

Town of Stantonburg

Regular Board Meeting

August 12, 2024

Mayor Coley Rhodes called the monthly Town Council meeting to order at 7:00 PM. The following council members were present: Donnie Bass, Ben Harper, Jackie Grice, Eartha Butler, and Steve Mooring. Also present was Town Manager Brian Hawley, Town Clerk Alexis Whitley, and Town Attorney Slade Rand.

Pledge of Allegiance and Prayer: Mayor Rhodes led the Pledge of Allegiance and opened the meeting with prayer.

Approval of Agenda: Councilwoman Grice made a motion to approve the agenda. Passed unanimously.

Approval of the Minutes: July 15th Regular Board Meeting Minutes: Councilman Mooring requested "contributable" be changed to the correct word of "attributable" on page 4, paragraph 5. He requested a spelling correction of "low baring" to be corrected to "load bearing" on page 4, last paragraph. He requested the correction of the wording on page 5, paragraph 3, "The limit would be a matching grant up to \$10,000.00 and the town would match \$5,000 of that." To be corrected to "The limit would be a matching grant up to \$10,000.00 and the ~~town~~ Stantonburg Industrial Development Corporation would match \$5,000 of that *to be administered by the Town.*"

Also, striking "It is administered by the Town of Stantonburg." in the next to the last sentence of paragraph 3.

July 15th Closed Session minutes were approved as written.

Public Comment: None

Presentations: UTEC was not present.

Financial Reports:

July: Monthly Receipts: \$352,047.10 Disbursements: \$402,333.83 Difference: -\$50,286.73. Report referred to our auditors.

Invoices for Payment:

Councilman Mooring questioned the invoice for payment to Anthony & Tabb, P.A., to Jim Earp Entertainment and to Ralph Hodge Construction. Manager Hawley stated the payments are for Anthony & Tabb and the last payment for Gary Pittman. He stated the payment made to Jim Earp Entertainment is for the 2024 Crepe Myrtle Festival for the stage and sound equipment and the payment made to Ralph Hodge Construction was for the Industrial complex for sewer and water lines that cross the roadway to connect to the town's services.

Councilman Mooring questioned the 3 payments to Register of Deeds. Manager Hawley stated those payments were for annexation recordings and map recordings. He questioned the payment to East

Coast Power and Lighting and if it was from the vehicle accident. Manager Hawley stated it was for the vehicle accident and the incident where the customer had to run off his generator, so the town brought in East Coast Power and Lighting to assist.

Councilwoman Butler questioned the invoice for payment for USA Bluebook. Manager Hawley stated the Water Department purchases items through USA Bluebook. She asked if the town pays for life insurance. Manager Hawley said that is possibly be for one employee on retirement. He will double check on that.

Mayor Rhodes asked about the invoice for payment for EMS Auto Repair. Manager Hawley stated that he believes it was for the air conditioning system in the electric department truck, but he will double check.

Councilwoman Butler asked if the town was caught up on paying the town attorney. Manager Hawley said we paid him last week and so it is not in the July report.

Councilman Mooring asked about the invoice for payment to Sunbelt. Manager Hawley stated that was for 167 KVA transformers for a turkey house customer. That project requires specific transformers. Councilman Mooring asked who's responsible for the cost; does the town pick up the costs or does the customer share the costs? Manager Hawley stated that the transformers are a part of the town infrastructure, and the town does not charge for them. Councilman Mooring thinks the town should investigate possibly charging for transformers to cover that investment.

The council discussed the possibility of charging for transformers. They agreed to see what other towns do, first. Councilman Harper is okay with either option that is the best.

Councilwoman Grice asked if the town receives a lot of extensions. Manager Hawley mentioned one extension that has been brought to his attention. Town Clerk Alexis Whitley stated that there is a folder of extensions each month. Customers get 2 extensions per year.

