

January 23, 2025

At the Regular Called Meeting of the Mayor and Board of Aldermen/women of the Town of Canton held at the Town Hall at 85 Summer Street, January 23, 2025, at 6:00pm with Mayor Smathers, and Aldermen/women Mull, Proctor, Hamlett present, and Shepard, 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 Stinnett, Assistant Manager Walker, Clerk Dunbar, and Town Attorney Morgan were present.

C. Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance

Alderman Shepard led the Pledge of Allegiance

D. Approval of Minutes

Alderwoman Mull made a motion to approve the January 9, 2025, Minutes. Alderwoman Proctor seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

E. Communications from the Mayor

Mayor Smathers stated that there has been a lot of progress in the Town, but there are still a lot of unknowns. Mayor Smathers stated that at some point there will be an increase in water and sewer rates, but we do not know how much of an increase it will be. Mayor Smathers stated that we will pay a fair a reasonable amount for sewer and water rates, but we will no longer be able to be a beneficiary for the old rates.

Mayor Smathers commended the Fire Department for their work during the fire. Mayor Smathers also thanked Town Staff for working in the freezing cold this week.

F. Aldermen/Alderwoman Comments

Alderwoman Mull stated that the Martin Luther King Jr. breakfast was wonderful as always, and said they did a great job. Alderwoman Mull said it was a great tribute to a great man; the event went well. Alderwoman Mull stated how she enjoyed talking to and meeting the Attorney General and Governor.

Mayor Smathers said that Raleigh cares about us and hears from both political sides all the time.

Alderman Hamlett asked Chief Sluder how many wellness calls they have gotten because of the cold weather. Chief Sluder stated that he cannot give an exact number, but the Police Department has been getting calls about wellness checks. Alderman Hamlett said thank you for doing those calls and checking on the seniors. Chief Sluder said the Police Department has helped many people with getting their groceries, and other small tasks. Chief Sluder said we are here to serve the community.

Alderwoman Proctor thanked Town staff for working in the cold. Alderwoman Proctor stated that she was excited to see the museum presentation. Alderwoman Proctor said that going to the Canton Museum was one of her first experiences with her child when they first moved to Canton.

Alderwoman Proctor stated that it was great to see the new Champion Credit Union building. Alderwoman Proctor said it was kind of CCU to offer us space to say welcome to canton. Alderwoman Proctor asked Chief Sluder when she could do another ride along.

Alderman Shepard thanked the Street Department for working in the cold, and for their work clearing the streets during the snow. Alderman

Shepard said the Street Department made the roads passable, he heard the trucks go by all night.

Mayor Smathers stated that there are no plans for the President to visit Canton tomorrow. Chief Sluder stated that he has not heard anything from Washington about a visit from the President.

G. Public Comments

Joe Trostel of Raleigh asked The Board if the Police Department was understaffed, where I live, we have a lot of vacancies. Mr. Trostel asked, how is the Police Department in Canton? Chief Sluder answered Mr. Trostel by saying the department is fully staffed.

H. Reports from the Manager

1. Tax Report /Cash Report:
Manager Stinnett gave the Tax Report
Assistant Manger Walker gave the Cash Report
2. Updates:

Manager Stinnett asked the board to bring back the Canton newsletter. Manager Stinnett stated that it is important for the community to stay informed. Manager Stinnett said Brandy Proctor would be in charge of this project; she would post the newsletter to the website and social media platforms. Manager Stinnett stated that the Newsletter would be called the Canton Current, flowing with information. Manager Stinnett stated that there will be a section of the newsletter called The Rumor Mill. Manager Stinnett asked the board for permission to proceed with this project. Mayor Smathers asked how often the newsletter will be released. Manager Stinnett said once a month.

The board agreed on a consensus for the newsletter.

Manager Stinnett stated that a group emailed her about a Co-Sponsorship and wanted to the email to serve as their sixty-day notice of the event. Manager Stinnett stated that the group did not send her the correct paperwork, and she has no direction from the group about the new event.

I. Old Business

Mayor Smathers asked Manager Stinnett about the sister city with Cleveland, Tennessee. Manager Stinnett stated that she reached out waiting to hear back.

J. New Business

1. Museum Presentation

Carol Jones stated Caroline Ponton is not here because her sister is ill. Mr. Jones stated that Caroline made these coffee mugs and gave them to The Board. Mr. Jones stated that he was a part of the Friends of the museum group, and that the group was Caroline's idea.

