

March 13 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, March 13, 2025, at 6:00pm with Mayor Smathers, and Aldermen/women Mull, Hamlett, Shepard, and Proctor 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 Smathers stated that Manager Stinnett, Assistant Manager Walker, Clerk Dunbar, and Town Attorney Morgan were present.

C. Pledge/Invocation

Alderman Shepard led the Pledge of Allegiance

D. Approval of Minutes:

Alderwoman Mull made a motion to approve February 27, 2025, minutes as presented. Alderman Shepard seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion and the motion carried.

E. Mayor Comments

Mayor Smathers stated what a day it has been. All the credit goes to The Board, Water Department, and Town Administration. Mayor Smathers spoke about the \$41 million allocated to the Town of Canton from the Federal Government. Mayor Smathers stated that this money is locked and loaded, and there are generation of water projects, but no land acquisitions. Mayor Smathers stated that it would take us decades to get money like this, this is a bipartisan and a historic moment for the Town of Canton. Mayor Smathers stated that there is a time and place for protest, the protest that accrued today could have been dangerous. Mayor Smathers stated that people would not think about the good of the \$41 million but instead be focused on the protest. Mayor Smathers told Arick from the Mountaineer that he did a great job writing his article about Congressmen Edwards Presentation. Mayor Smathers Thanked the Police Department for stepping in, and stated that this is the nature that we live in.

Mayor Smathers stated that he got a call from Zach Cline, a Town Council Member from Tazwell Virginia. Mayor Smathers stated that Mr. Cline was seeking information about Chestnut Mountain Nature Park, how it was constructed, and information on upkeep of the property. Mr. Cline informed Mayor Smathers that his Town wanted to do something similar with some land that they own. Mayor Smathers stated that when he called Mr. Cline back to answer his questions, Mr. Cline already spoke with Sam Dunbar,

who already answered the questions he wanted to know. Mayor Smathers thanked Dunbar for answering all the questions for the Councilman.

Mayor Smathers stated that Chief Sluder was not here tonight to be recognized, Chief Sluder got an invitation from the Governor to attend the State of the State address.

Mayor Smathers informed The Board that the Carolina Hurricanes Foundation reached out to him shortly after the flood and asked what they could do to help the new playground. Mayor Smathers stated that he asked Clerk Dunbar to reach out to the Hurricanes and discuss how they can help. Clerk Dunbar told The Board that the Carolina Hurricanes Foundation gifted \$100,000 to the Town of Canton for the All-Abilities Playground. Dunbar stated that the news will be made public tomorrow. Mayor Smathers thanked the Carolina Hurricanes for their donation.

Mayor Smathers stated that there is a Unified basketball game tonight at Pisgah High School. Mayor Smathers said that this is a great community and event, and wish's he was there.

F. Aldermen/women Comments

Alderwoman Mull Thanked the Police Department for protecting Congressman Edwards during his presentation.

Alderman Hamlett thanked Town Staff for getting the grants and thanked the water department for going out in horrible weather to fix water leaks. Alderman Hamlett also thanked the Police Department for their quick response during Congressman Edwards presentation. Alderman Hamlett stated that often we want the Police Department to be invisible, today they were not out of sight or out of mind, in a flash we had our chief and officers move to the front, not knowing of the situation. The Police Department defused the situation. The courage speaks well about all members of the force. I am very proud and honored that you are a part of my family and that I am apart of yours.

Alderwoman Proctor stated that this is a historical time for the Town of Canton, this grant will set us up for success for decades. Alderwoman Proctor stated that Town Staff are incredible, she is excited to see these projects start in the next four years. Alderwoman Proctor also thanked Mayor Smathers for his hard work during this. Alderwoman Proctor stated that she has gotten a lot of thanks from residents for cleanup and debris removal.

Alderman Shepard echoed what the other Board Members stated. Alderman Shepard thanked Mayor Smathers for all his work, and Alderman Shepard thanked Congressman Edwards for his work. Alderman Shepard stated that it does not matter what side of the aisle you are on. I am very excited and hopeful to see what these projects do; Infrastructure is often

overlooked. Alderman Shepard stated that other than it flooding every three years, our water infrastructure our biggest problem.

Mayor Smathers thanked the Water Department for their continuous hard work and dedication to the Town of Canton. Mayor Smathers stated that this department is working around the clock, in various weather conditions, and missing quality time with their families.

G. Public Comments:

Carol Cartwright asked the Town Staff if we got the fee listings for the vehicle tax. Assistant Manager Walker answered Mr. Cartwright stating that the fee listing is on the website, under Street Department in a PDF format. Mr. Cartwright stated that even though there is money coming in, he is assuming that there will be a budget shortfall, and fee increases.

Mr. Cartwright stated that with all the projects coming through with the Planning Board, one project that he has not seen movement on is the apartment complex. Mr. Cartwright stated that phase one of the apartment complex should be completed by this summer and stated that he believes they will not make that deadline.

Mayor Smathers answered Mr. Cartwright, stating that he has spoken with the owners of the complex and said that he wanted to see movement with this project. Mayor Smathers also stated that there has been movement, it is slow, but there has been movement.

Manager Stinnett said the apartment complex just got their storm water permit.

Mayor Smathers asked Manager Stinnett about the I-40 projects, it has not passed through our hands. It is all DOT. Mayor Smathers stated that it would be nice to see what the project looks like and end date. Manager Stinnett stated she will contact DOT for an update.

H. Manager's Reports

Cash: Assistant Manager Walker gave the cash report.

