

Minutes
Spring Hope Board of Commissioners Meeting
June 6, 2022

A regular meeting of the Town of Spring Hope Board of Commissioners was held at 7 p.m. at the Spring Hope Library.

Members present: Mayor William Pritchard, Commissioners Brenda Lucas, Tony Jefferys, Drew Griffin and Prudence Wilkins. Commissioner Cone was absent.

Also present was Town Manager Andrew DeLonno, Town Clerk Michele Collins, Town Attorney Mark Edwards and Chief Nathan Gant.

Lindell Kay from the Spring Hope Enterprise, Mark Cone from Southern Nash News and Kendra Jones from the Nashville Graphic were also present.

Mayor Pritchard called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance.

Commissioner Lucas made a motion to accept the agenda adding items about the pedestrian bridge, code enforcement and moving Mike Tolson's report to the beginning; Commissioner Jefferies seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Lucas made a motion to accept the minutes with the concerns; Commissioner Griffin seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Public Forum

David and Denise Beamer told the board that they were concerned about loud music near their home on Hopkins as well as an incident that happened in front of their home. Mr. Beamer said that there was a disturbance and that he did not feel as though the police officer had handled it correctly. He said that the officer had an attitude and that he wanted it known that he saw what appeared to be a handgun even though the officer said it was not. Commissioner Wilkins asked if they had spoken with the Chief. Chief Gant said that he had been to their home several times and that there seemed to be no one home.

Chief Gant said he watched the footage and that the officer handled the situation the way he was trained. He also said that they had warned the Beamers not to use 911 unless it was a true emergency.

Ms. Beamer asked if it would be possible to begin a campaign to catch people with loud music or speeding. Mr. DeLonno said that the issue with that is catching the vehicle during the incident. Commissioner Wilkins said that sometimes a police car will be in her yard trying to catch speeders. Chief Gant said that police department is actively trying to enforce the ordinances.

Terah Himmelright stated that she was concerned about Hurricane Preparedness. She mentioned that there were several named storms predicted for the upcoming season. She said she wanted to know what the emergency plan was for the town and if generators were available in case of power outages. She also asked what if any plans had been made to provide potable water. She also mentioned that there had been no response or follow-up on a barking dog in her

neighborhood. Ms. Himmelright also agreed that there should be some follow-up on citizens' concerns.

Mike Tolson from Mack Gay and Associates presented his findings on the water system. He said during his evaluation of the system he found that the distribution system was in poor conditions due to the age. He said that some of the hydrants were approaching 60 years old and would need to be replaced. He also said that replacement and or rehabilitation of the pipes was a good idea due to the galvanized pipe. He said that the water mains in the middle of town would be some of the oldest and should be looked at first.

Mr. Tolson said that the town's maps were not in the best condition and that they had been digitized. He said that the chemicals found in the water were all at acceptable levels. He said that the well water would not be the first thing that should be looked at to clear up any issues he said that the pipes should be the priority.

Commissioner Jefferys said he believed that the town needed to find ways to shut down parts of the town for repairs instead of the entire town. Mr. Tolson said he was right and that there need to be more valves connecting the town. Commissioner Jefferys also asked if there was a set of the plans for the plant; Mr. Tolson said whatever he found at the plant he would give back to the town.

Mayor Pritchard mentioned the amount of iron and manganese at one of the wells seen to be higher than the others. Mr. Tolson said it was not a health concern but it may stain clothes.

Ms. Himmelright asked if opening the hydrants for flushing could cause main breaks. Mr. Tolson said that the hydrant should be turned slowly no matter how old the hydrant.

Chamber Of Commerce

Chamber President Ethan Vester asked the board for their go ahead on having the Dan Finch Pottery Market in town. He said that it would be in November and would include vendors and music in the depot area.

Mr. Vester said that the pumpkin in the depot area was currently less than 6 feet long and that there would only be one flowering plant. Mayor Pritchard asked when the drop off near the pumpkin would be fixed; he said that a crew would be sent out to level off the land.

Commissioner Griffin made a motion to support the Chamber with the Finch Market; Commissioner Wilkins seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

The clerk explained the water and sewer write offs as well as the tax write offs. Commissioner Wilkins asked what the rationale was for the people; the clerk said that they just refused. She also explained that all avenues had been exhausted to collect. She said that this was a rare occasion and that the people that owed the most as far as taxes were on the foreclosure list.

Commissioner Griffin made a motion to accept the water and tax write offs; Commissioner Lucas seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Griffin made a motion to accept the discoveries and releases; Commissioner Lucas seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Jefferys said that the rate hike had to happen and that he would like to talk about it more. He said that he was unhappy with a rate hike especially since people are struggling. Commissioner Griffin said he thought it would be a good idea since everyone was not there. Commissioner Lucas asked what the money would go towards and where it would be spent. Mr. DeIonno said the increase would go towards funding a town operated system.