Edie Burnette stated that the packet given to The Board is a three-year journey from Tropical Storm Fred. Ms. Burnette stated that the paper is from the old champion mill. The reports came from Caroline and her monthly visits to town hall. Ms. Burnette stated we still have a museum; we just do not have a building. We have a detailed record of the things in storage. Ms. Burnette stated that the packet is a playbook for someone to take over.

Liz Harper stated that the museum has never felt forgotten, this report was made during the summer. Mrs. Harper stated that she wants the museum to stay apart of the history of Canton and she thanked The Board.

Carol Jones stated that everyone knows the Town is working very hard after Helene, people will have to wait and see if the museum is coming back in the same location. Mr. Jones stated that the Friends of the Museum still gets together to talk about the history of Canton and will help town staff in any way they can.

Mrs. Harper stated that a prime example of how organizations can work together is the library helped with a meeting space. Mrs. Harper said that this was a prime example of people coming together.

Mayor Smathers stated they had the work session on Monday. I cannot tell you where or how and why, but it is our intent to get a building sooner than later. You deserve a building, and the town deserves a building. Mayor Smathers said we all have family members, and we do not get paid to be here, for the past 5 years it has been tough. We have put in long hours.

Mayor Smathers said we have taken you for granted, we do appreciate you. We respect you and the work that you have done at the museum. Mayor Smathers stated that maintaining the stories and history of the town is a big part of the decisions we make. Mayor Smathers stated that we forget the ones who came before us, the teachers, mill workers, business owners. We were born in a hell of a place because of the people that are here. Thank you, other than safety, your job is the most important.

Alderwoman Mull told a story about her time at the library, and how many books she read as a child. Alderwoman Mull said that you should not be called the friends of the library, but Saints of the library. We appreciate what you do and the work that Caroline does. Alderwoman Mull stated that the library has a special place in my heart.

Alderman Hamlett asked Mr. Jones to introduce the friends of the museum. Mr. Jones introduced the group to The Board. The members present were Phil Paxton, Becky Anderson, Allen Sellers, Liz Harper, Jennifer Stewart, and Joe Trostel from Raleigh.

Alderman Hamlett stated friends is such a word, friends of the museum is much richer than that. We know Canton will continue to thrive because people like you keep it up. Alderman Hamlett said but indeed, you are family. Buildings will come and go, Canton is still here, the buildings may change, but Canton is here because of what you all have done. Alderman Hamlett thanked the group for their work.

Alderwoman Proctor thanked the group for their work. Alderwoman Proctor stated that it is incredible that a town as small as ours has a museum like the one we do. Growing up in Canton, kids know about the struggles that Canton has gone through. You keep this alive for our kids, this is how we grow and move forward.

Alderman Shepard said thank you for preserving our history, from not being from Canton, I have enjoyed learning about the history of Canton. Alderman Shepard stated that he is impressed about how proud people are about Canton. Alderman Shepard stated that Canton is not like other places, there's no one here that wants the museum to go away. Alderman Shepard stated we want you to have a new building, one that does not flood. Even if a new board comes up, we want to put back what you have worked so hard to protect.

Mayor Smathers thanked the group for staying so active. Mayor Smathers stated that we will need a decorator once we move to the new Town Hall. Mayor Smathers stated that we would love to see artifacts in our new buildings. Mayor Smathers said the coffee mugs are awesome, and selling them, or other gear would be a great fundraiser. Mayor Smathers wants Alderman Hamlett to donate his jacket to the museum.

2. Bowling for Kids' Sake: Sponsorship

Manager Stinnett presented The Board with a request for sponsorship for Big Brother Big Sister.

Alderman Hamlett made a motion to donate \$150. Alderwoman Proctor seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

Alderman Shepard stated that Big Brother and Big Sister put boots on the ground right after the flood, they have been good friends to the Town of Canton. Alderwoman Proctor stated that we can give the little we do have.

3. Budget Amendment

Assistant Manager Walker presented The Board with a budget amendment for a New Water truck and for increasing flood expense. Alderwoman Mull made a motion to approve the budget amendment. Alderman Hamlett seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

K. Closed Session Pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11 (a)(4)(5)(6)

Alderwoman Mull made a motion to enter session pursuant to 143-318.11 (a)(4) at 6:52pm. Alderman Hamlett seconded the motion. All were voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried. After a brief discussion and no action taken, Alderwoman Mull made a motion to enter open session at 7:19pm. Alderwoman Proctor seconded the motion. Motion carried. Alderwoman Mull made a motion to adjourn. Alderwoman Proctor seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 7:20pm.

L. Adjournment

The next regular meeting will be on Thursday, February 13, 2025, 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 7:20p.m.

Sam Dunbar, Town Clerk