

**TOWN OF GARLAND
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
THURSDAY, AUGUST 20, 2020
7:00 PM**

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Town of Garland was held via Zoom Meeting on Thursday, August 20, 2020 at 7:00 pm.

The following members of the Board of Commissioners were present:

**Austin Brown
Eddie Bronson, Jr.
Jo A. Strickland
Barbara A. Peterson
Carolyn R. Melvin**

Also present was Mr. Chase Jordan of the *Sampson Independent*. There were 2 citizens in attendance.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Winifred H. Murphy called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and welcomed everyone in attendance. Town Clerk, Pamela Cashwell, was present recording notes for the minutes.

QUORUM

Mayor Winifred H. Murphy and Clerk Pamela Cashwell established there was a quorum present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Winifred H. Murphy requested the Board review the agenda for approval. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown requested to add under 7. F. Public Works #6 Purchase Requests and to table 7. F. Public Works #4. Grease Traps. Mayor Murphy requested to table item 8. #4 Peddlers Permit. Mayor Austin Brown made a motion to approve the agenda as amended, seconded by Commissioner Carolyn R. Melvin and carried unanimously. (See attached).

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Vanessa Graham of 103 E. Fourth Street and Ms. Briana Graham of 1312 Garland Airport Road addressed the board and spoke about a mobile home her daughter placed behind her home. Ms. Vanessa Graham stated she was very apologetic about any of the things that were done incorrectly and stated they listened to people who they shouldn't have listened to. Ms. Vanessa Graham stated she was not personally aware that the water had been turned on at the mobile home and stated it was the contractor they hired who is responsible for this. She stated she understands there is a \$500.00 fee for turning the water on and stated her daughter wasn't aware the water was turned on and she asked the board to consider waiving the fee in light of the money her daughter has already expended in making repairs to the mobile home. She thanked the board for listening to her and stated she would be glad to answer any questions they may have for her. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown asked if they had purchased a zoning application and Ms. Briana Graham replied, "yes I did". Mayor Pro Tem

Brown asked if it was approved by the Zoning Board. Ms. Briana Graham stated she hadn't received any information back from her zoning application. Ms. Briana Graham stated she turned the pictures in yesterday as she wasn't aware, she had to provide pictures when she turned in her zoning application. Mayor Murphy asked Ms. Vanessa Graham who owns the mobile home that was moved behind her property. Ms. Vanessa Graham stated the mobile home is in Briana Graham's name and it was moved onto the property of Ms. Vanessa Graham. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland asked what the size of the lot was that this mobile home was placed on. Ms. Vanessa Graham stated she could look on some of her paperwork and determine this, but she didn't know off the top of her head the size of the lot. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland asked if there are any more residences on this same lot and both Ms. Graham's replied no, there is not. Mayor Murphy asked Ms. Vanessa Graham, the person who connected the water, you're saying you didn't know what he did. Ms. Vanessa Graham replied, no ma'am, I thought he was connecting pipe not the water, as she didn't think he would be able to do this. She stated she knew the town would have to be consulted about the water being turned on. She stated she had no idea he had turned the water on, she thought he was just getting the pipes ready for when they were ready to turn on the water. Mayor Murphy asked for the name of the person they hired who connected the water. Ms. Vanessa Graham stated Briana would have to give her that information. Mayor Murphy asked Ms. Briana Graham for the name of the person who connected the water. Ms. Briana Graham replied his name is Harris, she stated she didn't know how to pronounce his last name and stated Hondeous. Mayor Murphy stated she was going to advise the board members to consult with the town attorney because what we have here is meter tampering that carries a \$500.00 fine. She stated the mobile home was moved illegally without a zoning application filed and the process would have been to receive an approved zoning permit and then get additional permits from the county for the set-up, electrical and plumbing. She advised Ms. Graham not to complete any further work on the mobile home until she is able to obtain the proper permits. The Zoning Board will make a recommendation to the board members in reference to the zoning application submitted. Mayor Murphy requested Ms. Briana Graham to provide a title to the mobile home in her name along with the name and phone number of the contractor she hired that performed the plumbing work.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

ADMINISTRATION

Mayoral Report- Mayor Murphy stated she has been receiving a lot of phone calls lately from citizens about various issues and from companies who have an interest in the *Brooks Brothers* building. She stated they had a potential buyer with a purchase agreement, but they keep extending the bidding period to try and attract higher bids. She stated our goal is to attract a buyer who will be willing to put employees back to work as soon as possible.

FINANCE

Budget versus Actual – Clerk Pamela Cashwell provided copies of the current budget vs. actual report to the Board. (See attached).

