



Minutes of Regular Board Meeting

March 17, 2026

The Regular Board Meeting of the Board of Aldermen/Alderwomen for the Town of Fremont, NC was held on Tuesday, March 17, 2026 at 6pm. Present were:

Eddie Yelverton, Mayor
Leroy Ruffin, Mayor Pro tem
Oscar Mooring, Alderman
Tim V. Howell, Alderman
Shelia Reid, Alderwoman
Wayne Jackson, Alderman
Joyce M. Artis, Alderwoman/ Town Clerk

Also in attendance was: Interim Town Administrator Steve Harrell, Finance Officer Shannon Moats, Police Chief Paul Moats, Interim Public Works Director Kenneth Stanley, and Assistant Police Chief Greg Bottoms.

Call to Order:

Mayor Yelverton called the meeting to order at 6pm.

Invocation:

Mayor Yelveton gave the Invocation.

Pledge of Allegiance:

Police Chief Paul Moats led all in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda:

Mayor Yelverton asked if there was a motion to approve or amend the agenda.

Alderwoman Artis asked to add to discussion, "Bathrooms at Peele Park." Mayor Pro Tem Ruffin asked to add to discussion, "Cleaning of Ditches on South Sycamore, South Vance, and East Norwayne Alumni Way" Alderman Mooring asked to add to discussion, "Status of the CDBG-CV Grant."

Alderman Jackson made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by Alderwoman Reid.

Mayor Yelverton asked if there was any discussion. There were none. All were in favor of the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Yelverton asked if there was a motion to approve the following items on the consent agenda.

Consent Agenda:

1. Regular Board Meeting Minutes – February 17, 2026
2. Budget Retreat Minutes – February 25, 2026
3. Finance Report
4. Billing & Collections Report
5. Public Works Report

At the request of Mayor Pro Tem Ruffin, the finance report was removed from the consent agenda to be discussed later in the meeting.

Mayor Yelverton asked if there was a motion to approve the remaining items on the consent agenda.

Alderman Jackson made a motion to approve the remaining items listed on the consent agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by Alderman Howell.

Mayor Yelverton asked for any discussion. There were none. All were in favor of the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comments

Mayor Yelverton opened the meeting to hear comments from the public.

No one came forth to speak. Mayor Yelverton closed the public comment section of the meeting.

Speaker: Sharif Ewais of Fremont IGA – Addressing Concerns

Mr. Ewais stated that he was the eldest son of, Basin and Rosanna Ewais, who were the owners of Fremont IGA. He informed all in attendance that his family had resided in the Town of Fremont for many years, and that his mother had started her teaching career of forty years at the Fremont “Stars” Elementary School, and that his father’s company, Fremont Auto, had been a part of the Fremont community for forty years as well. He went on to say that he and his brother attended Fremont Elementary and Norwayne Middle Schools. He went on to inform the Board that Fremont was and still is the home of the Ewais Family, and that he was very concerned about the negative comments that had been posted on social media about his family’s business, race, and faith. He stated that the comments were “Inadequate and deeply offensive.”

Mr. Ewais stated that sole purpose of his family opening the Fremont IGA was to give back to the community that had given so much to his family.

Alderwoman Reid thanked Mr. Ewais for bringing the issue to the Board. She went on to say that the Board would do their very best to help solve the issue.

Alderman Jackson stated that not having a grocery store was one of the major complaints from the citizens. He also stated that he was concerned about the negative comments, and thanked the Ewais family for providing a much needed business to the Town.

Mayor Yelverton stated that Fremont IGA was one of the biggest assets that the Town of Fremont had, and without it the Town could not grow.

Chief Moats informed the Board that the comments that were posted on the Word of Mouth Fremont were mostly based on race and religion. He went on to say that he has had conversations with the administrators of the Facebook page to, hopefully, come to a resolution. He also stated that he had informed administrators of the Facebook page that there were civil litigations in their comments, such as defamation of character and other issues as well. He stated that the most recent negative post had been deleted after his conversation with the Facebook page administrators.

The entire Board expressed how pleased they were to have the Fremont IGA in the Town of Fremont.

Public Hearing

Mayor Yelverton opened the meeting for a public hearing.

He stated that the purpose of the hearing was to hear public comments concerning the Fremont Town Board of Aldermen/Alderwomen making changes to the subdivision ordinance Chapter 152, and the adoption of Standard Policies and Specifications for Utilities and Roadways for the Town of Fremont.