The clerk explained that the rates had to be increased this much to be able to be able to run the department without interruption. She explained that the time was short and that it would hurt in the long run to wait. She said that to no increase would be a red flag to the state and that they could come in and take over.

Commissioner Jefferys made a motion to table the rate hike. There was not a second so the motion died.

Commissioner Lucas made a motion to accept he Option 1 of the rate hike; Commissioner Griffin seconded and the motion passed with 3 Ayes and one Nay from Commissioner Jefferys.

Mr. DeIonno told the board that with a 2 dollar increase for GFL all residents would receive a large recycling cart.

Commissioner Griffin made a motion to accept the 2-dollar amount that would give every resident a large recycling bin; Commissioner Lucas seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Griffin made a motion to go into Public Hearing; Commissioner Lucas seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Public Hearing

Mr. DeIonno said that there would be a 3% COLA for all employees. He also commented that there was a 20% increase in health insurance which had been absorbed by the town. Mr. DeIonno said that the staff explored many ways to fund the \$4,000.00 increase which would also increase all the benefits. He said that the whole package would be \$800,000.00 and raise the tax rate from .67 to 1.05.

Mayor Pritchard said that it would be more like .79 for the raises. Mr. DeIonno said that the following year the town would have an additional tax base to grow the General Fund. Mr. DeIonno said he wanted to have a classification study to be able to fairly give merit raises rather than just a straight raise for everyone. Mr. DeIonno said that he had to shift employees to water and sewer to make the 3% COLA work. Commissioner Wilkins asked how the town would retain Police Officers; Mr. DeIonno said that if someone wanted to work for Spring Hope then they would.

Mayor Pritchard asked Chief Gant how long he had been working with Spring Hope; he said 8 years. He also said that he had not received a raise since he had been there and that the former Chief made a lot more. He said he had several officers that qualified for public assistance and that they may leave without a raise.

Commissioner Griffin made a motion to leave the Public Hearing; Commissioner Lucas seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Griffin made a motion to accept the contract from Fields and Cooper for legal services; Commissioner Jefferys seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. DeLonno presented the new Stewart Land Consulting contract. Mayor Pritchard said that he did not want to receive information directly from town staff as far as the work sessions but would rather talk with the consultants. Mr. DeLonno said that the contract was with the staff to keep the costs down and that to go back to them with changes would cost more. Mayor Pritchard asked what an example would be and or cause for the consulting company's hold harmless statement to be put into effect. Mr. Edwards said that if the administrator or town would apply the finds from the consulting company incorrectly to cause a lawsuit then Stewart would be held harmless.

Commissioner Griffin asked Mr. Edwards if Stewart would be looking through the ordinances and making sure that the town was compliant with the state. Mr. DeLonno said they would also be adding what state law would allow but that the town did not have already in place. Mr. DeLonno made it clear that nothing will be changed without the board's approval. Commissioner Jefferys asked if changes would be shown to the board as they were finished; Mr. DeLonno said yes. Commissioner Jefferys also said that extra meetings with the consultants would be a waste on him and that Mr. DeLonno was hired to be the manager and that the board needed to trust him in the position.

Mr. DeLonno said that there was a face-to-face meeting scheduled with the BOC and with the Planning Board.

Commissioner Lucas made a motion to accept the contract with Stewart Land Development as written; Commissioner Wilkins seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. DeLonno said that the new contract with Southern Coarsen would include cleaning and conditioning. He said that the response time was 24 hours. Mayor Pritchard asked why the repainting was not until 2027 even though there was rust noticeable. Mr. DeLonno said that the necessary repairs would be done with their inspections. Mr. DeLonno said that they would clean and inspect all areas. Commissioner Jefferys asked how many days the tanks would be empty while it was being painted. Mr. DeLonno said that he would find out the answers.

Commissioner Jefferys made a motion to accept the contract with Southern Corrosion; Commissioner Griffin seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. DeLonno explained to the board that the town's water and sewer rates would have to go up to be able to make the fund healthy. He said that NCRWA had done the rate study and had determined that the current rate was so low that the fund would be running in the red by the end of 2023. Mr. DeLonno said that there would be a large increase in the first year and smaller in the future years. He said that unfortunately the rates had not been increased in many years and that they were trying to in a sense play catch up.

Commissioner Wilkins said she thought that the increase would be too much for people right now with the cost of everything rising.

Mayor Pritchard asked if the rate percentage hike was only on the base rate or was it on all of it. Mr. DeLonno said that the rate would go up on the base and on the per gallon usage.

Mayor Pritchard asked if there was any way that the money set aside for Capital Outlay in Water/Sewer could be put into General Fund. The Clerk said no that the funds could not be intermingled.

The Clerk said that she would also like a raise and felt insulted that she nor the other ladies in the office were being considered in the conversation. She explained that the money was just not there and that General Fund could not carry a large increase.

