

Present:

Mayor Abigail Norton	Fire Department –
Alderman Jeanne Gentry	Maintenance – Jeremy Trantham
Alderman Wendy Stancil	Police Department – Chief David Shelton
Alderman Dan Myers	Tax Department – Laura Holloway
Ron Moore – Attorney (via Teams)	

Mayor Norton called the Town meeting to order at 6:00pm

Mayor Norton read the Public Charge.

Mayor Norton asked for a motion to approve the February 5, 2024 Board meeting minutes. Alderman Myers made a motion to approve; Alderman Stancil seconded the motion; all were in favor.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Gary Goss Goss IHS, LLC will replace subfloors at 16 S. Andrews; Artisan Gallery and Café. Rainwater gets into the building due to the construction/position of the sidewalk. Mr. Goss is replacing the portion of sidewalk that allows the water to flow into the building; otherwise the problem would persist. He is asking if the Town would help with the cost of replacing the sidewalk. Alderman Myers said it would depend on how the lot is laid out. Mayor Norton said the Board will find out if the Town has an easement on the sidewalk and if the Town would be responsible in replacing the sidewalk. Mayor Norton asked Mr. Ron Moore to find out if the Town has an easement. Mr. Moore asked Mr. Goss to get estimates for the replacement. Mr. Goss advised that he is currently working on getting estimates. Mr. Goss also wanted to let the Board know that he will be putting concrete steps at the back door of the Iron Horse Restaurant on Tuesday, March 12. Alderman Gentry asks that Mr. Goss let Jeremy Trantham know when the concrete will be poured so that the maintenance team can have the vehicles out before the drive is blocked; Mr. Goss agreed. Mr. Goss said he may also re-gravel the drive to redirect rainwater.

Ike Lassiter Asked the Board how the Town of Hot Springs' extension of water to Fairview would affect the current water shortage. Mayor Norton advised that we do not currently have a shortage of water. The Town has been asked to conserve water due to the main well pump going down. Alderman Myers said that the well pump was in the process of being repaired. Mayor Norton advised that the Town already has a new pump and the Board will be presented with a budget amendment a little later in the meeting. Alderman Gentry let everyone know that if something should occur in the future, similar to a pump going down, Fairview will also be placed on voluntary or restriction of water usage.

Mayor Norton

Presented a Budget Amendment to amend the Water & Sewer fund. Appropriations are to be changed: Capital Outlay to increase by \$50,000.00. The Water & Sewer appropriation fund would increase by \$50,000.00. This amendment is to budget for emergency repair to the water system: Pump for main well, a back up pump, control panel, and installation. Alderman Gentry made a motion to approve, Alderman Stancil seconded the motion, all were in favor.

Mayor Norton announced that there will be a special meeting held on Saturday, March 9, 2024 at 8:30am. This meeting will discuss the delinquent water accounts, the water policy, the back flow policy, and Aldermen Gentry & Stancil will discuss Finance Officer duties.

Mayor Norton asked Alderman Myers if Fire Chief Josh Norton had contacted him regarding the automated external defibrillator (AED). A program provided AEDs to the Fire Department. Alderman Myers said he picked up the AED from the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The AED needs to be placed in a central location and Chief Norton suggests placing the AED at the Welcome Center. Alderman Myers suggests putting a camera up in the Welcome Center's foyer and keeping the AED in there; the AED has to be covered by a camera and the equipment is expensive. He will go to the Welcome Center and speak with Stacey Geyer [Welcome Center Manager] to see if the center can accommodate the equipment. Mayor Norton asked the Board to think about the matter and bring ideas up at the next meeting.

Mayor Norton had distributed an email from Joel Kohn, Environmental Engineer, with the NC Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ), regarding a Backflow Policy. She had asked if we need to have a backflow policy. She found that it was not required by law but would be protection of the Town's distribution system. Mr. Kohn noted that the NCDEQ recommends municipalities to have a backflow policy and enforce cross-connection/backflow prevention ordinances. Mayor Norton feels it would be best for the Town to adopt a backflow policy. We have an example policy, from Raleigh. We need a policy more in line with the Town's need. She asked Alderman Myers to work on a policy. Mayor Norton advised the statute indicates the Town is to receive annual reports on the testing of the backflow – the business owners are responsible for hiring a certified backflow inspector to do the testing. It is also the business owners responsibility to make sure that a copy of the test results are provided to the Town.

