

MINUTES OF THE WHITSETT TOWN COUNCIL

February 14, 2023

Whitsett Town Hall Building

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

The regular meeting of the Whitsett Town Council was held on Tuesday, February 14, 2023 at the Whitsett Town Hall. The following members of the Town Council were present: Mayor Richard Fennell, Mayor Pro Tem Jerry Rice and Council Members Lee Greeson and Craig York. Also present were Town Administrator Elaine Garner, Town Clerk Barbara York, and Planning Board Chair Person Karen Horne as well as 2 citizens.

Mayor Pro Tem Jerry Rice gave the invocation.

Mayor Fennell called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., and noted that a quorum was present.

SPEAKERS FROM THE FLOOR

Mayor Fennell asked if there were any Speakers and there were none.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Adoption of the Minutes

- Mayor Fennell asked if he heard a motion to accept the minutes from the January 10, 2023 Town Council Meeting. Council Member Craig York made a motion to adopt the January, 2023 minutes. The motion seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Jerry Rice. The adoption of the January 10, 2023 minutes was carried by unanimous vote.

2. Update on Generator

- Council Member Lee Greeson was unable to get in touch with Bill Smith who was supposed to sell us a refurbished generator and take our old one away. After some discussion, the Mayor asked Mr. Greeson to look into the cost of replacing the fuel tank and battery on the generator that we currently have. The Council decided to table this subject until the next meeting and then discuss purchasing a new generator and selling the one that we currently have.

3. HVAC Update

- Council Member Craig York let the Council know that the Town had to purchase two HVAC systems instead of just one (for the council room). When inspecting the three HVAC systems that we have, it was found that the HVAC system for the kitchen was blowing out carbon monoxide. The Mayor told Town Clerk Barbara York to get a new HVAC system asap to replace the kitchen's system. Ms. York let the Council know that the Town now has a maintenance plan on all three systems that has an annual payment. The \$50K grant that we have paid for one of the systems

4. Any Other Old Business

- Mayor Fennell asked if there was any further Old Business and there was none.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Planning Board

- Planning Board Chair Person Karen Horne let the Council know that the Board had reviewed, discussed and then approved proposed Water Utility packet which included the Whitsett Water Service Policy, Utility Service Policies, The Utility Fee Schedule and the Application for Water Utility Service. She let the Council know that we have new bid proposals for the new meters for Hudson Way. We can opt for cellular, which will have an annual maintenance fee which could be in the neighborhood of \$12 per meter. The other option is drive-by meters, and we would pay the monthly cost for someone to ride around and get those readings. That would probably cost what we are paying now. The following estimate of getting the 36 units in Whitsett updated, if we choose to do the cell service units the cost will

be about \$350 and the drive-by would be about \$250. Hudson Way will have 114 meters that need to be purchased but the subdivision would be purchasing the meters.

- Chairperson Horne also talked about the system development fees, tap fees, etc. NC mandates that you have to have a system development fee analysis report to show how the Town set these fees. To set these fees, we would need assistance by a company that is already familiar with our water system which would be Davis, Martin and Powell. Mrs. Horne has spoken with Randy McNeil to get a ballpark estimate for how long it would take to assess what those fees should be. As of this meeting he has not gotten back to her. This assessment report is only about seven pages long and reports if our system meets the Town's capacity. Mr. McNeil said that when we developed our water system, every household in Whitsett should be able to connect to it if we expanded it into our Town's limits. That was before he realized that we were doing a development. Mr. McNeil pointed out that Whitsett does not have a sewer maintenance system and that is something the Council needs to consider because of Hudson Way if the HOA is not going to take on that responsibility. We need to get that information. Councilman Craig York said that this would probably be something the Town would be responsible and could use the system development fee to pay for it. Mrs. Horne reminded the Council that there are rules involved when setting that fee. Mrs. Horne did note that UNC did have a footnote on their site about setting those fees as well as when they can be charged. That the rule does not apply to local governments who purchase their water from other government entities. That statement might be our loophole to charge those fees. We don't have a waste water treatment plant or a water purification system. In Gibsonville's plan, their summary said that they also purchase their water through Burlington, and they suggested that when setting our development fees that they should not exceed the amount that is dictated by the AWWA (American Water Works Association). If you go above the maximum you must have a report that says why. Roughly, if you are looking at a $\frac{3}{4}$ inch meter, the maximum fee for waste water is \$2900 and the water fee is \$771 for a total of \$3689 for your normal household. If you do a one inch meter the price basically doubles.
- Finally, Mrs. Horne discussed the need for a billing system that the Town will need to manage the water bills once Hudson Way becomes a reality. She asked that Town Clerk Barbara York look into this so we can plan for it in our upcoming budget.

