

Minutes
Spring Hope Board of Commissioners Meeting
March 1, 2021

A regular meeting of the Town of Spring Hope Board of Commissioners was held at 7 p.m. at the Spring Hope Municipal Building.

Members present: Mayor James Gwaltney, Commissioners Brenda Lucas, Brent Cone, Prudence Wilkins, Ricky Tucker and Drew Griffin.

Also present were Town Manager Jae Kim, Town Clerk Michele Collins, Chief Nathan Gant, Officer Nathan Barbour and Town Attorney Mark Edwards.

Visitors present were Ethan Vester, Mike Tolson, Reverend and Mrs. Pope, Leanne Hahnel, Betsy Strickland and Allen Barbee.

Mark Cone from Southern Nash News, Lindell Kay from Spring Hope Enterprise and Kendra Jones from the Nashville Graphic were also present.

Mayor Gwaltney called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance.

Commissioner Griffin made a motion to accept the minutes with a change deleting Commissioner Tucker's name from the last meeting; Commissioner Tucker seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Public Forum

Bubbles and Bows owner Betsy Strickland asked the board to consider rescinding her resignation from the Downtown Development Board. She said she made it in haste and that she plans to re-open a store in Spring Hope when a building is available. She said that she had no intention of ever leaving town and wanted to be able to sit on the board.

Mayor Gwaltney said he had no problem to welcome Ms. Strickland back to the board since she was planning on returning to Spring Hope. He said that they were under the impression that she planned on staying in Franklin County and he also thought that it was not a good use of town resources to have police delivering packets that far. He said he has asked the manager to restrict the travel of police officers to the town and ETJ for those deliveries.

Mike Tolson from Mack Gay Associates gave the update on the AIA Grant. He said that they had been in town collecting data on hydrants and valves for the assets in the water distribution system. He said that they would also be looking at the sewer assets as soon as it stops raining which would include the manhole survey. Mr. Tolson said that there would be a data base that could be checked to track the water and sewer assets. He also said that he would like to know what else the town was interested in doing as far as the current grant usage and future grants.

Budget Amendment 2021-01 to move money from the AIA expense to the AIA revenue was requested.

Commissioner Griffin made a motion to approve Budget Amendment 2021-01; Commissioner Tucker seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Budget Amendment 2021-02 to move money from the Tree Board expense line item to Buildings and Cemetery was requested.

Commissioner Griffin made a motion to approve Budget Amendment 2021-02; Commissioner Tucker seconded and the motion passed unanimously,

The town's CPA Scott May presented the 2019-2020 final audit numbers. He said that there were no errors or irregularities found and that the town received a clean opinion. He said he felt like the town office staff had done a good job keeping the expenses and paperwork in line for the fiscal year. The board had no questions

Chamber President Ethan Vester told the board that they were following the lead from the state who decided that the fair would open this year so they decided to have a Pumpkin Festival. He also said that the Chamber was fully behind the idea of the town hiring a code enforcement officer.

Chief Gant said he started the Golf Cart ordinance from scratch. He said that there was room to adjust if the board was not happy with what was in the proposal. He said that there were some insurance companies that would insure carts if that was what the board wanted to require. Mr. Kim said that the ordinance had to go to the Planning Board first and that there would have to be a public hearing scheduled.

Commissioner Griffin asked Chief Gant if he was satisfied with the way it was written. The Chief said he added everything he could think of after talking to other agencies, DMV and insurance companies.

Commissioner Griffin made a motion to send the proposed ordinance to the Planning Board; Commissioner Lucas seconded. Mayor Gwaltney said he thought there should be a nominal fee. The motion passed.

Mr. Kim asked the board to consider adopting the Downtown Revitalization plan that had spoken about for several meetings.

Commissioner Cone made a motion to adopt the resolution for the Downtown Revitalization plan; Commissioner Griffin seconded and the motion passed.

Mr. Kim asked the board to consider the action that was tabled last meeting to hire a code enforcement officer. He said the individual would be a contractor who would be enforcing the ordinances of the town. Mayor Gwaltney asked what the per hour rate was for the individual; Mr. Kim said that there was a line item in the budget that would pay for the contract which is now at approximately \$25.00. He said that the current request is to negotiate a contract with Alliance. Commissioner Lucas asked how many hours would the contractor work; Mr. Kim said that at first they were talking about 10 hours a month.

Commissioner Cone made motion to allow the manager to negotiate a contract with the code enforcement company; Commissioner Wilkins seconded

Commissioner Lucas asked why it was necessary to hire a code enforcement officer.

Commissioner Cone said that the DDB felt like the town needed help due to the fact that there had been nothing done for years. He said that the town manager needed help since he had a long list other duties as well.

Mayor Gwaltney said that his concern was that there were many other zoning issues that we had not gone after including the town's own property. He said he thought the company was no more than a collection agency after listening to them at the DDB meeting saying that they would call people on the phone to get them to comply.

