

April 25, 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, March 14, 2024, at 6:00pm with Mayor Zeb Smathers, and Aldermen/women Mull, Hamlett, Shepard (arrived late at 7:17 p.m.) and Proctor present, the following proceedings were held.

A. Call to Order

Mayor Smathers called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

B. Roll Call

Mayor Smathers stated that the Manager, Town Attorney and Deputy Clerk Walker were present.

C. Pledge/Invocation

Alderwoman Mull led those in attendance in reciting the pledge of allegiance.

D. Approval of Minutes:

Mayor Smathers asked the Board for approval of the minutes for the March 28, 2024, and April 8, 2024 meeting.

Alderwoman Mull made a motion to approve the minutes of that meeting and Alderman Hamlett seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

E. Mayor Comments

Mayor Smathers mentioned that Zack Stines recently had a baby and named him Ernie Stines. Mayor Smathers thanked the Canopy Realtor Association for their clean up in Sorrells Park and the new benches on April 19, 2024.

F. Aldermen/women Comments

Alderwoman Mull thanked everyone for coming.

Alderman Hamlett inquired about the recent house fire in Canton. Fire Chief Wheeler stated a house fire broke out on Tuesday morning. He explained that the firefighters did have to do a rescue with a resident stranded in the house. He stated that the resident was currently in fair condition in the hospital.

Alderwoman Proctor stated how great the town looked. She said we have a wonderful small town and encouraged everyone to visit the businesses. Alderwoman Proctor thanked Finance Officer Walker for her work on the budget.

H. Public Comments:

Mr. Jason Aytes said that two out of five stop signs were installed and stated he thought there were going to be five stop signs. Interim Manager Stinnett responded that the stop signs were just for the thorough fares. Chief Scott Sluder confirmed the stop signs were installed at Walnut Street/Trammel Street and Blalock Street/Trammel Street.

Ryan Newell with Habitat with Humanity said he would love to partner with the Town of Canton. He stated he was proud of what he does. Currently, most of the houses are built in Waynesville and it has been a while since one was built in Canton.

H. Managers Reports

Finance Officer Walker presented a cash report.

Interim Manager Stinnett presented the Board with the monthly tax collection report and stated real and personal collections were at 98.16%. She, along with Alderwomen Proctor and Mull, thanked Wanda Lurvey for her efforts.

Interim Manager Stinnett presented a request from Blue Ridge Health to donate six pool passes as incentives for their patients. Alderwomen Mull made a motion to approve the request for the six pool passes. Alderman Hamlett seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Interim Manager Stinnett announced that the pool and the splash pad would open Memorial Day Weekend for the season.

I. Old Business

N/A

J. New Business

1. Pigeon River Garden Club Presentation

The PRGC is requesting permission to add some landscaping to the dog park. See attached. Mike Yates and Amanda gave a small presentation stating the trees would be native to the area and work would begin in May. Mayor Smathers stated that this is a gift and at no cost to the taxpayers. Mr. Yates stated that a three-day shutdown of the dog park would be necessary, but a notice would be given for the residents. Alderman Hamlett made a motion to allow the PRGC to install

landscaping at the dog park. Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion. Motion Carried.

Marty Yates with the PRGC also requested that they be given permission to utilize the flowerpots in town. They are currently fundraising for the funds and currently have the funding for 20 pots to be planted. Mrs. Yates stated that they do have a watering cart to water the planters. The board gave consensus.

2. Special Event Request: Octoberfest, Mike McClean

Mr. Mike McClean proposed an event in September located at the orchard. The event would be free to the public and focus on the history of Rutherford. The event required nothing of the town and is a one-day event. See attached. Mayor Smathers inquired if any safety concerns were present. Chief Sluder stated the only thing he sees is parking and getting permission from CMS. Alderwoman Mull made a motion to approve the special event request from Mr. McClean. Alderwoman Proctor seconded the motion. Motion carried.

3. Lease Request: Filter Plant Road

A lease request was presented to allow cattle on the property adjacent to the filter plant. The lease would assist town crews with maintaining the area. Alderwoman Mull made a motion to allow cattle to be present on the land with a lease. Alderman Hamlett seconded the motion. Motion carried.

