

Regular Meeting – July 19, 2022

The Fairmont Board of Commissioners held their regular meeting on Tuesday, July 19, 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 Interim Town Manager Jenny Larson, Town Attorney Jessica Scott, Deputy Town Clerk Donna Jacobs, Public Works Director Ronnie Seals, and Police Captain Jonathan Evans. Several citizens were also present.

Call to Order and Invocation

Mayor Charles Kemp called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Jonathan Huggins, Interim Pastor of Friendship Memorial Baptist Church gave the invocation, which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Presentation

Mayor Kemp presented the “Clean Sweep” certificate to Martha Thomas of Thomas Auto & Towing for the beautification of their business.

Public Hearing – Project Fort Economic Development Incentives

Commissioner Evans made a motion to go into public hearing at 6:04 p.m. Commissioner Seibles seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Mayor Kemp stated the purpose of the public hearing is to discuss economic development incentives for Project Fort/Atlantic Building Components. Robeson County Economic Development Director Channing Jones explained that Atlantic Building Components will make a \$6 million investment by expanding and revitalizing an existing facility and create 105 jobs. Robeson County has agreed to a 5-year tax incentive and is asking Fairmont to do the same. The tax incentive will total \$92,484 (Personal Property \$59,634 and Real Property \$32,850) for the five-year period. No other comments were made.

Commissioner Evans made a motion to exit public hearing at 6:10 p.m. Commissioner McNeill seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Evans made a motion to move Project Fort Economic Development Incentives to letter A of the agenda under new business. Commissioner Tedder-Rogers seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

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

Public Comment Period/Citizens Appearance

Ivy Kearney - Ms. Kearney is starting a new non-profit organization called New Beginnings a New way of L.I.F.E. providing transitional housing and services for ex-offenders. She is asking for funding for housing and announced there will be a car wash fundraiser on August 6, 2022, at 9:00 a.m. in Fair Bluff, NC.

Shepp Oliver - Fairmont Rotary Club President. Mr. Oliver presented Mayor Kemp with a \$2,000 check to assist with the repair of the bridge at the park. The club voted to give \$2,000 to assist with the park bridge repairs and asked if the Rotary logo could be placed at each end of the bridge. He also gave out a brochure to the Board to show the different types of help the organization provides.

Nate Thompson - Mr. Thompson complained about the loose dogs running in his neighborhood on MLK Drive.

James Mitchell - RCC Representative of College and Career Readiness. Mr. Mitchell announced they are working to recruit students and set a time to have classes at the Fairmont-South Robeson Heritage Center. Transportation funds have been secured to assist with travel for the students to get to class. He left flyers and business cards for anyone that is interested in attending classes.

Consent Agenda

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

Approval of Minutes – Regular Meeting, June 21, 2022, and Special Meetings, June 28, 2022, and July 5, 2022.

Old Business

No unfinished business this month.

New Business

Approve tax incentives for Project Fort/Atlantic Building Components

Commissioner Evans made a motion to approve tax incentives for Project Fort/Atlantic Building Components in the amount of \$92,484.00 for a five-year period. Commissioner Tedder-Rogers seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Fairmont Farmers Festival

Mayor Kemp recently had a conversation with Fairmont Farmers Festival Chairman, Kelly Johnson. Mr. Johnson does not feel the current allocation of \$2,000 is sufficient to put on a quality festival even with the reserved funds which have been acquired from past festival revenue. He would like the board to consider raising the annual allotment for the festival to the same as May Day. Interim Town Manager Jenny Larson stated the Farmers Festival has its own checking account and funds not spent goes into this account. Starting in 2016 funds from the festival were used for the Christmas Parade to pay the bands and Shriners. In the past couple of years, the unused festival funds helped pay for the fireworks. She reported that the town received a large refund from AT&T which can be used to increase the festival budget. She indicated the budget should also allocate funds for the Christmas Parade and Fireworks. She suggested budgeting \$3,500 for the Farmers Festival, \$1,500 for the Christmas Parade and \$5,000 for the Fireworks. Commissioner Tedder-Rogers made the motion to increase the Farmers Festival budget allocation to \$3,500, as well as adding \$1,500 for the Christmas Parade and \$5,000 for the Fireworks. Commissioner Ellison seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Waste Management Discussion