After a two-minute waiting period, Mayor Yelverton closed the public hearing section, due to the fact that no one came forth to speak.

Town Engineer Mike McAllister stated that the developer's engineer would sign off on the plans that was to be submitted to the Town, and by doing so, the developer's engineer would be certifying that the project is built in accordance to the plans that was submitted.

Mr. McAllister went on to say that he or a member of his engineering firm would carry out all other pertinent aspect/roles of all subdivision construction projects.

The agenda item was tabled due to the fact that a portion of page 9 of the purposed ordinance needed to be rewritten.

Resolution

Mayor Yelverton read a resolution that recognized the importance of the Old Fremont School Building, and also authorizing initiation of the procedures to effectuate listing the Old Fremont School as a historic landmark.

Mr. Harrell stated a Historic Preservation Committee had to be first established. He went on to say that after the Historic Perseveration Committee's gives its recommendation to declare the structure a historic landmark, the necessary steps could be taken in order to do so.

Mr. Harrell stated that the first step would be to update the Historic Preservation Ordinance, which was adopted in the early 1990's. He went on to say that the previous ordinance includes State Statues from that time period, which have changed within the last thirty-five years, and that an ordinance must be adopted that reflects the current legislation.

Mr. Harrell also informed the Board that he had spoken with Town Attorney Brian Pridgen, who was helping him with the wording of the ordinance, and that the process would take approximately two months.

Mayor Yelverton asked if there was a motion on the agenda item.

Alderman Mooring made a motion to approve the resolution, recognizing the importance of the Old Fremont School Building as a historic landmark, and also authorizing the initiation of the procedures to effectuate listing the Old Fremont School as a historic landmark. The motion was seconded by Alderwoman Artis.

Mayor Yelverton asked for any discussion. There were none. All were in favor of the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Letter to the Board of Education

Mayor Yelverton asked for the Board thoughts concerning sending an additional letter to the Board of Education to inform them of the Town's desire to purchase the old Fremont School. He went on to say that Town Attorney Brian Pridgen recommended that the Town would raise the first offer of \$55,000 to \$60,000 to purchase the school, in lieu of entering into the bidding process.

Mayor asked if there was a motion.

Alderman Mooring made a motion to offering the Wayne County Public Schools Board of Education an offer of \$60,000 to purchase the old Fremont School. The motion was seconded Alderman Jackson.

Mayor Yelverton asked for any discussion. There were none. All were in favor of the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Action:

1. Change of Meeting Times – Mayor Pro Tem Ruffin

Mayor Pro Tem Ruffin stated that due to long Board meetings, he would like for the Board to consider changing the meeting time of the regular Board meetings. He asked that the meetings would remain on the third Tuesdays, and that the time would be change from 6 p. m. to 3 p.m.

After much discussion, the action item was tabled.

2. Water Permit Extension Request for Fremont Meadows – Interim Town Administrator Steve Harrell

Interim Town Administrator Steve Harrell presented a request from the current owner of the Fremont Meadows Subdivision that asked to extend the water system management plan. He informed the Board that he was not prepared to sign-off on the request without acquiring pertinent background information. Along with the request, Mr. Harrell presented to the Board the following information concerning the project.

Background

In July, 2023, the Town of Fremont approved the construction of Fremont Meadows Subdivision which included a Water System Management Plan permit that was issued to the Town by the Public Water Supply Section of the NC Public Water Supply Section. Fremont Meadows property has changed hands several times since and the construction of the subdivision never materialized. The permit is set to expire the end of this month and the subdivision property has a new owner who wishes to proceed with construction of the subdivision. Fremont has been requested by the owner's current engineer, Stocks Engineering, to sign the enclosed Authorization to Construct Extension which would extend the permit issued in 2023.

Staff Report

Mike McAllister of Municipal Engineering, the engineering firm that actually designed Fremont Meadows, will be present at the Board meeting to assist in discussing this matter. Essentially, at the time this subdivision was initially designed, the Town of Fremont did not have a sanitary sewer capacity problem, but it does not now. Although this is the case, since the subdivision was permitted three years ago, it can proceed with construction if the Town agrees to the permit extension described above. The allowance of the construction of the subdivision will have an impact on the Town's sanitary sewer capacity, however, if constructed the Town would benefit from ad valorem taxes and new utilities' customers, to include electricity.