Manager Stinnett gave The Board the following updates:

Manager Stinnett stated that the playground has been vetted through insurance, engineers have looked at the site, made their recommendations, and the equipment has been ordered. Manager Stinnett stated that Clerk Dunbar will be in contact with Carolina Parks and Play and talk about a timeline. Manager Stinnett stated that we are moving as fast as we can with this project.

Manager Stinnett stated that River field Ballpark is out for bid, but we have gotten zero bids for the project, and we will Continue to push out.

Manager Stinnett stated that the pump house, concession stand, and bathhouse are out for bid. Manager Stinnett stated that we have received zero bids for the pool. Manager Stinnett stated that hopefully we will get bids shortly. Manager Stinnett stated that we have been soliciting bids, sending emails, phone calls, and the RFPs are on the website, we are just not getting any bids.

Manager Stinnett stated that we received one bid for fencing around the pool, the bid is astronomical, and we turned down that bid. Manager Stinnett stated that we have reposted the RFP, and we are seeking bids.

Manager Stinnett stated that Chestnut Mountain emergency bridge bid was awarded before the hurricane, since the area was damaged during the hurricane, we are working on cost repairs. Manager Stinnett stated that the main bridge has been inspected by a geo engineer, and that scope of work should be ready by next week. Manager Stinnett stated that once we have that scope of work, we can solicitate the bids, and get Chestnut Mountain opened by summer.

Manager Stinnett stated that the Armory is in the design phase and will be brought to The Board for approval. We scheduled an environmental assessment and survey that was required. Once we get that, The Board will see it quickly.

Manager Stinnett stated that Camp Hope is working through Shipo. Clay Griffen, the historian, is in the middle of his assessment. Manager Stinnett asked Carol Jones and Pam Kearse to meet the historian onsite to help with information. Once this process is complete, it will be obligated by FEMA. Once obligated, we will put that out for reservations because it was not affected by Hurricane Helene.

Manager Stinnett stated that Rough Creek Watershed will be closed for a while because of the damage of Hurricane Helene. Manager Stinnett stated that Clerk Dunbar spent days at the property with groups and the damage is severe.

Manager Stinnett stated that the old Town Hall is still in the FEMA buyout program. Manager Stinnett stated that she scheduled testing for New Town Hall, once the Credit Union moves out, then we can move in of May 2026.

Manager Stinnett stated that the Police Department is the same, they have started testing, and they will also be in May 2026.

Manager Stinnett stated that the Museum is still in the buyout program.

Manager Stinnett stated that the Debris is getting picked up after the original end date of May 28th. Manager Stinnett stated that they have begun moving the personal property debris, like around the doghouse. Manager Stinnett stated that you can see that a lot of debris has been picked up. Manager Stinnett stated that we are still signing people up for

this program, that deadline has not ended.

Manager Stinnett stated that the old fire department is still in the buyout program.

Manager Stinnett stated that the new Fire Department is here, the deck should be finished either today or tomorrow, once the contents are submitted it will be ready for occupy. Manager Stinnett stated that the Fire Department truck bay is still in the hands of the Army Corp of Engineers, and we are still waiting on their movement on that.

Filter plant:

Manager Stinnett stated that the Upgrades for phase one are underway, there was a back order on some equipment, but we hope to see the repairs to start in April or May.

Manager Stinnett stated that the \$41 million grant that was awarded is for both wastewater and for storm water. Manager Stinnett stated that we have two grants for storm water that are about to do into the design phase. Manager Stinnett stat that we have approved CCPT, for people to come in a clean the basins because they are full of debris, and silt.

Manager Stinnett stated that we have gotten the two RFQs, we have chosen one, once I get that back it will go before The Board for approval. Manager Stinnett stated that once that process is complete then we can move forward with that project.

Manager Stinnett stated that Rhoda St. Hyatt Pipeline had to put back out a design for a culvert because they hit rock. Manager Stinnett stated that this process has been designed and approved, and the project should be finished in 30-35 days.

Manager Stinnett stated that the paving is on track for this budget year. Manager Stinnett stated that the paving bids came out lower than we thought, and I have one bid for Board approval tonight. Manager Stinnett stated that we are going to put out more roads to be worked on. Manager Stinnett stated that she is unsure if the money will roll over if work has not started before July 1st.

Manager Stinnett stated that she knows the board members catch a lot of heat because of the way we work on the projects. Manager Stinnett stated that some of these projects are much easier to complete than others but will do all the projects as quickly as possible.

Alderman Hamlett asked if the repairs to storm water will help with future floods. Manager Stinnett answered yes, the cleaning of the storm water will help with future floods.

J. New Business

1. New Franchise Agreement

Manager Stinnett presented The Board with new franchise agreement to replace the existing ordinance that will expire on April 11, 2025. Manager Stinnett stated that Attorney Morgan has looked over the new ordinance and agrees with it. Alderman Hamlett made the motion to approve the new franchise agreement. Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed. This agreement came before the board twice.

2. Lonesome Mountain Paving Contract:

Manager Stinnett presented The Board with a paving contract from Lonesome Mountain Paving Company. Alderwoman Mull made the motion to approve the paving contract. Alderman Shepard 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)(4)(5)(6)

Alderwoman Proctor made a motion to enter closed session pursuant to 143-318.11 (a)(4)(5)(6) at 6:43pm. Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion. With all in favor the motion carried. Alderwoman Mull made a motion to enter open session at 8:25pm. Alderwoman Proctor seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion carried.

L. Adjournment

The next regular meeting will be on Thursday, March 27, 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 8:25 p.m.

Sam Dunbar, Town Clerk