Commissioner Tucker said he had some issues with the presentations. He said that there had to be a specific plan first to fix the town's properties and areas before they go after someone else. He also said he didn't want to get into another contract with a company that couldn't be controlled by the town. He wanted to know who would be responsible for keeping the new company inline.

Commissioner Lucas asked again why Jae was so busy that he couldn't do more. She wanted to know what the company would be doing different from what Jae was hired to do.

Commissioner Wilkins asked Jae if the company had more experience and education with this type of situation then he had. Mr. Kim said that they had more contacts and actual experience with code enforcement.

Mayor Gwaltney said he didn't hear anything about the company that showed that they had any kind of construction background and that it seemed like a strong arm company.

Motion passed to negotiate contract.

Town Attorney Mark Edwards had no new business.

No one from Envirolink was at the meeting.

Police Chief Report

Chief Gant asked if there were any questions about the report that was distributed; there were no questions. He told the board that he had a grant that he would like to use to sponsor a concealed carry for Spring Hope city residents. He said that he would like to see if there was interest and actually hold the classes starting next month. The board all agreed to all the Chief to hold the classes.

Managers' Report

Mr. Kim said that he would be attending a meeting in Middlesex that was arranged by Mack Gay and Associates for CTR Coating. He said that Kevin Varnell from Stocks would also be going and that the coating process was to help with inflow and infiltration issues.

Mr. Kim said that the town was getting quotes to install Wi-Fi at the Community Building and hope to have it up and running soon.

Mr. Kim told the board that due to Covid-19 concerns this year's Main Street Conference would be virtual. He said anyone on the board who would like to be included should let him know.

Lastly Mr. Kim said that he had been trying to get in touch with the property owner at 101 S Poplar St. He said he had sent letters and called the number that the owner gave him. Mr. Kim said he contacted the Borough Law firm to see what should be the next steps.

New Business

Commissioners Wilkins, Cone, Griffin and Lucas has no new business

Commissioner Tucker wanted to know exactly what the business operating at the former Batchelor's was called. Chief Gant said it was an online sweepstakes. Commissioner Tucker wanted to know why it didn't fall under the NCGS. Chief Gant said that he had contacted ALE when the last robbery happened and he was told that the Nash County DA would not prosecute. Therefore he allowed officers to do off duty work at the establishment. Commissioner Tucker said he did not like having off duty officers stationed at the business.

Commissioner Tucker also said that he did not understand why the board never really answered questions that people had at public forum. He said he wanted the board to do better. Mayor Gwaltney said that typically the reason why the board does not answer at the time of Public Forum issues is because the questions are spur of the moment.

Mayor Gwaltney said that there are several budget amendments during the year and a line item in the budget for Downtown Development that has not been used. He said that the town hall building is current leaking and mold is forming in several offices. He mentioned that the town hall was a building built and still being paid for by public funds. He also mentioned that there were issues at the WWTP and several other town well houses. Mayor Gwaltney also said that the Community Building seems to have some electrical and other issues that seem to be part of a stalled project. The Mayor said that he thought delivering packets to members of boards was not a good use of manpower. He said he was definitely not in favor of going outside of the ETJ especially since the town would be liable for anything that would happen. Commissioner Tucker said that he agreed that delivering packets outside of town was alright but that things were getting out of hand. Commissioner Cone said he would be willing to come to town hall to retrieve his own packet if it was better for the officers.

Commissioner Cone made a motion to restrict packet deliveries for BOC and advisory boards to town and ETJ only; Commissioner Tucker seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Gwaltney asked about the Covid relief funds that were received. He said that he asked the Chief if there were any extra shifts or hardship that was brought on the Police Department. He said that the Chief told him that there were only a few extra shifts or issues created by Covid. Mayor Gwaltney asked if the money had been spent and could it not be used for buildings. Mr. Kim said that the money was used to replace the monies for police salaries and that the money that was not used is in the revenue. Mayor Gwaltney asked what happened with the money that had been allocated for the third full time position. Mr. Kim said that currently the budget had money for a part time position. Mayor Gwaltney asked what his plan was to answer the problem of segregation of duties that the auditor mentions. Mr. Kim said that he would meet with the auditor again this year to discuss that issue. Mayor Gwaltney asked Mr. Kim if the part time worker wasn't available would he be helping upfront. Mr. Kim said that he

would be helping. Commissioner Cone asked if there was a description listed of what each employee did on a daily or monthly basis and that he would like to see something.

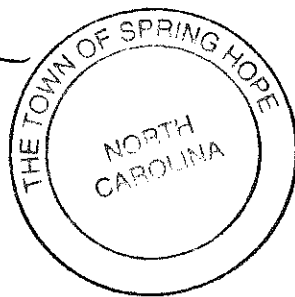
Commissioner Griffin made a motion to adjourn; Commissioner Cone seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Submitted

Attest



Michele K Collins
Town Clerk



James F. Gwaltney III
Mayor