

## **June 25, 2020**

At the Regularly Scheduled Meeting of the Mayor and Board of Aldermen/women of the Town of Canton held at the Walter Clark Board Chambers, June 25, 2020 at 6:30pm with Mayor Smathers and Aldermen/women Mull, Hamlett, Smith, and Shepard 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 stated that the Manager, Assistant Manager (by Zoom), Finance Officer and Town Attorney were present.

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

Mayor Smathers asked for a moment of silence. Mayor Smathers called on Alderwoman Mull to lead the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **D. Approval of Minutes: June 11, 2020**

Alderwoman Smith made a motion to approve the June 11, 2020 minutes as presented. Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion. All members voted in favor of the motion.

### **E. Mayor Comments**

Mayor Smathers commented many things have been done to get people interested in the downtown area beatification being one of them. Mayor Smathers stated that he had received several comments of the condition of the downtown area as of late. Mayor Smathers stated that he was aware that the gentleman that was doing the job was pulled away to help with the sidewalk projects and he did a good job when he had the time to do the job, however, Mayor Smathers stated that the Town gets judged on appearance and he feels it needs more attention. Manager Burrell stated that he had been focusing on what needed to be done during the pandemic and was focused on finishing the Newfound sidewalk project. Manager Burrell stated that he was not sold on the need for a full-time horticulturist and that he was meeting with B.H. Granning Landscaping to see if a plan could be developed. Alderman Hamlett suggested that Assistant Manager Scheuer take the responsibility of making sure the beds and flowers downtown were maintained. Manager Burrell stated that would not be a

problem. Alderman Hamlett stated that he wished to see a full-time horticulturist eventually be hired. Mayor Smathers asked the Board for their input on the subject. Alderman Shepard stated that he felt like a contracted service would be a good idea if they followed an approved plan. Manager Burrell stated that it would be a need basis and if you utilized a contracted service it would save benefits and salaries in the long-term. Alderwoman Mull agreed that a master plan needed to be developed and that the service should be for the long-term also commenting that Town did not look its best at the present time. Alderwoman Smith commented that considering that we were still operating in Phase II of the State of Emergency that she felt that having a maintenance plan now would be great and that she did not support a full-time position, rather allow employees to help in between contracted services. The Board directed the Manager to present them with a plan for the beautification of the downtown area.

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

Alderman Hamlett stated that he had concerns about the July 4<sup>th</sup> employee meal during Phase II stating it was not safe. Alderman Hamlett stated that the best way to appreciate the employees was to keep them safe. Alderman Hamlett inquired if employees get any time off for the 4<sup>th</sup> holiday? Manager Burrell stated that the employees would get Monday, July 6<sup>th</sup> off per the personnel policy.

Alderwoman Smith thanked everyone for wearing masks as well as Finance Officer Walker for her work on the budget.

#### **G. Public Comments**

Mr. Ernest Stamey from 25 Locust Street reported to the board that he was concerned about speeding on Locust Street. Mr. Stamey stated that this was a safety issue for all citizens and it continued to get worse. Mayor Smathers thanked Mr. Stamey for attending the meeting and his service. Manager Burrell explained that this was the first time he was hearing that there was an issue in the area but that we could provide help. Manager Burrell stated that he would make Chief Gaddis aware and develop a plan to slow down the traffic on Locust Street.

#### **H. Reports from the Manager**

Manager Burrell presented the cash report.

Manager Burrell made the board aware that the plan for the employee meal would be a takeout or to-go meal for the employees showing them appreciation in a safe manner. Alderman Hamlett stated he was in favor of cancelling the meal because the health of employees was more important. Alderwoman Mull asked if the employees should have a say? Mayor Smathers stated that restaurants were allowed to provide this service and asked if we could do it safely? Alderman Hamlett made a motion to cancel the employee meal. Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion. Alderwoman Smith inquired the outdoor limits and if social distancing could be obtained? Alderwoman Smith also commented that she knew other companies that provided employee meals as a nice gesture to their staff. Alderman Shepard inquired if the employees worked together daily? Manager Burrell stated that they did all work with each other in some capacity. Manager Burrell stated that the employees could be provided to-go boxes by department in designated time slots to maintain the social distancing and mass gathering requirements. Alderman Hamlett made a motion to allow the employee meal with the safety restrictions. Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion. All members voted in favor of the motion.

Manager Burrell asked the Board's direction regarding the Labor Day Festival, parade, or smaller event? Alderman Hamlett stated he did not feel you could have a parade or a small-scale event. Manager Burrell stated that he was inquiring about the 2-day music festival at this point. Alderman Hamlett stated he was in favor of cancelling the festival. Alderman Hamlett made a motion to cancel the Labor Day Festival. Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion. Alderwoman Smith stated that this was heart-breaking because so much was being missed during the pandemic. Alderman Shepard stated that he would love to be able to have the event but felt it was in the best interest of everyone to cancel the event. Mayor Smathers stated that risking the money was a concern due to low sponsorships and low attendance but most importantly safety was a concern. Alderman Hamlett stated that it was not about the money but the public safety. All members voted in favor of the motion. After a brief discussion the Board inquired the time limit to decide on the parade and small event ideas? Manager Burrell stated that August would be the deadline.

Manager Burrell updated the Board on the Boat Launch Project making them aware that the bids came in higher than anticipated. Manger Burrell stated that the Boat Launch Project had been in place for several years and had received the grant from Duke for most of the project and he was looking into ways to lower the costs to the Town. Alderwoman Mull inquired

where the launch would be? Manager Burrell stated behind Armory in grassy area. Alderwoman Mull made a motion to approve the lowest bid for the Boat Launch Project. Alderman Shepard seconded the motion. Alderwoman Smith inquired where Carolina Construction was located? Manager Burrell stated Asheville. All members voted in favor of the motion.

### **I. Old Business**

N/A

### **J. New Business**

#### 1. Adoption of the Budget and Budget Ordinance

Manager Burrell presented the 2020-2021 Budget and the 2020-2021 Budget Ordinance for the Boards approval. Alderwoman Mull made a motion to approve the 2020-2021 Budget and the 2020-2021 Budget Ordinance as presented. Alderwoman Smith seconded the motion. All members voted in favor of the motion.

#### 2. Budget Amendments

Manager Burrell presented proposed budget amendments. Alderman Hamlett made a motion to approve the budget amendments as presented. Alderwoman Smith seconded the motion. All members voted in favor of the motion.

#### 3. Audit Contract Proposal: Sheila Gahagan

Manager Burrell presented the proposal from Shelia Gahagan to perform the audit for the Town of Canton. Alderwoman Mull made a motion to approve the proposed contract from Sheila Gahagan. Alderman Hamlett seconded the motion. All members voted in favor of the motion.

#### 4. Offer to Purchase

Manager Burrell presented an offer to purchase parcel # 8667-11-0807 .01 acre. Manager Burrell stated that the offer to purchase was \$500.00 dollars with the buyer to pay for surveys and advertising costs. Attorney Morgan stated that he was unsure if a resolution was required. Manager Burrell stated that he would add this to old business for the next meeting.

**K. Closed Session: Pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11 (a)(5)**

Alderwoman Smith made a motion to enter closed session at 7:45pm. Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion. All members voted in favor of the motion.

After a lengthy discussion, Alderman Hamlett made a motion to enter open Session at 8:07. Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**L. Adjournment**

The next Regularly Scheduled meeting will be on Thursday, July 9, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. in Walter Clark Board Chambers. There being no additional business, Mayor Smathers adjourned the Meeting at 8:08 p.m.

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Melisa Stinnett, Town Clerk