Councilwoman Grice questioned the past due account of a local business and Councilman Mooring requested the amount of that past due account and if the balance was up to \$15,000.00. Manager Hawley stated he is working with that customer and that the amount has come down.

Councilman Harper made a motion to approve invoices. Passed unanimously.

Old Business:

Randy Davis, the president of Stantonsburg Industrial Development Corporation, discussed the Facade Grant. Their goal is to provide funds towards façade restorations if the applicant is approved for the grant. The intent is to beautify the downtown area to bring in businesses or spruce up existing businesses. Once the council approves the grant, the town will advertise it on social media and in the newspaper. Mayor Rhodes stated that the Appearance Commission will decide on a slate of colors and will hopefully present them to the board in September. Manager Hawley stated that the council is part of the Downtown Development Authority that oversees the grant and makes the final decisions.

Councilman Mooring made a motion to accept the offer from Stantonsburg Industrial Development Corporation to move forward with the Façade Grant subject to conditions set forth by the granting agency. Passed unanimously.

An update on the sanitation ordinance was presented. Manager Hawley presented the receipts and disbursements for the sanitation department. Customers have called in for bulk item pick up but the town is not being swarmed by requests for bulk items. Door hanger notices have been ordered to verify customers if they cannot be reached by telephone.

Councilman Mooring asked who will be posting notices for high grass and manager Hawley stated he handles that, and he has already written a few letters to property owners.

Manager Hawley presented the 911 call information he received from Jeff Williford at Wilson County Emergency Services. He discovered one location at 110 E Thompson St being a 911 hang up call concern. After speaking with Sergeant Rivera, the address does not exist but the Brightspeed building on Thompson Street is associated with the telephone number and he has been in contact with them and Brightspeed is investigating what could be causing the issue.

As far as the discrepancies the town has noticed when it comes to how we are being charged on a per call basis, Manager Hawley spoke with Angel Landrau, and he advised him that the charges are based on the law of averages. He recommended the council email any other questions to him to get answers from Wilson County Emergency Services.

Councilman Mooring was interested in the spreadsheet and the details. He noticed the hang up calls from that one location. There were 642 events and there were only 9 at that address. He did the math, and the town is still at about \$18.00 per call. If you look at the report, if they call 911, if the fire department goes, EMS goes, and the Stantonburg PD goes that is 3 calls. Town Manager Hawley stated that according to 911 that is only considered 1 call. Manager Hawley has not had a chance to confirm and compare the number of calls plus what the town has been billed for.

Wilson County Emergency Services does a current estimate on what the town should pay during that quarter but during the following quarter, they figure out the actual amount that needed to be charged and then the Town will receive a credit for the calls they should not have been charged for. Councilman Mooring requested information on a certain quarter in 2022, and he will provide manager Hawley with that timeframe, and he requested information on another quarter that was \$10,692.00. Councilman Bass also had concerns regarding those quarters and number of charges.

Councilman Mooring mentioned the pay voucher mistake in which he caught in his statement and sent an email. Finance Officer, Victoria, found the issue and corrected it.

Councilman Mooring mentioned the leased building at 101 N. Main Street and the questions regarding insurance. He stated the town is leasing that property and so we are subleasing it to the occupant. He asked what the town is paying to lease that property. Manager Hawley stated that the town owns that property as far as he knows. Manager Hawley stated that he and Attorney Slade Rand have discussed a lease for the property, but the amount of rent is up to the town council. The occupant has been there for 20+ years but an original lease has not been found. Mayor Rhodes asked if the lease could be executed before the next board meeting.

