

SEPTEMBER 12, 2024

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, September 12, 2024, at 6:00pm with Mayor Zeb Smathers, and Aldermen/women Mull and Hamlett Shepard and Proctor 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 that the Finance Officer, Walker and Deputy Clerk Lurvey were present as well as Attorney Morgan.

C. Pledge/Invocation

Alderwoman Proctor led those in attendance in reciting the pledge of allegiance.

D. Approval of Minutes:

Mayor Smathers then asked the Board for approval of the minutes of the August 22, 2024, meeting. Alderwoman Proctor made a motion to approve the minutes of August 22, 2024, and Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

E. Mayor Comments

Mayor Smathers stated that he wanted to take a moment to brag on Lt. Reece and Chief Sluder for the response to the recent rumors that led to social media postings regarding alleged events at the schools in our area. Mayor Smathers stated that the Police Department responded and were prepared to calm fears in our schools about potential threats made. Mayor Smathers also wanted to recognize Captain Moore, and Police Officer Ergle for their presence, as well as the SRO's that did a fine job in handling the situation.

Mayor Smathers then mentioned the Labor Day Festival and felt that the numbers were up from the prior year but with the numbers still coming in he would wait and address the attendance later. Mayor Smathers then thanked the employees for another successful event.

F. Aldermen/women Comments

Alderwoman Mull welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance. Alderwoman Mull stated that Labor Day was excellent, and she enjoyed herself and was proud of the employees for their work on the festival.

Alderman Hamlett then stated he echoed what Alderwoman Mull said and he felt it was a successful event.

Alderwoman Proctor that she wanted to thank the staff for a successful Labor Day and a fun parade. Alderwoman Proctor stated that after seven years she has learned the pacing of the candy at the parade. Alderwoman Proctor also wanted to thank the Police Department for their presence at the schools during the week and it was much appreciated. Alderwoman Proctor then asked Recreation Director Sam Dunbar if the fall hours of Chestnut Mountain were still 7:30a.m. to dusk and Mr. Dunbar stated that the fall hours would continue to be dawn to dusk and winter hours would depend on weather.

Alderman Shepard wanted to thank Town Staff for their efforts in preparation of the Labor Day festival. Alderman Shepard stated that the layout of craft area and layout of the event was great. Alderman Shepard also wanted to thank the Police Department for stepping in and making our schools safe. Alderman Shepard singled out Captain Moore and Officer Ergle for an outstanding presence at the high school during the week.

Mayor Smathers also wanted to point out that the Haywood County Schools has attained the rank of number 6 for quality of education and is in the top 10% of schools in the State.

G. Public Comments:

Mr. Howard Knepper stated that he wished to address the eyesore across from his motel and restaurant on Asheville Highway. Mr. Knepper stated that he had in a round about way talked to the owner of the property to get rid of the trailers and cancel the lease and clean up the property.

Mayor Smathers agreed with Mr. Knepper that the Board of Trade which has the trailers for sale on the lot in question did present a safety hazard because of the poor visibility on Asheville Highway and noted that there have been several accidents as a result.

Mr. Knepper stated that if that were to happen and the trailers were gone would the town be interested in opening a welcome center there.

Mayor Smathers then advised Mr. Knepper that with the loss of tax revenue due to the Mill closure he did not think that would be feasible as the Town is facing a loss of revenue for about \$1.5 million dollars.

Mr. Knepper went on to tell the Board that in his opinion the Board was doing an excellent job of navigating the Mill closure. Mr. Knepper stated that he called Eric Spirtas, potential buyer for the Mill property to discuss the opportunity presented of the Mill property. Mr. Knepper wanted to express to the Board to be careful and be strong in dealing with Mr. Spirtas as the Board cannot let our people down nor the ones that came before.

Mayor Smathers assured Mr. Knepper the town will be cautious as it always has been.

H. Managers Reports

Interim Manager Stinnett was on vacation and Finance Officer, Walker presented the Cash Report. Finance Officer Walker also advised the Board that we have 3 bids received on the Camp Hope project and that should be awarded soon.

Finance Officer Walker also advised the Board that the Water Conservation has been lifted for Canton and Clyde.

Finance Officer Walker brought the Board up to date that the Charles Street project should be starting in less than 2 weeks' time and then will move on to Rhoda Street once Charles is completed.

