

## **Regular Meeting – August 19, 2025**

The Fairmont Board of Commissioners held their regular meeting on Tuesday, August 19, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in the Fairmont-South Robeson Heritage Center with Mayor Charles Kemp presiding. Commissioners present were J.J. McCree, Jan Tedder-Rogers, Terry Evans, Heather Seibles, Melvin Ellison, and Clarence McNeill, Jr. Staff present included Town Manager Jerome Chestnut, Town Attorney Jessica Scott, Town Clerk Jenny Larson, Police Captain Jonathan Evans, and Public Works Director Ronnie Seals. Others in attendance included Reverend Rex Anderson, Michael Taylor, Phillip Wall, William Bethea, Jr., Halle Bethea, Jahana Jones, Kirsten Ellefson and many citizens.

### **Call to Order and Invocation**

Mayor Charles Kemp called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. Reverend Rex Anderson, Pastor of North Fairmont First Baptist Church, gave the invocation, which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Mayor's Presentation**

#### **Proclamation – Fairmont Town Employee Appreciation Week**

Mayor Kemp read a proclamation naming September 1-7, 2025, as Fairmont Town Employee Appreciation Week. A signed copy of this proclamation is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes.

#### **Recognition of Commissioner Melvin Ellison for being appointed to NC ABC Board.**

Mayor Kemp presented a certificate to Commissioner Melvin Ellison in recognition of being appointed to the North Carolina ABC Board.

#### **Introduction of 2025-2026 Golden Ambassadors**

Mayor Kemp introduced the 2025-2026 Golden Ambassadors. They are William Bethea, Jr., Kirsten Ellefson, Halle Bethea, and Jahana Jones.

### **Public Hearing – Non-Contiguous Voluntary Annexation of 130 Convenient Mart**

Commissioner Ellison made a motion to go into public hearing at 6:23 p.m. Commissioner Seibles seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

The purpose of the Public Hearing is to discuss the non-contiguous voluntary annexation of 130 Convenient Mart.

Town Manager Jerome Chestnut detailed the Non-Contiguous Voluntary Annexation petition of Hwy 130 Convenient Mart by Mr. Nasruddin W. Massar. He read the property description of parcel# 1204-02-018 and explained the town clerk certified the sufficiency of the petition. The petition meets the standards of noncontiguous annexation and is less than 3 miles from the town limits.

Mayor Kemp opened the floor for public comment, and several citizens including Karen Schwarmer, Terry Taylor, Scott Ivey, Debbie Webb, Gerald Jacobs, Melissa Ellefson, Jean Grimsley, Jeff Fowler, Darlene Bailey, and Ann Marie Smith spoke out against the annexation. Concerns included police/fire response times, sale of alcohol, cost of providing services versus benefits received, potential increase in crime/traffic, and fear of town annexing property surrounding the store. Commissioner Evans stated he is totally against the annexation because the store owner's only reason for wanting to be annexed is the ability to sell beer and wine.

Commissioner McNeill made a motion to come out of the public hearing at 7:10 p.m. Commissioner Evans seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

#### **Public Hearing – 2025 CDBG-NR Application**

Commissioner Ellison made a motion to go into public hearing at 7:11 p.m. Commissioner Seibles seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Town Manager Jerome Chestnut stated the purpose of this Public Hearing is to advise and receive feedback from the citizens of the Town of Fairmont on applying for the 2025 CDBG-NR Grant Program. The Town of Fairmont applied for this grant in 2023 and 2024 and were successful in both applications. Mr. Chestnut noted the following:

- First of 2 public hearings to gather community input
- Community Development Block Grant-Neighborhood Revitalization
- Maximum grant amount of \$950,000
- Total of approximately \$12 million funding available with \$4.7 million of that set aside for Rural Community Development Fund which does not require a housing activity
- Eligible activities
  - Housing
  - Infrastructure related to housing
    - New utility services
    - Streets
    - Flood and Drainage improvements
    - Sidewalks/pedestrian ways
  - Public facilities
    - Shelters, community center, recreation center

- Must meet 1 of 3 national objectives
  - Benefit LMI persons
  - Prevent or eliminate slums or blight
  - Meeting other urgent needs (often storm/disaster related)
- Homes must be owner occupied LMI, real property
- Can include rehabilitation of housing or demo/rebuild
- 2<sup>nd</sup> public hearing will be held on September 16, 2025 prior to submitting application
- Applications due October 29, 2025

There was no public input.