Bank Statements/A.P. Check Listing – Clerk Pamela Cashwell provided copies of the bank statements for all three accounts as well as the AP check report from July 17-August 12, 2020. (See attached).

Internal Control Monthly Reviews – Clerk Cashwell informed the Board that Commissioner Eddie Bronson, Jr. is on the rotation schedule for this month to meet with the Mayor and Clerk to complete the monthly internal review checklists.

Credit Card Purchases – Clerk Pamela Cashwell reviewed and provided copies of the credit card purchases for the month to the Board. (See attached).

Budget Amendment 20-21-02- Clerk Cashwell presented Budget Amendment #20-21-02 to the Board. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown made a motion to approve Budget Amendment #2020-2021-02 as presented, seconded by Commissioner Jo A. Strickland and carried unanimously. (See attached).

Pre-Buy Plan for Heating Oil- Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown made a motion to approve the pre-buy option in the amount of \$1,614.06, seconded by Commissioner Jo A. Strickland and carried unanimously. (See attached).

2019-2020 Audit Contract- Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown made a motion to approve the 2019-2020 Audit Contract in the amount of \$10,750.00, seconded by Commissioner Carolyn R. Melvin and carried unanimously. (See attached).

BUILDINGS/CEMETERY

Cemetery Update- Clerk Cashwell reported Mr. Neil Carroll and Mr. Randy Boone completed maintenance on the roads at the Garland Cemetery and she was very appreciative for this work. They placed gravel rock at both entrances and dirt on the road that washes out while leveling the road as much as possible. Mayor Murphy stated some additional maintenance work needs to be completed at both cemeteries and suggested possibly some seeding of grass at the Garland Community Cemetery. She requested committee members go out and assess needs at both cemeteries and report back to board members. Mayor Murphy stressed it is vitally important that we get the cemetery records up to date and stressed it will help prevent issues with burial sites for now and for future generations. She informed the board members that our software developers are working on a cemetery module that should be ready for use in the fall and suggested this may assist us with getting our records up to date.

Town Hall- Clerk Cashwell updated board members regarding the issues with the restroom renovations at Town Hall. She went and picked out three-restroom vanities that when installed, will cover up the holes left in the wall from the previous installers and *Lowe's* has agreed to cover the costs on the vanities and installation. The urinal that is still in the box for the men's restroom will be returned to *Lowe's* for a credit. Mayor Murphy and Clerk Cashwell have been in conversations with the district managers and they requested one contact person from the town to resolve these issues. Clerk Cashwell will be the contact person to assist with resolution of the issues with the restroom renovations.

PARKS/RECREATION

Updates- Mayor Murphy stated the parks remain closed due to the Covid-19 Pandemic and stated Commissioner Bronson, Jr. may need to get public works employee to place additional tape around the parks especially the C. D. Cain Memorial Park as visits have been seen at the closed park. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown read an email he received from Mrs. Wanda Johnson stating a light pole/light on the large ballfield was down from the recent storm. She also asked when the top to the dugout on the large field was going to be replaced. Commissioner Eddie Bronson, Jr. stated he received the email from Mrs. Johnson and states they will have time to take care of this prior to the start of the season next year. Mayor

Murphy stated employees, Randy Boone and Alexis Devane went out and surveyed the ballpark after the last storm and didn't identify any issues at that time. She stated Commissioner Eddie Bronson, Jr. may need to send Randy Boone back out to the park to determine damages reported. Commissioner Eddie Bronson, Jr. stated he will contact Mr. Leo Skinner and have him assess the damage to the light at the large ballfield. Clerk Cashwell reminded board members that we still have open insurance claims on past damage to the parks and she informed them if this is new damage, it will need to be documented with photos and at least an estimate of time as to when the damage occurred as this will be a new claim.

STREETS

Updates- Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown stated the only thing he has on streets is to get the Powell Bill Street Assessment work started as they will need to spend some money to correct the identified maintenance needs. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland stated now that things have calmed down some, she will get with Clerk Cashwell to review the list of needed repairs. Mayor Murphy requested Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown and Commissioner Jo A. Strickland to go ahead and get started on the items that can be completed with supplies we already have on hand or for equipment we have that can be used for repairs and maintenance. Clerk Cashwell informed board members that Neil Carroll and Randy Boone had reported several sink holes they have identified around town and she had informed them to notify Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown of these areas. She stated they had said none of the issues in the roads were from areas that the sewer improvement project is being completed.

