

TOWN OF GARLAND  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
TUESDAY, September 5, 2023  
6:30 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, August 1, 2023, at 6:30 pm.

The following members of the Board of Commissioners were present:

Mayor Pro Tem Carolyn R. Melvin  
Commissioner Barbara A. Peterson  
Commissioner Ralph Smith, Jr.  
Commissioner Haywood Johnson  
Commissioner Jo A. Strickland

Also present: Town Clerk Jennifer Gray, citizens Adam Smith, Todd Marshall, Wendy Taylor, Bob Graczyk, KC Johnson, Andrea White, Jamie Harper, Shauna Harper, Erin Wall, Billy Lane, Lydia Fryar, Jacqueline Johnson.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Brown called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm and welcomed everyone in attendance. Town Clerk, Jennifer Gray, was present and recorded notes for the minutes.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Austin Brown led everyone in the pledge of allegiance.

INVOCATION

A citizen offered the invocation.

QUORUM

Mayor Austin Brown and Clerk Jennifer Gray established there was a quorum present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Brown requested board members review the agenda for approval. It was requested that the following item be added to the agenda.

- ❖ Mayor Brown requested to add 6A Envirolink Report offered by Andrew White.

Commissioner Haywood Johnson made a motion to approve the agenda with said changes, seconded by Commissioner Jo Strickland the motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Todd Marshall read aloud a letter from the Garland Softball League. It says “the Garland Softball League is composed, comprised of five committee members, a secretary, league support staff, various coaches, coaching support staff, and league players. Committee members, secretaries, coaches, and coaching support staff are all volunteers from our community and surrounding communities. It has been a goal of ours, a goal intention of the Garland Softball League committee members to collaborate with the Town of Garland and the commissioners to provide a fun and healthy summertime event for our youth and the youth of surrounding communities. The Garland Softball Committee members have always

welcomed Town Commissioners advice and support, and have never blackmailed nor bullied any commissioner, nor have the committee members spoken negatively of the Town of Garland in any social media post nor public forum. The GSF committee even spoke highly of the town, the town of Garland and Commissioner Melvin during an interview with The Sampson Independent during one of our sporting events. During the last Garland meeting, the softball league was berated with negative and defamatory comments from certain commissioners, and it even said that those people are crazy and need to get a life, referring to the league. Just to point out, the situations which Commissioner Ralph Smith was speaking about were not posted. Nor said by any member of the actual Garland Softball League. Some of his comments were just speculations with no foundational evidence. The Garland Softball League has its own independent Facebook page titled Garland Softball League. This page is used to post updates to schedules, updates to the softball season, and to post pictures of the league players who willingly come to Garland to play softball. There has never been a post that reflects negatively at Town of Garland or any of the commissioners on that page. The Garland Softball League cannot control everyone's personal Facebook, nor any Facebook groups."

As representatives of the Garland Softball League, we would like to notate that the actual Garland Softball League was wrongfully accused of the actions in which were reflected onto us by Commissioner Ralph Smith. What has the actual Garland Softball League done to cause this type of reaction and emotion? The concerning situations are not being performed or condoned by the actual volunteer people that the Garland Softball League has compromised on. As stated in the first paragraph, that behavior does not need to forecast on to the people who do spend a large portion of their life planning for, organizing, and participating in this summertime event. As stated previously, it has been our goal to collaborate and work with the Town of Garland and the commissioners to provide a fun and healthy summertime event, all while bringing in extra resources that are beneficial to the town. This is not a competition, nor should we be in one, or in defense against each other. When all should be the same, what our town goal is, Goodness grows in Garland. The league committee welcomes any input and support from town commissioners to assist with the continuation of softball league for our youth and our community. GSL is simply a group of volunteers and players who dedicate our time for the potential betterment of Garland. That should be the goal of our commissioners. We look forward to next season and collaborating with you on providing great experience for our youth and community. It was also said we were tough to deal with by Commissioner Smith. I have on this page, on these handouts here, if you will take one, there's one for each of you if you want it, do with it what you want. But if you pass it on, there's one for each of you, my communication personally with him and everything else. These is what Ms. Carolyn and I, the communications we had via text, y'all. If anybody else is presenting themselves as being from the league, that's not us. There's five committee members of us. If y'all are willing to work with us, we're willing to work with y'all. If somebody else comes to you, it's not on our behalf. If anything's got to be said, normally, Ms. Wanda Johnson, or myself, comments or reaches out to everybody. Thank you.

