

Regular Meeting - August 16, 2022

The Fairmont Board of Commissioners held their regular meeting on Tuesday, August 16, 2022, at 6:00 p.m. in the Fairmont-South Robeson Heritage Center with Mayor Charles Kemp presiding. Commissioners present were J.J. McCree, Terry Evans, Heather Seibles, Melvin Ellison, Clarence McNeill, Jr., and Jan Tedder-Rogers. Staff present included Town Manager Jerome Chestnut, Town Clerk Jenny Larson, Town Attorney Jessica Scott, Public Works Director Ronnie Seals, Police Chief Jonathan Edwards and Fire Chief Woody Woodall. Several citizens were also present including Rev. C.F. McDowell, III, Lydia Dowdell, Kat Kitchell, Nate Thompson, Alice Baldwin, Alice McNair and Monte McCallum.

Call to Order and Invocation

Mayor Charles Kemp called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Reverend C.F. McDowell, III of First Presbyterian Church gave the invocation, which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Presentation

Mayor Kemp presented Certificates of Appreciation to Lydia Dowdell and Kat Kitchell of Empowering Youth 2 Serve for assisting with the May community trash pickup and for holding VBS in the park. Fire Chief Woody Woodall also gave them plaques for their work out at Camp4Heroes.

Mayor Kemp presented a plaque to Town Clerk Jenny Larson in recognition of her service as Interim Town Manager.

Mayor Kemp read a Proclamation naming September 5-11 as Fairmont Town Employee Appreciation Week. Employees will be recognized with a lunch on Wednesday, September 7. A signed copy of this proclamation is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes.

Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Evans made a motion to add Town Manager Jerome Chestnut as letter B of the agenda under old business. Commissioner Ellison seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Commissioner Evans made a motion to approve the amended agenda. Commissioner Ellison seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Public Comment Period/Citizens Appearance

Mr. Nate Thompson had concerns about the new water bill rates and the impact on citizens. He stated that residents were adding to the trash pile on McKoy Street.

Ms. Alice Baldwin, who lives in the Old Field neighborhood, had concerns about the water and sewer flooding in her back yard every time there is a heavy rain. She has brought in several loads of dirt to block it, but it keeps getting washed away. She is afraid of getting sick from the sewer water.

Mr. Monte McCallum spoke on behalf of Ms. Alice McNair who passed out photos showing how the sewer backs up into her toilet, sink, and tub after heavy rainfall. He implored the board to do something about cleaning out the canal, which is full of vegetation. Robeson County received a grant to clean out the canal a year and a half ago, but no work has been done yet.

Consent Agenda

Commissioner McNeill asked that the July regular meeting minutes be amended to reflect that he voted for the Farmers Festival budget increase. Upon motion by Commissioner Evans and seconded by Commissioner Ellison it was unanimously voted to adopt the following consent agenda items:

- a. Approval of Minutes - Regular Meeting, July 19, 2022, and Quarterly Issue Forum, July 26, 2022
- b. Ordinance 22-214 - Budget Amendment #1 in the amount of \$10,000
- c. Ordinance 22-215 - Closing Main Street for Fairmont Farmers Festival

The signed ordinances are hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes.

Old Business

Resolution 22-19 - Accepting Bid and Authorizing Sale of Property to George Alliss (wooded lot behind the old Brown Street sewer plant)

Commissioner Evans made a motion to adopt Resolution 22-19 — Accepting Bid and Authorizing Sale of Property (wooded lot behind the old Brown Street sewer plant) to George Alliss for \$10,200. Commissioner Ellison seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. A copy of the signed resolution is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes.

Approval of new Town Manager Jerome Chestnut

Commissioner Tedder-Rogers made a motion to hire Jerome Chestnut as Fairmont's new town manager. Commissioner McNeill seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Mr. Chestnut thanked the board for the opportunity to serve the citizens of Fairmont.

New Business

Ordinance 22-216 Project Budget Ordinance StRAP grant - \$250,000 for Stream Debris Removal

Mr. Chestnut explained this grant will help remove debris from the canal but due to required environmental studies, it will be over a year before the work can begin. Commissioner Evans made a motion to adopt Ordinance 22-216 Project Budget Ordinance StRAP grant - \$250,000 for Stream Debris Removal. Commissioner McNeill seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. A copy of this ordinance is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes.

Department Heads

Public Works Director Ronnie Seals has the \$10,000 pump the town purchased 18 months ago for Mrs. McNair's house. It will cost \$10,000 or more to install it. It was never installed due to conflict over the electricity bill from running the pump (\$10 to \$20 a month).

Police Chief Jon Edwards congratulated Town Clerk and Finance Director Jenny Larson on 24 years of service with the town.

Commissioner Input

The commissioners thanked the citizens for coming to the meeting and voicing their concerns.

Mayor Input

Mayor Kemp informed the citizens that Fairmont is one of 150 towns on the state watch list due to low utility rates. The town had no choice but to increase rates, which resulted in the town receiving a \$15 million sewer rehabilitation grant. This grant, among others, will help solve the problems in the Old Field neighborhood.

Manager Input

Mr. Chestnut was glad the citizens came out to voice their concerns. He knows the canal needs to be cleaned out and will see what can be done to speed up the process but cautioned that taking short cuts could be detrimental in the long run.

Announcements

Tuesday, August 23 - RCMA Meeting, 7:00 p.m., Heritage Center. Guest Speaker will be Robeson County Public Library Director Katie Fountain

Saturday, September 10 - Senior Bingo, 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m., Heritage Center
Tuesday, September 12 - J.O.B.S. Team meeting, 1:30 p.m., Heritage Center

Tuesday, September 20 - Regular Town Board Meeting, 6:00 p.m., Heritage Center

Commissioner Evans made a motion to adjourn at 7:01 p.m. Commissioner Ellison seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Jennifer H. Larson
Town Clerk