

March 13th, 2018

At the Special Called Meeting of the Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the Town of Canton held at the Colonial Theatre Annex, March 13th, 2018 at 5:30 p.m. with Mayor Smathers and Aldermen/women Mull, Hamlett, Smith and Markey present, the following proceedings were held.

A. Call to Order

Mayor Smathers called the meeting to order at 5:40 p.m.

B. Roll Call

Mayor Smathers noted that the Town Manager, Town Clerk, and Denise Holcombe were also present.

C. Colonial Theatre and Annex Work-session

Manager Burrell opened the meeting stating that this would be the time to come up with new ideas that the Board would like to incorporate into the new budget. Alderwoman Smith requested a tour of the facility before the discussion. After a tour of the facility Mayor Smathers asked Denise Holcombe, Facility Manager, how the fee structure was working. Mrs. Holcombe stated that the Annex seemed to be in-line with similar venues, however, the Theatre was probably underpriced but was worried of pricing the venue out of the market. Mayor Smathers stated that the logistics for events such as Folkmoot, Balsam Range, and Night at the Opry seemed to run seamlessly. Mayor Smathers inquired if the time of year played a role in bookings. Mrs. Holcombe stated that the bookings were year-round no time more popular than others. Alderwoman Smith asked if people booked far in advance or short term. Mrs. Holcombe stated that she had both types of bookings and the Theatre was more advance and the Annex was short term. Alderman Markey stated that from the figures presented that even totally booked you would be lucky to break even. Alderman Markey asked if the intent was to make money or consider this venue more of a community use? Manager Burrell stated that the Town did not sink extravagant amount of monies into the budget as far as booking entertainment to date and suggested that with fiscal limitations that the Town should seek partners to have events at the venue. Manager Burrell also stated that the marketing aspect needed some work and he would advise a marketing strategy as well. Mayor Smathers stated that he would like to see what we could bring in and let Denise facilitate to enhance the downtown economic

development. Mayor Smathers asked if movies were the answer then what needed to be upgraded and what other than the marquee could we utilize for marketing. Alderman Markey stated would this be quality of life or something else for people to do, and that he did not feel that weddings and receptions would do this. Manager Burrell stated that most users were Haywood County residents. Alderwoman Smith disagreed with Alderman Markey stating that when people from other places attended weddings and receptions that they need a place to sleep, eat, and be entertained and that weddings were a huge economic driver. Alderwoman Mull asked if it was feasible to hire a marketing manager for the facility or if it would be done by current employees. Alderman Hamlett stated that he would like to see two aspects, one being nostalgic old movies and live performances. Alderman Markey stated that the target to market needed to be identified then market accordingly. Alderwoman Smith agreed stating that you had to decide what you wanted to market, if it would be accessible to the community, large markets, or groups, what type of entertainment, then marketing would be much easier. Alderman Hamlett stated that he felt that the Theatre was much more than an event venue that it was the "Jewel of Canton" and he felt we should replace the DVD with a projector, a big screen, and show old nostalgic movies that play to the atmosphere of the theater dating to the 1930's. Alderwoman Smith agreed that coming back to our roots would be a good option. Alderman Hamlett asked staff to price a projector. Alderman Markey stated that even if we purchase a projector that we need to make the event an experience. Mayor Smathers reiterated that if we don't have the resources to do the programming, then what could we afford to market that the Town was seeking partners? Alderman Markey stated that one vision needed to be selected. Alderwoman Smith stated that decide the focus, go after it, long range planning, website, pamphlets, etc. The Board would like to see information regarding, similar venues, pricing, demographics, projector pricing, movie rental information, professional photography, promoter fees, website fee, sizing, big screen cost, and what is missing in the area. Mayor Smathers stated that when the information was available then vote on choice and budget an agreeable amount.

L. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Melisa Stinnett, Town Clerk