

OCTOBER 10, 2024

At the Regularly Scheduled Meeting of the Mayor and Board of Aldermen/women of the Town of Canton held at the Town Hall at 85 Summer Street, October 10, 2024, at 6:00pm with Mayor Zeb Smathers, and Aldermen/women Mull, Hamlett, Shepard and Proctor the following proceedings were held.

A. Call to Order

Mayor Smathers called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

B. Roll Call

Mayor Smathers stated that Manager Stinnett, and Deputy Clerk Lurvey were present. Attorney Morgan joined the meeting telephonically.

C. Pledge/Invocation

Alderman Hamlett led those in attendance in reciting the pledge of allegiance.

D. Approval of Minutes:

Mayor Smathers then asked the Board for approval of the minutes of the September 26, 2024, meeting. Alderman Hamlett made a motion to approve the minutes of September 26, 2024, and Alderman Shepard seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

E. Mayor Comments

Mayor Smathers stated that he wanted to take a moment go around the room and thank everyone in attendance. Mayor Smathers stated that Manager Stinnett did an outstanding and amazing job coordinating operations during the flood. Mayor Smathers acknowledge that Manager Stinnett spent many late nights, and the Town is better for it. Mayor Smathers said "Bravo, Town Manager". Mayor Smathers then mentioned Wanda Lurvey working from the Police Department to get payroll out for the employees. Next, Mayor Smathers stated that he was sad to hear that Alderwoman Mull's bench outside the Union Hall did not survive the flood. Mayor Smathers then addressed Alderman Hamlett telling him that he knows it had to be rough on him watching the houses be flooded when it brought back the memories of the flood of 2021. Alderman Hamlett lost two houses in that flood. Mayor Smathers then mentioned Alderman Shepard for being an amazing support for the staff and that he was ever present throughout the event. Mayor Smathers then addressed Vicki Hyatt with The Mountaineer for her coverage of the event with respect and emotion and that he is grateful for her reporting. Next, Mayor

Smathers spoke of Alderwoman Proctor's major role in coordinating the IP Complex with supplies for those in the community with need.

Mayor Smathers then stated that he wanted the TDA (Tourist Development Association) to know that Western North Carolina cannot be closed. Mayor Smathers wanted the message to be loud and clear that Canton is open for business.

Mayor Smathers then thanked Russ Harris, Executive Director of the Southwest Commission, Council of Government as he and his team picked up the slack and have been very supportive.

Mayor Smathers then mentioned Police Chief Scott Sluder and Fire Chief Kevin Wheeler. Mayor Smathers stated that he wanted to thank the Officers and Firefighters of the town. Mayor Smathers said what he witnessed was teamwork and was herculean and heroic. As the rain was coming down Officers were performing welfare checks. When communications faltered, they were passing notes and handling looters and never stopped protecting the Town and her citizens.

Next, Mayor Smathers then next recognized David Francis. He stated that no matter what hat David was wearing be it as Chamber of Commerce President, County Economic Director he is a friend of the Town of Canton with his many resources.

Next, Mayor Smathers wanted to thank the Board for their support.

F. Aldermen/women Comments

Alderwoman Mull welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance. Alderwoman Mull said that Mayor Smathers did an excellent job and did not have anything to add.

Alderman Hamlett then stated that Mayor Smathers left someone out. Alderman Hamlett said that Mayor Smathers failed to mention himself. Alderman Hamlett praised Mayor Smathers that there was no better spokesman for the Town and management and that the Mayor was responsible for getting the word out. Alderman Hamlett stated that whenever he watched MSNBC your face was out there doing interviews and getting the word out about the devastation. Alderman Hamlett said that he appreciated the mayor's presence and knows that we will come out the other side. Alderman Hamlett thanked the mayor for being there.

Alderman Hamlett mentioned that there was a whole new team during this catastrophic event and with the new team we can look ahead. Alderman Hamlett then address Manager Stinnett

and acknowledged that he saw the cot in the room where she and Finance Officer, Walker kept the Board apprised of the events with emails and constant updates. Alderman Hamlett acknowledged that even before the rain started falling these updates continued throughout the event. Alderman Hamlett complimented Manager Stinnett for her proactive response. Alderman Hamlett said that to say he is proud is an understatement and that we are in a much better place, and it will take us into the future.

Alderman Shepard wanted to thank the staff, employees of the Town as well as the volunteers around the Country that have come to help. Alderman Shepard stated that he would like to see a banner thanking everyone and placed near the Bear Country sign.

Alderwoman Proctor stated that she had the privilege to ride with the Police Department for a 12-hour shift during the flood. Alderwoman Proctor said that during this event as power outages were occurring and watching power lines falling the officers of the Police Department kept going.

Alderwoman Proctor stated that it was a very humbling experience working to support Byron Hickox and Brandy Proctor at the Sports Complex to set up the distribution center for friends and neighbors that experienced loss during the flood. Alderwoman Proctor also wanted to mention that Pinnacle Church was assisting with helping people to clean up and that Erica Davis is a wonderful partner. Alderwoman Proctor wanted to thank Pinnacle Church.

