

Regular Meeting – October 15, 2024

The Fairmont Board of Commissioners held their regular meeting on Tuesday, October 15, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. in the Fairmont-South Robeson Heritage Center with Mayor Charles Kemp presiding. Commissioners present were Terry Evans, Melvin Ellison, and Clarence McNeill, Jr. Commissioners Heather Seibles, J.J. McCree and Jan Tedder-Rogers were absent. Staff present included Town Manager Jerome Chestnut, Town Attorney Jessica Scott, Town Clerk Jenny Larson, Deputy Town Clerk Rodney Cain, Police Chief Jon Edwards, Detective Cody McKinnon, Officer Mason Locklear, Officer Jarrett Locklear, Public Works Director Ronnie Seals, and Lead for NC Fellow Madison Johns. Others in attendance included Rev. Larry Grissett, Joshua Outlaw, Tia Moore, Allison Stenger, Kathleen Markey, Fairmont Golden Ambassadors, and several citizens.

Call to Order and Invocation

Mayor Charles Kemp called the meeting to order at 6:09 p.m. Reverend Larry Grissett gave the invocation, which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Presentation

Recognition of Golden Ambassadors

Mayor Kemp introduced the Golden Ambassadors, six seniors from Fairmont High School. They will serve as guest guides, assistants for special events and community activities, and work with younger students as mentors. Their distinct dress of white shirts, black slacks, and gold nametags will distinguish them at special events. They are Kensley Newberry, Roderick Deese, Serenity Jones, Parker Wollenweber, Bradley Little, and Raniyah Deal.

Hurricane Helene Recognition

Town Manager Jerome Chestnut recognized Detective Cody McKinnon and Officer Mason Locklear for assisting the Asheville Police Department following the events of Hurricane Helene and introduced the town's newest officer Jarrett Locklear.

Approval of Agenda

Town Manager Jerome Chestnut asked the board to add closed session to the agenda. 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 McNeill and seconded by Commissioner Evans, it was unanimously voted to adopt the following consent agenda items:

- a. Approval of Minutes – Regular Meeting, September 17, 2024
- b. Ordinance 24-265 – Close Main Street for Christmas Parade

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

Public Hearing #2– CDBG-NR application

Commissioner Evans made a motion to go into public hearing at 6:30 p.m. Commissioner McNeill seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

The purpose of the Public Hearing is to discuss a second CDBG-NR application.

The Town of Fairmont is working on an application to the Community Development Block Grant – Neighborhood Revitalization Program for the 2024 cycle. The Town of Fairmont applied for the grant in 2022 and was awarded \$950,000 to be used to reconstruct 5-7 homes. The Town of Fairmont is applying to the program again to assist those who qualify to reconstruct or rehabilitate their homes.

Mr. Joshua Outlaw with the Adams Company stated the following:

- Second of 2 public hearings to notify of intent to apply
- Community Development Block Grant-Neighborhood Revitalization
- Applications due in Raleigh on October 31 (extended due to Helene)
- Applying for the maximum amount \$950,000
- Will be all housing
 - Started with town list of homes from town staff then did income surveys
- Activities to include
 - Reconstruction of 4 homes (demolish and rebuild new) and alternates of 1 reconstruction and rehabilitation of 2 homes
 - 503 Benjamin Street
 - 601 W. Benjamin Street
 - 908 Martin Luther King Drive
 - 305 S. Powell Street
 - Alternate #1— 401 Cottage Street – Reconstruction
 - Alternate #2— 602 Madison Street – Rehabilitation
 - Alternate #3— 924 East White Pond Road – Rehab
- Following this public hearing, Board will vote on a resolution to apply

Commissioner Evans made a motion to come out of the public hearing at 6:32 p.m. Commissioner Ellison seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Old Business

CDBG-NR – Resolution 24-07 application for 2024 CDBG-NR Grant funding, Citizen Participation Plan and Housing Selection Committee Bylaws

The Town of Fairmont is compiling an application to the Community Development Block Grant – Neighborhood Revitalization Program for the 2024 cycle. The Board of Commissioners conducted the first of two Public Hearings on September 17, 2024, and the second one on October 15, 2024. Upon approval of the resolution and application documents the application will be ready for submittal. Commissioner Evans made a motion to adopt Resolution 24-07 Application for 2024 CDBG-NR Grant Funding, Citizen Participation Plan and Housing Selection Committee Bylaws. Commissioner Ellison seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. A signed copy of the resolution is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes.

