

## **January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

At the Regularly Scheduled Meeting of the Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the Town of Canton held at the Municipal Building Boardroom, January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at 6:30pm 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 6:30 p.m.

### **B. Roll Call**

Mayor Smathers noted that the Town Manager, Town Attorney, and Town Clerk were all present.

### **C. Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance**

Pastor Vos gave the Invocation, Alderwoman Smith led those present in the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **D. Approval of Minutes: 12/14/18**

Alderman Hamlett made a motion to approve the December 14, 2017 minutes as presented. Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion. All members present in favor of the motion.

### **E. Mayor Comments**

Mayor Smathers began his comments by addressing those Citizens that had been affected by the Spruce Street Reservoir outage as he was as well. Mayor Smathers thanked those in attendance for coming to the meeting and asked everyone to express their issues in a civil timely manner. Mayor Smathers stated that he appreciated the Town employees as they were second to none and always went above the call of duty. Mayor Smathers requested the Manager give a report at the next meeting on what worked and what needed improving so that we could better serve the citizens in outages such as this. Mayor Smathers thanked the Board for voting to fund the Spruce Street Improvement Project at the last meeting so that the issues in this area could be resolved in the future.

Mayor Smathers commented that Caroline Ponton had place historic pictures in the courtroom so that those attending the meetings could see Canton's history on display.

## **F. Aldermen/women Comments**

Alderman Markey agreed with Mayor Smathers regarding the unfortunate water outage in the Spruce Street Reservoir area stating that the unprecedented cold temperatures only compounded the water issues within the Town and thanked the employees for their tireless efforts to restore water service to those affected in these frigid conditions. Alderman Markey stated that communication was the key in situations like these as he felt it made things more frustrating by not knowing what was going on. Alderman Markey stated that transparency and communication were top priorities of this Board and we need to always look at what we can do better.

Alderman Hamlett stated that the infrastructure was a concern and with that he made no excuses regarding the Spruce Street outage and requested contingency plans be prepared and in place so when this type of outage happened again we would be more prepared. Alderman Hamlett stated that climate change played a key role in this outage and that winter had just begun and we needed to try to be as effective as possible.

Alderwoman Mull thanked those in attendance for coming and that the Board wanted to give each Citizen the attention to their comments and to conclude ways that the Town could improve in handling these types of situations. Alderwoman Mull thanked all the employees that worked 24 hours a day to try and resolve this issue in such cold temperatures.

Alderwoman Smith stated that three months ago when she was campaigning that infrastructure was one of her concerns and that this Board takes it very seriously. Alderwoman Smith stated that it was critical for the residents to attend the meeting to be heard. Alderwoman Smith agreed with Alderman Markey stating that transparency and communication is key.

## **G. Public Comments**

Mr. Mike Hyde of 9 Elaine Drive stated that he worked for the papermill for 30 years and he knew that the mill used a lot of water during freezing temperatures to alleviate ruptured pipes, however, the outage for this length of time goes from an inconvenience to a hardship. Mr. Hyde stated that he also felt as if the media played a role in encouraging people to let water

run during these temperatures thus pulling from the water system as well. Mr. Hyde inquired if any correspondence had been made with the mill to limit their usage.

Manager Burrell interjected that he would give a timeline at this point so all those in attendance would be informed as to the timing of the events that took place. Manager Burrell explained that the 40 some odd residents that are affected during extreme temperatures or drought is because when the reservoir level drops below the two foot mark the pumps are no longer able to pump water into the tank. Manager Burrell also reiterated that there were several factors that influenced the low levels. Some of these factors were that the Town experienced several water lines breaks in various locations throughout Town with lines as small as 2 inches up to 8 inch lines that broke due to the freezing temperatures. In addition, both residential and commercial customers were running water faucets to avoid frozen water pipes. Coupled with the fact there can be undetected leaks that occur and may take days before surfacing. All of these events contributed to placing a strain on water system levels. Manager Burrell stated that he contacted the mill when he was notified of the future weather outlook and the below freezing temperatures forecast for the week to request that the mill be mindful of water usage. Manager Burrell stated that this was not a recent issue that arose within the last 3 years but instead, has been an ongoing problem for many years. The difference, Manager Burrell pointed out is with the popularity of social media and other forms of communication more people have become aware of the issue. Further, Manager Burrell stated that the previous Board, as well as the current Board was in the process of funding and implementing a project that should alleviate this problem in the future. Manager Burrell also explained that these types of projects, roughly \$1.7 million-dollar projects, do not happen overnight but was previously in process and should be completed at the end of 2020. With that being said, Manager Burrell agreed that in crisis such as these you can learn and implement measures to make things better, either with communication, implementation, and/or policies. Manager Burrell strongly stated that his employees were second to none and nothing with regards to maintenance and repairs could have been implemented any better or quicker.