4. Proposal: Phase 2 of the design for Town Hall, Police & Fire

Nick Scheuer presented a proposal from Creech & Associates for phase 2 of the town hall, police, and fire department designs. See attached. Mayor Smathers inquired on the timeline. Mr. Scheuer stated the town hall would be a six-month project while the police department would take approximately 18 months. He stated that he is currently looking for funding for the fire department. Alderwoman Mull made a motion to approve the proposal from Creech & Associates. Alderwoman Proctor seconded the motion. Motion carried.

5. Proposal: Phase 2 of the design for the Armory

Nick Scheuer presented a proposal from Craig, Gaulden, and Davis for phase 2 of the armory design. See attached. Alderwoman Mull made a motion to approve the proposal for the armory. Alderman Hamlett seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Finance Officer Walker inquired if a disclaimer could be added to both proposals for budget constraints. Attorney Morgan replied yes, and that he would email the information.

6. Notification to Civilian Governing Body and Local Community

Chief Sluder that as a requirement he had to notify citizens if any equipment is received in accordance with Presidential Executive Order 14074. See attached.

7. Police Policy Updates

Chief Sluder presented updated policies for Ballistic Shields, Residence Phone Requirement, Written Directive System, Personal Appearance, Tire Deflation Device, SRO Weapon Safe, Training and Career Development. Alderman Hamlett inquired about the appearance requirements and hair cut requirements stating they seemed sexist. Chief Sluder stated it was a safety issue with the ability to grab long hair. Alderman Hamlett inquired about the tattoo policy. Chief Sluder stated tattoos are allowed except for offensive tattoos and they must be covered. Alderwoman Mull made a motion to approve the policies. Alderman Hamlett seconded the motion. Motion carried.

8. Update the Town of Canton Purchasing Policy

Interim Manager Stinnett presented an updated purchasing policy. The policy was rewritten to be clearer. Alderwoman Mull made a motion to approve the policy. Alderman Hamlett seconded the motion. Motion carried.

9. Update the Town of Canton Ethics Policy

Interim Manager Stinnett presented the ethics policy. The policy is new. Alderwoman Mull made a motion to approve the policy. Alderman Hamlett seconded the motion. Motion carried.

10. Budget Amendments

Finance Officer Walker presented several budget amendments for all funds. The amendments do not increase the budget, but rather move in between funds. Alderwoman Mull made a motion to approve the amendments. Alderman Hamlett seconded the motion. Motion carried.

11. Public Hearing: Robinson Ridge Site Plan Approval

At 6:57 p.m. a motion was made by Alderwoman Proctor to enter the public hearing. Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion. Town Planner Byron Hickox presented a staff report in regards to the Robinson Ridge development. See Attached. Developers Michael Parrot, Mark Hingson, and Brian Young were in attendance to present the site plan. Mr. Parrott stated that Phase 1 is expected to be completed 2025 and Phase 2 is expected to be completed 2027. See attached. No public comments. Mayor Smathers stated that the project was not about quantity, but more about quality. He stated that the project began with many partners and the planning board and mentioned that the endeavor had not been easy. Mayor Smathers addressed if the area will be annexed and explained that the development would be annexed but not the houses on North Canton Road. Mr. Parrott stated he worked with the DOT to do a traffic analysis and it was recommended that no

new traffic lights were needed, but only repainting of lines and arrows. Both Chief Sluder and Chief Wheeler agreed that they had the availability to care for the area. Mayor Smathers stated that the project exceeded the board's requests with landscape and sidewalks and was the gold standard. Interim Manager Stinnett said that the upgrades to filter plant would be complete by the time the construction was completed. Alderwoman Proctor stated she was excited about the sidewalks to Ingles and that accessible and walkable communities were important. Jeanne Forrest from the planning board mentioned that the planning board felt like the project was a benefit to the town. Carl Cortwright, also from the planning board, mentioned that a concern was cut-through traffic from I-40, but that they had many productive meetings. At 7:39 Alderwoman Mull made a motion to leave the public hearing. Alderwoman Proctor seconded the motion.

