

**TOWN OF GARLAND
RECONVENED REGULAR MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WEDNESDAY, MAY 27, 2020
6:00 PM**

The Reconvened Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Town of Garland was held at the Garland Town Hall and remotely via GoToMeeting on Wednesday, May 27, 2020 at 6:00 pm.

The following members of the Board of Commissioners were present:

**Austin Brown
Eddie Bronson, Jr.
Jo A. Strickland
Barbara A. Peterson (Arrived at 6:05 pm)**

The following members of the Board of Commissioners were present remotely:

**Carolyn R. Melvin
Mayor Winifred Murphy (Unsure of time of arrival)**

Also present in the Boardroom: Ms. Pamela Cashwell, Town Clerk and Mr. Neil Carroll, ORC for the Town of Garland. There were no citizens in attendance

Present remotely: Mr. Jeff Ship and Mr. Joseph Andrews with *Star Communications*, Mr. John Eason and Mr. Dustin Norris with *Underground Construction* and Mr. Ken Scholl with *Ralph Hodge Construction*.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Pro Tem 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.

QUORUM

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

FIBER INSTALLATION ISSUES WITH CUT WATER LINES

Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown opened the floor for *Star Communications* to discuss issues with fiber installation to date. Mr. Joseph Andrews stated there has been five cuts to date with water lines, two main line cuts and three service line cuts. On May 21st when they were doing a bore, they didn't have any marked areas for water lines and ended up cutting a main line. On May 26th, they cut a main line and three service lines and stated these lines weren't marked either.

Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown stated crews from Ralph Hodge Construction have been in town working on the sewer improvement project and have graciously stopped on that project and helped repairs the cut lines to date. He stated they have lost time working on the sewer

improvement project and moving forward the town needs to make arrangements for future cuts as they are on a timeline to complete the sewer improvement project, they are in town working on. Mr. Ken Scholl stated they didn't mind assisting but the issues are the supplies haven't been readily available and he has had to send his staff to several different locations to retrieve parts for the repairs. Mr. Scholl agreed to get invoices prepared for the repairs to date so the town will know what the liability will be.

Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown read an emailed letter from Mr. Rich Moore with *McDavid Associates Inc.* as Mr. Moore was unavailable to attend the meeting tonight. (See attached). Mr. Moore's letter indicated they had agreed to mark the water lines for the town since they had a crew in town marking the sewer lines. He stated they marked the lines with white paint noting they were using as built maps and the cut to the main line on May 21st was unavoidable as the maps didn't indicate any lines in the area of the cut. He continued that his crew was on-site May 26th and informed the fiber installers of the lines that were cut. He stated his company would absorb the cost to date from *Ralph Hodge Construction* for the five cuts to the water lines. He provided a list of options moving forward the town may want to consider before continuing with the installation of fiber as the town will bear the liability moving forward. He thanked the staff of *Ralph Hodge Construction* for all they have done to assist in the repairs of the cut lines to date.

Mr. Joseph Andrews commented on Mr. Moore's letter stating he had provided blue and green paint to the locators to use to mark the water and sewer lines. He stated the locators weren't on-site when the lines were cut on the 26th and he asked Dustin Norris to confirm this and Dustin confirmed his statement and said it was difficult to find the locators or to reach Mr. Moore by phone for questions and his crew was told to go by the white lines that were marked for water lines. Mr. Andrews listed the reasoning behind not being able to shift the fiber lines for installation. The fourth point Mr. Andrews made was how to proceed moving forward with the knowledge that there will be additional cuts and the need to repair lines. He stated this was the biggest problem they need to address with the town at this time.

Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown stated Mayor Murphy has reached out to Sampson County officials requesting the county's help in locating the water/sewer lines so fiber installation can move forward. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown read a letter from Mr. Ed. Causey in response to the request. (See attached). The county is willing to assist the town with the location of lines using their equipment and staff as long as the town signs a written agreement holding them harmless for any liability or cost associated with their locating the lines. Mayor Pro Tem Brown stated he is appreciative of the county for assisting us with this free of charge. He stated Mayor Murphy has also reached out to Rural Water regarding assisting with line locations and they can't be in town to assist until next Tuesday.