Richard Spivey of 14 Hy Vu Drive stated that more communication would have been helpful so he would have

known when water would be restored. Mr. Spivey did acknowledge that water was delivered, as well as the boil water advisory, however, he would ask for more communication.

Mr. Roy Taylor of 48 Elizabeth Street stated that this issue had been ongoing for three years and it needed to be fixed. Mr. Taylor asked the Board to take this issue seriously and to provide residents with better communication. Mayor Smathers stated that the past Board, as well as this Board took this issue very seriously stating that the previous Board held a water summit and ranked the projects by priority and instructed the Manger to seek funding for the Spruce Street Water Project, as well as for an Asset Management Plan for all the infrastructure in the Town.

Mrs. LeFrance of 3 Hy Vu Dr. stated that the over use from the mill concerned her and inquired if the Town was in contact with them to alleviate this issue. Mrs. LeFrance also commented that she felt that communication was an issue and she would have been more comfortable if she had known what was going on as she had not lived in this area long. Mrs. LeFrance stated that she called the Town Hall and was made aware of the alert system to which she was added but also stated that a hard look needed to be done to see what could be collectively done better. Mrs. LeFrance thanked the employees for their hard work during this time.

Water Superintendent Richard Hodge addressed Mrs. LeFrance stating that this was the first time that the Town could access the daily usage for all users as the radio read meter installation project was completed this summer and that the mill was not aware of their usage until now and was concerned and willing to work with the Town to resolve these issues in the future.

Mr. Marshall Stratton of 16 Hy Vu Dr stated that this issue was not just the mill usage it was the over usage by a majority and we all needed to do a better job conserving our resources year-round. Mr. Stratton also agreed that communication needed to be addressed and improved upon.

Alderman Hamlett addressed everyone by stating that during times like these you usually would see the best of people and encouraged all residents to check on their neighbors and help to take care of one another and this is one of the reason's Canton is such a great place to live.

## **H. Audit Report: Sheila Gahagan**

Sheila Gahagan of Gahagan Associates presented the Board with the summary (see attached) of the audit report for the 2016-17 audit.

## **I. Reports from the Manager**

Manager Burrell presented the cash report to the Board.

Manager Burrell stated that he would update the Board during the work-session on street infrastructure.

Manager Burrell updated the Board on the progress and lack of progress with the Haywood Alert System sign up process stating that Alderman Markey was working with Lisa Stinnett to help capture the non-electronic demographic and get them into the new system, as well as continue to educate and assist with resident registration.

Manager Burrell reminded the Board that the Council of Government meeting would be Monday, January 22 at 5:30 pm at the Southern Porch.

Manager Burrell also made the Board aware that a work-session was scheduled for January 27<sup>th</sup> from 9am to 5pm. All members were in agreement on the day and time.

Manager Burrell stated that the 2018 Polar Plunge benefitting Haywood Waterways would be held in the new pool this year on February 17<sup>th</sup> and the Town would start to help promote as soon as the links and documentation was provided.

## **J. New Business**

### **Introduction of CFO Natalie Walker**

Manager Burrell introduced Mrs. Natalie Walker the newly hired CFO for the Town of Canton. The Board welcomed Mrs. Walker to the Town family.

### Red Cross Request

Manager Burrell presented the Board with a request (see attached) from the American Red Cross to use the Armory facility three times a year through the week for blood drives to benefit our community and surrounding areas. The Red cross has agreed to provide a certificate of insurance for each event. Alderman Hamlett made a motion to approve these events as presented. Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion with all members voting in the affirmative.

### TDA Sub-Committee Appointments

Manager Burrell distributed the guidelines for the appointments to the TDA 1% subcommittee along with the regulations for funding from the prior year to get them acclimated with this organization. The appointments will be tabled to a future meeting.

### **K. Closed Session: N.C.G.S 143-318.11 6) Personnel**

Alderman Hamlett made a motion to enter into closed session at 8:43 p.m. Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion with all members voting in the affirmative. After a brief discussion, Alderman Markey made a motion to enter into open session at 8:57 p.m. Alderman Hamlett seconded the motion with all members voting in favor of the motion.

### **L. Next Scheduled Meeting**

The next Special Called meeting will be held on January 27<sup>th</sup> at 9 a.m. in the Municipal Building second floor Boardroom.

### **M. Adjournment**

There being no additional business, Mayor Smathers adjourned the Meeting at 8:58 pm.

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Melisa Stinnett, Town Clerk