Ms. Barbara Peterson addressed the audience with the following. "I'm speaking on behalf of citizens, not commissioners, Barber Peterson at this moment. It was brought to my attention. Quote unquote that I said, that I said, that I didn't say. So, I'm standing before my commissioners and my board members with an apology of a statement that I did say that I didn't say. I have said to Commissioner Carolyn, to Commissioner Ralph and I think I said it to Commissioner Johnson. And I know I said it to Deputy Clerk Shauna, that I enjoy being on this board at this time because the board members we have now, quote on quote, you can make this one go down on record, I said this, okay? I don't do. Drama, but this was brought to my attention. This was sent to me. That I made a statement, these are not my words the person said, but her words, which is a lie. That I called my fellow board members a bunch of dumbasses. That's not what I said. I said, quote unquote, and I'm woman enough to stand here at 61 years of age and tell you what I said. I said, I enjoyed being on this board member at this time with these fellow board members that we have, because in the past, in the past, with past fellow board members, we

couldn't get along. We was being called out of our name. We would disagree. and could not agree, then we was called a bunch of dumbasses. That's what I said. I didn't say this, but I said in the past we were called a bunch of dumbasses. Now I'm a dumbass if I sit here and call somebody a dumbass and I'm on the board. Okay? So I wanted to be clear. At this present moment, no it was not the softball league, but it was softball affiliated. That I say that? I'm not talking to you, baby. I'm not talking to you because you didn't say it. The name is tagged in the text that I received. Who said it? But I want to be clear today. If anybody got an issue with Barbara Ann Peterson. And I mean what I say. If anybody got an issue with Barbara Ann... Peterson. I don't give a damn who it is. Now, I'm pissed, okay? And I've been toting this around for a minute since I got this text. And I let it go. And I don't bother nobody. But y'all don't know who you're messing with, okay? I try to stay in a comfort zone and live a drama free life. And I try to treat people the way I like to be treated. But I don't entertain drama and I don't entertain BS, okay? So let it be known now, if you're going to quote something I said, say it the way I said it. Don't break it down and put it in a version that you want it to be said. Don't lie on me. Because the individual that said that I said that, me and her ain't never had a word in my life. We ain't never had a conversation in my life. So how am I going to tell you something and you say quote unquote? Don't do that. Don't do that. Now, I am Commissioner Barbara Peterson. And like I said, if anybody got an issue with me, I think you know how to get up with me. I think you know how to get up with me, if you got a problem with me. Cause I am not, and I mean what I say, I am not the one to be played with. I mean, what I say now, I'm Commissioner Barbara Peterson."

Commissioner Ralph Smith added, and also I'd like to comment just a second on what I say. I stand by everything I said and every word.

Commissioner Haywood Johnson added, I guess I might as well clean it up. I'm not going to say I'm above drama, but I sure am not drama. There ain't going to be any. So what I'm going to do so this don't happen again, cause I'd hate to get revved up. I have limited words. I like action. So what I'm going to do, I want. I don't know one thing about no ball field, nothing. But I do know that the Town of Garland owns that ball field. So what I want done, and I'm going to make a motion to this and that, I want the paperwork of whatever trailer that ball field brought to the town hall. And then we'll take care of it from there. That's my motion.

Mayor Brown stated, you can't do that public comment. You have to add it to the agenda.

