

April 13, 2023

At the Regularly Scheduled Meeting of the Mayor and Board of Aldermen/women of the Town of Canton held at the Town Hall at 85 Summer Street, April 13, 2023, at 6:30pm with Mayor Smathers, and Aldermen/women Mull, Hamlett, and Proctor present, the following proceedings were held.

A. Call to Order

Mayor Smathers called the meeting to order at 6:45 p.m. Alderman Shepard had to coach a baseball game that was rescheduled due to rain.

B. Roll Call

Mayor Smathers stated that the Manager, Assistant Manager/Clerk, and Town Attorney were present.

C. Pledge

Alderwoman Proctor led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

D. Approval of Minutes:

Alderwoman Mull made a motion to approve the March 23, 2023, minutes as presented. Alderwoman Proctor seconded the motion. Motion carried.

E. Mayor Comments

Mayor Smathers stated that everyone involved with Governor Cooper's visit did a great job. Mayor Smathers thanked the Pisgah High School staff for everything set-up and ready for the meeting. Mayor Smathers stated that Mayor Pro-Tem Mull, Assistant Manager Stinnett, and Finance Officer Walker participated in the discussion. Mayor Smathers made everyone aware that Representative Pless would be in town on Monday with other delegates to discuss flood mitigation progress at 10 am in front of the old Town Hall and all members were welcome to attend. Mayor Smathers reported that he had recently spoke at an event with over 200 real estate agents and he stated that he made it very clear that Canton was not a place that was ready for those that were wanting to take advantage of these workers and that if citizens wanted to sell their homes that would be their decision that they should not be harassed or offered any low ball offers. Mayor Smathers stated that now weeks after he learned that a real estate person had contacted an individual regarding purchasing their property using his name as a reference and it was an extremely low offer and that he had never spoken with this individual.

Mayor Smathers stated he was able to let the owner know that this was not a good offer because she contacted him directly about the offer and that it was scary how others could trick and take advantage of others in this community during these trying times. Mayor Smathers asked that maybe a public awareness campaign could be issued to make others aware of this issue. Mayor Smathers stated that others must respect our people! Mayor Smathers encouraged everyone before making any deals to consult an attorney to protect themselves. Mayor Smathers stated that conversations were still ongoing with Pactiv Evergreen and that bridges need to be mended and that Pactiv Evergreen may be doing some good will projects in Town and may allow tours for workers to visit and take their families to see the historic mill before closure. Mayor Smathers explained to the Board that Camden Warren had mentioned to him that the mill whistles should belong to the Town and that that was an ask of the mill by the Town. Mayor Smathers stated he was more than happy to announce that the mill whistles would be gifted to the Town after the mill closure along with some other historic artifacts to be kept at the museum for generations to being able to see.

G. Aldermen/women Comments

Alderwoman Mull thanked the mayor for his kind comments and stated that she had a handout of what was currently being discussed with the Union and the Mill (see attached). Alderwoman Mull stated that we would get past this and was optimistic that better times were ahead for the community.

Mayor Smathers stated that it was so important for everyone to support the local businesses not as much now but 3, 6, 12 months from the closure of the mill to help them adjust and stay open.

Alderman Hamlett stated that the mill had been a large part of his life even as a teenager standing on the front porch ringing in the new year by the whistle so the ability to keep the whistles was good news. Alderman Hamlett stated when he taught at North Texas that a whistle was what he based his day on for lunch, three o'clock, and the five o'clock chime let everyone know the time of day. Alderman Hamlett asks the mayor to read aloud a note from the Lake Junaluska Director, Ken Howle (see attached). Alderman stated that kindness was free and that everyone should be more kind. Alderman Hamlett stated that he was so proud to be part of a good team!

Alderwoman Proctor thanked everyone for the updates. Alderwoman Proctor reported that the cerebral palsy 5k was very well attended for the first year and she looked forward to many more. Alderwoman Proctor stated that she was glad to hear the pool would be opening May 27th and that the addition

of the pickle ball courts looked great. Alderwoman Proctor reported that she received constant compliments regarding Chestnut Mountain Bike Park. Alderwoman Proctor stated that she attended the Canton Business Partnership meeting and encouraged everyone to stand up for Canton and shop locally. Alderwoman Proctor thanked staff for accommodating the Barbers association meeting the following week in the boardroom.

