

TOWN OF GARLAND
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TUESDAY, JANUARY 18, 2022
6:00 PM

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Town of Garland was held at the Garland Town Hall in Garland, N.C. on Tuesday, January 18, 2022 at 6:00 pm.

The following members of the Board of Commissioners were present:

Carolyn R. Melvin
Jo A. Strickland
Barbara A Peterson
Andy Johnson
Ralph Smith, Jr.

Also, present: Mayor Austin Brown, Town Clerk Pamela Cashwell, and Mrs. Emily Williams of the *Sampson Independent*. There was one citizen in attendance.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Austin Brown called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm and welcomed everyone in attendance. Town Clerk, Pamela Cashwell, was present recording notes for the minutes.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIENCE

Mayor Austin Brown led the attendees in the recitation of the pledge.

INVOCATION

Mayor Pro Tem Carolyn R. Melvin provided the invocation.

QUORUM

Mayor Austin Brown and Clerk Pamela Cashwell established there was a quorum present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Austin Brown requested board members review the agenda for approval. Mayor Austin Brown requested to add: Number 3. Under New Business- Resolution Authorizing Signatures for CDBG Grants. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland requested to add: Number 4. Under New Business- Board Meeting Date & Time. Mayor Pro Tem Carolyn R. Melvin made a motion to approve the agenda with said changes, seconded by Commissioner Andy Johnson, and carried unanimously. (See attached).

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mrs. Wanda Johnson of W. Seventh Street appeared before board members requesting permission to launch Adopt a Street or Area Program. She provided a packet of information on the program for each member. (See attached). The goal of the program is to clean up our town by picking up littered debris along roadways and other areas in town such as parks and alleys. Mrs. Johnson agreed to organize the program which would consist of volunteers working in groups with a team leader. Volunteers would agree to clean up debris from their assigned areas four times a year. Team leaders would complete progress reports and Mrs. Johnson would compile the reports and provide them to board members to monitor the progress of the program. Mrs. Johnson plans to visit the DOT in Clinton and ask for safety vests, trash bags and sticks to pick up debris. The town would be responsible for picking up the bags of debris and disposing them. Each volunteer would be required to complete an application and sign waiver forms

releasing the town and program of any liability. Mrs. Johnson stated her goals are for visitors traveling by our town to see a beautiful, clean, well-kept town. She stated she hopes to engage a lot of interested volunteers to work toward cleaning up our town.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

MAYORAL UPDATE

Mayor Austin Brown reported he continues to transition into this role from the previous administration. He has spent at least one day a week in town, and he noted he has had meetings every week. Yesterday he and Clerk Cashwell met with representatives from the Mid-Carolina Council of Governments, and he was excited to learn they will be assisting the town with the ARPA funding grant administration. They offer a lot of services and advice to local municipalities. Mayor Brown, Commissioner Smith, and Clerk Cashwell attended the Pre-Bid meeting for the 2019 CDBG-I project. The Bid Award meeting is scheduled for January 27, 2022. Regarding the 2019 CDBG-NR project, rehabilitation has begun on at least one home. No park updates have been received. The town has received funding for a shared administrative position with two other municipalities and the Mid-Carolina COG will be overseeing this position. The MOA has been signed for the funding of \$22,000.00 for staffing and the funding was received today. This will allow the town to hire part time staff for administration and public works for approximately six months to be able to do some of the things that were not able to be completed due to hurricanes and the pandemic. He informed board members the town hit a recent milestone of two million in the consolidated bank account. He stated that is a blessing from where we came from.

FINANCE

Credit Card Purchases – Clerk Pamela Cashwell provided a statement of and reviewed all the credit card purchases for the month. (See attached).

BVA & A.P. Check Listing- Clerk Cashwell reviewed the BVA reports with Board members and indicated which departments were behind on expenditures for this fiscal year. She requested all projects for each department be completed in full by May 15, 2022. A.P. check listing report provided for the month of December 2021. (See attached).

Reports Completed- Clerk Cashwell reported the bank reconciliations for December 2021 for all three bank accounts have been completed. Monthly & Quarterly reports were completed as well as the LGC-203 Report.

Audit Update- Clerk Cashwell noted the 2021 Audit has been delayed this year due to both auditors experiencing staffing issues and illnesses related to Covid-19. Auditors have been in the office for three days total this month and she is expecting the auditors to complete the on-site auditing this week.

