

Town of Hot Springs
Board of Alderman Meeting
August 5, 2024

Present:

Mayor Abigail Norton
Alderman Jeanne Gentry
Alderman Wendy Stancil
Alderman Dan Myers

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

Mayor Norton called the Town meeting to order at 6:01pm

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 July meeting minutes. Alderman Stancil made a motion; Alderman Myers seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Mayor Norton asked if there was a motion to approve the July 31st Special Executive Session Meeting minutes. Alderman Gentry made a motion; Alderman Myers seconded the motion; all were in favor.

AGENDA

Ike Lassiter

Mr. Lassiter expressed concern regarding the 2024 re-appraisal of properties. He said approximately 1,000 have filed appeals with the County. The County has sent new tax rates to the state and cannot be changed: County's rate is 36¢ per \$100.00 of value and 45¢ per \$100.00 of value for the Town of Hot Springs.

Mr. Lassiter said he has a property without central heat/air. The prior appraised value of the property was \$134,642; the new appraised value is \$623,570. The increase is 363%. He encourages people, with concern over the new appraised value rates, to appeal through the 3 step appeal process using the online form.

Mr. Lassiter requested that the Board keep the Town informed regarding the new tax rates will be. He understands from Town Staff that being revenue neutral will be a goal. He thinks that is good.

Jeff Jameson

Is on the agenda but not present in the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no Public Comments

DEPARTMENTS

Police Department – Chief David Shelton

Chief Shelton said that he will be taking his car to the repair shop on August 6, 2024 [his car had been backed into at the July meeting]. The repair shop will bill the Town for the repairs and then the insurance company will refund the Town. Chief Shelton said the estimate was around \$1,000.00.

Tax Department – Laura Holloway

Ms. Holloway said she does not know when the 2024 scroll will arrive – probably after all the appeals have been reviewed and everything is settled. The Demand Letters have been sent to four people; no response has been received at this time. Second Letters to the Executors of the Estates; again, no response has been received. 98.37% of 2023 real property taxes have been collected. Ms. Holloway asked the Board when they will hold their September meeting; the first Monday in September is Labor Day. The Board agreed to hold the meeting on Tuesday, September 3rd.

Maintenance Department – Jeremy Trantham

New flow meter is in and working well. Rick Palmer will start working on the generator at the Well House. Mr. Trantham told the Board that it's time for the generator at the Post Office needs to be serviced; he asked if Mr. Palmer could service it while he is in town working on the Well House generator. Alderman Gentry made a motion to have both generators taken care of; Alderman Myers seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Mayor Norton told the Board that the 1-million dollar grant has been released – McGill will start getting bids for sand pit, Post Office pump station, and Spring Creek sewer line.

Mr. Trantham told the Board there were about 18 areas in the streets and French Broad Circle that need patching. He will contact the company who provides this service and determine when they can come out, measure, and patch these areas.

Mr. Trantham had provided the Board with information on the purchase of a new pump [used to pump water out of the area where Maintenance is working] and a saw to cut into the pipes, for repair. Alderman Gentry told the Board the Budget will allow for the purchase. Water/Sewer Fund will pay for the pump; General Fund will pay for the saw.

The Maintenance Team requests that notes be placed in the next water bills reminding people of the trash pickup policy. Mr. Trantham said there is a lot of trash not bagged, getting a lot of small shopping bags – more than 5-bags and over the 35lb limit. It's becoming a problem. Alderman Gentry asked Mr. Trantham to provide a list of the people who has made this a practice.

Volunteer Fire Department – Fire Chief Josh Norton

Chief Norton is working on getting a pyrotechnic operator class put together. There are 7 to 9 Volunteer Firemen who are wanting to take the class. He thinks it will be good to have more people certified as thing will come up that takes a guy or two away from the pool of certified people away. Chief Norton is asking the Board if the Town will pay for the cost of the 7 to 9 guys to take this class. It will save \$300 to \$500 to have someone come out and set off the fireworks. The Town could even have more firework displays if we had our own people to set them off. The VFD Insurance company should cover the person who set off the fireworks. The VFD will be responsible for the continuing education to keep the certifications active, if the Town can pay the \$56, per person [56 x 9], for the group of people to take the course. Mayor Norton suggested that the VFD ask the different businesses for donations for the fireworks as they used to.

Chief Norton said he has sent Town Hall a quote for repair Engine 31; the budgeted \$10,000.00 is completely gone into this repair. Rescue 3 still needs work – Chief Norton said he'd go through the budget to see if he can find money for the repair.

