

Regular Meeting – August 20, 2024

The Fairmont Board of Commissioners held their regular meeting on Tuesday, August 20, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. in the Fairmont-South Robeson Heritage Center with Mayor Charles Kemp presiding. Commissioners present were Terry Evans, Heather Seibles, Melvin Ellison, Jan Tedder-Rogers, and Clarence McNeill, Jr. Commissioner J.J. McCree was absent. Staff present included Town Manager Jerome Chestnut, Town Attorney Jessica Scott (by phone), Town Clerk Jenny Larson, Deputy Town Clerk Rodney Cain, Police Captain Jonathan Evans, and Public Works Director Ronnie Seals. Others in attendance included Rev. John Spence, Victoria Moore, Tia Moore, Kim Mitchell, Nate Thompson, Ann Hughes, and several citizens.

Call to Order and Invocation

Mayor Charles Kemp called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Reverend John Spence, Pastor of Barnesville Baptist Church gave the invocation, which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Presentation

Mayor Kemp read a proclamation naming September 1-8, 2024, as Fairmont Town Employee Appreciation Week. A signed copy of this proclamation is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes.

Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Evans made a motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Seibles seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Public Comment Period/Citizens Appearance

Ann Hughes

Mrs. Ann Hughes of 710 East Gertrude Street requested a “Slow Children Playing” sign to be placed near 707 East Gertrude Street for the safety of the children in the area.

Tia Moore

Ms. Tia Moore spoke on behalf of Thrivent Financial, a financial advisory company that wants to focus on community engagement and improving financial literacy.

Victoria Moore

Ms. Victoria Moore would like to start an “Adopt-a-Block” campaign in memory of her son Tra, who loved Fairmont.

Nate Thompson

Mr. Nate Thompson had concerns about flooding from the recent severe weather and wanted an update on grant money allocated to address these issues.

Kim Mitchell

Ms. Kim Mitchell of 708 Church Street complained about the poor drainage in her neighborhood and how her property floods every time there is heavy rain even though her property is not in a flood zone.

Consent Agenda

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

- a. Approval of Minutes – Regular Meeting, July 16, 2024
- b. Ordinance 24-262 – Closing Main Street on October 19, 2024, for the Fairmont Farmers Festival

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

Old Business

Solid Waste contract update

The new solid waste contract agreement was discussed during a meeting on Thursday, July 28, 2024, at Town Hall with the Town Manager, Finance Director, Public Works Director, and the Senior Account Executive for Waste Management. The new agreement does exceed what was budgeted for solid waste service by 5%. This increase may lead to a budget amendment but will not lead to increased costs to citizens during this fiscal year. The staff and commissioners will consider a potential increase for sanitation on utility bills in the budget workshops for FY 2025-2026. Commissioner Evans made a motion to approve the contract with Waste Management for solid waste. Commissioner Ellison seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

LNC Fellow Update

Lead for North Carolina intern Madison Johns was introduced to the board. She will work with the town for the next 11 months. Her focus will be on the Regional Wastewater System project, Brownfields Grant, and Climate Resiliency. Her background is in Environmental Science.

Regional Wastewater Agreement Amendment – Proctorville

The Town of Proctorville has been in an interlocal agreement with the Town of Fairmont since April 2004. Based on circumstances beyond the control of the Town of Proctorville, the town requests that the interlocal agreement be amended through June 30, 2025. This will allow the town of Proctorville to release \$80,000 in current budget funds to the Town of Fairmont to reduce outstanding wastewater debt. It will also allow our Engineers to take a deep dive into the sewer system of Proctorville to assess and mitigate current issues with the town. The Town of Fairmont has consulted with our engineering firm and will set a plan in motion to get issues assessed and addressed through any available funding. The Town of Proctorville will be set to restart making payments to the Town of Fairmont, effective September 2024. Commissioner Evans made a motion to accept the \$80,000 payment from the Town of Proctorville. Commissioner Ellison seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Approval of CDBG-NR Agreement for Legal Services with Graham Law Firm, PLLC

The Town of Fairmont was awarded a \$950,000 CDBG-NR Grant in 2022. This grant is set to be a two-three-year program to replace 5-6 homes here in the Town of Fairmont. To continue the process, The Adams Company had to conduct a second round of advertisements for Legal Services. The Adams Company is recommending legal services be awarded to Graham Law Firm, PLLC. Commissioner Evans made a motion to approve legal services for the CDBG-NR Grant to Graham Law Firm, LLC. Commissioner Seibles seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

New Business

Real Property Acceptance Request – South Walnut Street

Mr. Hal Pittman of Raleigh, NC has reached out to the Town of Fairmont. Mr. Pittman and his family wish to donate the South Walnut Street property (#30080103701) to the Town of Fairmont. This vacant lot is located across the street from the new Dollar General Market. There are outstanding city and county taxes of \$527.63 due on this property. Commissioner Evans made a motion to accept the property from Mr. Hal Pittman on South Walnut Street. Commissioner Tedder-Rogers seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Real Property Acceptance Request – Center Street

Mrs. Sandra Stevens has reached out to the Town of Fairmont. Mrs. Stevens and her family wish to donate the Center Street property (#300603024) to the Town of Fairmont. There are outstanding city and county taxes of \$4,632.40 due on this property. Mrs. Stevens has no funds to pay the back taxes, clean up the property, or redevelop it into retail. Accepting this property will allow the town to clean it up with abatement funds, conduct an environmental study with Brownfields funds (it is a former dry cleaners), and redevelop prime real estate in the center of downtown for future jobs and retail space. Commissioner Seibles made a motion to accept the property from Mrs. Sandra Stevens on Center Street. Commissioner Tedder-Rogers seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Recreation rental agreement

Town Manager Jerome Chestnut recommended adding a hold-harmless statement to the current town facility rental application. He also mentioned distinguishing between town-sponsored events, community-wide events, and private events and how they are approved.

Commissioner Comments

The commissioners thanked the citizens for coming to the meeting and acknowledged the flooding concerns of residents. Commissioner Evans encouraged residents to help keep storm drains clear of leaves and trash.

Mayor Comments

Mayor Kemp announced there will be a job fair and blood drive on Wednesday, August 21 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. in the Heritage Center.

Town Manager Comments

Town Manager Jerome Chestnut understands the concerns that residents have been having regarding flooding and code enforcement. The town has a poor drainage design that has only worsened with time. The US Army Corp of Engineers is currently conducting a survey of the canal to determine where the water is coming from. Mr. Chestnut also acknowledged the frustration of citizens regarding code enforcement. Homes that are under foreclosure or have Medicaid liens cannot go through the code enforcement process.

Announcements

Wednesday, August 21 – Job Fair, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Heritage Center

Thursday, August 22 – PSRC Open House, All Schools, 1:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday, August 28 – Town Employee Luncheon, 12:30 p.m., Fire Hall

Monday, September 2 – Town Hall closed in observance of Labor Day.

Saturday, September 7 – Senior Bingo, 12:00 to 2:00 p.m., Heritage Center

Friday, September 13 – Fairmont Youth Council, 5:30 to 7:00 p.m., Heritage Center

Saturday, September 14 – Senior Citizens Trip to Northwood Temple in Fayetteville

Tuesday, September 17 – Regular Town Board Meeting, 6:00 p.m., Heritage Center

Adjournment

There being no further business, Commissioner Evans made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:01 p.m. Commissioner Ellison seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Jennifer H. Larson
Town Clerk