Budget Planning Retreat- Clerk Cashwell asked Board members if she could schedule a budgeting retreat to begin working on the 2022-2023 budget. This will allow time for the board to meet for a day to discuss budgeting priorities as a group. Board members asked Clerk Cashwell to look at options for the retreat and report back at the next meeting.

Powell Bill Budget Amendment 2021-2022-03- Clerk Cashwell read aloud the proposed Powell Bill Budget Amendment 2021-2022-03. (See attached). Commissioner Ralph Smith, Jr. made a motion to approve the amendment as presented, seconded by Commissioner Barbara A. Peterson, and carried unanimously.

BUILDINGS/CEMETERY

Re-opening Community Building- Commissioners Barbara A. Peterson and Jo A. Strickland have assessed the Community Building and noted there are supplies that were left behind by the former head start company and they are researching what can be done legally with these abandoned items. Board members discussed a desire to begin the process of re-opening the Community Center. Mayor Brown informed board members they would need to start with contacting the Fire

Marshal and reviewing the last fire inspection completed before the building was changed to storage only. After a brief discussion of some of the needed repairs, Commissioner Andy Johnson made a motion to begin the process of re-opening the Community Center, seconded by Commissioner Ralph Smith, Jr., and carried unanimously.

Commissioners Barbara A. Peterson and Jo A. Strickland also discussed the possibility of re-opening the ABC store as a satellite location under the auspices of a neighboring ABC store. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland has been in contact with state officials and noted they have a moratorium on issuing licenses to open a store at this time. She has contacted individuals to discuss having the former store be a satellite store and will report her discussions to the board at the next meeting. Board members discussed several neighboring stores that could benefit from having a satellite store in town.

Community Cemetery Expansion- Mayor Pro Tem Carolyn R. Melvin stated she visited the Community Cemetery and noted there is not much space left for gravesites. She suggested the town start looking to purchase additional land to expand the cemetery. She noted she had requested Deputy Clerk Ricketson to let her know how many gravesites were available and she has not provided her that information yet. Mayor Brown stated until the cemetery records are updated, that information will not be available. He stated we are still having issues determining who is buried where and if sites are available. He stated there are two totes with records written on sticky pads and in pencil since the 1960's. Commissioner Ralph Smith, Jr. stated this is where I am, and I will make a motion to bundle both cemeteries and sell them to a private industry and the town get out of the cemetery business. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland seconded the motion. Mayor Brown stated in his meeting today with the Mid-Carolina COG representatives, he, and Clerk Cashwell discussed the state of our cemeteries as it relates to the records and expenses and they both agreed they are a long-term financial liability for the town. Mayor Brown stated the board thirty years ago did not think about the financial liability this board is facing today and we should think about the board that will be in place fifteen years from now and not leave them with a financial burden. Commissioner Andy Johnson stated if we sell these cemeteries to a funeral home, they will immediately come in and manage them as this is their only business. He stated it would relieve the town and get this off our plate so we can concentrate on other issues facing the town. Commissioner Barbara A. Peterson agreed the records are not up-to-date and a business who can manage the cemeteries would be a better option for the town. Mayor Brown called for the vote and the motion carried unanimously.

Update for Urinal Repairs @ Town Hall- Commissioners Jo A. Strickland and Andy Johnson stated they have contractors they can contact for repairs of the urinals. Commissioner Barbara A. Peterson stated she would appreciate their assistance as she has contacted about ten plumbers, and no one has been able to give quotes on the needed repairs.

Light Bill at the Senior Center- Commissioner Jo A. Strickland spoke with Mrs. Marie Faircloth and the Division of Aging Director about the \$700.00 light bill received for one month of service. Suggestions were provided to decrease the monthly cost of electricity. Commissioner Andy Johnson made a motion to purchase programmable thermostats with locked covers for the buildings, seconded by Commissioner Barbara A. Peterson, and carried unanimously. Commissioner Ralph Smith, Jr. asked who will have the code and keys to the thermostats? Commissioner Jo A. Strickland answered it would be a town employee. Commissioner Andy Johnson also suggested checking to see if the attic needed insulation. He stated if the edges of the roof have frost and the center of the roof is thawed out, insulation is needed. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland stated she would take a picture of the roof early tomorrow morning to assess if insulation is needed.

