

Present:

Mayor Abigail Norton	Disaster Relief Admin Assistant (DRAA) – Sena Kassim	Police Dept. – David Shelton
Alderman Jeanne Gentry	Donation Center – Mandy Mae	Project Management – Brad Guth
Alderman Wendy Stancil	Entertainment Committee – Kevin Reese	Rebuild Hot Springs Area (RHSA) – T.J. Phillips
Alderman Dan Myers	Fire – Dan Myers	Safety – Dan Myers
Attorney Larry Leake	Maintenance – Jeremy Trantham	Tax Collector – Laura Holloway
	Planning & Zoning – Tim Arnett	

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

Mayor Norton referred attendees to the Public Charge that were placed on each chair. She asked everyone turn their cell phones down or off.

Mayor Norton asked the Board for a motion to approve the July 14, 2025 Budget Approval Meeting minutes. Alderman Myers made a motion to approve; Alderman \_\_\_\_\_ seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Mayor Norton asked the Board for a motion to approve the July 29, 2025 meeting minutes. Alderman Stancil made a motion to approve; Alderman Myers seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Carol Avery from Loudermilk Church & Co, LLP went over the 2023-2024 audit.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

**Andy Turner / Lions Club** – Mr. Turner brought the Lions Club electric bill to the Board for reimbursement as Police Chief David Shelton is officing out of their building. Mayor Norton told the Board that the Lions Club would like the Town to pay their electric bill. She said the Board will have to decide how to pay. She further explained that the Town is paying for 1 of 2 electric meter bills for the church [a portion of the church is being used as a donation center and food pantry]. Alderman Gentry mentioned she thought the Lions Club would provide a temporary office, as a community organization. Mr. Turner said he would revisit with Kenny [Ramsey]. Alderman Gentry told the Board that the [Duke] electric bill was \$202.00. Mr. Turner said the bill was double what it has been in the past; \$140.00 is the highest bill the Club has ever received. Alderman Gentry stated that the difference in the prior high bill and the current \$202.00 bill was \$60.00 [\$62.00]. Mr. Turner said they may need the air conditioner looked at. Said he'd take the matter back [to the club]. Alderman Stancil asked if Chief Shelton didn't spend more time, at this time, at the meeting hall. Mr. Turner said the Club is generally at the meeting hall twice a month. Alderman Myers asked for several previous months [Duke Electric] billings to determine the percentage of Chief Shelton's electrical usage. Mr. Turner said he could do that. The Board agreed that would be helpful. Chief Shelton said he moved into the meeting hall around the same time the cooling unit was reconnected. Chief Shelton said he has had to use a fan to keep himself cool. Mr. Turner said he had contacted the electrician two weeks ago to recheck the system; he

will contact them again. Alderman Myers asked for a report of the electrician's findings. He also asked if the Club would be able to cover the current bill, at this time. Mr. Turner said that the Club would be able to cover the [Duke Electric] bill. Alderman Gentry told Mr. Turner that the Town had the bill, so he'd need to pick it up as she wanted the Club to pay it timely. Chief Shelton said he had been told the [Duke Electric] bill payments were auto drafted, so no concern of late payment. Mr. Turner will double check.

**Jim Kallaher** – Wanted to introduce himself. He is new in town. He and his wife purchased a home on Lance Ave. He has 30-years' experience in Public Committee and Non-Profit. He offered his, and his wife's, assistance to the community in any way to please let them know.

## DEPARTMENTS

### **Disaster Recovery – Sena Kassim**

Ms. Kassim said resource information is still available in Town Hall, regarding storm recovery. If anyone needs assistance, or knows anyone who needs assistance, please stop by.

### **Planning & Zoning – Tim Arnett**

He has reached out to the Planning and Zoning Committee members regarding changing the September meeting from Monday [09/01/2025 – Labor Day] to Tuesday [09/02/2025]. He has heard back from enough Committee members to have the Tuesday meeting.

### **Police Department – David Shelton**

In regard to the new patrol car, Chief Shelton wanted to know if anyone has made contact with Mayor Norton. Mayor told him that the bank has not yet sent the paperwork, but she knows they are working on it.