Mayor Pro Tem Brown stated he is open for suggestions moving forward from his fellow board members. He stated we don't have staff who can handle these water line cuts, and we don't know how much it will cost moving forward. Commissioner Bronson, Jr. stated they could pack up and leave town. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland stated the town currently has cable services and while fiber is nice, the town just can't withstand these costs. Commissioner

Barbara A. Peterson stated we can't afford it. Mr. Jeff Ship stated they have approximately 100 customers in town and the current cable in town will be decommissioned in a year leaving those citizens without video or internet. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown noted he just seen Mayor Murphy come into the meeting remotely and ask her if she had any comments. Mayor Murphy stated we need to find a way to move this project forward in order to provide citizens with fiber and she thanked *Star Communications* for working to get fiber in our town. She stated we needed to look closer at our budget and find less expensive ways to get the cut lines repaired. She asked if *Star Communication* could wait until next Tuesday when Rural Water can be in town to locate lines. Mr. Ship suggested maybe everyone would want to sleep on this and make a decision regarding moving forward next Tuesday.

Commissioner Eddie Bronson, Jr. asked once the fiber is installed what is in it for the town currency wise. Mr. Ship discussed the investment they were making bringing fiber to the town. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland discussed her concerns of financial liability the town stands to incur fixing broken lines as a result of the fiber installation and determining where that money will come from. She asked why this installation has started when the board wasn't aware, they were here installing fiber, she asked who approved it, who signed the contract and why it wasn't brought before the board. Mayor Murphy replied that would be her as she had a conference call several weeks ago with several commissioners and representatives from *Star Communications* and she didn't take into consideration the costs of repairing broken lines at that time. She stated she felt the project needs to move forward and money can be moved from other departments to cover the costs associated with the fiber installation. The question was posed if the board was saying they wanted to scrap the project. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland indicated she needed more time to make such a decision. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown replied he understands fiber is the way of the future but asked who is going to fix these broken lines and how are we going to pay for it. Board members discussed options for repairing lines with Mr. Ken Scholl noting it is hard to determine costs that could be incurred because every cut is different depending on the size of the pipe, location and supplies needed for the repair. Cost saving options were discussed to include having repair supplies on hand versus having to go purchase supplies for each cut in the line. Mr. Scholl was asked if he could provide invoices for the repairs to date by next Tuesday and he stated he would provide the requested invoices.

Mayor Murphy stated it was important to move forward with the fiber installation for economic growth and attracting potential businesses who may be interested in purchasing *Brooks Brother's*. She stated it would be a travesty and a nail in the coffin for the town if we let this opportunity go. She stated with working collaboratively with *Star Communications*, Ken Scholl, the county and Rural Water to assist us, we can hopefully move forward with this project.

Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown stated he felt the county would be a big help in locating the lines moving forward. He stated the concern the board has tonight is there is another water leak on N. Herring Avenue from the fiber installation that was called in this afternoon around 4:00 pm that is still leaking, and we have no one to fix it. Mr. Ken Scholl was asked if they could assist us with this repair and he stated it would be helpful if someone could determine

what type of line was cut as his workers are back in Wilson at this time and they would need to know what supplies to bring to repair the leak. Board members agreed to go out to 124 N. Herring Avenue and assess the leak and contact Mr. Scholl with additional information regarding the leak.

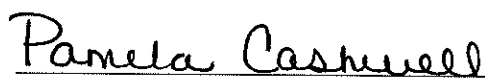
Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown stated so we will move forward with the county beginning to locate the lines tomorrow and hold off on fiber installation until next Tuesday and if a special meeting needs to be called at that time we can schedule one. He asked Mayor Murphy if she had any further comments and she clarified how the board wants to proceed as stated above. Mayor Murphy stated if the board wants to move forward with the county assisting with line location, they will need to approve her signing the agreement they provided before they can begin with line locations. Mayor Murphy asked the board if they were agreeing to move forward with the fiber installation and Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown stated the board wants to postpone the installation until they have additional time to think about it. Mayor Murphy stated she wanted him to call for a vote on the matter. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown asked if anyone wanted to make a motion to proceed with fiber installation and no motion was made.

Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown thanked everyone for attending the meeting and stated the board will approve the agreement with the county so they can begin locating lines and they will discuss this further next week.

Clerk Cashwell made copies of the agreement provide by Sampson County to locate the lines for free with no liability to the county. (See attached). Commissioner Barbara A. Peterson made a motion to approve Mayor Murphy to sign the agreement pending Attorney Maynard's review, seconded by Commissioner Jo A. Strickland and carried unanimously.

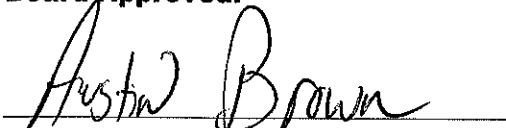
ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:17 pm, seconded by Commissioner Jo A. Strickland and carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:17 pm.



Pamela Cashwell, Town Clerk/Finance Officer

Board Approved:



Austin Brown, Mayor Pro Tem