PARKS/RECREATION

Clock Repaired @ Rotary Park- Mayor Brown reported the clock has been repaired. He noted representatives came from Georgia to fix it and noted the cost was greater than \$2,000.00.

Updates- Commissioner Ralph Smith, Jr. met with softball representatives at the softball park to discuss needed repairs. He stated this is not rocket science and they are not asking for a lot, and we need to get together and agree to make repairs and improvements to the concession stand and replace the one light pole and missing light fixture and let them play ball. He estimated the repairs to cost between \$5,000.00 to \$6,000.00. He stated regarding the safety issues with roots, he said those same roots were there when I played ball in high school. Commissioner Barbara A. Peterson asked about the fencing. Commissioner Ralph Smith, Jr. stated someone suggested placing snow fencing around any areas that were in poor repair as this is a cheaper alternative and some other municipalities were using these at their parks. He stated he feels the concession stand should be repaired and turned over to the softball league. He stated Todd said they could provide a percentage of the sales to the town, and he told him they should just keep all the money from sales and put it back into the softball league. Commissioner Andy Johnson stated if you look at other municipalities, they have nice park areas for the children to play and that is what it is all about, the children. Commissioner Smith stated this work needs to be started soon as they will be having signs ups in April. Commissioner Carolyn R. Melvin stated she and Commissioner Smith conducted a walk thru at the park to prioritize the needs and she compiled a list of things that needed to be looked at and repaired. (See attached). She discussed the list of needed repairs that included the soccer nets, walking track and picnic areas. Commissioner Andy Johnson stated his wife is on the committee and he does not want to create a conflict of interest here but most of the things on the list are done during the clean-up day they schedule every year for the public to come out and get the park area ready for softball. Commissioner Andy Johnson stated he is more than willing to do it again for the children to play ball and if more people would come out and help it would make it easier for everyone. Mayor Brown and Commissioner Smith agreed everything on the list except the fence could be completed for less than \$10,000.00. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland has already sprayed for fire ants on the walking track and has agreed to continue to spray for insects. Mayor Brown stated there is \$12,000.00 in the budget and he tasks the parks and recreation committee to get these repairs done by spring. Mayor Pro Tem Carolyn R. Melvin presented a quote to clean the ditch on Seventh Street in front of the walking track and remove all the debris for \$925.00. (See attached). Mayor Pro Tem Carolyn R. Melvin made a motion to approve the quote as submitted, seconded by Commissioner Barbara A. Peterson, and carried unanimously.

STREETS

Updates- Commissioner Andy Johnson stated he had driven around town assessing which streets were in the worse shape and the number of homes each street served. He suggested paving W. Sixth Street between Odham Avenue and N. Herring Avenue. He stated this section was in bad shape and has four homes on it. He stated he understood we had money to pave one section of street this fiscal year. Clerk Cashwell noted depending on the quotes, we may be able to pave two sections. Commissioner Ralph Smith, Jr. stated he would like to see the last block of W. Fourth Street paved to finish out the entire street being paved. It serves one home. Mayor Brown stated he would suggest getting a quote for Leroy Street as we receive complaints from the postal service on the condition of this street. Commissioner Andy Johnson agreed to obtain quotes for board members to decide which streets can be paved this fiscal year.

Adopt a Street Request- Commissioner Barbara A. Peterson made a motion to approve the Adopt a Street Program with Mrs. Wanda Johnson organizing the program, seconded by Commissioner Ralph Smith, Jr., and carried unanimously.

PUBLIC WORKS – WATER/SEWER/GARBAGE

Updates- Mayor Brown reported two water leaks at this time that will need to be repaired. One is on Belgrade Avenue near Mr. Ernest Smith's driveway and the other is on N. Herring Avenue and

W. Third Street. Both areas are under the road and the NC DOT officials will need to be notified as these are state maintained roads.

Public Works Job Vacancy- Commissioner Ralph Smith, Jr. stated he would like to see the town advertise for a Public Works Director who can oversee water and sewer and have certifications in one or both or willing to obtain the certifications and be able to operate heavy equipment. He stated they should sell the motor grader as this equipment is too large to do what the town needs it to do. He stated the town should purchase a track hoe or bobcat so the town will have the staff and equipment to repair water and sewer line breaks without having to hire contractors. He stated the town will have to offer around \$20.00 /hour to get someone with the required certifications. Board members discussed hiring someone who can be an ORC for the water and sewer department, and this would save the current expenditures of contracted ORC's. Commissioner Ralph Smith, Jr. made a motion to advertise for a Public Works Director, seconded by Commissioner Andy Johnson, and carried unanimously. They agreed to work on the advertisement to be published. Board members discussed the NCORR grant of \$22,000.00 that can be used to supplement six months of staffing for administration and public works.