Requested Action

At the discretion of the Board.

Mr. Harrell asked Town Engineer Mike McAllister, who drew the original water management system for the subdivision, to explain the request to the Board.

Mr. McAllister stated that the ownership of the Fremont Meadows subdivision had changed approximately three times. He went on to say that the subdivision's sewer allotment had tied up the Town's sewer allocation, and that there had been no onsite construction for within three years.

Mr. McAllister recommended that a letter would be drafted by Town Attorney Pridgen that would inform the new owners of the Fremont Meadows Subdivision that they had a

very short timeline to begin construction or else the Town would terminate the subdivision's sewer allotment.

After much discussion, Mayor Pro Tem Ruffin made a motion to approve the water extension request for Fremont Meadows for 90 days, and that a letter would be written by Town Attorney Pridgen to Stocks Engineering that would explain the same. The motion was seconded by Alderman Jackson.

Mayor Yelverton asked for any discussion. There were none. All were in favor of the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

3. CDBG CV Grant – Town Engineer Mike McAllister

Mr. McAllister stated that he not been informed by the NC Department of Commerce concerning the list of projects that the Town and Norwayne Alumni Association presented. He went on to say that, "I still do not have an answer as to what is eligible and what is not."

Mr. Harrell stated that he sent an email to the director of the CDBG division of the NC Department of Commerce, who responded by saying that he would have Cynthia Jones, who has been overseeing the grant, to get in contact with him and had not received a response.

Alderwoman Artis asked what was Mr. McAllister's next step concerning the grant. Mr. McAllister stated that if he had not received any communication from the NC Department of Commerce by the end of the week, he planned to send a payment request for Vortex Construction's performance bond payments, and Municipal Engineering's invoices.

***(Mayor Pro tem Ruffin left the meeting at 6:59pm)**

4. Lawn Mower Quote – Interim Public Works Director Kenneth Stanley

Mr. Stanley presented a quote to purchase a new lawn mower for the public works department.

Finance Officer Shannon Moats stated that, due to the fact that the lawn mower would be used for more than one department, the cost could be divided amongst the different departments.

Alderman Howell made a motion to purchase a Grasshopper 335B/61 lawn mower in the amount of \$13,009.52. The motion was seconded by Alderman Mooring.

Mayor Yelverton asked for any discussion. There were none. All were in favor of the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Stanley informed the Board that three of the four current lawn mowers were currently out of service.

Sewer Issues on Charles Drive

Mr. Stanley stated that, at the request of Mayor Pro Tem Ruffin, he was able to determine that the sewer line in question on Charles Drive had 2ft. of Fall and was 572ft. He went on to say that the reason the line was not properly draining was because the current sewer line only had 1/3 of the fall that was needed.

Owens Farm Road

Mr. Stanley informed the Board that the contractor that was building new homes on Owens Farm Road would like for the Town's single-phased light pole to be moved off their property. He went on to say that it would benefit the Town if the pole would be taken down instead of relocated.

Alderman Howell made a motion to remove the pole in question. The motion was seconded by Alderman Mooring.

Mayor Yelverton asked for any discussion. There were none. All were in favor of the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Library Sign

Mr. Stanley informed the Board that the sign in the yard of the old library was deteriorating, and that it needed to be removed. Mr. Jackson stated that the sign was purchased by Mr. Charles Bruton, who wanted the sign if the Fremont Museum did not want to use it as an exhibit.

Reports:

1. Police Department – Chief Moats

Chief Moats informed the Board that the police department was preparing for the Daffodil Festival, which was scheduled for Saturday, March 21st. He went on to report the police department's activity for the month of February.

2. Finance Reports – Shannon Moats

Mrs. Moats asked for the Board's direction concerning the type of financial report that they would like for her to submit each month, in addition to the monthly reports that she submits.

She went on to say that if there are any additional information that she would like to present to the Board, she would ask to have it added to the agenda

She stated that \$265,000 was transferred from the Town's Southern Bank account into the Town's Capital Management Trust Account on February 17, 2026, and that a Board approved transfer form was used to document the transfer, in which was signed by Mayor Yelverton.

Mrs. Moats referred the Board to Billing and Collections report, which included some

financial report as well.