Councilman Mooring mentioned the expenditure statement approved in the July 15th town council meeting. The council was told there was an error in the expenditure report. He asked if the financial summary page needed to be adjusted, and he was told that it did not need to be adjusted. On July 22, the council received an email stating that there was another error in which an expenditure was omitted

in the amount of \$16,775.00 for fire protection. His question was if the board unknowingly approved financials with errors, shouldn't the board revisit the financial reports to approve the corrected reports and the financial summary page along with correcting the minutes. There were two versions of the expenditure report, and they are very different in addition to a rounded amount of \$16,000.00 and \$1,000.00 for appearance being a grand total difference of to the 17,839.00. At the same time, the appropriated amount changed in the second report in the amount of 681,000.00. The expenditure YTD changed by 28,522.00 and the unencumbered balance \$3,402.00. He stated the board needs to go back and look at that. Attorney Slade Rand stated that the minutes do not need to be amended because of that, and that he recommends that Councilman Mooring ask for an explanation from the Finance Officer and Manager Hawley and let them send a memo to explain. If the explanation is not satisfactory, the board can elect to reapprove the corrected one if needed.

Manager Hawley stated that because The Town of Stantonburg practices the receipts and disbursements standard that the town does with voting on invoices and finance, information that was not 100% accurate or omitted, he would refer to the general statute of if anything is omitted, it is the town's job to get those minutes corrected with factual information. If the council wishes to go through that, they can vote to reapprove the financials. Councilman Mooring requested an explanation for the difference.

Councilman Mooring asked manager Hawley if he was able to ascertain that there is no conflict of interest or ethical concern for the sale of town property located at 110 E Commercial to an employee's spouse. Manager Hawley stated that he believes that the town thoroughly investigated this speaking with the School of Government on this subject as far as it not violating the criminal statute because that employee is not part of the decision-making process or the person making the contract itself or agreement to sale. His understanding from law, there is nothing there from prohibiting the sale from moving forward. Town Attorney Slade Rand spoke up about the subject and stated that he spoke with Crista Cuccaro at UNC School of Government after he had already determined that there is no conflict, and she agreed that there is none. At an earlier date, after Attorney Rand had already determined that the sale could proceed, Councilman Mooring contacted Cuccaro seeking advice on the matter.

Councilman Harper asked Manager Hawley if he ever found out anything about the shooting range. He did send a letter to the property owner. He has not heard from the Wilson County Sheriff's Department in regard to the violation of the Wilson County ordinance. Attorney Rand recommended Chief Rosario to get in touch with the Wilson County Sheriff's department as well.

New Business:

Manager Hawley presented the Tax Reconciliation Resolution that signifies approval of the tax reconciliation of the 2023-2024 Fiscal Year Tax Settlement for the town through June 30, 2024, received from the Wilson County Tax Administrator. Councilman Harper made a motion to approve the Tax Reconciliation Resolution. Passed unanimously.

Manager Hawley discussed the lost/abandoned meters that were identified during the preparation of the Lead Service Line Inventory. Some of these meters were not imported when the town shifted software from the old system to Logics. There are meters that were on but not being charged for on an active account and they also showed water usage. As these meters are found, they are turned off and

locked. One of the concerns manager Hawley has about an abandoned meter on 215 Tyson Drive is that there is a meter in the owner's sidewalk. It was off and is now locked.

Councilman Mooring asked why the meters were not turned off and locked in the beginning. Manager Hawley stated that he cannot answer that as he was not here then. Councilwoman Grice asked if these tenants are long term residents. Manager Hawley said the meter discussed specifically is at a remodeled home. The given list of abandoned/lost meters is an ongoing list.

Department Reports:

Sewer update: basic maintenance was done for July and August. No major concerns other than Tropical Storm/Hurricane Debbie. Flows started around August 6th at about 91 gallons per minute and shot up to 950 gallons per minute during the storm. The town is currently at 56 gallons per minute in flow.

Water update: the town continues making progress on the Lead Service Line Inventory. Approximately 55% of service lines have been inventoried. An email from Lynn Rogers at LGC let us know that the town will not be on their September agenda for approval for the Lead Service Line Inventory Loan. The LGC will not consider doing so until the town has caught up on audits.