SAFETY

Updates- Commissioner Jo A. Strickland reported she has contacted Sheriff Jimmy Thornton and he will be available to meet with the safety committee in a week or so to discuss the police coverage options for the town. Board members discussed options another municipality uses for police coverage, and they will discuss both options with Sheriff Thornton once an appointment is set. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland also reported she discussed the security alarm system at the senior center with the Director of Aging. She noted when the alarm goes off in the middle of the night, no one has access to go into the building or the code to the system to disarm the alarm thus keeping residents awake for hours. She also noted her safety concern for elderly residents attending the senior center being vulnerable with the doors open to the public and accessible to everyone. She suggested having doors that lock from the outside so someone would have to give visitors access to the inside. She reported the director stated this may be something the county could assist the town with to increase the safety of our seniors.

OLD BUSINESS

CARES ACT FUNDING Final Report- Clerk Cashwell provided the final Cares Act Report and noted she has completed and submitted all the required reports. (See attached).

NEW BUSINESS

Attorney Interviews- Commissioner Ralph Smith, Jr. stated he had spoken with Attorney Lew Starling, and he is interested in discussing the town's legal needs. He has experienced the recent death of his mother and will be available soon to meet with board members. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland noted Attorney Gary Grady is also interested and will check his schedule to set a time when he can meet with board members. Mayor Brown tasked board members with continuing this process to retain a town attorney.

Golden Leaf Scholarships- Mayor Pro Tem Carolyn R. Melvin discussed the scholarship opportunities and eligibility requirements available to Sampson County Seniors who plan to attend college provided by the Golden Leaf Foundation. Applications are free and available online.

Resolution Authorizing Signatures for CDBG Grants- Mayor Austin Brown read aloud a Resolution authorizing Mayor Austin Brown, Town Clerk Pamela Cashwell, Commissioner Ralph Smith, Jr., and Commissioner Andy Johnson as the official document signers for all CDBG projects. (See attached). Mayor Pro Tem Carolyn R. Melvin made a motion to adopt the resolution as presented, seconded by Commissioner Barbara A. Peterson, and carried unanimously.

Board Meeting Dates and Time- Commissioner Jo A. Strickland stated the monthly board meeting date and time was changed to accommodate the former town attorney and she would

like to see the date and time changed back to what the ordinance reads. Mayor Pro Tem Carolyn R. Melvin stated it is the second Tuesday of the month and I could not be a commissioner because I cannot be here on the second Tuesday of the month. Mayor Brown checked the ordinance book, and it reads the meeting will be held on the second Tuesday of the month at 7:30 pm. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland made a motion to change the monthly board meeting per the ordinance. Motion died for a lack of a second. After further discussion, Commissioner Jo A. Strickland made a motion to change the monthly board meeting to the first Tuesday of each month at 6:30 pm. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Andy Johnson and carried unanimously.

MINUTES APPROVAL

November 16, 2021 Regular Meeting, December 2, 2021 Oath of Office Ceremony & Organizational Meeting, December 16, 2021 Special Meeting & Public Hearing- Mayor Pro Tem Carolyn R. Melvin made a motion to approve all minutes as submitted, seconded by Commissioner Barbara A. Peterson, and carried unanimously. (See attached).

CALENDAR OF EVENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS/CONDOLENCES

Condolences: The Town of Garland sends our sincerest condolences to all of those who have recently lost loved ones.

Next Regular Board Meeting will be February 1, 2022 at 6:30 pm at Town Hall

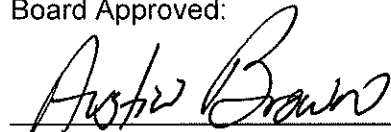
ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Pro Tem Carolyn R. Melvin made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Barbara A. Peterson, and carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:44 pm.



Pamela Cashwell, Town Clerk/Finance Officer

Board Approved:



Austin Brown, Mayor