

Regular Meeting – January 18, 2022

The Fairmont Board of Commissioners held their regular meeting on Tuesday, January 18, 2022, at 6:00 p.m. in the Fairmont-South Robeson Heritage Center with Mayor Charles Kemp presiding. Commissioners present were J.J. McCree, Heather Seibles, Terry Evans, Melvin Ellison, Clarence McNeill, Jr., and Jan Tedder-Rogers. Staff present included Town Manager Hank Raper, Town Attorney Jessica Scott, Town Clerk Jenny Larson, Deputy Town Clerk Donna Jacobs, Public Works Director Ronnie Seals, and Police Chief Jon Edwards. Others in attendance included Rev. Charles Cummings, John Masters, Daniel Leonard, Meredith Godwin, Nathaniel Thompson, Justin Hempstead, Kaye Zumbrunnen, Austin Hunt, Jake Wittinger, Brianna Hall, Ashley Solis, Meghan Larson, Erika Phillips, and several citizens.

Call to Order and Invocation

Mayor Charles Kemp called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. Rev. Charles Cummings, of Fair Point Free Will Baptist Church, gave the invocation, which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor's Presentations

Recognition of fire volunteers who helped with the Santa Visits the Kids program.

Mayor Kemp recognized the following fire volunteers for helping with the 19th annual Santa Visits the Kids program: Justin Chattel, Kaye Zumbrunnen, Justin Elk, Austin Hunt and Jake Wittinger.

Recognition of three students from area schools who have displayed unity.

Mayor Kemp presented certificates to three students from local schools who have been chosen as the “best unifier”. They are Brianna Hall, 4th grader at Rosenwald Elementary School, Ashley Solis, 8th grader at Fairmont Middle School, and Meghan Larson, 12th grader at Fairmont High School,

Announcement of 2022 Farmers Festival Chairman Kelly Johnson.

Mayor Kemp announced that Kelly Johnson has agreed to be the chairman of the 2022 Fairmont Farmers Festival.

Approval of Agenda

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

Public Comment Period/Citizens Appearance

Nathaniel Thompson - Commissioner resident status

Mr. Nathaniel Thompson remarked he never received an answer to his question in November about the resident status of one of the town commissioners.

Justin Hempstead – Plans for multi-family housing

Mr. Justin Hempstead has recently purchased about 40 acres of land off Industrial Drive and N.C. Highway 41. His long-term plans include a retail complex and multiple family housing. There is currently no sewer available to the land, so he will have to pursue some grants first.

Consent Agenda

Upon motion by Commissioner Evans and seconded by Commissioner Seibles, it was unanimously voted to adopt the following consent agenda item:

- a. Approval of Minutes – Regular Meeting, December 21, 2021.

Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business this month.

New Business

2020-2021 Audit Report – John Masters

Mr. John Masters, of S. Preston Douglas and Associates, presented the 2020-2021 Audit Report. The town’s unassigned fund balance for the general fund is 32.41%, down slightly from the previous year. The town’s tax collection rate is 94.6%. One finding on the audit was an “excess of expenditures over appropriations.” Town Manager Hank Raper stated this will be corrected in the future by doing budget amendments throughout the year.

Appoint Lumber River Council of Government Board representative and alternate.

Commissioner Evans made a motion to appoint Commissioner J.J. McCree as Fairmont’s representative on the Lumber River Council of Government board. Commissioner Seibles seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Commissioner Ellison made a motion to appoint Commissioner Jan Tedder-Rogers as the alternate on the LRCOG board. Commissioner Evans seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Appoint Planning Board member to fill remainder of Commissioner Ellison’s term which expires in May 2024.

Commissioner Jan Tedder-Rogers made a motion to appoint Timmy Bass to the Fairmont Planning Board to fill the remainder of Commissioner Ellison’s term which expires in May 2024. Commissioner Evans seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Resolution 22-01 – Naming First Bank as an official Bank Depository.

Finance Director Jenny Larson informed the board that the town needs to open an account at First Bank for daily deposits since Truist is closing in February. Commissioner Evans made a motion to adopt Resolution 22-01 naming First Bank as an official bank depository for the town. Commissioner Ellison seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. A signed copy of this resolution is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes.

Pay Study and Personnel Policy Discussion – Erika Phillips, MAPS Group

Ms. Erika Phillips, of the MAPS Group, presented an updated personnel policy, employee job descriptions and pay scale. The last pay study was conducted in 2001. Ms. Phillips interviewed all town employees to get current job descriptions and compared pay from other towns in the region that are similar in size to Fairmont. Ms. Phillips suggested the board consider increasing the pay of town employees to be competitive. No action was taken by the board, but the pay study will be discussed further at future meetings and budget workshops.

Mayor Input

Mayor Kemp remarked that his first month as mayor had been positive.

Commissioner Input

The commissioners thanked the citizens for coming to the meeting. Commissioner McCree encouraged everyone to go online and order free Covid-19 tests. Commissioner Seibles thanked everyone who participated in the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. program. Commissioner Ellison thanked Ms. Phillips for presenting the pay study and is encouraged by Mr. Hempstead’s development plans.

Manager Input

Town Manager Hank Raper thanked Ms. Phillips for presenting the pay study. Mr. Raper is in talks with Mr. Hempstead about applying for a planning grant to help run sewer lines to his land.

Closed Session - Personnel

Commissioner Seibles made a motion to go into closed session at 7:28 p.m. to prevent the disclosure of information that is deemed privileged or confidential as determined under General Statute 143-318.10(e) and to personnel as permitted under General Statute 143-318.11(a)(6). Commissioner McCree seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Mayor Kemp, Commissioners McCree, Seibles, Tedder-Rogers, McNeill, Ellison, and Evans along with Jessica Scott, and Hank Raper were in attendance during closed session.

Commissioner Evans made a motion to come out of closed session at 7:57 p.m. Commissioner McNeill seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Mayor Kemp announced that no action was taken in closed session.

Announcements

Tuesday, January 25 - Quarterly Issue Forum, 6:00 p.m., Fairmont-South Robeson Heritage Center.

Tuesday, February 8 – Strategic Plan Meeting, 6:00 p.m., Fairmont-South Robeson Heritage Center.

Saturday, February 12 – Senior Sweetheart Party, 1:00 to 3:00 p.m., Fairmont-South Robeson Heritage Center.

Tuesday, February 15 - Regular Town Board meeting, 6:00 p.m., Fairmont-South Robeson Heritage Center

Adjournment

There being no further business, Commissioner Tedder-Rogers made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:57 p.m. Commissioner McCree seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Jennifer H. Larson, NCCMC
Town Clerk