Mayor Norton brought up the well house roof matter. Moore's estimate was \$4,100 and Rice's estimate was \$5,200. Alderman Myers asked about the amendment the Board just voted on; he asked if the \$50,000 was more than what was actually needed for the pump, panel, and installation. Mayor Norton said the \$50,000 may be more than needed, but it is not know what the final cost of the project may be. Alderman Myers asked that if the pump, panel, and installation didn't total the amended \$50,000, could the balance be used to repair the wellhouse roof. It was noted that Moore did not have insurance. Attorney Moore advised that if one of the roofer's employees were injured on the job, the roofer would be responsible for the injury – not the Town. Alderman Myers made a motion to hire Jimmy Moore to replace the wellhouse roof; Aldermen Gentry and Stancil seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Mayor Norton asked the Board if the wellhouse should be reroofed with tin or shingles; currently the building has shingle. It was discussed that there wasn't much of a price

difference; if tin was used, the shingles would not have to be removed, and tin would last longer.

Nancy Thomas' car was damaged when the wind blew Town Hall's roof off. Mayor Norton is presenting an estimate, from Dyke's Body Shop, for repair. The Mayor told the Board that the Town's insurance would not pay for the damages as the incident was an act of God. The policy has a clause indicating such damages are not covered. The insurance company said if the town needs to file the claim, the insurance company can process; but, the claim would be denied. Alderman Stancil stated that since Ms. Thomas was at work and the Town's roof damaged her car while she was at work the Town should cover the damages to Ms. Thomas' car. Alderman Stancil made a motion to cover the repair of the car damages; Alderman Myers seconded the motion; all were in favor.

DEPARTMENTS

Police Chief David Shelton – Police Department

Chief Shelton said he has contacted Brad Edwards regarding the cameras; Chief Shelton would like to have more memory space on the current cameras. Brad Edwards has some sort of excuse each time Chief Shelton calls, reminding them that he still needs them to come out. Chief Shelton said he is about to give up on Brad Edwards and find another company to work with. Chief Shelton would like to have storage on the cloud if he does change companies. He has lost needed footage with the current company. Cameras currently have 4 gig and once that is full the system writes over the previously recorded footage. Mr. Goss told the Board he will be putting up new camera and explained where they will be placed. He told Chief Shelton that he could come look at his setup once it's in place. Alderman Gentry suggests that for the 2024-2025 budget Chief Shelton get with the company Mr. Goss is using – get some quotes for the type of system the Town is needing.

Mayor Norton announced that the Town has a new police officer, Stacy Workman, sworn in. Chief Shelton said Officer Workman is a sworn-in officer at Madison. She can write grants and will be an asset in grant writing for the Department.

Jeremy Trantham – Maintenance Department

The new pump is up and running. The new control panel is expected within the week.

Justin Wood passed his C-Well test. Mr. Wood's next test will be on C-Distribution. After that, he has to work under the C-Distribution for a year and then we can move on to the B tests.

Laura Holloway – Tax Department

Has provided the Board with a list of delinquent tax payors. She asked the Board that if they know anyone on the list and can give the person a soft, or even a hard, nudge, their help would be appreciated.

Ms. Holloway requested release of \$112.90 for Vaste Riviera, LLC. The LLC belongs to Dan Arnold who no longer owns Vaste Riviera, but has been billed for the personal business property (PBP). The current owner, Mr. Callaway, has been charged for the

same PBP. The County is aware of the duplicate charge and will be releasing the taxes billed to [Dan Arnold] Vaste Riviera, LLC. Alderman Gentry made a motion to release the Vaste Riviera, LLC PCP billed taxes; Alderman Myers seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Ms. Holloway requests the release of \$24.66 from Clarence Ervin Young's account. Mr. Young previously owned Jennifer Sawyer's mobile home. She had accidentally billed under Mr. Young's name and Ms. Sawyer's name. Alderman Gentry made a motion to approve the release; Alderman Stancil seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Ms. Holloway advised the Board that Tiny House Movements had been released by the County as no longer in business. She request that the Town also release the taxed amount of \$196.98. The business has not been in business since 2015, but the business owners have just now notified the County of the business closing. Alderman Gentry asked when Tiny House Movements notified the County of the business closing; Ms. Holloway told the Board that the County was informed within the past couple of months. The Board requests that Ms. Holloway contact the County and find out when they were notified of the business closing and how they will/won't release any of the delinquent taxes.

