendors in which we have used. We have a Rate Study underway and we should wait and make permanent decisions based on that Rate Study and as I understand it for this year just by passing the 4% Rate increase or up to 5% for Eureka to compensate for the cost of operating the Sewer System. The issue is the LGC, who is now speaking for Eureka feels that the Rates are entirely too high, that the Rates are Premature because of the Rate Study that will give us more definitive information to make a decision on and therefore as long as it is worked in a positive sense for Fremont, it is not unreasonable to bring the Rate down to a Percent in which Goldsboro is increasing our Rates.

**Sharon Edmundson:** And once the Rate Study I completed, we want to work with the Town of Fremont to determine a Fair Rate for Eureka and by using the Rate Study, we will be basing this on Data and not just somebody's opinion of what the Rate should be.

**Mayor Pro tem Joyce Artis:** Asked the Mayor Flowers, will the Rate Study take into account "the abnormal amount of INI that's coming from Eureka?"

**Michael McAllister:** Yes, so everything that comes to you, Fremont from Eureka including the Sewer and the excessive INI, when it rains, you bill Eureka and that's been part of the problem the system is so leaky that they just couldn't handle it, just looking at the loss areas, it's considerably wet during wet season.

**Mayor Pro. Tem Joyce Artis:** When we met in our September Meeting, the first Meeting with the LGC concerning Eureka, we discuss how there is a lot of trash, and a lot of rags, that coming out every day from the Sewer system in which you all didn't know anything about also the amount of INI, so we just want the Rate presented to be taken into consideration based on that.

**Michael McAlister:** We are looking at the amount of Wastewater that comes from Eureka, that's what it's based on and we're also looking at the cost associated with what you're speaking on, having continuous maintenance, the upkeep of the 2 stations that feed it, including the rags and the removal and all that stuff that you are speaking of, plus the energy costed to move it back to Fremont, so all that



figures in the Rate Study, plus set aside for better improvement, things of that nature because you are going to always have upkeep.

**Alderwoman Beatrice Jones:** I think at the September 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting, you, LGC said that there will be a \$1,700 dollars Flat Fee that will remain in tack and you ask that we considered a 5% increase which would bring the Rate to \$16.22 up from the \$15.45 that it was initially at. I think you, LGC said that it went from \$15.45 to \$32.46 which increase Eureka's Rate by 110% and that's why you were asking us, the Town of Fremont to look at a 5% increase because you believe that a \$32.46 increase was not a Bulk Rate.

**Sharon Edmundson:** Yes ma'am, it was calculated just double the inside Rate and again the 5% that we asked of the Town of Fremont would be considered as just an Interim Rate until the Rate Study is complete.

**Mayor Flowers:** Any other questions or discussion.

**Alderman Keith L. Spivey:** I make a Motion that Eureka's sewer and water Rate, still include the \$1,700 dollars monthly Rate and the \$15.45 per thousand gallon Rate be increased by 5% to \$16.22 on an Interim bases until the Rate Study is completed.

**Alderwoman Annie Lewis:** I second the Motion.

**Mayor Flowers:** Is there any Discussion?

**Former Town Clerk Shannon Daly:** Have we thought about the Overcapacity Rate, which will be a huge thing if, Eureka goes over Capacity.

**Mayor Pro tem Joyce Artis:** What was it before?

**Former Town Clerk Shannon Daly:** The Overcapacity Rate is, what the Outside Rate inside the Residential area.

**Debbie Tomasko:** Is outline in the 1999 Utility Agreement, which sets the Outside Rate. We need to Reference the Utility Agreement and see what it say of the Overcapacity Rate and make sure it is ailment with the Rate that we have in our Rate Study.

**Mayor Flowers:** A Motion and a Second has been made or do we need further Discussion? No one answered. Are we ready to Vote? All those in Favor, please

indicated by raising your hands. **5** Board Members in Favor and **1** Board Member, **Opposed:** Alderman Leroy Ruffin.

### **Reports:**

**Financial Report: Ryan Marlar,** stated his main priorities has been processing Payroll, Paying the Bills, and reconciling the Town's Banking Accounts and those have been caught up through August 31, 2023. Ryan stated his Engagement Letter includes an automatic termination clause for when Town Hall, does hire a Finance Officer, which my duties as the outsource Finance Officer Service Provider, that will terminate. Ryan stated there are significance adjustments that maybe, need to be made to the Reports, I have provided the Board with today, in order to update some of those pervasive issues, but all the Bills are paid, up to date, and all the Accounts have been Reconciled. You have before you the General Funds Cash Balance for the Books and the Town's changes in Funds balancing in that position for its Funds, for the period of July 1, 2023 through August 31, 2023. Major contributors to the changes are waiting for a Power Bill allocation in the Books, some Grants to hit the Books, and there have been some unexpected decreases in Billing and Collections on the Utility side in which I have analyzed it but nothing looks abnormal, for example, Power Purchase for Resale that expenditure has decreased roughly in the same percentage as the amounts collected, so nothing looks abnormal other than just the variance from what we would expect up to date and again these amounts may change or maybe the information that I don't have that may reflex in these Reports.

**Alderman Leroy Ruffin:** You said something about a Power Bill, what was that?

**Ryan Marlar:** The Proceeds from the State has not reflected in the General Fund, yet, so there was a decrease in General Fund Balance from the Fiscal year beginning to now and part of what is contributing to that decrease is we are waiting on some Grant Funds, some Power Bill Funds, that once they are collected the Fund Balance will return to Positive essentially, is what will happen and so we just need those reflexed in the Books, once we collect those.