BUSINESS

Mayor Norton

Executive Session Special Meeting was held on Wednesday, July 31 to interview for the Maintenance Assistant position. There were seven applicants. The Board and Maintenance Supervisor decided Charles Hemphill was the best candidate for the position. Alderman Stancil made a motion to offer the open Maintenance Assistant position to Mr. Hemphill; Alderman Gentry seconded the motion; all were in favor.

The Board discussed retaining the remaining applications for 1-year so they could reactivate them within a 12-month period if needed. Alderman Myers made a motion to retain the remaining applications; Alderman Gentry seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Mayor Norton referred the Board to the chart from UNC School of Government; Exceptions to State Competitive Bidding Requirements. The North Carolina Sheriff's Association has a program for which we would not have to advertise for bid on equipment if the Sheriff's Association has already obtained bids and awarded a contract.

The Carolina Environmental Systems, Inc. (CES) quote is for a garbage truck. Maintenance has indicated the truck would meet their needs. Alderman Gentry asked if Carolina Environmental will deliver the truck; she was told they would. Alderman Myers asked if the truck available now. Mr. Trantham said he spoke with the CES representative and CES thought they may have a truck already built, but if not, it would take up to 90-days to build the truck. Alderman Gentry made a motion to accept the quote from CES; Alderman Stancil seconded the motion; all were in favor.

In the July meeting, Town Resident, Andy Fulton, requested that he be allowed to put a septic tank in since there is a moratorium on adding to the Town sewer system. The Board denied Mr. Fulton's request as being against the Water/Sewer Policy. Mayor Norton directed the Board to the printout of §160A-317. Mayor Norton told the Board that Mr. Fulton can't be denied the ability to put the septic tank in. However, he must follow the

County guidelines. There are questions regarding fees noted in the §, Mayor Norton is working on getting those clarified. Alderman Myers made it known that he was not comfortable in charging anyone fees for something the Town is not providing. Mr. Fulton told the Board that their plans have been postponed and thanked them for looking further into his initial request.

Certification of Municipal Declaration to Enact Speed Limits and Request for Concurrence
NCDOT TEAAS Ordinance Report: Shows where the speed limits were set on Bridge Street. Mayor Norton contacted the State regarding the different speed limits within a short distance. The State will make the speed limit from Jackson Avenue to Lance Avenue 25mph.

The Collaboratory is meeting with the towns who are receiving a portion of the \$20-million from the Innovated Highly Treated Wastewater Pilot Program. A summit will be held. Details of transportation/meals/lodging information was provided to the Board. Mayor Norton, Alderman Stancil, and Jeremy Trantham will attend the summit. Mayor Norton asked the Board if the Town Clerk could make the arrangements; the Town could pay the up-front expenses and then receive reimbursement from the Collaboratory.

Mayor Norton contacted the School of Government regarding *For the Love of Hot Springs Committee* – if the committee disbanded and became a private committee, would a couple of the committee members be able to be an advisory board for the Town. She has not yet received a response. When the Committee's officers were originally appointed, the appointment process was not correct. The Committee is not a committee for the Town. Mayor Norton explained that if the group decided to be an official committee for the Town, the Board would need to draft an ordinance and the group would have to follow the meetings law. Ike Lassiter asked the Board if the committee's recommendations would be respected differently. Alderman Gentry said it would depend on whether or not the taxpayer's money is involved.

Alderman Myers

People, who live on private drives, have been asking Alderman Myers why their trash isn't picked up – they pay town taxes. He suggests sending letters to these people letting them know that the garbage can be placed on the public road that is attached to their private drive. Mr. Trantham confirmed that if the trash is brought to the public road the trash will be picked up.

Mayor Norton asked for a motion to go into Executive Session.

6:58pm Alderman Stancil made a motion to move into Executive Session; Alderman Myers seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Mayor Norton asked for a motion to return to Regular Session.

7:09pm Alderman Gentry made a motion to return; Alderman Myers seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Mayor Norton asked Ms. Holloway to call and find out when the services for Mike Boone will be held and to order flowers for the service.

Mayor Norton told everyone that the Board went into Executive Session to discuss a legal matter. The topic has been tabled until Attorney King is in attendance [Ms. King is on vacation this month].

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.

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Approved
Abigail Norton

Mayor Abigail Norton

Date 9-3-2024

Other