

Regular Meeting – January 16, 2024

The Fairmont Board of Commissioners held their regular meeting on Tuesday, January 16, 2024, 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 Attorney Jessica Scott, Town Clerk Jenny Larson, Deputy Town Clerk Rodney Cain, Public Works Director Ronnie Seals, Police Chief Jon Edwards, and Fire Chief Erick Freeman. Others in attendance included Reverend Michael Hunt, Jim Pate, Nate Thompson, and several citizens.

Call to Order and Invocation

Mayor Charles Kemp called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. Reverend Michael Hunt, Pastor of Maranatha Word of Life Church of God, gave the invocation, which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Presentation

Mayor Kemp announced the 2024 Martin Luther King Jr. Unity Award winners: Ryder Thompson of Rosenwald Elementary School, Amyra Grissett of Fairmont Middle School, and Adriana Southern of Fairmont High School.

Public Hearing – Removal of additional Fluoride from Drinking Water

Commissioner Tedder-Rogers made a motion to go into Public Hearing at 6:13 p.m. to discuss the removal of additional fluoride from drinking water. Commissioner Ellison seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Town Manager Jerome Chestnut stated that Fairmont's drinking water has naturally occurring fluoride and adding additional fluoride is unnecessary and potentially harmful. Removal of additional fluoride will reduce costs as well.

After no public comments, Commissioner Evans made a motion to come out of the Public Hearing at 6:16 p.m. Commissioner McNeill seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Public Hearing – Discuss Rescinding Game Room Ordinance

Commissioner McNeill made a motion to go into Public Hearing at 6:16 p.m. to discuss rescinding the game room ordinance. Commissioner Evans seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Town Manager Jerome Chestnut explained that changes in State law have removed or significantly reduced the effectiveness of the town's game room regulations and recommended that Chapter 113, Game Rooms be rescinded. The ordinance's rescension will not affect the two game rooms currently in operation but will not allow any future ones.

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After no public comments, Commissioner Evans made a motion to come out of the Public Hearing at 6:19 p.m. Commissioner Ellison seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Approval of Agenda

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

Public Comment Period/Citizens Appearance

Nate Thompson

Mr. Nate Thompson stated that yesterday's Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day celebration was very enjoyable.

Jim Pate – Town Hall

Mr. Jim Pate encouraged the board to consider a site near downtown for the new town hall.

Consent Agenda

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

- a. Approval of Minutes – Regular Meeting, December 19, 2023.
- b. Ordinance 24-249 – Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Budget Amendment #5.
- c. Resolution 24-01 – Truist Bank signatures.
- d. Resolution 24-02 – First Bank signatures.

Signed copies of the minutes, ordinances and resolutions are hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes.

Old Business

Approval of Town Manager's contract effective August 1, 2023

The board agreed on the Town Manager's contract during closed session on July 18, 2023, but due to an oversight forgot to approve it in open session. Commissioner Ellison made a motion to approve the Town Manager's contract for one year with an annual salary of \$100,000 effective August 1, 2023. Commissioner Evans seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

New Business

Removal of additional fluoride from drinking water

Commissioner Evans made a motion to remove additional fluoride from the town’s drinking water. Commissioner Tedder-Rogers seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Ordinance 24-250 – Rescind Chapter 113 Game Rooms

Commissioner Evans made a motion to adopt Ordinance 24-250 - Rescind Chapter 113 Game Rooms. Commissioner McNeill seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. A signed copy of this ordinance is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes.

Promotion of Erick Freeman to Fire Chief

Town Manager Jerome Chestnut promoted Erick Freeman to Fire Chief and pinned him with assistance from Erick’s wife Jessica Freeman. Chief Freeman was recently recognized as the Robeson County Firefighter of the Year.

Resolution 24-03 – NCLM Grant Technical Assistance MOA

Commissioner Evans made a motion to adopt Resolution 24-03 – NCLM Grant Technical Assistance MOA in the amount of \$30,000. Commissioner Seibles 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.

Commissioner Input

The commissioners thanked the citizens for coming to the meeting and praised Stop the Violence for putting together a wonderful Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebration.

Mayor Input

Mayor Kemp announced that a Youth Summit will be held on Tuesday, January 23 at 7:00 p.m. in the Heritage Center.

Mayor Kemp announced that Chrissy Andrews will be the town’s social media influencer.

Mayor Kemp recognized Commissioner Seibles and the Stop the Violence program for their excellent work in organizing the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebration for the past three years.

Executive/Closed Session – Real Estate/Attorney-Client Privilege GS 143-318.11(a)(5,6)

Commissioner Ellison made a motion to go into closed session at 6:52 p.m. for the purpose of discussing real estate and attorney-client privilege as allowed under G.S. 143-318.11(a)(5,6). Commissioner Evans seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Commissioner Evans made a motion to come out of closed session at 7:17 p.m. Commissioner Tedder-Rogers seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Mayor Kemp announced that no action was taken.

Announcements

Tuesday, January 23 – Youth Summit, 7:00 p.m. Heritage Center.

Tuesday, January 30 – Tornado Tank, 6:00 p.m., Heritage Center.

Friday, February 9 – Val-N-Tunes Motown Dinner/Concert, 6:00 p.m., Fairmont-South Robeson Heritage Center.

Tuesday, February 13 – Pride in Fairmont Ceremony, 7:00 p.m., Fairmont-South Robeson Heritage Center.

Wednesday, February 14 – Valentine’s Employee lunch, 12:30 p.m., Fire Hall.

Saturday, February 17 – Senior Bingo, 12:00 noon to 2:00 p.m., Fairmont-South Robeson Heritage Center.

Tuesday, February 20 - Regular Town Board meeting, 6:00 p.m., Fairmont-South Robeson Heritage Center.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Commissioner Evans made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:17 p.m. Commissioner Tedder-Rogers seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Jennifer H. Larson
Town Clerk