Commissioner Lucas said she didn't see a point in tabling the budget that the money would not suddenly appear.

Commissioner Lucas made a motion to adopt the 2022-2023 fiscal year budget; Commissioner Griffin seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. DeIonno asked the board to look at the Walnut Cove light diagram. He said that Mr. White needed the approval to be able to turn over everything to the contractor. Mayor Pritchard asked which one of the lights would cast the lights better. Mr. DeIonno said he could ask Duke Energy and wanted to know if the board had a preference.

Commissioner Griffin made a motion to approve the map with the condition of seeing the and approving the type; Commissioner Lucas seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Griffin made a motion to pass Budget Amendment 2022-06 moving revenue amount of \$20,000.00 to expenditure in Water/Sewer; Commissioner Jefferys seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. DeIonno said he met with NCDOT and spoke about the pedestrian bridge. He said that there were a lot of safety issues and wanted to know if the town wanted to pursue a new scope of work. Mayor Pritchard asked if DOT had approved a new scope of work; Mr. DeIonno said that the only thing they agree to was demolition.

Commissioner Griffin made a motion to allow town manager to talk with NCDOT; Commissioner Jefferys seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Police Chiefs Report

Chief Gant said that there were 131 security checks, 3 traffic accidents and 196 calls for service during the prior month. He also reported that the box truck and trailer that was stolen from the Duck Thru was recovered within two days of the incident. Chief Gant said that there was a break in a business on Main St and at the solar farm outside of town. He also reported that he had picked up the truck that he received from the Dept. of Defense.

Town Attorney Mark Edwards had no new business.

Manager's Report

Mr. DeIonno said that the remediation plan for 205 W Main St. was in and he was waiting for the new demolition schedule.

Mr. DeIonno said that most of the items that were on his report had been discussed.

Mr. DeIonno said that the lead time was about 5 weeks for the new air conditioning unit for the town hall so the next meeting may be at the library as well.

Mayor Pritchard asked Commissioner Jefferys about the report on the hydrants after the major fire in town. Commissioner Jefferys said that Wooten Engineering had the reports from the hydrant issues and asked when the projects would begin as far as the capital projects. Mr. DeIonno said probably in July.

Commissioner Jefferys also said that the development in Walnut Cove was moving along and that Tom White would be turning things over to the contractor.

Mayor Pritchard asked about the keys to the wells; Mr. DeIonno said that there was a copy of the keys in the office. Mayor Pritchard wanted to know why they weren't available during the fire. The clerk said that she and Sandra tried to call Envirolink who according to their contract they have a 24-hour service. She said that they would not answer the call.


Commissioner Jefferys said that if all the wells were running there would only be 200 gallons a minute running. He said that the tanks were drained in less than an hour and that no town would be able to keep up with them. He said the fire department was trained for that kind of issue and that they did a great job.

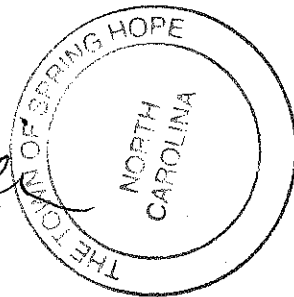
Mayor Pritchard said did not like Mr. DeIonno copying all the board members in his emails.

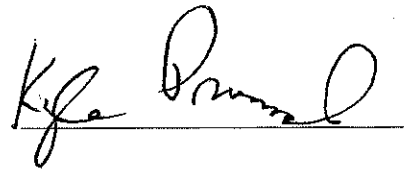
Mayor Pro Tem Drew Griffin called for an adjournment; Commissioner Wilkins seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Submitted

Attested







Minutes
Spring Hope Board of Commissioners Meeting
June 17, 2022

A special called meeting of the Town of Spring Hope Board of Commissioners was held at 8:30 a.m. in the Commissioners Room.

Members present: Mayor William Pritchard, Commissioners Brenda Lucas, Tony Jefferys, Drew Griffin, Brent Cone and Prudence Wilkins.

Also present was Town Manager Andrew DeLonno and Town Clerk Michele Collins.

Lindell Kay from the Spring Hope Enterprise, Mark Cone from Southern Nash News and Kendra Jones from the Nashville Graphic were also present

Mayor Pritchard was not present at 8:30, Mayor Pro Tem Drew Griffin called the meeting to order.

Commissioner Griffin said that the purpose for the meeting was end of the year adjustments.

The finance officer explained the budget amendment 2022-07 moving items from one line item to another. These including large amounts from Admin to Police department salaries and money from Admin to Sanitation. Water and Sewer salaries were also increased due to a new employee from a line item in Water/Sewer.

Commissioner Cone made a motion to accept amendment 2022-07; Commissioner Wilkins seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Cone made a motion to go into closed session; Commissioner Wilkins seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Pritchard was in attendance for the closed session.

Closed Session

Commissioner Griffin made a motion to adjourn; Commissioner Cone seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Submitted

Attested

