

**TOWN OF GARLAND
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2020
6:00 PM**

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Town of Garland was held virtually via Zoom Meeting on Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at 6:00 pm.

The following members of the Board of Commissioners were present:

**Austin Brown (Present in the Boardroom)
Eddie Bronson, Jr. (Present Virtually)
Jo A. Strickland (Present in the Boardroom)
Barbara A. Peterson (Present in the Boardroom)
Carolyn R. Melvin (Present Virtually)**

Also present virtually: Mayor Winifred Hill Murphy, Attorney Alan Maynard, Town Clerk Pamela Cashwell, Mr. Chase Jordan of the *Sampson Independent* and Mrs. Sylvia Chestnutt of the *Sampson Weekly*. There was 1 citizen in attendance virtually.

CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Winifred Hill Murphy requested the Board review the agenda for approval. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland requested to add under New Business: 2. Future Board Meetings and 3. Colleens' Water Bill, Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown requested to add under 7. F. Public Works #6 Purchase Requests and to delete #10. Closed Session. Mayor Winifred Hill Murphy requested to add under 7. F. #7. Ricky Brown Contract: delete under #8. approval of both sets of closed session minutes, add under 5. A. #2 Sextant Water Fountain, under 6. #2. Business subgrants from CARES ACT funding, #3. Public Works position, and #4. New phone systems. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown made a motion to approve the agenda as amended, seconded by Commissioner Jo A. Strickland and carried unanimously. (See attached).

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were received.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

ADMINISTRATION

Mayoral Report- Mayor Winifred Hill Murphy stated she would do a report but at a later time.

FINANCE

Budget versus Actual – Clerk Pamela Cashwell provided copies of the current budget vs. actual report to the Board. (See attached). She stated the revenues and expenditures should be around 25% at the end of September 2020.

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 August 14 to September 10, 2020. (See attached).

Internal Control Monthly Reviews – Clerk Cashwell informed the Board that Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown is on the rotation schedule for this month to meet with the Mayor and Clerk to complete the monthly and quarterly internal review checklists.

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

CARES ACT Special Budget Ordinance- Clerk Cashwell read the CARES ACT Special Budget Ordinance aloud noting the money was received on August 24, 2020. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown made a motion to adopt the CARES ACT Special Budget Ordinance, seconded by Commissioner Jo A. Strickland and carried unanimously. (See attached).

CARES ACT Expenditures Spreadsheet- Clerk Cashwell reviewed the current expenditures to date from the CARES ACT Funding which totals \$7,494.50. (See attached).

BUILDINGS/CEMETERY

Cemetery Update- No updates at this time. Mayor Murphy asked if Commissioner Barbara A. Peterson could provide an update at the next meeting regarding updating cemetery records and maintenance care needed at the cemeteries.

Buildings Update- Mayor Murphy asked if Commissioners Barbara A. Peterson and Eddie Bronson Jr. would get together and decide what was needed for the outstanding insurance claims for buildings owned by the town.

PARKS/RECREATION

Updates- Commissioner Eddie Bronson Jr. stated he had contacted Mr. Harvey Herring in regard to repairing the dug out at the ballfield. No quote has been obtained as the top of the dug out will need to be placed back on the dugout before he can determine the extent of the damage repairs. Clerk Cashwell stated there is an open insurance claim for this repair and once the repairs are made, the claim can be submitted for payment. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown made a motion for Commissioner Eddie Bronson Jr. to proceed with getting the dug out repaired, seconded by Commissioner Jo A. Strickland and carried unanimously.

Monthly Fire Extinguisher Checks at Concession Stand and Other areas- Commissioner Carolyn Melvin stated the monthly fire extinguisher checks aren't being completed at the parks and recreation concession stand. Mayor Murphy stated the town owned buildings other than the town hall and senior center aren't being done either. After a brief discussion it was decided the deputy clerk would issue a work order for the public works staff to inspect all fire extinguishers monthly at the parks and recreation facilities and other town owned buildings.

Lighting Fixture Damage at Ball Park- Commissioner Eddie Bronson Jr. stated he needed permission from the board to contact Mr. Terry Long for a quote to repair the damaged lights at the ballfield. He stated he felt this would be a costly repair as it would require getting a

bucket truck to make the repairs. Board members agreed with obtaining a quote for needed repairs.

Sexton Water Fountain- Mayor Murphy discussed installing the donated water fountain at an alternate location since the park isn't ready for it to be installed there as previously planned. After a brief discussion, Commissioner Jo A. Strickland made a motion to table this item, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown and carried unanimously.

STREETS

Updates- Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown stated he is working on scheduling a time to meet with Commissioner Jo A. Strickland to discuss the Powell Bill Street Assessment and devise a plan to get the needed repairs and maintenance items completed.

Sink Hole on W. Second & Brown Avenue- Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown stated this sink hole was assessed by the NC DOT and determined to be a storm drain issue and they will be responsible for making the required repairs.

