

January 9, 2025

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 9, 2025, at 6:06pm with Mayor Smathers, and Aldermen/women Mull, Proctor, and Hamlett present, Alderman Shepard was absent, the following proceedings were held.

A. Call to Order

Mayor Smathers called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m.

B. Roll Call

Mayor Smathers stated that the Manager Stinnett, Assistant Manager Walker, Clerk Dunbar, and Town Attorney Morgan were present.

C. Pledge/Invocation

Alderman Hamlett led the pledge of allegiance.

D. Approval of Minutes:

Alderwoman Mull made a motion to approve the December 12, 2024, minutes as presented. Alderwoman Proctor seconded the motion. Motion carried.

E. Mayor Comments

Mayor Smathers agreed with the County Commissioners with their stance on FEMA and residents being evicted from hotels. Mayor Smathers stated that FEMA is complex, and the Town is still working on projects with FEMA from Tropical Storm Fred. FEMA must be doing better communicating on the ground regarding housing. Mayor Smathers stated that he is on the task force with Governor Stein regarding housing. Mayor Smathers stated that people need to be getting their hotel rooms paid for. FEMA does great in some regards but needs to do better with their communication.

Mayor Smathers spoke about the fires in California and stated that his thoughts and prayers are with the ones affected by the fires. Mayor Smathers stated that Western North Carolina and Canton needs to keep telling our story, Washington needs to think about how they are going to distribute money to both areas that were affected by natural disasters.

F. Aldermen/women Comments

Alderwoman Mull stated that her thoughts and prayers are with California during these horrific fires. Alderwoman Mull stated that the decorations in Town looked nice, and she wants to keep Christmas decorations up all year.

Mayor Smathers thanked Town Staff for enduring cold weather.

Alderman Hamlett stated that we have a responsibility to talk about the driver we find ourselves in. In North Carolina and in California and the driver being climate change. Alderman Hamlett stated if people ask what they can do about it, we tell them it only takes one voice to make a difference. Alderman Hamlett stated that the steps we needed to take for climate change have long passed.

Alderwoman Proctor stated that she was saddened about the passing of former President Jimmy Carter. Alderwoman Proctor thanked President Jimmy Carter for his work as President and in politics. Alderwoman Proctor stated that she liked the Christmas decorations in Town and stated that the Town Staff did a great job putting them up.

Alderwoman Proctor asked Manager Stinnett to let the board know about water leaks.

Mayor Smathers thanked River View Farm and Garden for going back to work and moving back into their building. Mayor Smathers stated that seeing them open brought a smile to his face.

G. Public Comments:

N/A

H. Managers Reports

Assistant Manager Walker gave the cash report.

Manager Stinnett asked the board for permission to sign a letter of intent for commercial and residential debris pick-up. Southern Disaster Relief (SDR) plans to have a meeting space with the residents, so they can have flood debris picked up. Manager Stinnett stated that residents will have to go through the paperwork process but could save people a lot of money. Manager Stinnett stated there is a lot of mud from Hurricane Helene, and the State is working to remove mud. The State is extending regulations for mud and debris pick-up.

Alderman Hamlett made a motion for Manager Stinnett to sign the letter of intent. Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Manager Stinnett gave The Board a flood update. Manager Stinnett stated that the bid is out for the dog park and baseball field at Rec Park.

Manager Stinnett stated that she and Clerk Dunbar are working with McGill for the pool and pump house. Manager Stinnett stated that Clerk Dunbar is working with her to make sure nothing was missed during the damaged inventory report. Manager Stinnett stated that quality of life is important for residents, and we are pushing hard to get through these projects. Manager Stinnett stated that she received the engineering plans for the playground. Manager Stinnett stated that we can get these projects done quickly. Alderwoman Proctor asked about the playground and what that looks like. Manager Stinnett answered, McGill compiled a list of recommendations for the playground. Manager Stinnett stated that Carolina Parks and Play is reviewing that document and will get back to Clerk Dunbar once they have their plan ready.

Manager Stinnett stated she applied for additional funding in the amount of \$150,000. Manager Stinnett stated that the Town got \$300,000 because another organization did not do the correct paperwork. Manager Stinnett stated that in total the Town received \$699,000 for the A&P building.

Manager Stinnett met with the Army Corp about the Pigeon River. Manager Stinnett met with McGill, and McGill quickly put together scopes for anything pertaining to water, to see the possibility of funding. Manager

Stinnett stated that this decision was up to The Board to approve if the Town is accepted.

Manager Stinnett stated that Champion Credit Union has moved out of the mortgage building. Manager Stinnett stated that Creech & Associates will begin working there shortly. Manager Stinnett stated that Champion Credit Union needs an extension on their lease for the new town hall building as they need 30 days to move IT stuff.

Mayor Smathers asked about the new sign for Town Hall. Manager Stinnett stated that Brandy was working on combining the two signs The Board liked.

Alderwoman Proctor asked if FEMA has an issue with us staying here longer. Manager Stinnett answered that the thirty days should not be an issue.

Manager Stinnett stated that Brandy will take lead by sending text messages to residents about past due water bills. Manager Stinnett stated that this was to help remind people about their past due bills.

Mayor Smathers stated that we understand tough and challenging times and he hopes that these reminders will help the residents. Mayor Smathers stated that the amount of energy and production to get back and better is great. Mayor Smathers commended town staff on keeping everything going.

J. New Business

1. Police Department Policies Updates

Chief Sluder presented The Board with new policy adjustments for the police department. Chief Sluder stated that these policies are the best practices and become in compliance with North Carolina certifications and compliance with Law Enforcement lawyers.

Alderwoman Mull made a motion to accept the new policies for the Police Department. Alderman Hamlett seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion, and the motion carried.

- Residence/Telephone is an existing policy that had some modifications to meet the Smith/Rogers Model Policy
- Equal Employment/Nondiscrimination is an existing policy that needed a verbiage change to meet JAG grant recipient requirements
- Mobile Audio and Video is combined from two separate current policies for body cameras and car cameras to conform to the model policies
- Disciplinary Actions and Prohibited Harassment were split out from being contained in one policy and have been separated to conform to model policies
- Complaints was revised to conform to model policy
- Code of Conduct was revised to conform to model policy

2. Work session January 20, 9:30am

Manager Stinnett stated that we have a lot to cover during this work session, so moving the work session to January 20th, there will be enough time to go over town projects.

Alderman Hamlett made a motion to have the work session on January 20, 2025, at 9:30am. Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

3. Opioid Discussion

Assistant Manager Walker stated that the funds from the opioid lawsuits are extremely restrictive, and we do not know how to spend money. Assistant Manager Walker suggested The Board give the settlement to the County and their health department. Assistant Manager Walker stated that doing this can make a bigger impact.

Manager Stinnett stated that the town was awarded a \$250,000 grant to study the needs in Canton regarding opioid use. Manager Stinnett stated that we do not have the resources to spend the money and we will have to send that money back. Chief Sluder cannot use the money to buy supplies like Narcan. Manager Stinnett stated that Canton is too small of a Town to spend the money.

Alderman Hamlett stated that people with opioids have no restrictions and having the money restricted is sickening.

Mayor Smathers said giving the money to the county is a good idea but agrees with Alderman Hamlett.

The board agreed on consensus to give the money to Haywood County and to return the grant money.

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 6:41pm. 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 9:52pm. Alderwoman Proctor seconded the motion. Motion carried.

L. Adjournment

The next regular Called meeting will be on Thursday, January 23, 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 9:53 p.m.