A motion to approve the Land Use Plan was made by Alderwoman Mull. Alderwoman Proctor seconded the motion.

A motion to approve the Site Plan was made by Alderwoman Mull. Alderwoman Proctor seconded the motion.

A groundbreaking event will be set for early June. Mr. Hingson and Mr. Young addressed the board stating they were very thankful to be involved with the project in Canton.

12. Work Session

Wanda Lurvey addressed the board regarding the estimated tax revenue for 2024-2025. She stated she had worked many hours with Tax Assessor Judy Hickman and with the school of government. She explained that if a tax bill is being contested, they do not have to pay. The mill currently has property values with the board of equalization that are being contested. With that, Mrs. Lurvey explained that you must focus on the billable value. She is estimating a reduction of real property to be \$86,787. She is estimating a reduction of personal property to be like numbers from 2012. Evergreen is contesting the value and saying 91% is obsolete. Mrs. Lurvey is projecting a total tax reduction of \$1,394,310. She warned that all dollars from HB259 must be utilized wisely. Mayor Smathers expressed his anger at Evergreen saying they made a business decision that affected the entire town. Mrs. Lurvey stated she can't paint a rosy picture of the Town. Alderman Shepard stated he appreciated Mrs. Lurvey's candor, and that the Town could not operate on a rosy picture. Mrs. Lurvey reiterated the importance of HB259 and begged the board to use it as it for its intended purpose and she thanked the legislatures. Alderwoman Mull thanked Mrs. Lurvey. Alderman Hamlett stated that everyone could see her emotion while delivering the news. He stated that the dark clouds will pass, and we will make it because of people like Mrs. Lurvey. Mayor Smathers stated that Mrs. Lurvey was patriotic for her courageous words. Alderman Hamlett said he wished the powers of Evergreen the

pain and anxiety that they have brought the town. He said maybe they will do the right thing and be honest.

Finance Officer Walker brought up the Municipal Vehicle Tax. She mentioned the entire fee would be solely for roads. The board had a lengthy discussion on the proposed fee. Interim Stinnett stated that there would be a capital improvement plan that listed the roads in condition, and we could place it on the website. Alderwoman Proctor, Alderman Hamlett, and Alderman Shepard all supported the fee and its intended use. Mayor Smathers and Alderman Mull stated they could not support the fee at the time. Mayor Smathers stated that it would show instability and perception controls reality. Alderman Mull stated she sees it as a kick in the face and the fee would not make a difference in the budget. Alderwoman Proctor, Alderman Hamlett, and Alderman Shepard made a consensus for add in the \$30 Municipal Vehicle Tax while preparing the budget.

Mayor Smathers also mentioned that Mary Ann Enlow passed away and gave his condolences to Vicki Hyatt from the Mountaineer.

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

At 8:43 p.m. Alderwoman Mull made a motion to enter closed pursuant to N. C. G. S. 143-318.11 (a) (4) economic development. Alderman Shepard seconded the motion. Motion Carried. After a brief update, Alderwoman Mull made a motion to enter open session at 9:21 p.m. Alderman Shepard seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Alderwoman Mull made a motion to enter closed session at 9:21 p.m. pursuant to N. C. G. S. 143-318.11 (a) (6) Alderwoman Proctor seconded the motion. Motion Carried. After a brief discussion, Alderwoman Mull made a motion to enter open session at 9:21pm. Alderman Shepard seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Alderwoman Mull made a motion to enter closed session at 9:30 p.m. pursuant to N. C. G. S. 143-318.11 (a) (6) personnel Alderwoman Proctor seconded the motion. Motion Carried. After a lengthy discussion, Alderwoman Mull made a motion to enter open session at 10:25pm. Alderman Hamlett seconded the motion. Motion carried.

L. Adjournment

The next scheduled meeting will be on Thursday May 9, 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 10:25 p.m.

Natalie Walker, Deputy Town Clerk