2. Enforcement Officer/Town Administrator

- Town Administrator Elaine Garner updated the Council on the junk car yard at 7211 Greeson Road that has been discussed at the last couple of meetings. She stated that a letter has been sent to the owners telling them they need to remove the cars and cease any kind of business that is happening on that residential property. They had until January 31 to respond to this letter. The son of the owners of the house came to the Town Hall and said he owned all of those cars and he was not running a business at that location. He was told he needed to provide a copy of the titles of all of the cars to confirm that what he was saying is true. He has hired an attorney, Donald Vaughn, to represent him. Mr. Vaughn sent the town a letter asking for an extension of 45 days for Mr. Hernandez to remove the cars from the property. He has until March 15 to remove the cars.
- Mrs. Garner also gave an update regarding the complaint from the neighbor (Ms. Sisk) regarding the residence at 502 NC 61. She states that her yard is being badly flooded to the point that her septic tank does not work for a period of time, and that water is coming from the neighbor's property. Stormwater program administrator, Teresa Andrews has been out there to look at the properties and she determined that the flooding is not the fault of the neighbor. The Environmental Health Agency will come out again to re-assess the property. It looks like it is a problem that the owner (Mr. Turner) of Ms. Sisk's house will need to address. It is not the responsibility of the Town or Guilford County to correct the problem. We will try and advise her of her options.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Building Upgrade Discussion

- Mayor Fennell stated that he had a discussion with one of the bidders on restoring parts of the Town Hall. Most of the holdup on moving forward with this is we are waiting on Environmental Health to come and check on where the septic system is, the picnic shelter may be affected by that. They also discussed some of the costs that would be incurred in upgrading the Town Hall. We need to keep in mind that this building is a part of the National Historic Registry when

making decisions about the restoration. For example, would it be ok to replace the windows in the Hall with vinyl or does it have to be wood? Council Member Craig York reported to the Council that he had recently spoken with Rep. Jon Hardister who is trying to get us in the state budget for the restoration project and was told that we have to have a structural study of the Hall done by a structural engineer to get an overall condition of the building and what we would be looking at as far as cost is concerned and will also answer the question of what kinds of materials can be used for the project. Councilman Lee Greeson made a motion to hire a structural engineer to do a study of the building. Mayor Fennell seconded the motion and all approved the motion.

2. Recommendation by Red Cross to purchase a defibrillator. Town Clerk Barbara York let the council know that the Red Cross said in order to be in compliance with them, the Town Hall would need a defibrillator. The Council decided to table this until we find out everything we are going to need for this first. Mayor Pro Tem Jerry Rice made a motion to table this discussion and Councilman Lee Greeson seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Susan Brothers McKinney – discussion of financial gift. Town Administrator Elaine Garner let the Council know of the vast amount of hard work Mrs. McKinney has put in for the Town Hall since August of this year. She suggested we give Mrs. McKinney a financial gift to at least pay for her gas coming from Brown Summit and back two to three days each week. Councilman Craig York made a motion to gift Mrs. McKinney with \$300.00 to help with her gas expenses over the last few months. Councilman Lee Greeson seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.

4. New Internet Service through Spectrum Town Clerk Barbara York informed the Council that as of now we no longer are using Century Link as the vendor for our telephone and internet. We have moved to Spectrum.

5. Any items from Council Members. Councilman Lee Greeson stated what a fantastic job Mrs. Garner’s husband Mike Garner did on the Black History display that he set up in the Town Hall for the month of February. We had a lot of visitors including students from Greater Vision Academy. Town Clerk Barbara York let the Council know that the Burlington Times News had come and interviewed Mr. Garner and the story was put on the first page of the paper!

6. Announcements Mayor Fennell asked if there were any announcements and there were none.

7. Speakers from the Floor The Mayor asked if there were any Speakers from the Floor and Charles Sedoris, from the audience gave the Council some good information about emails and security on our internet sites. Planning Board Chair Karen Horne let the Council know that there has been a large black sectional sofa out near the corner of Woodard Dr. and Highway 70 that needs to be removed. Town Clerk Barbara will contact the DOT about removing it. Councilman Lee Greeson stated that while Ms. York is on the phone with the DOT, there is a large branch hanging over Highway 61 that is catching some of the larger vehicles that go by. He asked that she make the DOT aware of this so they can trim it back.

ADJOURNMENT With no further business before the Council, Mayor Fennell invited a motion to adjourn. The motion to adjourn was made by Mayor Pro Tem Jerry Rice and seconded by Council Member Lee Greeson. The motion carried; and the January 10, 2023 Town Council meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:20 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Whitsett Town Council is scheduled for 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 14, 2023 at the Whitsett Town Hall.

Elaine Garner, Town Administrator

Richard Fennell, Mayor

APPROVED: