

## **Regular Meeting – February 21, 2023**

The Fairmont Board of Commissioners held their regular meeting on Tuesday, February 21, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. in the Fairmont-South Robeson Heritage Center with Mayor Charles Kemp presiding. Commissioners present were J.J. McCree, Terry Evans, Melvin Ellison, Heather Seibles and Clarence McNeill, Jr. Commissioner Jan Tedder-Rogers was absent. Staff present included Town Manager Jerome Chestnut, Town Clerk Jenny Larson, Town Attorney Jessica Scott, Public Works Director Ronnie Seals, Police Chief Jonathan Edwards, Officer Mason Locklear, Officer Carlie Sanderson, and Officer Denzel Burney. Several citizens were also present including Bishop Jerrod Moultrie, James Jones, David Richardson, Copeland Jacobs, and Joshua Outlaw.

### **Call to Order and Invocation**

Mayor Charles Kemp called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Bishop Jerrod Moultrie, Pastor of Oak Grove Baptist Church gave the invocation, which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Mayor's Presentations**

#### **Recognition of Director James Jones and TZK Thunder Zone Karate.**

Mayor Kemp recognized Thunder Zone Karate Director James Jones and his students for winning first place at the War Angel Challenge in Dillon, South Carolina.

#### **Introduction of new Police Officers – Mason Locklear, Carlie Sanderson, and Denzel Burney.**

Police Chief Jon Edwards introduced the town's newest police officers – Mason Locklear, Carlie Sanderson, and Denzel Burney, who recently completed BLET. With the addition of these new officers, the police department is now fully staffed.

### **Approval of Agenda**

Mayor Kemp asked the board to add Item F under New Business – CDBG-NR Grant Administration Services Bid Approval. Commissioner Evans made a motion to approve the amended agenda. Commissioner Ellison seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

### **Public Comment Period/Citizens Appearance**

There was no public comment this month.

### **Consent Agenda**

Upon motion by Commissioner Evans and seconded by Commissioner Ellison, it was unanimously voted to adopt the following consent agenda items:

- a. Approval of Minutes – Regular Meeting, January 17, 2023, and Issue Forum, January 24, 2023
- b. Ordinance 23-223 – Budget Amendment #6 - \$6,000
- c. Ordinance 23-224 – Project Budget North Carolina Youth Violence Prevention Grant

A signed copy of the ordinances are hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes.

### **Old Business**

There was no old business this month.

### **New Business**

#### **Comprehensive Plan Vision Statement adoption**

The Lumber River Council of Governments has been assisting the Town of Fairmont with crafting an updated Vision Statement to align with the town’s comprehensive and strategic plans. The Vision Statement will be used as a guide in all planning and investment work undertaken by the Town of Fairmont. The statement is as follows:

“The Town of Fairmont will be an inclusive community that spurs economic opportunity through development aligned with family values, innovation, heritage, and stewardship.”

Commissioner Evans made a motion to adopt the Comprehensive Plan Vision Statement. Commissioner Ellison seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

#### **Strategic Plan adoption**

The Lumber River Council of Governments has been assisting the Town of Fairmont with completing a Strategic Plan. This plan will help guide the strategic work of the Fairmont Town Commissioners and Staff for the next six years (2023-2028). It will be reviewed annually, and feedback presented to the Commissioners on progress. The mission statement of the plan is to promote and support a high quality of life for the residents and businesses of Fairmont. The values of the plan are accountability, inclusiveness, professionalism and sustainability. There are four multi-year goals, and each goal has a set of strategies and timelines for implementation. The four goals for Fairmont are: Financial Stability, Quality of Life, Community and Economic Development and Community Engagement.

Commissioner Evans made a motion to adopt the Fairmont Strategic Plan 2023-2028. Commissioner Seibles seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. A copy of the plan is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes.

StRAP Debris Removal Bid approval

Bids for the Town’s NCAGR StRAP Program Streamflow Rehabilitation project were received on Tuesday, January 24, 2023, at the Fairmont Town Hall. The project included a base bid for work along Old Field Swamp and two additive alternates for additional work in areas on the west side of Town. Four (4) bids were received ranging from a low of \$39,664.00 to a high of \$306,000.00. The low bid of \$39,664.00 from Millers Tree & Debris Removal Service was considered a non-responsive bid and rejected due to their bid price not including costs for appropriate removal and disposal of debris as indicated in the bid documents. Therefore, the lowest responsive bid of \$134,000.00 was submitted by Stocks Landscaping of Tabor City, NC. The lowest responsive bidder, Stocks Landscaping, has completed several successful projects within the area and is acceptable as a contractor for the project. Therefore, as the low base bid is within the budgeted amount and adequate funding is available, it is LKC’s recommendation to award the base bid project scope and both additive alternates to Stocks Landscaping for their low bid amount of \$160,500.00.

Commissioner Ellison made a motion to award the bid for the StRAP Program Streamflow Rehabilitation project to Stocks Landscaping for their low bid amount of \$160,500.00. Commissioner Evans seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Resolution 23-02 Grant Submission Approval

WithersRavenel will prepare a \$150,000 USDA Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) for assistance in preparing a Downtown Streetscape Master Plan. The RBDG Program is a competitive grant program designed to support targeted technical assistance, training, and other activities leading to the development or expansion of small and emerging private businesses in rural areas.

Commissioner Evans made a motion to adopt Resolution 23-02 – USDA RBDG Grant Submission Approval. Commissioner Seibles seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. A signed copy of this resolution is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes.

Discuss Draft Code Enforcement ordinances and set date for Public Hearing: Ordinance 23-225 Chapter 91: Public Nuisances, Ordinance 23-226 Chapter 91.20: Abandoned, Junked, and Nuisance Vehicles, Ordinance 23-227 Chapter 152: Minimum Housing Standards, and Ordinance 23-228 Chapter 152A: Non-Residential Buildings or Structures Standards

The following Ordinances have been updated to reflect changes mandated by Chapter 160D of the North Carolina General Statutes:

- Chapter 91: Public Nuisances
- Chapter 91.20: Abandoned, Junked, and Nuisance Vehicles
- Chapter 152: Minimum Housing Standards
- Chapter 152A: Non-Residential Buildings or Structures Standards

These ordinances have been updated by an outside consultant (N-Focus, Inc) and have been reviewed by the Town Attorney, Police Chief, and local Magistrate. These ordinances were emailed to the Mayor and Commissioners on February 15, 2023. These drafts will be published on the town's website and copies made available at Town Hall for citizens. The Board of Commissioners need to review these ordinances and set a Public Hearing and tentative adoption date for March 21, 2023, with enforcement of these ordinances set to begin on April 2, 2023.

Commissioner Ellison made a motion to set a Public Hearing for Tuesday, March 21, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. in the Heritage Center for the purpose of discussing updating the town's code enforcement ordinances. Commissioner McNeill seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

#### CDBG-NR Grant Administration Services Bid Approval

Grant Administration Services bids for the \$950,000 Community Development Block Grant – Neighborhood Revitalization were received on Monday, February 20, 2023, at the Fairmont Town Hall. Four bids were received ranging from a low of \$90,000 to a high of \$175,000. The low bid of \$90,000 was not scored highly based on statewide experience with the CDBG-NR program. Therefore, the lowest responsive bid of \$143,000 was submitted by The Adams Company of Warsaw, NC. The Adams Company has completed numerous projects in this region and is acceptable as a contractor for this project. Therefore, as the low bid is within the budgeted amount and adequate funding is available, it is the recommendation to award the CDBG-NR Administrative Services bid to The Adams Company in the amount of \$143,000.

Commissioner Evans made a motion to award the bid for CDBG-NR Grant Administration Services to The Adams Company. Commissioner Ellison seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

#### Commissioner and Mayor Comments

The commissioners thanked the citizens for coming to the meeting and voicing their concerns. They welcomed the new police officers and stated that code enforcement is necessary for the growth and beauty of the town. Commissioner Evans still wants to strengthen the curfew ordinance. Commissioner Ellison announced the Fairmont ABC store will be undergoing renovations for the next 2 months.

Mayor Kemp made the following statement:

I am certain that I'm not the only person in this room who has waited for the introduction and presentation of the newly revised codes at this meeting. For the first time in years our government can now begin the process of true revitalization and self-improvement both commercially and residentially. No longer, after you board members adopt these codes, will any of us elected officials have to tell a citizen "We're waiting on our new codes". Once you vote adoption, Mr. Chestnut can begin his long and well thought out plan to implement these codes and when that process begins Fairmont will begin to change, for the better. I have been awaiting this moment for over a year ever since our former manager

told us what was happening regarding code revision. We've all waited patiently. We're all anxious to move forward. Fairmont's physical and economic future is now on the line. We cannot and must not drag our feet or be tentative. Let's approve the codes and watch as Fairmont is transformed into the community we all want it to be. This is a defining moment for our community. We now will have the means to actually, physically make Fairmont a better, cleaner, more up to date town. The only thing standing between that future status and our present one is the adoption of these codes and I truly believe all of us want that. I stand firmly with each board member as you study, discuss, and adopt these codes. We are a team. A team that wants all the best for Fairmont. So, let's do that for her and all our citizens.

Mayor Kemp announced that Chanda Hughes will be the 2023 Farmers Festival Chairman.

### **Town Manager Comments**

Town Manager Jerome Chestnut said he is proud to serve the Town of Fairmont and thanked his hard working staff.

### **Announcements**

Saturday, March 18 – Senior Bingo, 12:00 noon to 2:00 p.m., Fairmont-South Robeson Heritage Center.

Tuesday, March 21 - Regular Town Board meeting, 6:00 p.m., Fairmont-South Robeson Heritage Center

Wednesday, March 29 – Town Employees luncheon, 12:30 p.m., Fire Hall.

### **Adjournment**

Commissioner Evans made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:44 p.m. Commissioner Ellison seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

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Jennifer H. Larson  
Town Clerk