PUBLIC WORKS – WATER/SEWER/GARBAGE

Nuisance Properties- Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown asked board members to notify the deputy clerk of any nuisance properties so she can mail them a letter. Mayor Murphy stated she had identified some areas and letters have been sent. She encouraged follow-up on the letters that have been sent to determine if the areas had been cleaned up and if not to proceed with the next steps in the process to abate the nuisance. She asked that all board members participate in identifying problem areas town wide, so no specific areas are said to be targeted and the process is fair.

Violation Letters & Moratorium Letter- Commissioner Jo A. Strickland stated she had read the latest violation letter received by the town and asked why we are getting a violation for frequency of visits to the lagoon and lift stations when we have individuals hired to visit these sites regularly. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown responded they don't communicate with him. Mayor Murphy stated part of the problem is the ORC's didn't know how to access information from the SCADA system and noted they require additional training on the SCADA system. She stated there is a training session every Wednesday and she encouraged Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown, the ORC's and the deputy clerk to attend these training sessions. Mayor Murphy stated a lot of the reasons we had violations were a result of the town inheriting issues once the previous contracted vendor services were cancelled. She read aloud a letter she received today from Mr. Mark Brantley acknowledging the improvements made to the wastewater system and recognizing the contributions of our current ORC's, Mr. Neil Carroll and Mr. Brandon Hairr. Mr. Brantley stated they planned to work with the town in reducing the amount of fines associated with the six outstanding violations and requested the town send him a letter along with invoices to demonstrate how much money has been expended thus far by the town to make necessary improvements to the wastewater system. Mayor Murphy stated she was working on this request. She stated she had received notification that the proposed moratorium for the wastewater system was being lifted as well. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland requested the board members receive email copies of all violation letters received by the town.

Water Fountain & Clock Repair- Commissioner Jo A. Strickland contacted Mr. Gary Hall about repairing the town clock and he is scheduled to come out on October 14, 2020 to assess the clock. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown requested the Parks & Recreation Committee work on

getting an estimate to repair the water fountain at Rotary Park as he doesn't have time presently to work on this project.

Update on Water Line Repairs from Fiber Installation- Mayor Murphy provided an update and stated *Star Communications* is starting on phase three of the fiber installation and noted there was a main line break last week. She stated Mr. Richard Brown has been assisting with locating water/sewer lines and was willing to contract with the town in continuing to identify lines and consult with town staff on other issues involving public works.

R. Brown Contracted Services- Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown made a motion to contract with Mr. Richard Brown for \$599.00 annually to assist with identifying water/sewer lines and for consultative services, seconded by Commissioner Jo A. Strickland and carried unanimously.

Update on Sewer Line Repairs on Leroy Street- Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown reported the contractor completed the sewer line repairs on Leroy Street and the citizen was very happy the town made these repairs. He stated the contractor did a great job and left the area looking good after the repairs were made.

SAFETY

Fire Department Inspection Letter- Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown and Commissioner Jo A. Strickland provided an update on the upcoming fire inspection in November 2020 after meeting with the Assistant Fire Chief, Mr. Brandon Norris this past Sunday. Items discussed included the upcoming mandatory hydrostatic testing of water hydrants by January 2021 in which the town will be responsible for purchasing the equipment to test the hydrants as well as having public works staff do the testing or contracting with someone to complete the testing. The town will also be responsible for ensuring trees and limbs are cleared away from fire hydrants. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown briefly spoke about the possibility of the fire department requesting to purchase additional town-owned land to place a helipad and the possibility of the fire department hiring some paid firefighters to work during the day. Mayor Murphy stated the purpose of the November fire inspection is to try and lower the fire rating in order for citizens to have lower insurance premiums. She stated the town needed to work with the fire department in achieving this goal.

Mayor Murphy noted Commissioner Barbara A. Peterson had requested name badges with a photo for board members and staff at the August 2020 meeting and requested she work with the deputy clerk to get these ordered.

OLD BUSINESS

Code Enforcement & Zoning, Fines and Penalties- Attorney Alan Maynard stated he discovered the statute that called for a \$500.00 fine for meter tampering was repealed in 2017 and the current fine has been increased to up to \$5,000.00. He suggested drafting an amended ordinance to be reviewed at the next board meeting. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown reported he attended the zoning meeting, and he understands the fines per day for the three mobile homes that were moved into town without a zoning permit would be \$50.00 per day. Attorney Maynard stated the letters he sent to the three mobile homeowners did have a start date for the fines so the amount owed can be calculated easily. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown asked if we were going to do anything about the mobile homes or just keep letting the fines accrue? Attorney Maynard stated the town could set a deadline and then start additional enforcement. Mayor Murphy stated the letter also informed the homeowners they could

appeal the decision to the Board of Adjustments which would require a public hearing. The homeowner would be responsible for the cost of the appeal. One homeowner notified the town in writing today of their desire to appeal the decision of the Zoning Board. Mayor Murphy stated we will need Attorney Maynard's assistance when it comes to condemnation of properties. She stated the old depot has been sold to someone to tear it down. She stated Mr. E. L. Rackley has offered to give the town two parcels of land, one is behind the Family Dollar store and one is behind the daycare, in exchange for the town to agree to clear off any remaining debris from the property once the depot has been disassembled. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown stated that could be a great offer but suggested waiting until the purchaser has completed the removal before agreeing to the offer in order to assess if the public works staff could handle removal of what is left of the depot.