PUBLIC WORKS – WATER/SEWER/GARBAGE

Nuisance Properties- Mayor Murphy reported some letters have been sent out to property owners and she reminded the board members they were to give the deputy clerks names of any properties that were a nuisance so letters can be mailed out. She stated she did hear from the owner of the old movie theater and he is aware of the rodents and he has asked for a ten-day extension to respond to the nuisance letter he received.

Summer Cleanup- Mayor Murphy and Board Members discussed issues encountered during the announced Summer Clean-Up. Staff haven't finished the project and the discarded items remain curbside and needs to be picked up. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown made a motion to designate August 24th-26th for staff to complete the Summer Clean-Up, seconded by Commissioner Carolyn R. Melvin and carried unanimously.

Water Fountain & Clock Repair- Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown and Commissioner Eddie Bronson, Jr. had someone to come out and assess the water fountain in Rotary Park. The fountain itself is crumbling and would have to be replaced at an estimated cost of \$7,000 to \$10,000.00. The base of the fountain is in good shape and they discussed possibly removing the top portion of the fountain and getting a pump that would put a stream of water from the base of the fountain as a more cost conservative resolution. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown stated he would need the name of the vendor who repaired the clock previously. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland recommended checking with a local vendor to see if they could possibly fix the clock. She agreed to contact someone and inquire if they could repair the clock. No decision was made for the water fountain repairs.

Sewage Blockage- Board members considered two quotes for replacing the sewer pipes that have roots growing into the lines causing the ongoing sewage blockage for residents in that location. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown made a motion to approve the quote submitted by Mr.

Steven Price in the amount of \$700.00, seconded by Commissioner Jo A. Strickland and carried unanimously. (See attached).

Purchase Requests- Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown made a motion to purchase twelve locks for public works at a cost of \$151.62, seconded by Commissioner Barbara A. Peterson and carried unanimously. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown stated there are additional maintenance items needed for the lawnmowers that he plans to purchase for public works.

SAFETY

Commissioner Jo A. Strickland stated there are a lot of issues for public safety at this time. She discussed the recent break-in at the funeral home and stated there have been other petty incidents that have occurred as well. She noted an elderly gentleman at a local business was touching himself inappropriately and she has observed individuals purchase alcohol and hand it off to juveniles near her home. She stated she doesn't know how the town will get a handle on these issues without some type of police presence, she stated she understands at this time it isn't in the budget to have this coverage, but it is something the board members need to start discussing and planning towards, as she doubts the situations are going to improve without some sort of coverage. Mayor Murphy thanked her for her report and stated we can reach out and request move coverage from the Sampson County Sheriff's Office and the N.C. Highway Patrol Unit. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland stated she had noticed increased coverage from them and noted the N.C. Highway Patrol officer was being proactive in slowing down traffic especially on Highway 701. Mayor Murphy stated everyone needs to be vigilant and watch out for each other as well.

Fire Department Inspection- Mayor Winifred Murphy stated the Garland Volunteer Fire & Rescue is scheduled for a state inspection in November and the town needs to work with them with whatever they need as these inspections determine the fire rating for the town and she doesn't want residents to face increasing insurance premiums. She suggested some of the board members may want to reach out to them and offer to meet with them regarding the upcoming inspection. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland stated she would contact them. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland also advised the elections would be held at the Garland Volunteer Fire & Rescue Building from now on beginning with the election in November 2020. Mayor Murphy stated early voting would not be in Garland in November 2020 but will be held in several other locations.

OLD BUSINESS

Neptune Software Upgrades- Clerk Cashwell presented the quote to upgrade the Neptune Software in the amount of \$12,639.37. She stated part of the budget amendment approved earlier tonight was to cover these costs. (See attached). Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown made a motion to approve the quote as presented, seconded by Commissioner Barbara A. Peterson and carried unanimously.

Code Enforcement & Zoning, Fines and Penalties- Mayor Murphy stated the Planning Board will meet Monday night to consider several zoning applications. She stated the town needs to update ordinances with fines and penalties and have detailed remedies outlined in writing for Code Enforcement violations and Zoning violations. Board Members discussed several zoning violations currently present in town and in the ETJ areas. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland stated this asking for forgiveness instead of permission is going to get the town in a bind and we have to draw a line. Board Members were all in agreement for Mayor Murphy

to contact the town's attorney to address some of these violations and to institute notifications to the property owners of their violations and associated penalties and fines that will be assessed up to and until the violations have been resolved.

