

**TOWN OF WELDON BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIALMEETING
February 20, 2017
6:00 p.m.**

PRESENT: Julia M. Meacham, Mayor

Commissioner Susie Adams
Commissioner Stanley Edwards
Commissioner Charlotte Moss
Commissioner Kimberley Robinson
Commissioner John Smith

PUBLIC PRESENT: Antoinette Cheatham, Helen Vincent, James Vincent, Myrthaline Greene, Mary Mitchum, Eric Green, Terrell Green, Ozie Ruffin, Nolan Davis, Yvonne Banks, Joey McAllister – Halifax County ABC, Christon Martin, Krystal Martin, Willie Vincent, Carol Gatling, Eugene Gatling, Jr., Meta Rawls, Bertha Greene, Shirley M. Brown

MEDIA PRESENT: None.

STAFF PRESENT: Mark Macon – Police Chief/Town Administrator, Katherine Parker—Town Clerk, Richard Brown – Code Enforcement Officer, Antonio Williams – Street Supervisor, James Avens – Deputy Police Chief, Thomas Mason, Sergeant Rusty Bolt – Fire Chief.

ITEM ONE: CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Meacham called the meeting to order at 5:59 p.m.

ITEM TWO: INVOCATION

Deputy Chief Avens rendered the prayer.

ITEM THREE: PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The audience recited the pledge of allegiance.

ITEM FOUR: ADOPTION OF MEETING AGENDA

Chief Macon requested to add Trees-Garner Landscaping under item eight tab B. Commissioner Robinson requested to add Black History Salute under item eight tab C. Commissioner Moss mentioned that Doris Garner had requested to be on the agenda and needed to be added under item eight tab D.

Commissioner Moss made a motion to accept the meeting agenda as presented with additions. Commissioner Smith second. All in favor, motion carried.

ITEM FIVE: APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Meacham requested to have a correction made to the Work Session minutes item four when she says, "If the Board did agree to pay \$34,500.00 for the roof that it should be added to the lease purchase agreement.

Commissioner Moss made a motion to table the January 3, 2017 minutes until the March Regular Meeting and approves the January 9th and January 18th minutes. Commissioner Smith second. All in favor, motion carried.

ITEM SIX: SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

a) *Business Certificate – Halifax County ABC Board*

Mayor Meacham presented Board representatives with the business certificate of appreciation.

b) *Proclamation for Teen Dating Violence Prevention and Awareness*

Mayor Meacham read the proclamation that was provided to the representatives of Hannah's Place.

ITEM SEVEN: OLD BUSINESS

a) *Old Heilig Myers Building*

No leakage was found in the original area that was discussed. However, Chief Macon stated that a follow up meeting should be carried forth to speak on that matter.

Commissioner Smith made a motion to table the discussion until the next Work Session March 7, 2017. Commissioner Moss second the motion. All in favor, motion carried.

Commissioner Edwards stated what will be the subject matter for the meeting with the Attorney. Commissioner Smith stated that he would like to be brought up to where the other Commissioners are regarding their decision with the roof. Commissioner Edwards explained that the Board had different views but he suggested forming a committee to speak with Ms. Banks to discuss renegotiation in the lease before making roof repairs.

Commissioner Smith made a motion to schedule a Special Meeting for the purposes of discussion of the roof. Commissioner Moss second. Commissioner Smith wanted to say that he does not want to hurt but to assist with making the right decision

a) *Tree Removal*

Commissioner Moss stated a series of events leading up to the removal of the tree. She presented photographs of the sidewalk that was located in front of the tree that was removed

and sidewalks located near Weldon Preschool. The photos indicated that the sidewalk was in good condition prior to the tree being removed. Commissioner Moss had concerns with the tree being removed prior to her request for the Board to reconsider. Mr. Macon stated that action took place based upon the Boards vote to have the tree removed. Commissioner Moss stated that she was unhappy but it was done even though she asked for reconsideration. She wants the Attorney to look into the company being liable for damaging the sidewalk from removing the tree.

Commissioner Robinson cited a parliamentary procedure rule that states to reconsider a vote, someone from the prevailing side has to present it to come back to the table according to Robert's Rules of Order. Commissioner Moss said that should have been mentioned at the Work Session. Commissioner Robinson said that every Board member was capable of reading, understanding and had access to the same training that included classes and course work. Commissioner Moss asked if the company who cut the tree was insured and bonded. Mr. Antonio Williams, Street Department Supervisor stated that the company was. Commissioner Moss asked if the Powell Bill funds could be used to repair the sidewalk. Commissioner Edwards said that maybe the attention should be spent discussing the sidewalk in front of the school than to speak about something that is already done.

