

April 8, 2024

At the Special Called Meeting of the Mayor and Board of Aldermen/women of the Town of Canton held at 85 Summer Street, Canton NC, April 8, 2024, at 11:00 am 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 11:02 am.

B. Roll Call

Mayor Smathers stated that the Manager, Finance Officer, Town Attorney and Department Heads were present.

C. Pledge

N/A

D. Approval of Minutes:

N/A

E. Mayor Comments

N/A

F. Aldermen/women Comments

N/A

G. Public Comments

N/A

H. Reports from the Manager

N/A

I. New Business

1. Budget Work Session

Interim Manager Stinnett thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. Interim Manager Stinnett stated that this was the second meeting regarding the budget, and she would go through the presentation fairly quickly but at any time the Board could interject with questions. Interim Manager Stinnett commented that this years proposed budget was

going to be focused on sustainability as we progress forward. Interim Manager Stinnett thanked Finance Officer, Natalie Walker for the budget presentation as she started the slide show (see attached). Mayor Smathers stated that with the presentation reflecting on the past year accomplishments it brought to his mind that with the removal of the old Town Hall that we should invite old employees and dignitaries to the event to show respect for those that worked so long in this building. Interim Manager Stinnett called on each Department Head (Chief Sluder, Chief Wheeler, Michael Gantt, Keith Pressley, Mark Jones, Artie Wias, Todd Rathbone, Sam Dunbar, and Caroline Ponton) to highlight their accomplishments for the past year. Deputy Tax Collector, Wanda Lurvey presented the Board with the possibility of a major tax decrease from the Evergreen property and personal property. Mrs. Lurvey cautioned the Board of the potential impact of a possible 1-million-dollar cut would have on this year's budget and encouraged them to budget accordingly. The Board thanked Mrs. Lurvey for her honesty and transparency with sharing all the information. Finance Officer Walker talked about revenue, possible motor vehicle tax, water rate and garbage rate increases for the new fiscal year budget of 24-25. Finance Officer Walker reported the requests for the different departments, commenting that nothing outlandish was included. Finance Officer Walker asked the Board's pleasure on the possibility of a cost-of-living raise. The Board, after a brief discussion instructed the Finance Officer to include a 2% COLA (cost-of-living), commenting that the employees were the backbone of the Town and they wished they could do more. Finance Officer Walker made the Board aware that most likely some of the requests would need to be cut to implement the COLA raise. The Board asked the department Heads if the raise or the equipment was more important. The consensus was their employees, and the COLA are more important than the equipment, especially with the ability to retain employees. The Board thanked the staff for the presentation and work they do every day to make Canton a better place. Finance Officer Walker went into depth regarding the flood projects and funding that was being received or the lack of funding to complete these projects. Interim Manager Stinnett asked the Board to prioritize these projects so that that they could start moving forward to completion and get the revenue generating facilities operational funds. Finance Officer Walker stated that the unmet need could be revisited to move to other projects if it was justified through the State. The Board asked for another work session to be scheduled to decide some of these issues. That concluded the proposed budget presentation.

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

Alderwoman Proctor made a motion to enter closed session to discuss personnel at 12:12pm. Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion. Motion carried. After a board discussion, Alderwoman Mull made a motion to enter open session at 1:47pm. Alderwoman Proctor seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Alderwoman Mull made a motion to enter closed session to discuss economic development at 1:48pm. Alderwoman Proctor seconded the motion. Motion carried. After a brief discussion, Alderman Hamlett made a motion to enter open session at 2:04pm. Alderwoman Proctor seconded the motion. Motion carried.

J. Adjournment

The next Regularly Scheduled meeting will be on Thursday, April 25, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. at 85 Summer Street, Canton, NC 28716. There being no additional business, Mayor Smathers adjourned the Meeting at 2:04 p.m.

Natalie Walker, Deputy Town Clerk