### **Project Manager – Brad Guth**

Mr. Guth referred the Board to a memo regarding the Red Bridge repair. A bid was received from ACMI for \$22,250.00. Fifteen RFQs [Request For Quotation] were sent out to State Contractors. A couple companies were not able to provide quotes due to time frame. Mr. Guth recommends that, the Board accept ACMI's quote. This is a micro-purchase and meets the threshold for FEMA, Code of Federal regulations, and the Town's policy. The scope of work includes replacing 5 guardrails, 1 guardrail post, 2 torsion rods, deck boards, and curb section. Alderman Myers asked to see all messages from contractors, in the future. Alderman Gentry made a motion to approve; Alderman Stancil seconded the motion; Mayor Norton: To award the FEMA funded Red Bridge repair for \$22,250.00 as a micro-purchase under 2CFR200.320 and Town Policy 4.E and authorize staff to execute the contract and necessary documents. Alderman Gentry made a motion to approve; Alderman Stancil seconded the motion; all were in favor.

### **Rebuild Hot Springs Area (RHSA) – T.J. Phillips**

The Spring Creek Community Center is having their annual car show and pie contest on September 20, 2025. There will also be a 50/50 raffle. Proceeds will go to Rebuild Hot Springs.

Mr. Phillips is working with the Entertainment Committee for the flood anniversary. More details will be available shortly. However, the book release will be on Friday, September 26. Mr. Phillips asked Kevin

Reese to speak more on this. Mr. Reese said the book went to print at 10:45 this morning. There were 44 contributors and will have over 200 full color pages.

### **Tax Collector – Laura Holloway**

The Town has collected 95.13% of the 2024 Real Property Taxes.

## **TOWN BUSINESS**

### **Mayor Norton**

Mayor Norton told the Board that an alternate Zoning Administrator. Should the Administrator need work on their property, they wouldn't be able to approve their own application. Alderman Stancil said Paul Delisle had told her that he maybe interested in the Administrator position; perhaps he'd also be interested in the Alternate position. Mayor Norton asked Alderman Stancil to speak with Mr. Delisle to see if he is interested. Alderman Myers asked Tim Arnette [member of the Planning and Zoning Committee] his thoughts. Mr. Arnette said it is a good idea to have someone with building knowledge; so he thinks Mr. Delisle is a great choice.

Mayor Norton referred the Board to the Water Ordinance. A change had been made and this is the updated Ordinance. Alderman Myers made a motion to accept the amended Ordinance; Alderman Stancil seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Mayor Norton told the Board the contract to Audit Accounts for the 2024-2025 audit. This audit has been updated to reflect Hassina Kassim as the new Finance Officer. Alderman Myers brought up the 2023-2024 audit indicates Ron Moore and Selina King as our Attorneys in the audit report that was made available for the evening's meeting. Alderman Gentry explained that Mr. Moore and Ms. King were the Town Attorney's in 2023-2024 fiscal year. Attorney Leake will be noted a Town's Attorney for fiscal year 2024-2025. Mayor Norton told the Board that a Single Audit will be performed for 2024-2025 due to the Federal Funds the Town has received. This will be a more extensive audit. (Thank you Helene! :P ) This audit will cost more than the previous audit; \$19,800.00 (approximately \$1,000.00 more than the previous audit). Alderman Gentry made a motion to approve; Alderman Stancil seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Mayor Norton presented the contract, which has already been voted on, for Highshoals Construction. The Town Attorney, Mr. Leake, has spoken with Mr. Cramer. The contract has been signed.

### **Alderman Stancil**

Alderman Stancil has a resolution that will allow the Town to be a part of the Flood Coalition, at the Coalition's request. The Coalition pays for expenses when they have members travel and there are no due. By Hot Springs joining the Coalition, we will be, yet another municipality on board with their efforts. Alderman Myers asked what the Coalition would have a right to review in our files. Alderman Stancil said the resolution only shows that Hot Springs supports the work the Coalition is doing. Mayor Norton reminded everyone that our files were public information. T.J. Phillips asked the purpose of the Town joining the Coalition; Alderman Gentry said she would read a portion of a statement as to why the Town is joining the Coalition: The Hot Springs Board of Aldermen finds that joining the American Flood Coalition will promote the welfare of Hot Springs residents and insure the prosperity of the Town of Hot Springs economy by accelerating solutions to sea level rise and flooding. We recognize the need to advance

national solutions to sea level rise and flooding and will work as a member of the American Flood Coalition to safeguard the welfare of the Town of Hot Springs residence.