Councilman Mooring requested an update on our audit. Manager Hawley sent an email today to Danna Layne at Nunn, Brashear, and Uzzell, P.A. to follow up on that and is awaiting response. She is working on a Letter of Engagement, but she could not get it to us in time for this month's meeting due to a few minor adjustments that needed to be made by Ryan Marlar on our trial balance information for this past fiscal year. The LGC sent approval for the town to be released from their contract with Carr, Riggs, and Ingram.

Councilman Mooring mentioned that the town missed the grant and so there is another \$2.1M loan they won't approve either if they didn't approve the other. Manager Hawley clarified that he was discussing the loan. He stated that the direct grant appropriation has been approved. The town needed to provide a priority list to Vince for what needed to happen. The town is waiting for more estimated costs from Vince and then that will be sent to DEQ to release funds. The town met with DEQ specifically at their request to come up with a better plan on how they will release funds to the town. Vince will be finalizing an itemized request for DEQ that adds up to the loan amount.

Manager Hawley and Councilman Mooring discussed the loan.

Councilman Mooring referred back to his statement on the \$2.1M and referred to Manager Hawley's statement on July 26th where he stated that he met with LGC and made an inquiry on the 2.1M item and Councilman Mooring shared that the town's current position was to not move forward with the at that time and instead prioritize using the LSLI loan due to our mandated deadline this does not mean we lose the loan this is the effort to mitigate additional scrutiny while the town was attempting to have the LGC's approval for the LSLI. Manager Hawley stated there is a \$2.1M loan the town was approved for which was originally a \$1.3M that the town was approved for and DEQ did the additional cost to do Phase II of the sewer rehab project.

Since a State of Emergency was implemented, Wilson County is requesting that municipalities report all incurred expenditures related to the storm for possible reimbursement.

Parks and Recreation: Grounds are being maintained and light bulbs under the shelter have been replaced.

Permits: The town had two properties apply for permits. One property for a Special Use Permit and another for a Special Use Permit and Variance. All of those requests were approved.

Public Works: There were some challenges in preparing for the storm, but overall Robert and his team did a great job. They have gone above and beyond. Manager Hawley has been trying to get someone to give us support on the challenge with the ditch that runs beside Mr. Grant's home on E. Commercial Avenue.

Mayor Rhodes stated that Wendy with Don Davis's office called her and said that she would like the town to identify any problems the town has during the storm, and she would be willing to help. She requests pictures be taken and used for extra support on these issues.

Electric Department: Saratoga has requested additional LED lights for in town. The town had high water in our reclosure area, but everything was fine. The town had one emergency where a tree collapsed on a power line on W. Commercial Avenue, but our crews responded to handle it.

Police report reviewed.

Councilwoman Grice discussed the on-call schedule for the Electric Department. Councilwoman Butler asked if the town needs to fill the 3rd position. Manager Hawley believes the town needs another experienced lineman, but that decision is up to the council.

Wilsn Emergency Management requested emergency repair to infrastructure, emergency repairs to facilities, all costs related to feeding personnel while managing an incident, supplies purchased, any overtime hours for personnel working the incident, and equipment time while responding to debris removal.

Town Manager Report:

CDBG: The Housing Selection Committee met to reorganize and discuss the possibilities of making new selections on properties. The town has one interested party in the CDBG project so far. The Request for Qualifications will remain open until tomorrow. If the town does not receive additional interest, the RFQ will need to be readvertised.

A drafted letter of disagreement was provided to the council regarding a notification received last week from the IRS on the FY 2022 taxes for the W2's being delinquent. They are in the process of penalizing the town for \$10,000.00. The new finance officer was not in place until February of 2023. He drafted the letter asking the IRS to not penalize the town. He has been in contact with Danna Layne in regard to this issue. The letter provided is not the final letter, but once it is final and signed, it will be sent. The town has 45 days to respond.

Mayor and Council Comments:

Councilman Harper did not have additional comments.

