

August 14, 2025

At the Special Called Meeting of the Mayor and Board of Aldermen/women of the Town of Canton held at the Town Hall at 85 Summer Street, August 14, 2025, at 6:00pm with Mayor Smathers, and Aldermen/women Mull, Hamlett, Proctor, Shepard 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 stated Manager Stinnett, Assistant Manager Walker, Clerk Dunbar, and Town Attorney Morgan were present.

C. Pledge/Invocation

Alderman Hamlett led the pledge.

D. Approval of Minutes:

Alderwoman Mull made a motion to approve the minutes from the July 24, 2025, meeting. Alderman Hamlett seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

E. Mayor Comments

Mayor Smathers stated that it was good to be back in Canton. He expressed his gratitude to the office staff who continue to answer phones and deal with upset residents over the increase of water rates. He acknowledged that employees often bear the brunt of residents' frustrations.

Manager Stinnett reported that only 8% of FEMA funds have been obligated to this region, while 92% remains in Washington "collecting dust." She noted that the Town of Canton is still owed over \$1 million from Tropical Storm Fred recovery efforts. Manager Stinnett emphasized the

urgent need for these funds, explaining that outreach to state Emergency Management has produced no explanation for the delay. Manager Stinnett stated that, early on, Canton was advised to merge projects from the two storms, but those projects remain at a standstill.

Mayor Smathers reminded the room that many residents continue to suffer because of these storms. He said people in Washington need to see the struggles of those still recovering. "These people deserve good leaders," Smathers said, adding that while the town should not have to "shake the cages," they will if necessary. "The people deserve better from D.C."

F. Aldermen/women Comments

Alderwoman Mull thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Alderman Hamlett stated that while Washington should do more to release FEMA funds, FEMA staff on the ground are working hard and doing their best under difficult circumstances. He reminded everyone that FEMA employees are also limited, "working with their hands behind their backs."

Alderman Hamlett added that he wanted to break protocol to raise an idea he and Alderwoman Mull had discussed during the Christmas Parade: recognizing town staff for their work both during the hurricane response and in daily operations. He suggested that all town employees walk in the Labor Day Parade. Manager Stinnett responded that it would be difficult to arrange, since most employees are working during the parade.

Alderwoman Proctor noted that many residents are very excited for the upcoming Labor Day Festival.

Alderman Shepard thanked town employees for their hard work and offered a gentle reminder for residents to keep their yards mowed.

Mayor Smathers closed by noting the similarities between the heavy rainfall experienced in 2021 and the weather patterns being seen this year.

G. Public Comments:

Mr. Mike Wood commended the Board and staff and stated he was honored to bring the Charters of Freedom to the Town of Canton. He announced that he is working on time capsules for the Town of Canton, with an event scheduled for October 14. Mr. Wood explained that he is seeking memorable and significant items from Canton to include in the capsules and asked the Board for any suggestions. He also noted that pavers are still available for sale at the same price.

Mrs. Mary McCracken shared that her father was raised on Cherry Street and asked about the process for obtaining a plaque for Recreation Park. She also mentioned speaking with Clerk Dunbar at the dog park about adding more shade in that area.

Mr. Carol Cortwright stated that it was encouraging to see work progressing at Chestnut Mountain and expressed interest in hearing more updates later in the meeting.

Mayor Smathers asked about the size of the time capsules. Mr. Wood responded that they are 2x2x14 feet. Mayor Smathers asked if the capsules are waterproof, and Mr. Wood confirmed that they are, noting that additional sealing is being added for protection.

Mayor Smathers asked if the Town is working with the County on sirens in case of a nighttime flood event. He also commended town staff for their ongoing preparedness efforts.

Alderman Shepard inquired about the price of the pavers, and Mr. Wood responded that they are \$100–\$125 each.

Mayor Smathers recommended that Mrs. McCracken consider purchasing a paver from the Charters of Freedom project.

Manager Stinnett advised Mrs. McCracken to contact Town Hall to be added to the list for plaques at Recreation Park.

Mr. Wood asked whether the museum, old Town Hall, and Fire Department buildings would be converted into green space after removal. Manager

Stinnett confirmed that those properties are part of the buyout program and could indeed become green space.

Alderman Hamlett thanked Mr. Wood for his efforts to honor the Constitution, for his past contributions, and for the work he continues to do with both the community and the country.

H. Manager's Reports

Assistant Manager Walker gave the Cash Report.

Manager Stinnett gave the tax report 99.88%

Old Business

Watts St Easement

Mr. David Chasen asked the Board to consider whether Bob Woods Drive, off of Watts Street, is an easement or a right-of-way for road use, and whether it could be extended. He explained that his client wishes to sell a lot for the construction of a single home. Mr. Chasen noted that while he understands the Town's concerns about security, there are currently no regulations requiring security measures around storage tanks—only at the water intake.

Mayor Smathers asked Mr. Chasen to clarify his proposal. Mr. Chasen stated that he was requesting an easement or right-of-way to use the existing road, along with a shared maintenance agreement. He added that, if approved, the project could incorporate an automatic gate and cameras to enhance security.

Manager Stinnett advised that the decision rests entirely with the Board. He also noted that, following 9/11, federal agencies strongly encouraged municipalities to secure all water sources. While not mandated by statute, such measures remain highly recommended.

Alderman Hamlett asked if there were plans to make apartments on this lot. Mr. Chasen stated that the Board would have to make a legal

document stating that the property was just for a single-family resident.

Alderwoman Proctor asked what the water tank in question is used for. Manager Stinnett responded that it is the main water reservoir, which distributes water to the other reservoirs.

Alderman Shepard asked if the site is currently fenced. Manager Stinnett stated she was unsure if fencing surrounds the tank itself but confirmed there is fencing closer to the road.

