

June 26, 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 absent. 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

Alderwoman Mull led the pledge

D. Approval of Minutes:

N/A

E. Mayor Comments

Mayor Smathers opened the meeting with a major announcement stemming from recent developments in Raleigh. He addressed the long-standing issue of wastewater management, noting that for years, the mill had treated the town's waste at no cost. With the closure of the mill, the town has been actively seeking a location for its own wastewater treatment facility—a challenging task given the nature of such infrastructure.

After extensive effort, the Town of Canton has identified and secured a suitable site for a new wastewater treatment plant. Thanks to support and funding from Raleigh, the town will purchase the west side of the mill property. This acquisition includes the land for the treatment plant as well as several warehouses.

The current wastewater treatment facility will be reduced in size and upgraded, while the new facility will be operated by the Town of Canton. Mayor Smathers emphasized that this approach is the most cost-effective and allows the town to retain full control over its future infrastructure needs.

In addition to addressing the town's environmental needs, this move lays the foundation for economic development. The warehouses on the west side of the property will be repurposed to attract well-paying manufacturing jobs. Mayor Smathers and the Board are committed to creating opportunities for the people of Canton and Haywood County, ensuring they receive the quality jobs they deserve.

Mayor Smather expressed his gratitude to multiple allies in the effort, including Rep. Mark Pless, Sen. Ralph Hise, and other leaders across the state. He celebrated this milestone as the beginning of a new chapter for the community—one rooted in resilience, local control, and opportunity.

F. Aldermen/women Comments

Alderwoman Mull said, "all I can say is thank you, the State came through for us."

Alderman Hamlett stated that when I first ran for office years ago, the Board wanted a waste treatment plant that is ours and operated by the Town of Canton. Alderman Hamlett stated that we could see the writing on the wall with Pactiv Evergreen, this is the genesis of a dream, we now have a place.

Alderman Hamlett thanked David Francis and Jeff Goss for their hard work; Alderman Hamlett stated that you both have had many sleepless nights. Hamlett thanked Mayor Smathers for leading the charge and said. "The Town, its people, and the future generation of Canton is indebted to you. Alderman Hamlett thanked the Town administration staff for their hard work.

Alderwoman Proctor thanked Mayor Smathers for his work and Thanked Town Staff for their hard work. Alderwoman Proctor stated that our economic development has been the forefront for this Board, securing our own future is messy, but it is necessary, we are not afraid of hard work here; we are the hometown of the future.

Manager Stinnett thanked Mayor Smathers for his work in Raleigh.

Cory Vaillancourt from the Smoky Mountain News asked Mayor Smathers these questions.

How many acres is the west side? Mayor Smathers answered is 35-38 acres. Mr. Vaillancourt asked what the purchase price was for the west side property? Mayor Smathers answered 14 million, and the funding from the North Carolina General Assembly.

Vicki Hyatt asked How long will it take to move the plant? Mayor Smathers answered, we are not moving it, we will downsize the current one and then build a new wastewater treatment plant.

Mrs. Hyatt asked what is the timeframe for this? Jeff Goss answered, wastewater treatment plants take years to build.

Mrs. Hyatt asked when would the Town stop paying the \$140,000 a month to Spiritas to treat wastewater? Mayor Smathers answered, when we take ownership of the existing plant.

Alderwoman Proctor thanked the crews for finishing Rhoda St.

G. Public Comments:

N/A

H. Manager's Reports

Assistant Manager Walker gave the Cash Report

Manager Stinnett gave the tax report; the tax collection is 99.74%

Manager Stinnett stated that Pickin in the park had issues due to the extreme heat with no shade and dancing on the concrete. Manager Stinnett stated that T Evans asked to use one of the sheds at Rec Park for the event, and we blocked the sheds for every Friday night. Manager Stinnett stated that the group will do their own set up and bring their own generators.

Alderman Hamlett made a motion to allow Pickin in the Park to use the shelters at Recreation Park on Friday nights during the Summer. Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

Manager Stinnett stated she will request a copy of insurance from Mrs. Evans.

Tom Wilson stated that he disagrees using the shelters because there is no stage and it is not enough room for the dancers. Mr. Wilson stated that he has information on a portable stage, that costs around \$26,000. Mr. Wilson stated that the stage can go on any surface, and this is an investment for 10-12 years, It can used for multiple uses. Mr. Wilson stated that the group can help fundraise for the stage and then donate the stage to the Town.

