

Town of Hot Springs
Board of Alderman Meeting
July 1, 2024

Present:

Mayor Abigail Norton
Alderman Wendy Stancil
Alderman Dan Myers
Attorney Selena King

Fire Department –
Maintenance – Jeremy Trantham
Police Department – Chief David Shelton
Tax Department – Laura Holloway

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

Mayor Norton referred the audience to the public charge. A copy of the public charge was placed in each chair for the meeting attendees to read.

Mayor Norton asked if there was a motion to approve the April meeting minutes. Alderman Myers made a motion; Alderman Stancil seconded the motion; all were in favor.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no Public Comment.

AGENDA

Andy Fulton

He lives within the Town limits. He is wanting to put a cabin/home on his property for his in-laws. Mayor Norton stopped Mr. Fulton and told him she pulled the sewer policy and it states if public sewer is available people [living within town limits] must hook up to the public sewer. However, currently [due to the moratorium] sewer lines can not be added or connected to a current sewer line. Mr. Fulton explained that he was requesting approval to put in septic for the cabin/home. He has worked with a local contractor and has mapped out plans of where the cabin/home and septic tank would be placed. Mr. Fulton said he thinks there is a restriction for septic tanks within the Town's limits. Mr. Fulton told the Board that if they approved the septic to be put in, now, they [the Fultons] would agree that when the moratorium is lifted, the cabin/house would be hooked up to the Town's sewer system. Mayor Norton told Mr. Fulton that the Health Department would be involved. Mr. Fulton said he would have to rely on the expertise of the contractor to go through the proper protocol and permits.

Mayor Norton asked the Board for discussion. Alderman Stancil asked if there would be a downside and Alderman Myers asked Mr. Fulton if he was trying to get everything done now. Mr. Fulton said their goal was to have things taken care of before January 1, 2025. Mayor Norton said the downside was our sewer policy. She expressed concern of setting a precedence if allowed. Alderman Myers asked if septic was Mr. Fulton's only option. He asked Mr. Fulton about composting toilets or

similar options. Ben Houser explained that a composting toilet was not an option in North Carolina. Mr. Fulton explained to the Board that the properties currently for sale in town are not an option for his in-laws. He also added that his in-laws were great people and would spend a lot of money in town but would set up precedence for the town. Mayor Norton said she votes no on the matter. [With Alderman Jeanne Gentry absent, Mayor Norton is able to vote.] Alderman Myers also votes no. Alderman Stancil voted no.

PUBLIC COMMENT [offered to late comers]

Kristen Robinson

Said she would like to be put on the agenda for August [✓]. She wants to discuss Town alerts, similar to what the school has regarding water being turned off on an emergency basis or there's an accident in town. Mayor Norton asked Ms. Robinson to do some research on the subject [costs, available grants(?), etc...] and get on the August agenda to present to the Board.

Jeff Jameson

Trying to put a Hot Springs 5K together for Saturday, October 26th and wanted to know if this would be possible. Alderman Myers asked what route the run would take. Mr. Jameson said the route is in the planning stages but would be off of 25/70 Highway. Alderman Myers said the 5K, also, could not take place on River Road. Mayor Norton asked Mr. Jameson to put a route together, get on the August agenda [✓], and present the detail to the Board.

DEPARTMENTS

Maintenance -- Jeremy Trantham

Well 2 pump was replaced and is now working as it should.

Mayor Norton asked about the Laboratory Instrument Quote. Mr. Trantham explained to the Board that the sewer plant's flow meter has been having issues. The registered flow is a big interest of the State's and we have received fines for being over our flow allowance numbers. We are now looking at purchasing a new flow meter; we can purchase a used/refurbished flow meter, or we can purchase a new flow meter. The price of a new meter would probably be less than the State's fines. Mayor Norton suggests that a new flow meter be purchased; Alderman Stancil agrees. Mayor Norton said that after we have several months of good, accurate readings from a new flow meter, we may be able to lift the moratorium [we currently have on the sewer lines]. Mr. Trantham said the Town had been using chlorine tablets but switched to liquid chlorine a few months ago. He said he'd like to switch to liquid dechlor. The liquids are less expensive, easier to administer, and easier to regulate.

Mayor Norton asked for a motion to purchase a new flow meter; Alderman Stancil made a motion; Alderman Myers seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Mayor Norton asked for a motion to switch from a tablet dechlor to liquid; Alderman Myers made a motion; Alderman Stancil seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Mr. Trantham brought up the well house generator and asked what the Board decided on the Palmer quote for repair. Mayor Norton asked for a motion to accept the Palmer Electric bid for repair of the well house generator; Alderman Myers made a motion to approve; Alderman Stancil seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Mayor Norton asked Mr. Trantham to get with Jones Environment and Palmer Electric and let them know of the Board's decisions.

