

## **January 11, 2024**

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, January 11, 2024, at 6:00pm with Mayor Smathers, and Aldermen/women Mull, Hamlett, and Shepard present, the following proceedings were held.

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

Mayor Smathers called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Mayor Smathers reported that Alderwoman Proctor was out of Town on business.

### **B. Roll Call**

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

### **C. Pledge/Invocation**

David Francis led those in attendance in reciting the pledge of allegiance.

### **D. Approval of Minutes:**

Alderwoman Mull made a motion to approve the December 14, 2023, minutes as presented. Alderman Hamlett seconded the motion. Motion carried.

### **E. Mayor Comments**

Mayor Smathers thanked Police Chief Scott Sluder and Fire Chief Kevin Wheeler for all their work and keeping everyone updated on the severe weather event that was on Tuesday and Wednesday. Mayor Smathers stated we dodged a bullet, but the communication was better, and the flood mitigation put into and that will be installed can help to save lives.

Mayor Smathers teased Vickie Hyatt about calling the finance officer a place where dreams go to die. Finance Officer Walker stated that it was all fun.

### **G. Aldermen/women Comments**

Alderwoman Mull thanked everyone for coming and thanked the staff for all that they did to prepare for the forecasted flooding. Alderwoman Mull commented that the communication was great during the event.

Alderman Hamlett also thanked Lisa and Nick for the timely

communication to the Board.

Alderman Shepard thanked the staff for all the updates during the bad weather event and the staff that was out preparing and putting flood mitigation into place prior to the event. Alderman Shepard stated that the baseball fields did not receive any damage from this storm, but runoff did concern him in the ditches and culverts up the backside and encouraged staff to make sure the culverts and ditches were clear within town.

#### **H. Public Comments:**

Mr. David Francis, Haywood County Economic Director presented the Town of Canton staff the Haywood Honors award for their dedication and service to the Milltown workers and their families by organizing the job fair at Pinnacle Church after the mill closure. Mayor Smathers extended the honors to Natalie Walker and Lisa Stinnett for organizing the event in a short amount of time with it being well attended by vendors and workers. Mayor Smathers stated the best part was it allowed hope during very uncertain times for these workers. Manager Scheuer thanked Mr. Francis for coming to deliver the award in person and for all his dedication during the mill closure process.

#### **I. Managers Reports**

Manager Scheuer presented cash and tax reports.

Manager Scheuer commented that he appreciated the staff for all their hard work preparing for the potential flood and that this was a great exercise for the staff, and they did a great job.

Manager Scheuer brought the Board up to date on the Rhoda Street project stating that we were waiting for two easements to be secured and then it would be put out to bid in early February and construction to start in February. Manager Scheuer stated that it has taken a lot of time, but we wanted to make sure that everything that we do back from Tropical Storm Fred is done in a way to prevent flooding and have all the flood mitigation that we can have in place. This meant that we had to work hard to secure funding to help with this project, otherwise this would have stayed the same and continue to flood in high rain events.

Manager Scheuer reminded the Board that the Ice Festival would be in canton in two weeks with things in the park and the Penguin race that will raise money for the all abilities playground.

Manager Scheuer reminded the Board that the Martin Luther King Prayer Breakfast was on Monday.

Mayor Smathers thanked Lisa Stinnett for making people aware on social media that the hummer vehicles were not a military invasion but rather gifted to the Town for use during floods, snow, and other ad weather events.

Manager Scheuer stated that Tuesday night shed light on the importance of resiliency projects and why long-term solutions are so important. Alderman Shepard stated that he felt that the response from the Town during this event helped calm some of the anxiety of the business owners and residents. Assistant Stinnett commented that it was great to be able to get prepared then reach out to help the community instead of scrambling to help ourselves.

## **J. Old Business**

N/A

## **K. New Business**

### **1. BRIC applicant designation**

Manager Scheuer presented a BRIC applicant agent designation form for the Board to consider. Manager Scheuer stated that the BRIC grant would be used for potential purchase, demo, reno of the Bethel Christian Academy. Manager Scheuer stated that this would allow himself or the Assistant in his absence to sign the documents in this program. Manager Scheuer stated that the application scored fifth and that it was a good chance that the grant would be approved, and I feel good about it at this point. This will allow the application to move forward to allow options for this site. Alderwoman Mull made a motion to approve the form as presented. Alderman Hamlett seconded the motion. Motion carried.

## **L. Old Business**

### **1. Traffic Calming Request**

Manager Scheuer stated that the request did not meet the criteria for the traffic calming measures as it was now and would negate the cost sharing request. Manager Scheuer stated that lowering the speed limit to 15 mph was an option to help. Mayor Smathers stated that the citizens did a great job presenting their case and the documentation and he understood the concern for their children's safety. Alderman Hamlett stated that we would

be remiss if the Board did not recognize the effort that Jason Aytes put into this request and just because we cannot cost share does not mean we are not appreciative of his work. We invite people to get involved and work hard for their communities. We can certainly try to implement other measures to help in this area such as a speed limit and child playing signs. Alderman Hamlett made a motion to deny the request based on the data and to try to implement other measures as allowed. Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion. Motion carried.

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

Alderman Shepard made a motion to enter closed session pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11 (a)(4) at 6:35 pm. Alderman Hamlett seconded the motion. Motion carried.

After a lengthy discussion, Alderman Shepard made a motion to enter open session at 7:53pm. Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Mayor Smathers made everyone aware that Fred Chapel had passed and asked for a moment to honor him.

Alderman Hamlett made a motion to enter closed session pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(6) at 7:55pm. Alderman Shepard seconded the motion. Motion carried.

After a brief discussion, Alderman Hamlett made a motion to enter open session at 8:00pm. Alderman Shepard seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**N. Adjournment**

The next meeting will be on January 25, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. at Town Hall located at 85 Summer Street, Canton, NC 28716. There being no additional business, Mayor Smathers adjourned the Meeting at 8:00 p.m.

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Melisa Stinnett, Town Clerk