Mayor Smathers stated that Pickin in the Park will be moved into the armory full time once it is repaired. Manager Stinnett stated that the armory will be finished in September 2026.

Ken Evans stated that using the shelters at Rec Park is a temporary fix, we have seven more weeks for Pickin in the Park, the sheds are what is going to get us through this summer.

Manager Stinnett stated that Haywood Waterways repaired steps at Rec Park into the river and they look great.

Manager Stinnett stated that Rhoda Street is opened, but the project is not finished. Manager Stinnett stated that the contractors will be back to finish the rest of the project in the future.

Manager Stinnett stated that we have a water vaulve that broke on

champion drive, we have had issues with spruce street gaining water. Manager Stinnett stated that we are going to have to do an emergency repair. Manager Stinnett stated that we are going to close Champion Drive and North Main, Manager Stinnett stated that the water will be turned off from midnight to 6am on Sunday, this is a necessary repair, and it will be a boil water advisory.

Manager Stinnett added these items to the agenda

k-9 contract
10k grant for highway safety
Public hearing alley closure
Closed session 4 & 5

J. New Business

1. Armory Update

Manager Stinnett asked the Board what their ideas were for the new stage inside the armory that was destroyed. Manager Stinnett suggested that we use the space for storage and buy a portable stage to replace the current permanent stage. The Board agreed to a consensus on buying a portable stage and not building a permanent stage inside the Armory. Manager Stinnett stated that Sept 2026 is the projected opening for the Armory.

2. Funding Letters of Intent

- o Water Treatment Plant Upgrades and System Improvements
- o Wastewater Treatment Plant Modifications and Sewer Improvement

Alderwoman Mull made a motion to approve the letters of intent for the water treatment plant upgrades and improvements. Alderman Hamlett seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

Alderwoman Mull made a motion to approve the letters of intent for

the wastewater treatment plant modifications and sewer improvements. Alderman Hamlett seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

3. Pigeon River Garden Club: Train Use

Clerk Dunbar stated that the garden club asked about using the trackless train for River Fest. Clerk Dunbar stated that the group has not yet filled out the paperwork to use the trackless train. Mayor Smathers stated that we can move this to old business and discuss when the group has finished the paperwork.

4. Mill Around Town: Co Sponsorship

Manager Stinnett presented to the Board a Co Sponsorship with the Canton Merchant Partnership. Manager Stinnett stated that the Mill Around Town event is great for citizens and for Downtown, but we do not have the ability to help with the event during some of the requested dates. Mayor Smathers and the Board like the idea of the event but asked the group to restructure and bring back to the Board. Manager Stinnett asked that the Board recognize that the Canton Merchant Partnership was were here on this date 6/26/2025.

5. Budget Amendments

Assistant Manager Walker presented to the Board various budget amendments. Assistant Manager Walker stated that all of the amendments are due to flood expenses. Manager Stinnett stated that some of the money from Tropical Strom Fred will be heading our way soon. Alderwoman Mull made a motion to approve the budget amendments. Alderman Hamlett seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

6. K-9 Lease Agreement

Manager Stinnett presented a k-9 lease agreement to the Board, which allows the Town of Canton to Lease a trained K-9 from Chief Sluder. Manager Stinnett stated that the K-9 will be used by the police department until the K-9 retires and then the K-9 will belong to Chief Sluder. Alderman Hamlett made a motion to approve the K-9

lease agreement. Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

7. NC Governor Highway Traffic Safety

Chief Sluder stated that the Governor Highway Traffic Safety Grant will add an additional \$10,000 to the Police Departments budget for officers working traffic control. Alderwoman Mull made a motion to approve the grant funding if awarded the \$10,000 to help with the Police Departments traffic control. Alderwoman Proctor seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

8. July 24 public hearing for closing of the alley way by the police department.

Alderman Hamlett made a motion to set the public hearing for the ally way by the police department on July 24. Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

K. Closed Session Pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11 (a)(3)

Alderwoman Mull made a motion to enter closed session pursuant to 143-318.11 (a)(3) at 7:15pm. Alderwoman Proctor seconded the motion. With all in favor the motion carried. After a brief discussion and no action taken. Alderwoman Mull made a motion to enter open session at 7:40pm. Alderwoman Proctor seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion and the motion carried. 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.

L. Adjournment

The next regular meeting will be on Thursday, July 10, 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

7:48 p.m.