Commissioner Tedder-Rogers made a motion to come out of the public hearing at 7:15 p.m. Commissioner Seibles seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

#### **Public Hearing – CDBG-I 20-I-3608 Program Amendment**

Commissioner Ellison made a motion to go into public hearing at 7:15 p.m. Commissioner McNeill seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Town Manager Jerome Chestnut stated the purpose of this Public Hearing is to discuss the proposed project amendment for the Town of Fairmont's Community Development Block Grant, CDBG project number 20-I-3608.

The Town of Fairmont received CDBG funds (20-I-3608) in the amount of \$1,903,000 to provide for the rehabilitation/replacement of the existing Brown Street pump station and the repair/replacement of the associated mechanical bar screen and grit removal systems which transports 100% of the Town's wastewater to the Town of Fairmont Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant via approximately 51,000 LF of discharge force main along NC Hwy 103 by replacing and adding the air valve along this line and provide for the replacement of approximately 800 LF of 18-inch failing gravity sewer outfall. The low-to-moderate income percentage of the project area is 65.05 percent.

A previous program amendment was submitted to modify the scope of work due to budget constraints. The revised scope of work included the installation of a new triplex submersible pump station along the route of the existing force main, replacement & addition of air release valves, providing weatherproof shelters for the existing electrical controls and cleaning & coating of the existing conduit exposed in the wet well and valve vault at the Brown Street pump station. The existing electrical and pump control components will remain in service as they were planned for replacement in the original scope of work. In addition, the revised scope of work included the replacement of the existing Brown Street generator but incorporated the use of the existing automatic transfer switch instead of a complete replacement of both components. The wet well and valve vault rehabilitation at the Brown Street pump station are not included in the revised project scope.

The current FY20 project is being amended to include revisions to the previously approved scope of work. The revised scope of work includes the purchase of a new two-ton hoist and frame (approximately \$32,000) and an autodialer (approximately \$2,000) for the new intermediate pump station located at 16619 NC130 Hwy E, Fairmont, NC. The Town does not currently have a means of removing the proposed pumps from the pump station when necessary for maintenance. In addition, the proposed pumps are too heavy to be safely removed with a typical davit crane. The addition of the autodialer, or some means of remote monitoring, is required by NCDEQ. The addition of the proposed auto-dialer is the most cost-effective solution that meets NCDEQ requirements. The amended scope of work does not require additional grant funds. The proposed benefit will remain unchanged at 65.05 percent low-to-moderate income. Mayor Charles Kemp then invited anyone from the public to provide comments on the proposed FY20 Program Amendment.

There was no public input.

Commissioner Ellison made a motion to come out of the public hearing at 7:21 p.m. Commissioner Seibles seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Commissioner Seibles made a motion to authorize LKC Engineering to proceed with FY20 CDBG-I-3608 Program Amendment authorizing Mayor Charles Kemp to execute all required documents for the FY20 Program Amendment on behalf of the Town. Commissioner Ellison seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Mayor Charles Kemp called for a short 10-minute recess at 7:21 p.m. so the minutes from the public hearing could be finalized, approved and certified at tonight's meeting. The minutes will be included in the FY20 Program Amendment to be submitted soon after the public hearing.

Once the meeting resumed at 7:31 p.m., Commissioner McNeill made a motion to adopt the Public Hearing Minutes for the CDBG-I 20-I-3608 Program Amendment. Commissioner Ellison seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

### **Approval of Agenda**

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

### **Public Comment Period/Citizens Appearance**

#### **Michael Taylor – Limbs and Leaves pickup**

Mr. Michael Taylor, of 125 Haywood Street, had a complaint about the limbs and leaves on his street not being picked up for a whole month.