Alderman Stancil told the Board that the Southeast Director [of the Coalition] will be in Hot Springs on August 12, 2025, along with Mark Pless [NC House of Representatives]. There is a \$20-million flood mitigation pool of money that the Coalition and Mr. Pless has helped lobbied for. There will be discussion of what the monies could be used for, mitigation wise. Each municipality can get up to \$2-million. There will be several groups in town on the 12<sup>th</sup>. There will be meeting with Grow NC at the sewage treatment plant to discuss how things, at the plant, are going. The Collaboratory also be a part of the meeting at the sewage treatment plant as they are allocating the funding of the plant.

Alderman Stancil contacted Norfolk Southern (NS) regarding the debris on River Drive and behind the Magnolia property. Evidently the debris slipped through NS's mind, but they have now been reminded it's still there.

At this time, the French Broad River Bridge will open, to two-lanes, at noon on Fridays, and will be open until Monday morning [this will be until further notice while the new bridge is being constructed]. This is a reasonable solution for the Town as well as those who are working on the bridge. Over the past weekend, the Town's business owners said they could tell there were more people stopping and doing things in town with the new bridge schedule. Mr. Arnett said he noticed new signage, well before town, noting construction ahead and warning drivers to be prepared to stop. Alderman Stancil said the traffic signal lights timing has been tweaked; River Road will not have the same green-light time as both directions on 25/70.

Alderman Stancil told the Board that the Flood Coalition has been working with Texas [after their July 4, 2025 flood]. The Coalition is thinking about sending the Western North Carolina partnership and the Texas partnership to Washington DC. It's felt the two partnerships, going together to DC, would definitely be a powerful statement.

Alderman Stancil made a resolution to join the American Flood Coalition; Alderman Gentry seconded the motion; all were in favor.

The Board will go into Executive Session (ES) at 6:35pm. The attendees started getting out of their seats – a motion was not made, nor seconded to move to Executive Session.

At 7:53pm, Mayor Norton announced a motion was made to return to Regular Session.

During ES, the Board discussed using Helene Cash Flow Loan to pay salary for Mandy Cox and Brad Guth if the grant funds are not available. Currently grant funds are available for another month. There will be a 10% decrease in the current salary for Mr. Guth, through December 8, 2025. Alderman Myers made a motion to approve; Alderman Stancil seconded the motion; all were in favor. For Ms. Cox, there will a 10% decrease in her current salary, and will be paid through December 8, 2025, if the loan funds are required. Alderman Myers recused himself from this vote. Alderman Gentry made a motion to approve; Alderman Stancil seconded the motions; all were in favor.

The Board discussed Chief Shelton's salary. His salary will increase to \$28.85 per hour; \$60,008.00 annually. There is a stipulation that there must be police coverage, in Town, Friday through Sunday. If Chief Shelton isn't

available during this time, he must have someone covering for him on weekends. Alderman Myers made a motion to approve; Alderman Gentry seconded the motion; all were in favor. Alderman Gentry told Chief Shelton that if he could find a full-time police officer, she will look at the budget and see if we could appropriated funds to pay an officer. Alderman Gentry asked Ms. Holloway to call several smaller municipalities and find out how much they pay their police officers. She is thinking \$20-per hour would be appropriate, but Mayor Norton was thinking we would need to pay more. Chief Shelton said paying people to work is important, especially coming all the way to Hot Springs. Alderman Gentry reminded all that the hourly salary isn't the only thing a full-time person would receive. Full-time employees receive insurance and cell phone.

Mayor Norton said the Board discussed hiring Sena [Kassim]. She will be Town Administrator/Finance Office; salary for these positions is already in the budget. Ms. Kassim will be Town Administrator for 32-hrs [per week] at \$26.00 per hour, and will be evaluated after 90-days. Ms. Kassim will continue to receive 8-hrs [per week] through the grant funds for the recovery disaster position. Alderman Myers made a motion to approve; Aldermen Gentry and Stancil seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Mayor Norton asked the Board if they wanted to discuss that the Church will no longer be available [as a donation center] after December. Alderman Myers asked to table until next meeting. He would like to have an opportunity to speak with someone at the church; said he was successful the last time he spoke with them.

Since there is no other business to discuss, Alderman Myers made a motion to adjourn, Alderman Gentry seconded the motion; all were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:00pm.

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Approved

*Abigail Norton*  
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Mayor Abigail Norton

9-8-25  
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Date