

March 9, 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, March 9, 2023, at 6:30pm with Mayor Smathers, and Aldermen/women Mull, Hamlett, Proctor, and Shepard present, the following proceedings were held.

A. Call to Order

Mayor Smathers called the meeting to order at 6:45 p.m.

B. Roll Call

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

C. Pledge

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

D. Approval of Minutes:

Alderswoman Mull made a motion to approve the December 30, 2022, January 26, 2023, February 9, 2023, and February 23, 2023, minutes as presented. Alderman Hamlett seconded the motion. Motion carried.

E. Mayor Comments

Mayor Smathers commented that it was wonderful to meet in the park as a community to pray for all those that have lost their jobs and still suffer shock from the recent mill closure announcement. Mayor Smathers stated that a press conference would be held at Haywood Community College High Tech Center on Friday and encouraged the Board to attend. Mayor Smathers thanked the local media reporters Cory Vaillancourt and Vickie Hyatt for reporting all the facts and issues surrounding the mill closure. Mayor Smathers thanked the Board for all the behind the scenes conversations with local leaders and State leaders trying to help the employees during this difficult time. Mayor Smathers thanked Natalie Walker and Lisa Stinnett for organizing the job fair that would be held March 16th at Pinnacle Church stating that as a Town we would do everything we can to support our community better known as our family. Mayor Smathers stated that the lack of respect shown to the employees of the mill, the Town administration, and the community was appalling. Mayor Smathers commented that he hoped the executives that sold their stock prior to the announcement was held to the letter of the law as

other Citizens would be.

F. Aldermen/women Comments

Alderman Hamlett thanked Mayor Smathers for all he has done in the past few days with his sober response to the mill closure and being the voice of responsibility. Alderman Hamlett stated that the Board will fight and do everything possible for the mill employees.

Mayor Smathers stated that he is glad to be a part of a great team and they would continue to fight to make sure that law enforcement and fire are in the strongest position to keep our residents safety and welfare as the top priority.

Alderwoman Mull stated that we would be a mill town with or without the mill and that this Board stands with the employees and are proud of the hard work that these employees and family members before them provided for years.

Alderwoman Proctor thanked the press for a great job covering the issues. Alderwoman Proctor stated that this small town has proven time and time again that we will not stay down, we are grit and grace!

G. Public Comments

Mr. Carl Cortright inquired what Evergreen would be doing with all the other parcels they own throughout town? Manager Scheuer stated that it is to be determined at this point.

H. Managers Reports

Manager Scheuer presented the cash report.

Manager Scheuer reminded everyone of the Cerebral Palsy 5k would be on March 25th at Sorrells Park and encouraged everyone to come out and support this wonderful event.

Manager Scheuer reported that staff had met with Carolina Parks and Play and being that we did not receive the North Carolina Part F grant it was extremely important to maximize the monies for the best equipment for the kids.

Manager Scheuer updated the Board that the Hubert Thomas recreation courts were finished and waiting on the fencing to be installed. Manager Scheuer stated that a ribbon cutting ceremony would be soon.

Manager Scheuer made the board and media aware that the staff had organized a job fair that would be held at Pinnacle

Church on March 16th from 12 (noon) until 7pm to be able to accommodate all the shift workers at the mill. Assistant Manager Stinnett stated that Natalie Walker had done a great job organizing and reaching out to employers for this event.

Manager Scheuer reported that another job fair would be held on March 23rd at the WNC Expo that would allow the employees another opportunity to meet with employers.

Manager Scheuer commented that the Haywood Community College and the Workforce Development would be available for onsite help, job training, etc. and Brandy was working with the County on a website that was solely for the resources and information that the employees can access moving forward.

Manager Scheuer commented that Champion Credit Union provided a fund to help support the employees showing compassion and leadership and hope that others will follow their lead to help the employees during this transition.

I. New Business

1. WPTL Co-Sponsorship Request

Assistant Manager Stinnett presented the Board with a co-sponsorship request for the "Momma T's Spring Fling" to be held in Sorrells Park on May 27, 2023 including vendors, dancing, and music. Assistant Manager Stinnett recommended the Board approve the co-sponsorship as presented. Alderman Hamlett made a motion to approve the co-sponsorship as presented. Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion. Alderman Hamlett thanked Terryll Evans for her love of the Town and willingness to give back to her community now more than ever.

2. Bid Award for the Museum Basement Flood Renovations

Manager Scheuer stated that the Cinderella Partners Inc was the only bidder for this project, and he recommended that the Board award the bid as presented. Alderwoman Mull made the motion to award the bid to Cinderella Partners as submitted. Alderwoman Proctor seconded the motion. Motion carried.

3. Off Duty Police Rental Rate

Manager Scheuer called on Chief Sluder to provide the information regarding the rate increase. Chief Sluder stated that the rate would be changed from \$35 per hour to \$60.00 per hour. Chief Sluder explained that this rate was in line with

other agencies in our area for off duty police rates and that it should have been increased years ago. Alderman Hamlett made a motion to approve the rate as presented. Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion. Motion carried.

4. Budget Amendment

Manager Scheuer presented a budget amendment for a fleet OBDI reader that allowed the Chief Mechanic to be able to work on the newer vehicles in the Town fleet. Manager Scheuer stated that this would result in a saving of half the original cost and a year's free subscription if this was purchased at this time.

Alderwoman Mull made a motion to approve the budget amendment as presented. Alderwoman Proctor seconded the motion. Motion carried.

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

Alderman Hamlett made a motion to enter closed session to discuss economic development at 7:52 pm. Alderwoman Proctor seconded the motion. Motion carried. After a lengthy discussion and update Alderwoman Proctor made a motion to enter open session at 8:25 pm. Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion. Motion carried.

K. Adjournment

The next meeting will be on Thursday, March 23, 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 8:26 p.m.

Melisa Stinnett, Town Clerk