Phil Wall – Board trust concern

Mr. Phil Wall said trust has been broken between the people and the commissioners they voted for. He asked for the resignation of the council members who have brought shame onto our town.

**Consent Agenda**

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

- a. Approval of Minutes – Regular Meeting, July 15, 2025

**Old Business**

Ordinance 25-282 – Satellite Annexation of 130 Convenient Mart.

Ordinance 25-282 follows the earlier Public Hearing request for the Noncontiguous voluntary satellite annexation of Hwy 130 Convenient Mart. Commissioner Evans made a motion to deny Ordinance 25-282 Satellite Annexation of 130 Convenient Mart. Commissioner Ellison seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

**New Business**

Resolution 25-08 – FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Application for the Happy Hill and Walnut Street Pump Station Relocation.

The Town of Fairmont seeks to apply for additional funding through FEMA for the relocation of the Happy Hill and Walnut Street Pump Station from flood zones. Commissioner Tedder-Rogers made a motion to adopt Resolution 25-08 – FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Application for the Happy Hill and Walnut Street Pump Station Relocation. Commissioner Evans seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. A signed copy of the resolution is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes.

Resolution 25-09 – Bladen-Columbus-Robeson Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan

Based on federal and state statutes, The Town of Fairmont must adopt a Hazard Mitigation Plan within a five -year cycle. The Town of Fairmont does not have an independent Hazard Mitigation Plan for the town, but the Town of Fairmont is included as part of the larger “Bladen-Columbus-Robeson Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan. Mr. Chestnut recommends that the Board of Commissioners adopt this resolution for the town to be eligible for federal and state assistance if a state of disaster is declared for a hazard event. A copy of the plan is available on the town’s website. Commissioner Seibles made a motion to adopt Resolution 25-09 – Bladen-Columbus-Robeson Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan. Commissioner Tedder-Rogers seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. A signed copy of the resolution is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes.

Ordinance Proposal – 1<sup>st</sup> Reading – Business Safety and Public Welfare

Town Manager Jerome Chestnut presented an ordinance proposal drafted by Commissioner Seibles to strengthen our business safety and public welfare. Our Town Attorney has reviewed this ordinance to ensure its legality. We are currently awaiting review from the UNC School of Government before we move forward with an official ordinance. Commissioner Tedder-Rogers made a motion to approve the first reading of the business safety ordinance. Commissioner Seibles seconded the motion, and it passed with a vote of 4 to 2 as follows:

For:	Commissioners Tedder-Rogers, Seibles, Ellison and McNeill
Against:	Commissioners McCree and Evans

**Commissioner Input**

Commissioner Evans would like a report from South Robeson Rescue at the next board meeting, along with the current roster of town firefighters.

Commissioner Seibles stated the purpose of the business safety ordinance is to protect the wellbeing and future of the community and give the town authority to close any business that puts lives at risk.

Commissioner Ellison thanked everyone for coming and expressed his desire for Fairmont to grow by doing our best to protect its citizens.

Commissioner Tedder-Rogers stated the board cannot fix things they are not aware of and does not want to see any more blood in the streets.

**Mayor Input**

Mayor Kemp thanked Stop the Violence for their wonderful back to school events held this past weekend.

**Announcements**

Wednesday, August 20 – Job Fair/Blood Drive, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Heritage Center.

Wednesday, August 27 – Town Employee Luncheon, 12:30 p.m., Heritage Center.

Monday, September 1 – Town offices closed in observance of Labor Day.

Thursday, September 4 – Fairmont Planning Board, 6:00 p.m. Town Hall Courtroom.

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

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

Saturday, September 27 – Golf Cart Cruise-In and Parade, Food Truck Rodeo, Craft Village, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Town Hall parking lot.

**Adjournment**

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

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Jennifer H. Larson  
Town Clerk