Mayor Smathers stated that amid all the chaos the Board has appointed Lisa Stinnett permanent Town Manager.

G. Public Comments:

Mr. Russ Harris with the Southwest Commission told the Board that the Commission will support the Town of Canton. Mr. Harris stated that they had 20 grants to assist in the Cleanup along with the Chamber and that grant is for \$500.00 each. Mayor Smathers thanked Mr. Harris for his support.

Mayor Smathers then acknowledged members of the 101st Airborne from Fort Campbell Kentucky joined the meeting. Mayor Smathers wanted to thank them for arriving in advance of the storm. When communications went down there was a lot of statements made on social media that were not true. Mayor Smathers noted that the 101st is assisting at the distribution center and how proud the kids are to see them helping.

Alderman Hamlett stated that we deeply appreciate the

members of the 101st and that these men and women took an oath to help people, and they are living up to that oath. Alderman Hamlett then requested everyone in the audience rise to give a standing ovation to the members of the 101st.

H. Managers Reports

Manager Stinnett stated that the Finance Officer was out and there was no cash report for this meeting.

Manager Stinnett stated that she wished to thank the members of the 101st Airborne for their support and always coming to check on them.

Manager Stinnett wanted to also thank 8 Days of Hope for setting up a trailer for showers at the IP Sports Complex.

Manager Stinnett then told the Board that the Town of Canton has the best employees. When communications failed the employees just rolled with it and found a way to make things happen.

Manager Stinnett then requested the Board consider waiving permit fees for those that were affected by the flood. Alderman Hamlett made a motion to waive permit fees for flood victims and Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion with all in favor, the motion passed.

Old Business

N/A

J. New Business

1. PHS Band Sponsorship Request

Manager Stinnett requested the Board table this request so that she could consult with the Finance Officer as to the level of sponsorship. Alderman Ralph Hamlett made the motion to table the PHS Band Sponsorship request and Alderman Shepard seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion was tabled.

2. TDA Presentation: Executive Director: Corrina Rufflieux

Corrina Rufflieux then made a presentation along with Hanni Muerdter who was at the meeting telephonically. Please see attached Community Change Grants. Once the presentation was finished Alderman Hamlett expressed his concern with the way this would be presented to the public. Alderman Hamlett

thanked both Ms. Ruffieux and Ms. Muerdter for their work on this project but he felt that considering the flood Alderman Hamlett stated that it would make the Board looked tone deaf. After considerable discussion Alderman Hamlett made a motion to approve the Resolution of Support for the Haywood County Community Change Grant if the presentation was changed. Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion with the noted change in presentation. All voted in favor with the change and the motion passed.

3. Presentation: Southern Appalachian Conservancy Hanni Muerdter

Please refer to the TDA Presentation.

4. Budget Amendments

Manager Stinnett then presented to the Board three (3) Budget Amendments. The Budget Amendments were directly related to Helene Flood Expenses. Please see attached. Alderwoman Mull made a motion to approve the Budget Amendments as presented and Alderwoman Proctor seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion carried.

5. Declaration For Emergencies with Exigent Circumstances

Manager Stinnett then presented to the Board a Declaration of Exigent Circumstances to formally address exigent circumstances that have arisen from the impacts of Hurricane Helene. This declaration outlines the significant disruptions experienced and the primary areas affected. Alderwoman Mull made a motion to approve the Declaration for Emergencies with Exigent Circumstances and Alderman Tim Shepard seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

6. Champion Credit Union Lease Extension

Manager Stinnett then presented a Lease Extension between the Town of Canton and Champion Credit Union extending the lease until April 30, 2025. Alderwoman Mull made a motion to approve the Lease extension with Champion Credit Union until April 2025 and Alderwoman Proctor seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion carried.

7. NCDOT DIASTER Relief Debris Removal

Manager Stinnett presented the Board with the NCDOT Local Agreement for Debris Removal for residential debris from Hurricane Helene. Alderman Hamlett made a motion to

approve the NCDOT Local Agreement for Debris removal and Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

K. Closed Session: Pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11 (a) (3) (4) (5) (6)

At 7:26p.m. Alderwoman Proctor made a motion to enter closed session pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11 (a) (3) Preserving attorney-client privilege, (4) Economic Development, (5) Attorney/Client, (6) Personnel. Alderwoman Mull seconded the motion, and all were in favor and the motion carried. At 8:12p.m. Alderwoman Mull made a motion to enter open session and Alderman Shepard seconded the motion with all in favor the motion passed. At 8:17p.m. Alderwoman Mull made a motion to close the open session and Alderman Shepard seconded the motion and all were in favor and the motion carried.

L. Adjournment

The next Regular Called meeting will be held on Thursday, October 24, 2024, at 6:00p.m. at Town Hall located at 85 Summer Street, Canton, NC 28716. There being no additional business, Mayor Smathers adjourned the Meeting at 8:17p.m.

Wanda M. Lurvey, Deputy Town Clerk