Of Wand and Earth has been charged Town Taxes, but according to the County Of Wand and Earth didn't operate out of the Town of Hot Springs. Ms. Holloway requests that the Board release \$7.44 charged for 2023 taxes. Alderman Gentry made a motion to approve the release; Alderman Myers seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Ms. Holloway said she charged The Short Porch PBP for 2022 & 2023. They have not been an overnight rental for several years. Requests the release of \$4.89. Alderman Gentry made a motion to approve release; Alderman Myers seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Tony Drew Lawson has been charged for two mobile homes, for several years. Ms. Lawson happened to notice the charge of the second mobile home on her 2023 tax bill. Ms. Holloway requests to release the 2023 tax charge of \$24.66 on the nonexistent mobile home. Alderman Gentry made a motion to release the \$24.66 charge; Alderman Myers seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Ms. Holloway said she contacted CitySwitch regarding the construction of the cell tower. She reported that Hot Springs is not on the schedule for construction to begin, anymore, for 2024. She also asked if the current plan was to [eventually] install 4g or 5g. CitySwitch advised that ATT does not have 5g slotted for Hot Springs – but other carriers that may come on boards may put in 5g.

Ms. Holloway told the Board that 93.77% of Real Property taxes had been collected.

Alderman Wendy Stancil – Entertainment Committee

The Committee will hold an Easter Egg Hunt at the elementary school on Saturday, March 30.

Mayor Abigail Norton – For the Planning Committee

The committee will meet on Monday, March 11th. The Planning Committee will be working on increasing fees.

BUSINESS

Alderman Wendy Stancil

Beacon of Hope has been funded by Healthy Opportunities Pilot (HOP). The program allows Beacon of Hope to extend their offerings of different resources: healthy foods, transportation, housing assistance and support for stressful family situations. HOP would like to use our Community Center; they are willing to pay rent and a portion of the electrical bill. They would like to use the center one or two days a week. A survey was sent out through the elementary students and the results of the survey realized that HOP would be helpful to many Hot Springs families. Alderman Stancil said that if the Community Center was being utilized, it would hopefully help us obtain grants easier than it would if the center was used only once a month or only during elections. Alderman Stancil will visit with the HOP representative and present questions, obtain additional information and bring back to the Board.

Mayor Norton asked for a motion to move into Executive Session to discuss Property Tax Parcels that are partially in town limits and Water & Sewer Operations. Alderman Gentry made a motion to move into the Executive Session at 6:57pm; Alderman Stancil seconded the motion; all were in favor.

The Board returned from Executive Session at 7:51 pm. Alderman Gentry made a motion to return to the regular meeting, Alderman Myers seconded the motion; all were in favor. Mayor Norton announced that the Board discussed the James & James contract. She requested a motion to release the contract. Alderman Gentry made the motion to release the contract; Alderman Myers seconded the motion; all were in favor. Alderman Stancil made a motion to contact Jones Environmental and request changes to their contract. If the changes are made, the Board will sign a contract with Jones Environmental; Aldermen Gentry and Myers seconded the motion; all were in favor. Alderman Myers made a motion to send James & James a letter, written by Attorney Moore, advising Alderman Gentry seconded the motion; all were in favor. Alderman Gentry told everyone that the Property Tax Parcels matter has been tabled.

Since there is no other business to discuss, Alderman Stancil made a motion to adjourn, Alderman Myers seconded the motion; all were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:52pm.

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Approved *Abigail Norton*

Mayor Abigail Norton

4-1-2024

Date

Other