

July 10, 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, June 26, 2025, at 6:00pm with Mayor Smathers, and Aldermen/women Mull, Hamlett, Proctor present, Alderman Shepard present. The following proceedings were held.

A. Call to Order

Mayor Smathers called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

B. Roll Call

Mayor Smathers 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 June 24, 2025 minutes. Alderman Shepard seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

E. Mayor Comments

Mayor Smathers thanked town staff for the 5th of July event at Sorrells Street Park and stated that the carnival looked busy. Mayor Smathers asked Chief Sluder if the officers were prepared for a school shooter? Chief Sluder answered, stating that a training is being held soon at Pisgah High School to train officers how to get victims out of an active shooter zone.

Mayor Smathers spoke about the flooding that happened in Texas last week. Mayor Smathers stated that even though Helene was horrible, the storm did not happen at night, and we could be more prepared. Mayor Smathers asked if the Town had an intercom or other to alarm residents in the case of another flood. Chief Wheeler stated that they are working on

getting a similar system to alert the community if another flood comes.

F. Aldermen/women Comments

Alderwoman Mull stated that the fireworks went great and the flowers look beautiful. Alderwoman Mull thanked Chief Sluder and Chief Wheeler for their work during the firework show.

Alderman Hamlett recognized the Fire Department and the Police Department for what they do for Town residents and for other community members. Alderman Hamlett thanked both Chief Wheeler and Chief Sluder for adding their high level of safety.

Alderwoman Proctor stated she saw a lot of happy families during the 4th+1 event. Alderwoman Proctor stated that any type of resources you can donate to Texas that would be much appreciated.

Alderman Shepard echoed what the other board members said about the flooding in Texas and down in Eastern North Carolina. Alderman Shepard thanked town staff for the 4th +1 event.

G. Public Comments:

Ken Brown Stated that he was impressed to see chief Sluder at the Maggie Valley fireworks.

Ralph Bruce of 39 Wiggins St. stated that the water bill increase is too expensive for him because he lives on a fixed income. Mr. Bruce stated that he cannot afford the extra \$80 a month for water and stated that he did not know this was happening and cannot afford this new rate. Mayor Smathers answered explaining since the mill closed and the Town has benefited from the mill treating its wastewater for years, we have had to the increase in rates to pay for the treatment of wastewater.

Mr. Bruce stated that he lives on a dead-end road and has a strong

chlorine smell when he turns his tap on and he cannot drink his water.

James stated that his water bill just doubled and he has not moved in. Mr. James stated that there must be a better solution, the average water rate in North Carolina is \$20 a month. James stated that there must be a better option than doubling the water rates. James suggested implementing a water usage rate, or have Hollywood come and shoot a movie in Canton to make up for this budget shortfall. Mr. James stated that he will fill up this room with citizens who are angry with their water rates.

Assistant Manager Walker stated that she can ask other municipalities and conduct another rate study to bring back to the Board. Assistant Manager Walker stated that the Town of Canton is now comparable to the surrounding areas.

Mayor Smathers stated that they will continue looking at ways to make this better.

Carl Cartwright said we pay double the property tax then the people outside of the city limits.

Aldерwoman Proctor stated that increasing the water rate is something that I have struggled with personally and I had to raise the rates on this Board. Aldерwoman Proctor stated that the Board cannot supplement water, that it is against North Carolina law. Aldерwoman Proctor stated that the Board had to raise water rates so the Town can sustain itself. Aldерwoman Proctor stated that raising the rates helps the Town get grants for infrastructure.

Mayor Smathers stated this has been one of the toughest decisions we have ever had to make. We can try to make things better if we can.

H. Manager's Reports

Assistant Manager Walker gave the Cash Report

Old Business

Mill Around Town

Manager Stinnett presented to the Board a Co-Sponsorship with the Canton Merchant Partnership. Manager Stinnett stated that the group understood not being able to have the event on August 31st, so the group plans to have a soft opening event on that date. Manager Stinnett stated that the Canton Merchant Partnership understands that they will have to pay for security for their events, but Manager Stinnett suggests to the Board to wave the trackless train fee. Alderwoman Mull made a motion to approve the Mill Around Town Co-Sponsorship.

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

J. New Business

1. Obstacle Course Project

Clerk Dunbar presented to the Board a plan for a new obstacle course at the International Paper Complex. Tony Malinauskas is asking the Board for a match of \$94,000 which would be reimbursable if awarded the Tourism Development Grant. Clerk Dunbar stated that Mr. Malinauskas has worked hard on this project and the grant deadline is July 18th. Alderman Hamlett stated that he could not in good faith support this project due to our current budget. There was not a motion to approve the obstacle course project.

2. PHS Cheerleading

Alderman Hamlett made a motion to donate \$250 to the Pisgah High School cheerleaders. Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

3. Resolution Accepting the \$12,284,250 2023 Water Treatment Plant Upgrades

Manager Stinnett presented a resolution to the Board about upgrades for the water treatment facility. Manager Stinnett stated that this is to meet the requirements for the \$38 million we received. Alderman Shepard made a motion to accept the \$12,284,250 Water Treatment Plant Upgrades resolution. Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

Mayor Smathers stated that he wants to see this project move forward quickly.

4. Resolution to Accept \$16,215,000: Wastewater treatment plant upgrades and system Improvements

Manager Stinnett presented to the board a resolution to accept the \$16,215,000 for wastewater treatment plant improvements. Alderwoman Mull made a motion to resolution to accept the resolution for \$16,215,000 for wastewater treatment plant improvements. Alderman Shepard seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

Mr. Bruce asked if the Town is using the existing wastewater treatment plant. Mayor Smathers answered yes. Mayor Smathers stated that the Town will be purchasing the west side of the mill property from Spiritas. Mayor Smathers stated that the plans are to shrink the current wastewater treatment plant and then build a new plant for wastewater.

5. Resolution Requesting Closing a Portion of the Alley Wway from Adams to Short Academy Street: Set Public Hearing.

Alderwoman Proctor made a motion to set the Public Hearing for closing the alley way on August 14, 2025. Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

6. Letter of interest EPA Planning and Design Assistance program

Manager Stinnett presented to the Board a resolution from the EPA to aid the community. Manager Stinnett stated that this will not cost the Town any money and a group from the EPA will speak to the community about improvements citizens want to see. The Board agreed to an consensus to move forward.

Mr. Cartwright asked if the meetings could be held outside of normal working hours? Manager Stinnett stated she will pass along his message.

7. Application to accept the emergency bridge loan and technical assistance grant

Manager Stinnett stated that weeks after Hurricane Helene, she applied for the bridge assistance loan. Manager Stinnett stated that she was accepted for the loan, but it has been hold because she was waiting for a scope of work. Alderwoman Mull made a motion to move forward with the emergency bridge loan. Alderwoman Proctor seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

8. Offer to purchase 222 Main St.

Manager Stinnett presented the Board with a contract to purchase the old liquor store property. Manager Stinnett stated that Town will not have to pay, but the ABC Board will not pay the Town their normal taxes to the Town until the tax value of the property is paid, which would be four years. Alderwoman Mull made a motion to purchase 222 Main Street. Alderman Shepard seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

9. Labor Day Road Closure

Manager Stinnett stated that we have to submit this road closure to DOT for the annual Labor Day Festival. Manager Stinnett stated that the set up has not changed. Alderwoman Mull made a motion to approve the road closure for the Labor Day Festival. Alderwoman

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

L. Adjournment

Alderwoman Proctor made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried. The next regular meeting will be on Thursday, July 24, 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 7:03 p.m.