#### ENVIROLINK REPORT

Report given by Andrew White, director of Operations with Envirolink. Mr. White stated that going forward the report will be provided a week prior to the meeting. A couple things that happened in the last month. Preparation for the tropical storm that had to be completed which included preparation for all of your generators, everything was fueled. The town's help on getting that accomplished was appreciated. There was an inspection by DQ on the wastewater plant. Couple highlights from that inspection. The first thing that DEQ mentioned was secondary containment. For the chlorine barrels, disinfection location, basically, a secondary way to, should a barrel spill, chlorine doesn't go in the ground. There are still some nutria holes that were addressed a while back that need to be repaired. There was an inspection by DEQ on the wastewater plant. Couple highlights from that inspection. DEQ recommended the purchase of a spare chemical pump for chlorine disinfection. It is not required to have a spare, but a spare is recommended. Wire mesh has been installed in an effort to reduce turtles coming in the effluent pipe.

#### COMMISSIONER REPORTS

##### FINANCE

Credit Card Purchases: Clerk Gray explained that the most credit card purchases have been for tools and items to make repairs around town.

BVA & A.P. Check Listing: Clerk Gray provided the listing for both. Mayor Brown expressed his concern about the spending for streets and public works and stated that spending for streets and public works be scaled down.

Audit Contract : Clerk Gray presented the board with an Audit Contract from Belinda Johnson CPA out of Charlotte NC. The auditor from previous years was unable to complete the audit for the town for the previous year's financials. Clerk Gray did not know that the previous auditor had not been retained for the upcoming audit due to the LGC by October 31, 2023. The board discussed the predicament. Commissioner Ralph Smith made a motion to approve the contract as stated, the motion was seconded by Commissioner Barbara Peterson and the motion was carried unanimously.

BJ Williamson Gas Proposal : Clerk Gray provided a quote from BJ Williamson Gas for the upcoming gas needs for the town for the winter months ahead. The board discussed the quote. A motion was made to approve the contract offer as stated by Commissioner Ralph Smith, seconded by Commissioner Haywood Johnson and the motion was carried unanimously.

Southern Bank CD : A motion was made by Commissioner Haywood Johnson to move the money market money to a CD, seconded by Commissioner Barbara Peterson for a term of 12 months. The motion was carried unanimously.

November 7, 2023 Board Meeting: The November 7th board meeting falls on election day. Commissioner Haywood Johnson made a motion to move the November 7<sup>th</sup> meeting to November 14<sup>th</sup>, seconded by Commissioner Barbara Peterson . The motion was carried unanimously.

#### BUILDINGS/CEMETERY

There was discussion on repairing the Town Hall roof. This item was tabled until the October 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting pending quotes for roof repairs.

#### PARKS AND RECREATION

The fence at the softball field was discussed. Commissioner Johnson has made a motion to approve the estimate. Contingent upon if the clerk can find the money. Seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Carolyn Melvin. The motion passed 3 to 2. Mayor Pro Tem Carolyn Melvin, Commissioner Haywood Johnson and Commissioner Barbara Peterson voted yes. Commissioner Jo Strickland and commissioner Ralph Smith voted no.

There was a lengthy discussion about the Garland Softball League and the Town of Garland in regard to running the Garland Softball Fields. Commissioner Haywood Johnson has made a motion to take over the Garland Softball League, seconded by Commissioner Ralph Smith. The motion was carried four to one. Mayor Pro Tem Carolyn Melvin, Commissioner Haywood Johnson, Commissioner Barbara Peterson and commissioner Ralph Smith voted yes. Commissioner Jo Strickland voted no.

#### STREETS

Public Works Jonathan Herring compiled a list of surplus items. The board discussed the items on the list and agreed with everything on the list except for the large John Deere tractor, stating that it should be kept as a backup. Items to be sold are the military generator, military fuel tank, Dixie Chopper

Mower, the small John Deere tractor and the Mahindra Tractor. Commissioner Ralph has made a motion to approve the items listed for surplus sale with the exception of the large John Deere Tractor. Commissioner Haywood Johnson seconded the motion, and the motion was carried unanimously.

Commissioner Johnson addressed the board regarding the parking spaces for town employees and the Mayor. Commissioner Johnson stated that anyone that is parking in the Mayor or employee parking spaces that is not holding those positions, vehicle should be towed at the owner's expense. Commissioner Johnson made a motion that anyone parking in an unauthorized space, vehicle will be towed at the owner's expense. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion, and the motion was carried unanimously.