New Business

Approval of Paving Project – Mulberry Street

Mulberry Street is in disrepair and causing maintenance issues for first responders located on the street. The Fairmont Rural Fire Department has requested the street be resurfaced and paved to minimize equipment expenses caused by the road on the Fire Engines. The estimate to resurface Mulberry Street is \$35,432.15. Commissioner Evans made a motion to approve paving Mulberry Street in front of the Fairmont Rural Fire Department for \$35,432.15. Commissioner Ellison seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Approval of Paving Project – Linden Street

Linden Street is in disrepair and causing maintenance issues for school transportation that enters on this street. The Public Schools of Robeson County has requested the street be resurfaced and paved to minimize maintenance expenses caused by the road on the school buses. The estimate to resurface Linden Street is \$24,616.80. Commissioner Evans made a motion to approve paving Linden Street next to Rosenwald Elementary School for \$24,616.80. Commissioner McNeill seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Brownfields Project Update – Terracon Consultants, Inc.

Ms. Kathleen Markey, with Terracon Consultants, Inc., presented an overview of the current EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant. She explained a brownfield property is an abandoned, idled, or underused property where redevelopment is hindered by real or perceived environmental contamination. Some examples include former gas stations, former dry cleaners, industrial properties, and former auto repair shops. The assessment grant provides funding to inventory and assess sites, conduct redevelopment and cleanup planning and provide community outreach. Phase I includes inspection of property, interview of site owners/neighbors, review of environmental and historical records and determine areas of concern. Phase II involves collection of samples from site to determine if there is contamination and whether it above regulated levels. Fifteen commercial sites have been identified so far with priority sites on Byrd and Center Streets.

Project Forward Update

Tia Moore gave an update on Project Forward including Workforce Development initiatives and a plan to build 50 residences.

NCLWF Grant Award Announcement

The Town of Fairmont has been awarded \$57,000 from the North Carolina Land and Water Fund for drainage and flooding issues caused in the Holly Street/Pine Street Intersection area in North Fairmont by tree roots growing into the drainage lines. This grant was submitted on March 1, 2024, for \$817,000 under the Innovative Stormwater Program. Ms. Jill Fusco, from the NCLWF Division conducted a site visit on April 22, 2024, with the Town Manager, Public Works Director, and Mark Lacy from LKC Engineering. The NCLWF Board of Trustees met on October 1-2, 2004, to review the applications, and notification of the award was made on October 3, 2024. Since the full amount was not awarded, the funds given will be used to redesign this area for better drainage and then reapply for construction funds to conduct the work.

BJA Grant Award Announcement

The Federal Office of Justice Programs (OJP) has awarded the Town of Fairmont \$290,913 under the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) FY24 Rural and Small Department Violent Crime Reduction Grant. The grant was posted on March 19, 2024, and closed on May 22, 2024. Initial notification of the award was made on September 27, 2024. The Town of Fairmont was 1 of 12 communities across the country that was selected for this award. This grant is to support youth violence prevention initiatives, Police Office Salaries, and the purchase of additional community cameras.

Commissioner Comments

The commissioners thanked the citizens for coming to the meeting and encouraged the citizens to continue to come.

Mayor Comments

Mayor Kemp encouraged citizens to take advantage of upcoming events in town including the Farmers Festival, Trunk or Treat, and Veteran's Day. He reminded the board that Fairmont is hosting the Robeson County Municipal Association meeting on October 22 at 7:00 p.m. in the Heritage Center.

Executive / Closed Session

Commissioner Ellison made a motion to go into closed session at 7:29 p.m. to discuss personnel per N.C.G.S. 143-318-11 (a)(6) and consult with an attorney retained by the board to preserve the attorney - client privilege between the attorney and Board of Commissioners for the Town of Fairmont per N.C.G.S. 143-318-11 (a)(3). Commissioner Evans seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Commissioner Evans made a motion to come out of closed session at 7:46 p.m. Commissioner Ellison seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. Mayor Kemp stated that personnel was discussed and no action was taken.

Announcements

Wednesday, October 16 – Job Fair/Blood Drive, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Heritage Center.

Friday, October 18 – Farmers Festival Kickoff, 7:00 to 10:00 p.m., Fairmont Golf Course.

Saturday, October 19 – Fairmont Farmers Festival, downtown all day, parade at 10:00 a.m.

Tuesday, October 22 – RCMA meeting hosted by Fairmont, 7:00 p.m., Heritage Center.

Thursday, October 31 – Drive thru Trunk or Treat, Railroad Street (location moved due to early voting at the Fire Hall).

Early Voting Dates at the Fire Hall: October 17-18 – 8:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., October 20 – 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., October 21-25 – 8:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., October 28-November 1 – 8:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., and November 2 – 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Election Day – November 5 – 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Monday, November 11 – Veteran’s Day Ceremony with guest speaker Kelly Barr, 11:00 a.m., Heritage Center.

Tuesday, November 19 – Regular Town Board Meeting, 6:00 p.m., Heritage Center.

November 27-29 – Town offices closed in observance of Thanksgiving.

Friday, December 6 – Holiday on Main Twilight Christmas Parade. Tree Lighting Ceremony 6:00 p.m., Twilight Parade, 6:30 p.m. and Entertainment in the Heritage center, 7:30 p.m.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Commissioner Evans made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:47 p.m. Commissioner McNeill seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Jennifer H. Larson
Town Clerk