

Town of Hot Springs
Board of Alderman
Special Meeting
March 3, 2026

Present:

Mayor Abigail Norton
Alderman Lisa Gahagan
Alderman Tammy Shelton
Alderman Wendy Stancil

Mayor Norton called the meeting to order at 5:00 and said there will be no Public Comment as this was a Special Meeting.

- Mayor Norton said the first item on the agenda was the **Boundary Line Agreement**. She said Attorney Larry Leake had investigated the specifics of the issue and found that an agreement between Iron Horse owner Gary Goss, and the Town of Hot Springs would be acceptable. Mayor Norton said the Board needed to vote on the matter.

Alderman Stancil made the motion to approve allowing Mr. Goss to use the area in question.

Alderman Gahagan seconded the motion.

All were in favor.

- The second item on the agenda was **Live Streaming Board of Alderman Meetings**. Kevin Reese, who maintains the Town of Hot Springs Web Page described the process of live streaming the meetings. The positive aspects of live streaming included enabling anyone to hear and see the meetings from their homes, the simplicity of setting up the equipment, and the ability to put the videos on Facebook or You Tube, and the ability to disable public comments if desired. Mr. Reese stated the pros outweighed the cons, which were vulgar or unrelated comments, which can be deleted or blocked all together. Mr. Reese said the meetings can also be posted to the Towns Web Site and can easily be accessed by establishing an account. He said he will the Board quotes for the expense of live streaming, and added if he could not be present, he would show someone how to set everything up.

Alderman Shelton made the motion to allow Mr. Reese to set up a Live Stream to record Board of Alderman meetings.

Alderman Gahagan seconded the motion.

All were in favor.

- The last item on the agenda was **Water Accounts and Water Policy**.

Mayor Norton introduced the subject stating she would discuss some amendments made to the Policy, and asked Hassena Kassim to present water procedures to the Board.

Ms. Kassim read former Alderman Jeanne Gentry's policy to the Board and described the billing and collections procedures including but not limited to meter reading procedures, billing, examining overdue payments, and procedures to collect payments which include letters and disconnecting water service.

Ms. Kassim stressed the importance of being trained by former Alderman Gentry, and added her policy was stricter.

Ms. Kassim added she believed water applications would be helpful in locating every meter, pursuing collections, and give applicants the information to enable notifications from Code Red.

Alderman Stancil stated he felt water applications was a good idea.

Alderman Gahagan asked who the applications were for, as most residents with water service have not filled one out.

Ms. Hassim said applications could be placed in the water bills so everyone could fill one out. Mayor Norton said new account holders would be required to fill one out prior to receiving service.

Alderman Gahagan asked if his proposal called for any fines or penalties to those who do not fill out an application. She was concerned and hopeful that established accounts would not have any consequences for not turning in an application.

Alderman Stancil said applications would make the software more useful. Ms. Hassim said applications would help with all the procedures. Mayor Norton said they would be helpful to ensure all accounts had a correct address to match the meters. She said that would be necessary if the Town adopted a Radio system to collect meter readings.

Alderman Gahagan asked if the tax accounts had a correct address, and could that be used to ensure the meters and account holders matched.

Ms. Hassim said she will be available to help anyone fill out an application.

The Board discussed charges such as late fees, and when to add them, Meter deposit increases, and cut off notices.

Alderman Gahagan asked what was expected of the Board at this time.

Ms. Kassim said if the Board will make their decision, she can get them typed up into an ordinance.

Mayor Norton told the Board that prices were higher now, and with Water expenses and system maintenance, there were many reasons to ensure every account be collected.

Alderman Stancil said it was not like they could take money from the General Fund to place in the Water and Sewer Fund.

Ms. Hassim said the Town had to pay for chemicals for the system, water testing supplies, and other expenses, and added there were invoices totaling over \$14,000.00 that have not been collected. Mayor Norton said the Town can not afford that anymore.

Ms. Hassim mentioned usage reports for the DEQ were concerning also, as water usage and billing were not consistent.

Clerk Thomas said broken meters were more of a concern to her, as broken meter accounts were only charged base rate.

Mayor Norton discussed suspected meter tampering, which is a legal matter, and water adjustments. Mayor Norton suggested any adjustment must be approved by the Board, and requests must be accompanied with proof of leak.

Clerk Thomas said for all the years she has worked at City Hall, account holders were always allowed to have one adjustment per year, they did not need proof of a leak, and she never had to take a request to the Board. A hypothetical example would be if someone's water hose broke, and water ran all night, she could still do an adjustment.

Ultimately the Board agreed to look over the Policy and Amendments, and discuss some subjects with Town Attorney Leake, and re-visit the subject.

Alderman Gahagan made the motion to adjourn.

Alderman Stancil seconded the motion.

All were in favor.

Abigail Norton, Mayor
March 9, 2026

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approved