Mayor Kemp invited Vicki Wittenburg and Ronald Smith from Waste Management to tonight's meeting to discuss issues with limbs and leaves pickup. Commissioner McCree stated Waste Management is not covering the whole town with limbs and leaves service. He called Waste Management the week of July 4th to see if all streets have been serviced and was told the truck was broke down, but no calls were made to anyone at town hall. Commissioner McCree feels the town is getting billed for services that Waste Management is not providing, especially since the cost goes up annually. His whole street was skipped, and he believes they are picking and choosing which areas to service. He declared the contract must be honored and if not, the board would need to talk with the town attorney to cancel. Commissioner Evans agreed that Waste Management's service is unacceptable, and we are not going to throw money away. He stated the citizens are being robbed when they are not serviced. Commissioner Ellison also agreed. He saw the truck slow down, look and pass by. Commissioner McNeill also agreed adding that some limbs/leaves have not been picked up for a month and the town needs to look at getting a new company. Ms. Wittenburg was shocked by what she heard and only knew about the conversation with Commissioner McCree. Commissioner McCree found out that the truck was not broke down but was in Whiteville picking up their cans because Whiteville had terminated their service with Waste Management. Ms. Wittenburg apologized on behalf of Waste Management. Fairmont has been a client for 37 years and she has only heard of two complaints. They currently have a shortage of drivers and acknowledged they have not done a good job communicating. Commissioner Seibles asked about GPS on the trucks and if they can tell what areas the truck serviced. Mr. Smith said the cameras will be placed on the trucks and will take pictures if the can is out or not. They are in phase 1 of testing for this camera system. Commissioner Seibles suggested that until the cameras are installed, they should keep an eye on the work of the drivers.

Ordinance 22-213- Project Budget for SCIF Library Grant

Interim Town Manager Jenny Larson stated the \$50,000 SCIF grant will be used to start the remodeling of the old post office into the new library/youth services building. The town was recently notified that it will be awarded an additional \$500,000 to complete the project. Commissioner Evans made a motion to adopt Ordinance 22-213 Project Budget for SCIF Grant. Commissioner Ellison 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

Police Captain Jonathan Evans said he was aware of the dog problems in North Fairmont and that he has spoken with Robeson County animal control. He acknowledged it is a town ordinance violation, and he is working on the issue.

Commissioner Input

The commissioners thanked the citizens for coming to the meeting and indicated they were excited about the adult education program.

Mayor Input

Mayor Kemp reminded the board and the public of the next issue forum to be held Tuesday, July 26th at 6:00 p.m. at the Fairmont South Robeson Heritage Center.

Mayor Kemp spoke on the current P.A System, which has outlived its usefulness. He stated during the June board meeting a citizen commented “speak up, we can’t hear you.” At the June 25th Business Expo event the PA system was used to play music, but only half of the sound system was operable. Many people who rent the Heritage Center use the PA system and don’t know how to use it properly. Mayor Kemp asked for board authorization to have a local sound technician evaluate our current system and make recommendations for replacement, use ARP fund to buy a new PA system and then lock it in a closet to be used only by town personnel for town events. Commissioner Tedder-Rogers made a motion to proceed with the PA sound system replacement process. Seconded by Commissioner Evans the motion and it passed unanimously.

Manager Input

Interim Town Manager Jenny Larson announced former Commissioner Faye Sellers passed away and to keep the family in prayer. Mr. Sellers served on the board for 8 years from 1989 to 1997.

Executive/Closed Session – Attorney-Client Privilege GS 143-318.11(a) (3,6)

Commissioner Seibles made a motion to go into closed session at 7:20 p.m. for the purpose of preserving the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the Board of Commissioners for the Town of Fairmont per N.C.G.S. §143-318.11(a)(1)(3). Commissioner McNeill seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Mayor Kemp, Commissioners McCree, Tedder-Rogers, Ellison, McNeill and Seibles along Town Attorney Jessica Scott, Interim Town Manager Jenny Larson, and Deputy Town Clerk Donna Jacobs were in attendance during closed session. Commissioner Evans was excused to go back to work and was not in attendance for closed session.

Commissioner McNeill made a motion to come out of closed session at 7:55 p.m. Commissioner Tedder-Rogers seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Mayor Kemp announced no action was taken.

Announcements

Wednesday, July 20 – Job Fair, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Heritage Center

Tuesday, July 26 – Town Issue Forum, 6:00 p.m., Heritage Center

Saturday, August 6 – Senior Bingo, 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m., Heritage Center

Tuesday, August 16 – Regular Town Board Meeting, 6:00 p.m., Heritage Center

Commissioner McNeill made a motion to adjourn at 7:56 p.m. Commissioner Ellison seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Donna Jacobs
Deputy Town Clerk