#### PUBLIC WORKS – WATER/SEWER/GARBAGE

The generator for Well #4 has been ordered and Clerk Gray is working with an ARPA specialist for payment of the project.

Well #4 repairs have been made and the well is back online running at full capacity.

A hotel room has been secured for Public Works Jonathan Herring to attend class at Wilkesboro Community College.

Andrew White gave an update on the State Inspection earlier in his report to the board.

#### SAFETY

Clerk Gray updated the board regarding community service hours for the individuals who broke into the old Garland Head Start Building.

#### OLD BUSINESS

None

#### NEW BUSINESS

Planning Board Appointment: Kimberly Moffitt with the Mid Carolina Council of Government provided a list of citizens recommended to sit on the Planning/Zoning Board for the town. Velda Brown, Chancey Phillips, Adam Smith, Keshia Johnson and Kyle Cashwell have agreed to be part of this board. Mayor Pro-Tem Carolyn Melvin will act as the liaison between the Planning Board and the Garland Board of Commissioners. Deputy Clerk Shauna Harper will serve as clerk to the Planning Board. Commissioner Ralph Smith made a motion to approve the planning board seconded by Commissioner Barbara and the motion was carried unanimously.

AIA Consultant Selection: Commissioner Ralph Smith made a motion to accept Withers Ravenel as our AIA consultant, seconded by Commissioner Jo Strickland and the motion was carried unanimously.

Trunk or Treat Donation: The volunteers requested \$400 for the Trunk or Treat Event. I think that's what we do. Yeah. Okay. And they've also asked that the town approve the Christmas toy drive and the Christmas tree lighting ceremonies so they can go ahead and start planning. A motion was made by Commissioner Barbara Peterson to approve two events as stated seconded by Commissioner Haywood, the motion was carried unanimously.

Commissioner Barbara has made a motion to allow the volunteer group to use the senior building for their meetings, seconded by Commissioner Ralph Smith and the motion was carried unanimously.

Senior Center Day Celebration 2023. The senior participants of the Garland Senior Center, Department of Aging, and staff invite the Town of Garland Board and Staff to the Garland Senior Center Day. This annual event is a celebration that helps to encourage senior citizens to see what the center has to offer. The celebration will be held on September The 21st, 2023 at Garland Senior Center from 11 a. m. until 2 p. m. The theme for this year's event is called Discovery Awards. This year's Senior Center Day will feature Sampson County Health Department, blood pressure, Check flu shots if available.

Scarlett Norris is moving into the Addie Norris house. Commissioner Ralph Smith made a motion to reconnect the water to this property, seconded by Commissioner Haywood Johnson and the motion was carried 4 to 1. Mayor Pro Tem Carolyn Melvin, Commissioner Haywood Johnson, Commissioner Barbara Peterson and commissioner Ralph Smith voted yes. Commissioner Jo Strickland voted no.

#### MINUTES APPROVAL

##### Regular Meeting – August 1, 2023

Commissioner Melvin recommended corrections be made to the August 1, 2023 Regular Meeting minutes. Commissioner Smith made a motion to adopt the minutes with suggested changes, the motion was seconded by Commissioner Johnson, and the motion was carried unanimously.

#### CLOSED SESSION

Commissioner Haywood Johnson made the motion to enter closed session for personnel. Mayor Pro-Tem Carolyn Melvin seconded the motion, and the motion was carried 4 to 1. Mayor Pro Tem Carolyn Melvin, Commissioner Haywood Johnson, Commissioner Barbara Peterson and commissioner Ralph Smith voted yes. Commissioner Jo Strickland voted no.

No action was taken in closed session.

#### ADJOURNMENT

With there being nothing further to discuss, Commissioner Ralph Smith made a motion to adjourn, Commissioner Haywood Johnson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Duly adopted this the 3rd day of October, 2023 while in regular session.

  
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Austin Brown, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
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Jennifer Gray  
Town Clerk/Finance Officer