Councilman Mooring clarified if the town is waiting on blueprints and asked if Manager Hawley received any other feedback from Turpentine Design regarding 312 S. Main Street. Manager Hawley stated that a

meeting is scheduled with them for Wednesday to get updates. According to the last time he spoke with them, the town should be receiving construction documents in September and can then advertise for build. He would like to request that there be a procedure for accepting the bids. He wanted to be sure that the process includes the bids being sent certified mail and opened in the town council meeting. Manager Hawley stated that is the current procedure. The council will be involved in that selection.

Councilman Bass asked Manager Hawley if the town sees any infrastructure that is completed to where they are not repeatedly tearing up the street. He spoke of a manhole near the railroad tracks that is a major concern because of the paving job that was done after repairs were made. Manager Hawley stated he will speak with the town engineer and sort that out.

Councilman Bass asked about DOT and 811. Manager Hawley stated our team does not think they have the capability to do 811 locate themselves. The second part of his question was if DOT has paid for the damage they caused. Manager Hawley said DOT is still refusing to pay for the damage/repairs and that he is still trying to work with them to resolve the issue.

Councilman Mooring stated that the problem is that the town's infrastructure is not deep enough per current standards so this will happen again if they dig and not call 811. Does the town dig up all infrastructure and bury it to current code? Manager Hawley said that in many spots there is cement under the asphalt before reaching the water lines. As far as replacing it all, there are many outdated lines and will eventually have to be updated at some point. That is one of the items he has spoken with Ken Fontenot about for additional appropriations.

Councilwoman Butler asked for an update on the Supermarket and if the owner had a potential buyer. Manager Hawley said the owner is looking at leasing the building, and before the town can connect services again, the account must be paid in full. He has been in contact with the owner.

Councilwoman Butler mentioned the library roof leaking after the storm even after the leak was previously repaired. Manager Hawley said after speaking with Gordon Deno, all the properties leaking after the storm need to be on our asset list and the way that works is it becomes a reimbursement from FEMA as long as the building is insured. FEMA will cover the deductible and anything the insurance will not.

Councilwoman Butler had concerns about a fire hydrant being blocked by a tree on E. Commercial Avenue. She requested Manager Hawley check that.

Councilwoman Grice discussed Town Ordinances and if there is a way the town can restrict certain businesses such as vape shops since the board previously voted to restrict internet cafes.

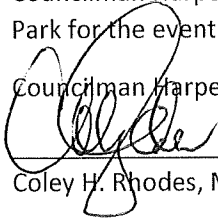
Councilwoman Grice asked if the Appearance Committee had plans to do anything on the opposite side from downtown where NC Hwy 58 meets N. Saratoga Street. Committee member, Linda Mooring said she will mention that when they have their next meeting regarding the colors for the Façade Grant.

Councilwoman Grice mentioned that there was something Manager Hawley was going to address this week that dealt with personnel and if he planned to do that solo. Manager Hawley stated that he would but not solo.

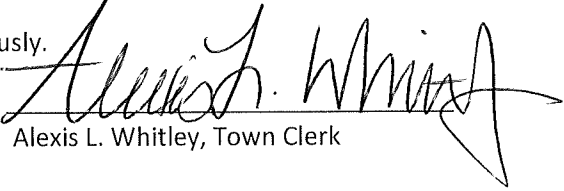
Manager Hawley mentioned the good news received from the LGC. The town's appeal was approved, and they will not be withholding any of the town's sales tax.

Mayor Rhodes mentioned the Recreation Committee's "Sunday in the Burg" event. They want to have a couple of food trucks, recreation games, cornhole, music and more. She requested permission from the board for the Recreation Committee to use the Town Park on September 8th from 4:00pm-7:00pm. Councilman Harper made a motion to give permission to the Recreation committee to use the Town Park for the event on September 8th. Passed unanimously.

Councilman Harper made a motion to adjourn. Passed unanimously.



Coley H. Rhodes, Mayor



Alexis L. Whitley, Town Clerk