Business Subgrants from CARES ACT Funding- Mayor Murphy stated the board allocated \$10,000.00 of the Cares Act Funds to be used for Business Subgrants for Covid-19 related expenses. She stated she had drafted a notice for business owners outlining the kind of things that would be eligible for reimbursement. She noted the board needed to decide how much each business would be eligible to receive. She stated the business would be required to provide a W9 and they shouldn't be delinquent on their business registration fees or business and personal property taxes in order to receive grant funding. Discussion followed regarding hiring a temporary part-time person to work on the CARES ACT Funding only. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown made a motion to advertise for that position on the town's website and social media site, seconded by Commissioner Eddie Bronson Jr. and carried unanimously.

Public Works Position- Mayor Murphy stated she had sent the one application received to all the board members and asked that they review the application and make a decision on whether or not they would like to move forward with it.

New Phone Systems- Mayor Murphy stated the board had agreed to get two cell phones from *FirstNet* for public works and one for her and she stated she is declining this offer as the bills would have to go under the Town of Garland account so she will continue to use her personal cell for town business. Other board members declined getting a cell phone as well. She stated the new phone system has been installed at town hall and one is in the boardroom for use like tonight for virtual meetings and she stated the new system has the ability to direct calls to members of the board. Mayor Murphy requested each Committee Chair receive after hours calls that relate to their committee. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown stated he is Chairman of two of the largest committees and he would take Public Works calls only as long as the town employee is aware, he is on call for after hour calls as well. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland stated she would take calls on safety issues if they were before 9:00 pm. She stated her job description as a Commissioner didn't require her to be on call twenty-four hours a day. Commissioner Eddie Bronson Jr. stated he would take building and parks & recreation questions after hours, Commissioner Carolyn Melvin agreed to take parks & recreation calls after hours and Commissioner Barbara A. Peterson agreed to take building questions after hours.

Commissioner Eddie Bronson Jr. requested to go back to buildings before beginning New Business. He stated he would like for the board to talk with someone about cleaning the old police department, stating there is mold in there and the walls will need to be scrubbed down and painted. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown asked what the plans are for this building moving

forward. Mayor Pro Tem Brown also stated he felt like estimates needed to be obtained for the work mentioned prior to moving forward. Board members did agree that opening up the building to air out and placing fans inside the building could possibly help in the meantime.

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution Approving Clean Water State Revolving Fund Application- Clerk Cashwell read the resolution in its entirety for the board members. (See attached). Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown made a motion to approve the resolution as read, seconded by Commissioner Barbara A. Peterson and carried unanimously.

N.C. Department of Commerce Assessment- Mayor Murphy stated she had been in communication with Ms. Grace Lawrence and she is interested in doing a virtual needs assessment for the Town of Garland to identify potential resources for economic development. A virtual work group of interested citizens from varied backgrounds would be required to participate in this virtual assessment. Mayor Murphy stated she plans to be in further discussions with Ms. Lawrence in order to provide this assessment opportunity for the town.

Future Board Meetings- Commissioner Jo A. Strickland made a motion that we have all town meetings, from this day forward, to be held publicly at the Garland town hall and require all participants to be present in person to be counted. Motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown. Mayor Murphy stated she would like to ask if we do this, that everyone wear a mask and adhere to social distancing. She stated if the pandemic increases, this motion would need to be revisited. She also stated that the public would have to be limited to coming in a few at the time to speak in order to social distance. All voted in favor of the motion with Commissioner Eddie Bronson Jr. stating as long as all the employees come in too, stating they should be receiving a public works report monthly and Commissioner Carolyn Melvin adding as long as everyone wears a mask and social distances.

Colleen's Water Bill- Commissioner Jo A. Strickland reported issues with a major leak at Colleen's Grill in which she wasn't notified because the deputy clerk admitted to not completing the continuous use report. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland made a motion to adjust the water bill to \$140.00 for the current and previous months water bill which she stated is the customer's average, due to human error, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown and carried unanimously. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown then made a motion for the deputy clerk to complete the continuous use report a minimum of three times a week on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, seconded by Commissioner Barbara A. Peterson and carried unanimously. Mayor Murphy also stated the system needs to be backed up regularly to avoid a loss of data during outages.

MINUTES APPROVAL

July 21, 2020 Regular Meeting- Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Commissioner Barbara A. Peterson and carried unanimously. (See attached).

August 20, 2020 Regular Meeting- Commissioner Jo A. Strickland made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, 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.

Mayor Winifred Hill Murphy announced Community Day and the Trunk or Treat event will not be held this year due to the pandemic.

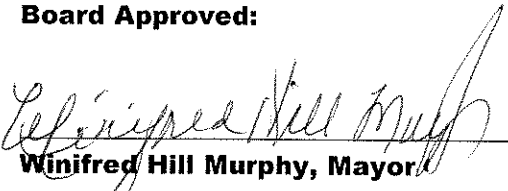
ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Jo A. Strickland made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown and carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:44 pm.



Pamela Cashwell, Town Clerk/Finance Officer

Board Approved:



Winifred Hill Murphy, Mayor