CARES Funding, Accountability, and Purchasing Needs- Clerk Cashwell reviewed the CARES ACT Funding paperwork she placed in the board packets. (See attached). She stated the amount the Town of Garland will receive totals \$50,820.00. Clerk Cashwell provided them with a list of purchases that have already be purchased that are directly related to the Covid-19 Pandemic. Board members discussed various things the town could consider using the funds for that are related to Covid-19. Some of the items included: backpack sprayers and cleaning formula to use to clean the equipment around both parks, cleaning and sanitizing town hall, changing the front entrance to town hall to a hands free operating door, sanitizing stations for the town owned buildings and park areas, assisting local businesses who have Covid-19 related expenses. Mayor Murphy also stated the town could hire someone to assist managing the grant as long as that was all that they worked on. Board members stated the phone system and the computers ordered are to facilitate social distancing among employees and remote working, have been ordered and the CARES ACT Funding will cover these expenditures.

Updated Award & Update Spending Plan- Clerk Cashwell informed the board she had given them a copy of the initial Spending Plan that was submitted when we were allocated money from the first round of funding. She informed the Board now that the second round of funding has been allocated the Town of Garland will receive \$50,820.00 direct deposited into our banking account and we are required to update the Spending Plans for the CARES ACT Funding by September 1, 2020. (See attached). Mayor Murphy and Board members reviewed the spending plan and discussed various option to update the plan using the current allocation amounts. After a detailed discussion, Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown made a motion to allocate \$30,820.00 to 2. Public Health Expenses, \$10,000.00 to 4. Expenses of actions to facilitate compliance with Covid-19 related public health measures and \$10,000.00 to 5. Expenses associated with the provision of economic support in connection with Covid-19 public health emergency. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Jo A. Strickland and carried unanimously. (See attached).

NEW BUSINESS

FirstNet Phone Proposal- Clerk Cashwell reviewed information she and Mayor Murphy received from attending an electronic meeting with representative from *FirstNet*. (See attached). Clerk Cashwell stated the town could opt to go with *FirstNet* for cellular phone service and this would be a dedicated line for emergency situations to where the network could be able to handle the call volume during times of emergencies. The town can purchase a smart phone for \$0.99 and the monthly charge would be \$39.99 for unlimited phone, text and data usage. The town would also receive a \$200.00 credit toward the bill after a few months of service that would help cover the cost of the monthly service. Board members and staff are also eligible to receive this offer as well. Sampson County recently tested the phone service system for months and opted to go with this company for cellular service. Clerk Cashwell recommended the board consider going with *FirstNet* and purchasing three phones, two for public works employees and one for Mayor Winifred Murphy as she has paid for her own cellular service for the past six years that I know of and she gets an extraordinary amount of call volume from citizens and others for town related

business. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown made a motion to purchase three phones as suggested above from *FirstNet* for the Town of Garland, seconded by Commissioner Carolyn R. Melvin and carried unanimously. Several members voiced potential interest in this service and requested additional information from *FirstNet* prior to making a final decision for their cellular phone services. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown made a motion to cancel services with *U S Cellular* once the other phones are activated, seconded by Commissioner Jo A. Strickland and carried unanimously.

MINUTES APPROVAL

Mayor Murphy stated she hasn't finished reviewing the minutes submitted by Deputy Clerk Devane and asked the board to table minutes approval. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown made a motion to table minutes approval, seconded by Commissioner Jo A. Strickland and carried unanimously.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS/CONDOLENCES

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

Congratulations to Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown and Clerk Pamela Cashwell for passing the test to become Certified in Environmental Review for the CDBG Funding.

CLOSED SESSION

Commissioner Jo A. Strickland made a motion to enter into closed session at 9:03 pm pursuant to G.S.143-318.11(3) Attorney-Client Privilege and (6) Personnel, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown and the motion carried unanimously.

Closed Session started at 9:10 pm after a brief recess.

Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown made a motion to exit closed session at 9:46 pm, seconded by Commissioner Jo A. Strickland and carried unanimously.

OPEN SESSION

No action taken during Closed Session.

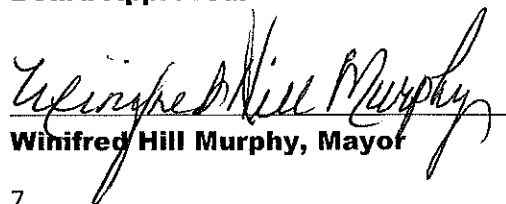
ADJOURNMENT

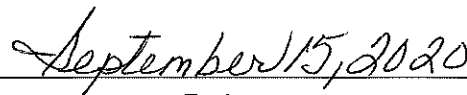
Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Jo A. Strickland and carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:47 pm.



Pamela Cashwell, Town Clerk/Finance Officer

Board Approved:


Winifred Hill Murphy, Mayor



Date