H. Public Comments:

Ms. Sharon Breedlove of 1278 Pisgah Highway reported that she had been denied public records from the Police Department regarding her son and a recent medical call that she was involved in by the Canton Police Department. Ms. Breedlove stated that she was videoed without consent by a Canton Police person, and she wanted the video and an answer as to why the Canton Police Department was responding to a call outside the corporate limits. Mayor Smathers thanked Ms. Breedlove for attending the meeting and stated that any public information that could be released would be made available to her if allowed by law.

I. Managers Reports

Manager Scheuer presented the tax report.

Manager Scheuer commented that he was thankful for the Representatives visiting to see what needs the Town still had regarding flood mitigation.

Manager Scheuer reported that the pickle ball courts were complete and that a ribbon cutting would be scheduled for the Hubert Thomas recreation courts and that it was great seeing all the people enjoying the park already this year.

Manager Scheuer reminded everyone that the Altrussa Balsam Range concert would be in Sorrells Park on Saturday.

Manager Scheuer stated that Chestnut Park was in full swing with the tree houses being finished and 13 trails complete. Manager Scheuer stated that the mini grand opening would be held on June 10, 2023.

Manager Scheuer reported to the Board that he had recently spoken at a Resiliency Symposium and that the Western part of the State was having to address resiliency as much as the Eastern part of the state with flooding etc. Manager Scheuer thanked the Representatives for helping to secure funding for Canton and the County to help with these issues.

Manager Scheuer reiterated that the Canton downtown businesses were like the canary in the mine and should be evaluated closely as they would be quickly affected after the mill closure, and he encouraged everyone to shop locally and support them to allow them to be able to adjust and stay open until we can strategically get another business to fill the void of the mill.

J. New Business

1. Amended Water Shortage Response Plan

Manager Scheuer presented the amended water shortage response plan that was required by the State. Alderwoman Mull made a motion to approve the amended water shortage response plan. Alderwoman Proctor seconded the motion. Alderwoman Proctor suggested that the watering of vegetable gardens be moved to stage three emergency conservation as many people depending on the vegetable to eat. After a brief discussion and a consensus to revisit, if need be, the motion carried.

2. Town of Canton Flag

Manager Scheuer explained to the Board that the Town of Canton flag still had the old logo on it and that the Pigeon River Garden Club had requested to fly a Town of Canton flag on the new flagpole. Assistant Manager Stinnett presented the Board with four different options (see attached) that had been mocked up by the Communications Officer, Brandy Proctor for their approval. After a few minutes of discussion flag number 1 was chosen by the Board. Alderman Hamlett made a motion to approve flag number 1 as the Town of Canton flag. Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion. Motion carried.

3. Offer to Purchase #8656-88-8735 lot beside 412 Pisgah Drive.

Manager Scheuer presented the Board with an offer to purchase 412 Pisgah Drive lot (.08 of an acre in the amount of \$2,250 dollars. The Board was concerned about the entry and exit at the roundabout as well as the offered amount. No motion.

4. Notice to Proceed StRAP Grant

Manager Scheuer presented the Board with the notice to proceed on the StRAP grant that was for stream restoration. Alderwoman Proctor made a motion to approve the notice to proceed as presented. Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion. Motion carried.

K. Closed Session Pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11 (a)(4)(5)(6)

Alderwoman Mull made a motion to enter closed session pursuant to 143-318.11 (a)(6) at 7:29pm. Alderwoman Proctor seconded the motion. Motion carried. After a brief discussion and no action taken, Alderwoman Mull made a motion to enter open session at 7:55pm. Alderwoman Proctor seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Alderman Hamlett made a motion to enter closed session pursuant to 143.318.11 (a)(4)(5). Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion. Motion carried. After a lengthy discussion Alderman Hamlett made a motion to enter open session at 8:23pm. Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion. Motion carried.

L. Adjournment

The next meeting will be on Thursday, April 27, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. at Town Hall located at 85 Summer Street, Canton, NC 28716. There being no additional business, Mayor Smathers adjourned the Meeting at 8:27 p.m.

Melisa Stinnett, Town Clerk