**Mayor Flowers:** Does anyone have any questions or comments? No one had any questions or comments.

**Billing & Collections Report:** Shannon Daly, spoke of what was billed in July 2023 versus what was collected in August 2023 and the differences of Amount Balance owed being \$19,193. Shannon stated the majority of this amount of money is where Town Businesses did not pay their Bill. The Town Board gave Businesses until the end of September 2023 to pay their Bill, reasoning being because the Town took the Rates back to what it originally was before July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023. This is the Big Reason for the \$19,000 dollar amount in differences. We received \$3,382 that was owed to the Town of Fremont from **Vouchers**, so basically if the \$3,382 is subtracted from the \$19,193 the difference of amount would be a little over \$16,000 that we did not collect from Businesses for the Month of August 2023. We will not collect all of this money because of reverting the Rates back, so whatever that Amount is going to be, is what we will not Collected, I'm just not sure what the exact Amount difference will be. The **Cutoff's**, we didn't do any Cutoff's last Month because of the Billing Issues or the Rates. The **Debt Setoff**, we Billed out \$639 and Letters were mailed out to certain Town Customers of Debt owed to the Town, which those Town Customers came in immediately and paid their Debt and from there I was able to go back into Debt Setoff and take those Customers back out of Debt Setoff. In **Arrangements**, we had \$935 and we collected \$177, so as of right now, we only have \$758 in Arrangements that's due to the Town.

**Mayor Pro tem Joyce Artis:** Made it clear that she knew the Billing and Collection Report, dollars amount owed to the Town was due to Businesses hadn't paid their Bill that was due for the Month of August.

**Mayor Darron Flowers:** Any other questions or Comments? No one had any questions or comments.

**Public Works Report:** Assistant Manager Jeff Barnes, spoke on several things from Abatements, pot holes from 117 Highway and by the residence of Alderman Keith Spivey. Jeff also spoke on the Green Dump Truck being broke down but having 2 quotes already for the repairs needing to be fixed for the Green Dump Truck. Jeff went on to speak about Trash being beside a concerned citizen's home, which is at an abandon house for 2 months but not really knowing what can be done to rectify this situation, be it Land field or what. He suggested that an immediate fine be

placed on the one that is dumping trash beside the road. Chief Moats informed Mr. Barnes that regardless of the amount of time, the process is based on the Town's ordinance, and the issue must be addressed regardless of how inconvenient it may be to the Public Works or Police Department. Chief Moats also stated that the Town has a bulk rate, which could be added to the abatement fee and the code enforcement officer would address the homeowner and from there, the appropriate person would be charged.

Jeff stated several calls come through in a day due to Electric services going out be it for Limbs or Squirrels, but there's really not much that can be done in regards to Limbs or Squirrels. Jeff spoke on the receptacles being up for Christmas Lights and that Vanessa is working on the Christmas Wreaths.

#### **Police Department – Chief Moats**

Chief Moats stated that the Fremont Police Department formed a community watch in a neighborhood in the town, and the PD was able to meet with several of concerned citizens to develop a plan to solve the issue. He went on to say that the individual was arrested, charged, and processed.

He went on to say that the Charles B. Aycock High School Home Coming Parade will be held on Friday, October 6, 2023 @ 4pm, and that he would need the assistance of the Public Works Department.

#### **Christmas Party- Alderwoman Jones**

Alderwoman Jones stated that the Board and Staff Christmas Party is schedule for Tuesday, December 12, 2023 at the Lane Tree Golf Course at 6pm.

#### **Training for the Board Members – Alderwoman Jones**

Alderwoman Jones stated that we have a budget for training of \$4,500, and she has noticed that a third of the budget has been exhausted in July or August by two people, which included approximately \$300 travel expense per person. She went on to say that the finance committee feel that we (the Board) need to review our policy on how these funds are to be used.

**Daffodil Drop – Alderman Ruffin**

Mr. Ruffin stated that he would like to table this discussion item to the next month's agenda. He would like to hold the event on New Year's Eve night.

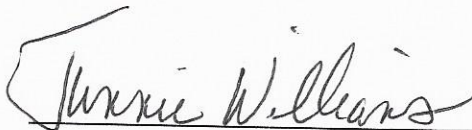
**HVAC for Town Hall – Mayor Pro tem Joyce Artis**

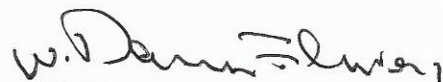
Mayor Pro tem Artis presented 3 estimates for the new HVAC system. She stated that all four offices and the conference room are without air conditioning or heat. The Board decided to purchase the Trane HVAC unit from Herring Heating and Air in the amount of \$8998.00.

**New Town Administrator Search – Mayor Pro tem Joyce Artis**

Mayor Pro tem Artis stated that David Bone of Eastern Carolina Costal contacted her to determine where the Town was in the selection of the new town administrator. She went on to say that Mr. Bone offered to write the Town a turn-key proposal, which would be in the amount of \$5,000.00. At the request of Alderman Leroy Ruffin, the Board agreed to discuss this item after the Board comes out of closed session.

Mayor Pro tem Artis made a motion to go into closed session, it was seconded by Alderman Leroy Ruffin.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Junnie Williams – Town Clerk

  
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W. Darron Flowers - Mayor

1974-75 - Administration - when it was first set up  
the Board of Directors was composed of the following members  
and served the needs of the community.

1975-76 - Administration - when it was first set up  
the Board of Directors was composed of the following members  
and served the needs of the community.

1976-77 - Administration - when it was first set up  
the Board of Directors was composed of the following members  
and served the needs of the community.

1977-78 - Administration - when it was first set up  
the Board of Directors was composed of the following members  
and served the needs of the community.

John J. [Signature]  
President

[Signature]  
Secretary