

## **August 9, 2021**

At the Special Called Meeting of the Mayor and Board of Aldermen/women of the Town of Canton held at the Walter Clark Board Chambers August 9, 2021, at 5:00pm with Mayor Smathers, Alderman/Alderwomen Mull, Hamlett, Smith and Shepard present, the following proceedings were held.

### **A. Call to Order**

Mayor Smathers called the meeting to order at 5:09 p.m.

### **B. Roll Call**

Mayor Smathers reported that the Manager, and Town Clerk were present.

### **D. Approval of Minutes, July 22, 2021**

Mayor Smathers reported the minutes for July 22, 2021, would be presented at the next regular meeting.

### **E. Mayor Comments**

Mayor Smathers thanked everyone for their thoughts and prayers for the passing of his brother-in-law. Mayor Smathers stated that his family felt them during this most difficult time.

Mayor Smathers stated that the goodness of this community was truly astounding. Mayor Smathers stated while running one morning he had a conversation with a gentleman that walks and picks up trash, cans, etc. everyday. Mayor Smathers stated that he does this and send the proceeds to a lady in Tennessee that has an Autistic child and needs a little help. Mayor Smathers stated that was the kind of community that we lived in, and he was so proud to be a part.

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

N/A

### **G. Public Comments**

Moved to item 1 under new business.

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

Manager Scheuer presented the cash report.

Manager Scheuer presented the tax report.

Manager Scheuer reported to the Board that progress on Sorrells Street Park had slowed due to the wait for parts and supplies. For example, concrete is now at least a 3 week wait. Manager Scheuer stated that it would be after Labor Day before the splash pad would be constructed due to the back order of the pump and other supplies.

## **I. Old Business**

N/A

## **J. New Business**

### **1. Pisgah Band Boosters Donation Request**

Manager Scheuer presented a request for a monetary donation in support of the Pisgah Band. Alderman Hamlett made a motion to approve a \$500.00 donation. Alderwoman Mull seconded. All members voted in favor of the motion.

### **2. Public Comments**

No public comments were made.

### **3. Labor Day Update**

Manager Scheuer presented a staff report from Assistant Manager Lisa Stinnett with numerous options and concerns for the Labor Day event. Mayor Smathers introduced Dr. Mark Jaben to the Board and asked Dr. Jaben if he would update the Board and answer questions during this discussion. Alderman Hamlett asked Dr. Jaben the current situation with the Covid-19 virus increase. Dr. Jaben started the discussion with he sympathized with the Board with the decisions they were tasked to make. Dr. Jaben reported that over the weekend 60 new cases of the virus were detected and this would continue to rise as new cases were reported. Dr. Jaben stated out of 500 people that you would have a 100% chance of someone getting the virus. Dr. Jaben stated that the concern for covid at this time was the same level you would have had in December last year with the added effect of the variant is 5 times more contagious. The Board thanked Dr. Jaben for the update. The Board asked Dr. Jaben to stay for the discussion to answer any questions that might arise. Alderman Hamlett made a motion to cancel the Labor Day festival not including the parade. Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion. Alderman Hamlett stated that his rationale for cancelling the event was that one person sick or one person's death was one to many and he did not want to be responsible. Alderman Hamlett stated that he wanted to be able to look in the mirror and like who he saw. Mayor Smathers asked Dr. Jaben how many

people were hospitalized in Haywood County. Dr. Jaben stated at this time 16. Dr. Jaben stated that the hospitals were at capacity in Haywood and Buncombe due to the uptick of the virus, normal summer accidents, and surgeries thus leaving no rooms available. Alderman Hamlett asked if Dr. Jaben could foresee another variant forming in the future. Dr. Jaben stated that most likely that would happen until everyone was vaccinated or herd immunity was achieved. Dr. Jaben stated that 95% of delta variant cases were unvaccinated people at this time. Alderman Hamlett asked Dr. Jaben if you were an Alderman, what would you do? Dr. Jaben replied that he would ask himself if I were as careful as possible, is it still worthwhile for the activity? Mayor Smathers stated with all the events and activities going on does cancelling help the situation? Alderwoman Mull stated that the football game and other activities did not mean anything to her. Alderwoman Mull stated we are Canton not everywhere else. Alderwoman Smith thanked Dr. Jaben and remarked that she loved his analogy of the Swiss cheese approach, which means that things should be done in layers so that no holes remain. Alderman Hamlett asked if two weeks would change anything? Dr. Jaben stated that it would not change. Alderman Hamlett referred to himself as a fly stick stated that he could still not get comfortable with proceeding as one life meant too much to him and it was about life. Alderwoman Smith stated that that quality of life and recreation were huge components to the citizens, and she felt as if staff should figure out how to make the event as safe as possible and have the event. Alderman Shepard stated that the easy thing would be to cancel the event. Alderman Shepard stated that cancelling would have negative impact on vendors, sponsors, and the event as a whole and that the decision to attend should not be the board rather the individual choice of the person. Alderman Shepard stated that the Board was elected to the best thing for the Town, and he felt that the best thing for the town would be to move forward and have the event with the best safety protocols in place. Alderwoman Mull stated that she agreed that it was the individual choice but felt that the Board be encouraging attendance by having the event. Alderwoman Mull stated that she could not accept the responsibility of someone dying because of the event. Dr. Jaben stated that this was a dilemma and that he appreciated the Board being so mindful regarding the event. Alderman Hamlett made a motion to cancel the 114<sup>th</sup> Labor Day Festival event. Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion. Alderwoman Smith and Alderman Shepard voted against the motion. Mayor Smathers voted against the motion. Motion denied.

Alderman Hamlett made a motion to direct staff to meet with Dr. Jaben and look at safety protocols that would be the most safety sustainable for Labor Day. Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion. Alderwoman Smith asked staff what they would

need to provide this to the Board. Manager Scheuer stated that at the end of the day it was a board decision to make. Assistant Manager Stinnett stated that staff would need parameters that the Board would like implemented to form a plan. After a brief discussion the Board voted in favor of staff forming a plan and returning to the board for consideration at the August 12<sup>th</sup> meeting.

#### 4. Labor Day Parade

Alderman Hamlett made a motion to have the parade but amend route with the best safety parameters. Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion. All members voted in favor of the motion.

### **L. Adjournment**

The next Regularly Scheduled meeting will be on Thursday, August 12, 2021, at 6:30 p.m. There being no additional business, Mayor Smathers adjourned the Meeting at 7:40 p.m.

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Melisa Stinnett, Town Clerk