Planning Board / Zoning – Mayor Norton

Mayor Norton announced that the Planning Board / Zoning voted to increase the fees. Mr. Ben Houser explained some of the fees. Alderman Myers made a motion to approve the fees; Alderman Stancil seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Tax – Laura Holloway

Ms. Holloway said she is going through some old Board meeting minutes. She sees that Chief Shelton had requested a No Entrance sign to go on the door between Town Hall and his office. She explained that not too long ago a group of people were in Town Hall and before Ms. Holloway realized what was happening, a few people wandered into Chief Shelton's office – and one person had a camera [and was probably taking pictures]. Once she noticed people going into Chief Shelton's office she told the group that they were not allowed in there – however one person was well into the office and was taking pictures. With this occurrence, Ms. Holloway requests to purchase a no entrance sign and change the doorknob to be able to lock the door. Mayor Norton asked if the doorknob didn't already have a lock; yes, but we don't have a key for the lock. Chief Shelton spoke up and said he has a key, but the 2nd key has been misplaced. Mayor Norton told Ms. Holloway or Chief Shelton to have a key made. The Board agreed to have a sign made for the door into Chief Shelton's office.

Ms. Holloway provided the Board with a list of people who will receive Attorney King's demand letter. A different letter will be sent to the Estate Executors.

At this time, Ms. Holloway told the Board the Town has now collected 98.9% in real property taxes. She said that she has received calls from delinquent taxpayers wanting to pay over the phone. She said people have also come into the office wanting to pay with a credit card. She has had to explain that we can not take payment by card [or checking account, by phone]. The caller promised to send a check and the walk-in promised to bring cash – Ms. Holloway said she hadn't seen payment from either. She said even though it was a small amount, their payment would have amounted to \$500.00 if payment could have been taken. Alderman Stancil asked the Board if a Square account could be set up to take such payments. Mayor Norton told the Board that such payment types could be set up through the Town's bank. She explained to the Board that the Town would have to buy or rent the credit card machine and charge a flat rate or percent of the charge. We would also have to make certain the website was secure. Mayor Norton said she could contact the bank and get updated pricing. Both Alderman Stancil and Myers agreed that it would be work checking into. Ms. Holloway stated that

even if we didn't take payment through the website, we could at least take payment by credit/debit card. Kristin Robinson offered to gather numbers for a government credit card processing system; she will gather the numbers for several systems and bring them to the Board. Ms. Robinson told Mayor Norton she could have the information ready by the following week.

Fire – Dan Myers

A metal building was purchased by the prior maintenance manager. The building is still at the Fire Department (FD). – it's not being used and is taking up space. FD is requesting that it be sold. The Maintenance Department will look at the building and see if they can use it but if not, FD can sell it.

BUSINESS

Mayor Norton

Mayor Norton told the Board that the Town received and paid a fine for the January flow readings

Benefits for the Vision policy, provided to the employees, can be enhanced for \$5.00 more, each month. Mayor Norton asked the Board if the Town or the employees should pay the additional fee. Alderman Gentry was not present in the evening's meeting, but through Mayor Norton she would vote for the Town paying the additional fee. Aldermen Stancil and Myers agreed for the Town to pay the \$5.00 for each employee.

Mayor Norton said she added, to the Maintenance Opening Ad, that the person must have a high school diploma or GED. The ad now indicates the person must be 18 years or older, must have a valid drivers license, and must have a high school diploma or GED. She asked the Board if they agreed with the requirements and the ad will be opened until the position has been filled; Board agreed.

Mayor Norton presented the Zoning Ordinance to the Board and requested their approval of the changes made the prior Wednesday [June 26, 2024]. Alderman Myers confirmed that nothing had changed since the meeting. Alderman Myers made a motion to accept the changes; Alderman Stancil seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Ordinance for the Municipal Water System has been updated; Section 2-e. There is a grant which will pay for the Fairview water customers to be connected to the Hot Springs water system. Section 2-e now allows for the Fairview connection. Alderman Stancil made a motion to accept the amendment; Alderman Myers seconded the motion; all were in favor.

FYI ... The NC Legislative Bulletin, the House and the Senate are looking to move the American Rescue Plan funds to state funds. If this occurs, the deadline of December 31, 2026 will go away – the Town will have more time to gather everything needed for a new sewer plant. Alderman Stancil suggested writing our Representatives.

Alderman Stancil

Festivities for the 6th of July [4th celebration] will be held at the elementary school. There will be water slides and other fun things. The Events Committee is working with the School Reunion Committee to figure out parking. [Both are held on the same day with overlapping times.]

Alderman Myers

Alderman Myers said he will be where the fireworks will be set off.

Mayor Norton asked if there was anything else before the Board moved into Executive Session. Mr Trantham let everyone know that the coming Friday [July 5th] will be Bryan Raines last day. He wanted Bryan to know that he appreciated everything he has done. The meeting attendees showed their appreciation with a round of applause.

At 6:53 Alderman Stancil made a motion to move into Executive Session; Alderman Myers seconded the motion; all were in favor.

At 7:06 the Board returned from Executive Session. Alderman Myers made a motion to return to the regular session; Alderman Stancil seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Mayor Norton explained that the Board went into Executive Session to discuss a possible property purchase.

Since there is no other business to discuss, Alderman Myers made a motion to adjourn, Alderman Stancil seconded the motion; all were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:07pm.

S-3

Approved
Abigail Norton
Mayor Abigail Norton

8-5-2024

Date

Other