Alderwoman Mull asked how the lot is currently accessed. Mr. Chasen presented a map to the Board showing the proposed easement. Mayor Smathers directed Manager Stinnett to list this item under Old Business for follow-up.

Mr. Chasen asked what the Board would require moving the request forward. Mayor Smathers stated that fencing, a gate, and compliance with zoning requirements would be necessary. He further requested that Mr. Chasen return with a formal proposal and noted that he would consult with Attorney Morgan.

Mayor Smathers asked if two weeks would be sufficient to prepare the proposal, referencing the next Board meeting scheduled for August 28, 2025.

Alderman Hamlett asked how security of the reservoir could be maintained and suggested that Chief Sluder be included in the discussion moving forward.

Manager Stinnett gave an update on the pool, She stated that we are one step closer to getting the pool opened, as parts are starting to work properly. Manager Stinnett stated that the pool chemicals are perfect.

Mayor Smathers stated that the pool got hit hard, and a lot more work was needed to make it work properly.

Manager Stinnett stated that if the pool were to be ready by Labor Day, she recommends it be free for the community.

Manager Stinnett gave an update on the playground; she stated that work should be completed by the end of September pending the weather.

Manager Stinnett gave update on Chestnut Mountain. Manager Stinnett stated that the Park should be able to open for the upcoming race and stated that the emergency bridge work to start sometime in November.

Manager Stinnett stated that Clerk Dunbar is seeking quotes to repair the roof at the International Paper Complex and the concession stand.

Manager Stinnett stated that the fire department bay is finished, and she thanked the Army Corps for their hard work.

Manager Stinnett stated that the bathhouse at the pool should be finished sometime next week and the pickleball lights should turn on next week as well.

Manager Stinnett stated that the armory Town Hall and Police Department are at a standstill.

Mayor Smathers stated that there are a lot of projects going on and pointed to the Mountaineer and asked to make sure they got it all. Mayor Smathers stated this speaks to the grit of the staff and board, and this would be a good story.

Manager Stinnett asked the Board for a Labor Day grand marshal.

Mayor Smathers stated that one name that comes to mind is Wilber Davis.

Alderman Hamlett asked if town employees families could walk in the parade because the families are the ones who make the sacrifices.

Manager Stinnett stated that she is being asked what the Christmas parade theme will be. Manager Stinnett suggested to the Board a theme being "Santa workshop in motion." Manager Stinnett stated that this would potentially partner with Kringle Market and the Reindeer Run 5k. The Board Agreed to the Christmas parade theme.

Alderman Hamlett asked how to purchase tickets for the Labor Day Festival. Manager Stinnett answered, at Town Hall, online, or at one of the gates.

J. New Business

1. Public Hearing: To Consider a Proposed Text Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance, Sections 9-4025, 9-4028, and 9-4004

Alderwoman Proctor made a motion to go into a public hearing at 7:04pm. Alderman Shepard Seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

Byron Hickox gave a staff report on amending the zoning ordinance for the use of trucking terminals or transfer companies in Town limits. Hickox recommends to the Board to remove Trucking Terminals, or Transfer Companies as permitted use in the general business district. Hickox also recommended removing trucking terminals as permitted use in the light industrial district. Hickox stated that the Planning board approved both amendments.

Zachary Stines asked if this will affect any existing terminals? Hickox stated no, this will not affect current trucking terminals in these districts.

Alderwoman Mull made a motion to enter open session at 7:10pm. Alderwoman Proctor seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

Alderwoman Mull made a motion to remove trucking terminals or transfer companies in the general business district. Alderman Hamlett seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

Alderwoman Mull made a motion to remove trucking terminals or transfer companies in the light industrial district. Alderman Hamlett

seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

2. **Public Hearing: Resolution Requesting Closing a Portion of the Alley Way from Adams Street to Academy Street**

Alderwoman Proctor made a motion to go into a public hearing at 7:11pm. Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Manager Stinnett stated that this was a resolution to close a section of the Alley Way from Adams Street to Academy Street. Manager Stinnett stated that this was for the Police Department's new building. Manager Stinnett stated that all legal requirements were met for this resolution, and the back corner of the US Local 507 will have a gate.

Tripp Rhodes at 325 Main Street stated that the letter he received in the mail was misleading, and he wants to make sure his tenants have access to the property. Manager Stinnett showed Mr. Rhodes the map of the proposed closure.

Alderman Shepard stated that no one is going to lose access to the building, but to the new Police Department parking lot.

Alderman Shepard made a motion to enter open session at 7:14pm. Alderwoman Proctor seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

Alderwoman Proctor made a motion to approve the resolution of closing a portion of Adams Street to Academy Street. Alderman Hamlett seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

3. **Proclamation: Constitution Week September 17-23, 2025**

Alderwoman Mull made a motion to declare the week of September

17th-23rd Constitution Week. Alderman Shepard seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

Alderman Hamlett stated that we breath the life into this document.

Chief Wheeler stated that the Fire Department was awarded a grant of \$170,000 to upgrade our communication system. The Board congratulated Chief Wheeler on this accomplishment.

k. Closed Session: Pursuant to N.C.G.S. §143-318.11 (a)(3)(4)(5)

Alderwoman Mull made a motion to enter closed session pursuant to 143-318.11 (a)(3)(4)(5) at 7:18pm. Alderman Shepard seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried. With no action taken, Alderwoman Mull made a motion to enter open session at 8:32pm. Alderwoman Proctor seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion carried.

L. Adjournment

Alderwoman Mull made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Alderwoman Proctor seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried. The next regular meeting will be on Thursday, August 28, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. at the Town Hall located at 85 Summer Street, Canton, NC 28716. There being no additional business, Mayor Smathers adjourned the meeting at 8:32 p.m.