Alderwoman Artis stated that Mrs. Moats gives the Board a monthly financial report. She went on to say that there may be some misunderstanding concerning the purpose of consent agenda, and feels that some additional explanation is warranted.

Discussion:

Cell Towers on Water Tank – Mayor Yelverton

Mayor Yelverton stated that Mr. Harrell had contacted Utilities Service Communication, a company that supervises the rental cellular services on water towers. Mr. Harrell stated that he would share the information that he was able to obtain concerning the rental of the water tower with Town Attorney Brian Pridgen and with the Town Board for approval.

Peele Park

Alderwoman Artis stated that she had received some complaints/concerns about the condition of the Peele Park. She went on to say that complaints ranged from no water, unlocked bathrooms, dirty bathrooms, which were cleaned up by the parents and members of a local softball team, no electricity, drug paraphilia, inoperable scoreboards, etc.

Interim Public Works Director Kenneth Stanley stated that the water is usually disconnected during the winter and during expected low temperatures.

Interim Town Administrator Steve Harrell stated that he along with Alderman Jackson and other staff memberd would meet to develop a program that would, hopefully, make the park more useful and safe for the public, which would be presented to the Board for their approval.

Demolished/Turned-over Headstones in Elmwood Cemetery – Mayor Yelverton

Mayor Yelverton stated that the families of the headstones that were turned over in the Elmwood Cemetery should be contacted. He stated that the dates on some of the headstones were antiquated, and it may be impossible to contact a family member. He went on to say that the areas where the headstones pushed over were very dangerous and unsightly, and that he felt that at some point, the Town should explore other options to repair/resolve the issues.

Ditch Drainage Issues

In the absence of Mayor Pro Tem Ruffin, Alderman Howell stated that the pictures that he sent to the Board and Interim Town Administrator Harrell were the areas that Mayor Pro Tem Ruffin wanted to discuss before he had to leave the meeting. Alderman Howell stated that these areas needed immediate attention.

Old Business:

- 1. Grading of Street Shoulders – No Discussion**
- 2. Town Administrator/Public Works Director Position**
Removed from old business due to positions being filled.
- 3. Town of Eureka’s Sewer Agreement – No Discussion**
- 4. Grant Writer – No Discussion**
- 5. Repair of Sewer Tile Below Railroad Track –**
Town Engineer Mike McAllister stated that the drawings of the project would be submitted to Peter’s and White to obtain a cost to repair the sewer tile below the railroad track.

Alderwoman Artis asked if the cost to repair the issue under the railroad would be funded from the 4.4 million sewer rehab grant that the Town was awarded.

Mr. McAllister stated that a change order would have to be made to the existing contract, if there was enough money left in the grant to repair the sewer tile under the railroad.

Alderwoman asked Mr. McAllister when the drawings would be submitted to the contractors. Mr. McAllister replied that he would submit the drawings to Peter’s and White Construction at the next sewer rehab progress meeting on Friday, March 27th @ 10am.

- 6. Picnic Table for MLK Park**
Removed from old business due to the purchase of a new picnic table for the MLK Park.

Information:

1. Daffodil Festival – Saturday, March 20th @ 10am
2. LGC Finance Class on March 31, 2026 9am-4pm at the Clayton Town Hall, Clayton, NC
- 3.

Board Members’ Comments

Alderman Jackson welcomed, newly hired interim town administrator, Steve Harrell, to the Town of Fremont. He informed Mr. Harrell that he was looking forward to working with him.

Alderwoman Artis stated that she was working on getting the new garbage cans for Main Street ordered.

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

Mayor Yelverton asked if there was a motion to go into closed session.

Alderwoman Artis made a motion to go into closed session to discuss personnel. Alderman Mooring seconded the motion.

Mayor Yelverton asked for any discussion. There were none. All were in favor of the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Open Session:

Closing Prayer:

Alderwoman Reid gave the closing prayer.

Motion to Close:

Mayor asked if there was a motion to close the meeting.

Alderman Jackson made a motion to close the regular Board meeting. Alderman Howell seconded the motion.

Mayor Yelverton asked for any discussion. There were none. All were in favor of the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Mayor Yelverton adjourned the meeting.

The meeting ended at 8:03 p.m.

Eddie Yelverton, Mayor

Joyce M. Artis, Town Clerk