Finance Officer Walker, then told the Board that people from 10 States were present at the Labor Day festival with some staying over night due to the traffic.

Finance Officer Walker also wanted the Board to know that the Papermaker Park dedication will be September 20, 2024, at 11:00a.m. at 593 Park Street.

I. Old Business

N/A

J. New Business

1. Co-Sponsorship: Pigeon River Garden Club: Scarecrow Trail with Fall Festival

Finance Officer Walker then presented the Board with a co-sponsorship request from the Pigeon River Garden Club for the 2024 Scarecrow Trail and Fall Festival. Ms. Marty Yates with the PRGC requested that they wished to utilize the Town's train. The Scarecrow Trail would be at the Orchard, and they currently have 50 participants for the event. The Fall Festival

will be held on November 2, 2024, from 10:00a.m. to 4:00p.m. where they will announce the winners of the Scarecrow Trail.

Ms. Yates stated that they may also want to have a scavenger hunt.

Finance Officer Walker advised the Board that the policy of the Train rental was not complete at this time. Mayor Smathers then asked were there any other issues that needed to be addressed at this time for the co-sponsorship request and Finance Officer Walker said no. Alderman Hamlett then made a motion to approve the co-sponsorship request and Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion and all were in favor. Motion carried.

2. Co-Sponsorship: Canton Merchant Association: Halloween Trick or Treat

Next Finance Officer Walker presented a co-sponsorship request from the Canton Merchants Association Trick or Treat Main Street 2024. Ms. Jeanne Forrest presented her application to hold a Trick or Treat event on October 31, 2024, from 5:00p.m. to 7:30p.m. This event would have bouncy houses, food trucks, DJ, Hayrides, Car Show, Costume Contest, Crafts and Face Painting. Ms. Forrest stated that she has approached owners of the parking lots for available activities. Ms. Forrest also requested the use of the Town's train. Alderwoman Mull made a motion to approve the co-sponsorship and Alderman Hamlett seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion carried.

3. Co-Sponsorship: Chestnut Chase 10k

Recreation Director, Sam Dunbar presented the Board with a co-sponsorship application for Chestnut Chase 10K run and organized by Run 828/North Carolina Mountain Trail Runners to take place on November 10, 2024, from 8:00a.m. to 11:00a.m. at Chestnut Mountain Park and in case of rain on that date a date of November 17, 2024, would be a "rain date". Recreation Director, Sam Dunbar stated that last year there were approximately 60 participants, and the event was a great success. Mr. Dunbar stated that the park would be closed during the event but would open to the public at 12:00P.M. Director Dunbar stated that the Town would have EMS and Fire Department attend as a precaution. Alderwoman Gail Mull made a motion to approve the co-sponsorship application and Alderman Shepard seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

4. Budget Amendment

Finance Officer, Walker presented to the Board a Budget Amendment for a vehicle swap for \$4,000.00 to transfer a

vehicle previously purchased by the Police Department and transferred to the Filter Plant. Finance Officer, Walker told the Board that for audit purposes, a check from the Water and Sewer fund would be issued to the town and credited back to the general fund. Alderwoman Proctor made a motion to approve the budget amendment and Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

L. Closed Session: Pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11 (a) (3) (4) (5)

At 6:41p.m. Alderwoman Mull made a motion to enter closed session pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11 (a) (3) Preserving attorney-client privilege, (4) Economic Development, (5) Attorney/Client. Alderwoman Proctor seconded the motion, and all were in favor and the motion carried. At 8:00p.m. Alderwoman Mull made a motion to enter open session and Alderman Shepard seconded the motion with all in favor the motion passed. At 8:01p.m. Alderwoman Mull made a motion to close the open session and Alderman Shepard seconded the motion and all were in favor and the motion carried.

At 8:00p.m. back in open session Alderwoman Mull made a motion to approve a Representation Agreement for Cranfill Sumner for legal services to be provided to the town. Alderman Shepard seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

M. Adjournment

The next Regular Called meeting will be held on Thursday, September 26, 2024, at 6:00p.m. at Town Hall located at 85 Summer Street, Canton, NC 28716. There being no additional business, Mayor Smathers adjourned the Meeting at 8:01p.m.

Wanda M. Lurvey, Deputy Town Clerk