

MINUTES OF THE WHITSETT TOWN COUNCIL
March 13, 2018
Whitsett Town Hall Building

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

The regular meeting of the Whitsett Town Council was held on Tuesday, March 13, 2018 at the Whitsett Town Hall. The following members of the Town Council were present: Mayor Richard Fennell, Mayor Pro Tem Andy Brown, Council Members Jerry Rice and Lee Greeson. Absent was Council Member Cindy Wheeler.

Also present were Town Administrator Ken Jacobs and *The Alamance News* reporter Tomas Murawski; no additional public. Absent was Planning Board Chairman Bob Maccia.

Mayor Fennell called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., noted that a quorum was present; and asked Council Member Jerry Rice to offer the invocation.

SPEAKERS FROM THE FLOOR

Mayor Fennell asked for any speakers from the floor; and there were none.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Adoption of the Minutes

Mayor Fennell asked for any changes to the minutes from the February 13, 2018 regular meeting; and hearing none, asked for a motion to adopt the minutes. Council Member Jerry Rice made a motion to accept the minutes as written; Mayor Pro Tem Andy Brown seconded the motion. The motion to adopt the February minutes passed by unanimous vote of those present.

2. Proposals for Town Hall Grounds Paving Project

The Town received proposal from four contractors ranging from approximately \$18,000 to \$28,000. Town Administrator Jacobs remarked that the lowest bidder was actually the most responsive and most attentive to the project; the others lacked timeliness and interest; but, did finally assess the site and submit quotes.

Jacobs also reported that the funds are readily available from this year's budget to cover the project. Mayor Fennell asked for discussion; and Council Members expressed their preference to have AAA Paving Company add more detail to its proposal since it submitted the lowest bid and, therefore, may be the favored contractor.

A motion was made by Council Member Jerry Rice to accept the AAA bid, contingent on expanding its proposal to include more in-depth description of the work to be done. Motion seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Andy Brown; and the motion carried by unanimous vote of those present.

3. Revised Fire Department Agreement for Shared Utilities

Council Members had before them a final version of the above agreement with the Town, and the tabled discussion from last month resumed. Town Administrator Jacobs explained that at the direction of Council Members, a clause was added to the end of the document that incorporated a sharing of electric charges between the Town Hall and the Fire Department.

Jacobs left the amount open so that Council could vote on a standard monthly fee chargeable to the Fire Department, which would then be reimbursable to the Town on an annual basis (\$360 total). A motion to set the monthly charge at \$30.00 was made by Council Member Jerry Rice; motion seconded by Council Member Lee Greeson. The motion carried by unanimous vote of those present; and \$30.00 would be inserted into the agreement.

4. Proposed Changes to Water System Tap Fees Policy

Town Administrator Jacobs had worked up justification to oppose setting a fixed price for water taps, and establish a process for arriving at a fee on a case-by-case basis to ensure that the Town would not lose money on a single tap. Jacobs proposed that the following revised policy be instituted:

When a water line tap is requested, the Town shall solicit bids from as many as three approved and licensed utility contractors. The Town will then decide who will be awarded the contract. Based on conditions and variables that may affect tap location, the choice may not be the lowest bid. An administrative fee of \$150 and the cost of the meter will then be added to the contractor quote; and these three elements shall constitute the total tap fee.

The general concept of this method had been concurred with by Council members at last month's meeting; and had now been formally documented for action. A motion was made by Council Member Lee Greeson to effect the revised tap fee policy; motion seconded by Council Member Jerry Rice. The motion carried by unanimous vote of those present.

5. Any Other Old Business

Mayor Fennell asked if there were any other old business to be discussed; and there was none.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Planning Board

In the absence of the Board Chairman Maccia and last week's regular meeting having been cancelled, Town Administrator Jacobs stated there was no report to give.

2. Enforcement Committee

Enforcement Officer Ken Jacobs stated that no committee activity had taken place this month.

3. Enforcement Officer

Enforcement Officer Jacobs reported that since last month's Council meeting, three development clearance permit certificates had been issued to: (1) Swaim Electric to install a 22 KW generator for Martha Moss at 520 NC Hwy 100, (2) AT&T for maintenance and upgrades to cell tower at 7114 Gusenbury Road, and (3) Maria Gonzalez at 7205 Greeson Road to construct a three-car attached garage to principal dwelling.

4. Town Administrator

Town Administrator Jacobs stated that his items had been handled under Old Business.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Execution of Amendment to Sewer Contract with the City of Burlington

This item was simply an FYI mention; the amendment will be signed tonight by appropriate parties of the Town and readily hand carried to the City of Burlington.

2. Discussion on Rent and Utility Charges for the Ruritan/Cafeteria

Town Administrator Jacobs reported that the Ruritan who uses the Town Hall building cafeteria as its clubhouse, pays an annual rent of \$360 to the Town. Since now, the Town has paid the electricity and natural gas bills for the entire building. The electricity charges are lumped into one bill for the Town Hall; the two natural gas bills, however, are individual—one for Town Hall, and one for the

cafeteria since it has a separate meter. The cafeteria's natural gas bills for the past year tallied \$722.43; and Jacobs was asking Council Members to consider other arrangements for utility payments since they involve property tax dollars.

Mayor Fennell felt that the Town should at least break even and not realize a yearly \$300 to \$400 expenditure for the Ruritan using Town tax dollars. Doubling of the rent was discussed, as was a Town donation to the Ruritan that to cover cafeteria utilities. But one issue all stood firm on was that of misuse of property tax dollars.

Given that, a motion was made by Council Member Lee Greeson to maintain the rent of \$360/year, and turn over responsibility to the Ruritan for its natural gas payments. Motion seconded by Council Member Jerry Rice; and the motion passed by unanimous vote of those present. Town Administrator Jacobs will present the Council's decision to the Ruritan at its next meeting.

3. Any Items from Council Members

Mayor Fennell asked for any items from Council members; and no one had any.

4. Announcements

Mayor Fennell asked for any announcements; and there were none.

5. Speakers from the Floor

Mayor Fennell asked for any speakers from the floor; and no one asked to be recognized.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Council, Mayor Fennell invited a motion to adjourn. Council Member Jerry Rice made the motion to adjourn; motion seconded by Major Pro Tem Andy Brown. Motion passed by unanimous vote of those present; and the March Town Council meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:36 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the Whitsett Town Council is scheduled for 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, April 10, 2018 at the Whitsett Town Hall.

/s/

/s/

Jo Hesson, Town Clerk

Richard Fennell, Mayor

APPROVED: April 10, 2018