Commissioner Moss said a tree policy needs to be prepared for future concerns. Commissioner Robinson wanted it stated in the minutes that the Powell Bill money can be used for sidewalks. She had seen the sidewalk where the tree was located at that time and came to the following Board meeting and stated that those funds could be used for the sidewalk. This is not the first time that the Powell Bill money has been brought up as mentioned by Commissioner Robinson. She agreed that there are other sidewalks in Town that need to be fixed as well which can come before the Board. Commissioner Robinson said the state sends the money for those purposes.

c) Severe Weather/Emergency Policy Adoption

Mr. Macon presented this policy to the Board at the February 7, 2017 Work Session for adoption consideration.

Commissioner Robinson made a motion to approve the Severe Weather/Emergency Policy. Commissioner Moss second the motion. All in favor, motion carried.

Chief said he will have a tree policy at the next work session for Board review and potential adoption.

ITEM EIGHT: NEW BUSINESS

a) Christon Martin-Appreciation and Complaint

Mr. Martin apologized to the Board and citizens for the confusion with cutting down the tree. He stated that he was the young man who requested to have the tree cut down. It was a concern for him being that the tree hung over on his property in the yard where his four

children are sometimes gathered for activities. Mr. Martin said that he did not want any misunderstanding between him, his neighbors or the Board but it was a concern he had of his children, property and cars. He asked Commissioner Moss if she would have brought up the sidewalk repairs near the preschool school to the Board had he not asked for consideration of the tree being removed. Commissioner Moss stated that she would have.

Mr. Martin thanked the Town and employees involved with removing the tree. He was concerned about his children being hurt, his home as well as his neighbor's home. However, he had a concern with statements from the January meeting being inaccurate of his character. He wanted to come this evening and say what he needed to get information accurate. Mr. Martin's first concern was about someone saying he lied on his neighbor; whom was present at the February meeting that did not anything to him. It was stated to him by citizens that he was described to be angry and hostile in the Work Session and he wanted to clear that up by saying that was never his intention nor does it reflect his character.

Mr. Martin asked the Board if anyone felt threatened or like he was hostile while he expressed his concerns of the tree. Commissioner Robinson stated that when the statement was made, she defended him and felt that he was passionate and articulate about whatever he has to say and have always been whenever he comes before the Board. She took offence to people trying to act like black men who come and disagree are mad and angry. Mr. Martin apologized again but told Commissioner Moss that if she felt so threaten why did she come to his home taking pictures and speaking to him. His concern was for the safety of his family and neighbors. Mr. Martin also stated that there have been some spiteful things going on by certain board members that he had much respect for. He stated there were allegations saying Mayor Meacham and Commissioner Moss have been strategizing to come against certain citizens and businesses. Mayor Meacham told Mr. Martin that if he had any personal feelings against her, he needed to pull her to the side and did not think that was the platform for such discussion. Commissioner Robinson stated that every month Reverend Webb comes and talk negatively about her and nothing is said. Yet, a citizen comes and says something that the Mayor does not like, discussion is made to cease. Mr. Martin said he did not want things to go in this direction but would like to finish what he has to say and will be respectful.

Mayor Meacham stated that she wanted everyone to know that it is their duty as elected officials to make decisions that are in the best interest of taxpayers. She told Mr. Martin that if he has something to say, it can be said in the public comment period. Mayor Meacham made a statement about not wanting to hear random ranting and raving and felt it to be very unprofessional. She apologized to the citizens regarding this discussion getting out of hand.

b) Garner Landscaping-Trees

Mr. Macon had received estimates of replacing two trees located behind Town Hall. The estimate cost would be \$700-\$800 for replacement of two and repositioning one.

Commissioner Moss asked where the money would come from. Mr. Macon said the general fund account under line item Tree and Parking Lot improvement.

Commissioner Moss made a motion to proceed with the replacement of the two trees and correct the one that is leaning. Commissioner Smith Second the motion. All in favor, motion carried.

Mr. Macon stated that borders will surround the base of the trees to prevent future harm such as from grass cutting and trimming.

c) *Black History Month Salute*

Commissioner Robinson gave homage to individuals throughout the Town who have paved the way and others who are currently carrying out the legacy of African American heritage. Some of those individuals included past and present members of the Board of Commissioners (Mr. Doc Brown, Mrs. Myrtle Knox, Mrs. Hattie Squire, Stanley Edwards and Susie Adams), current Town employees (Mark Macon-First African American Chief of Police and Town Administrator, Katherine Parker-First African American Town Clerk) and citizens (Christon Martin).

Commissioner Robinson concluded by saying that the African American culture have ancestors who fought, bleed and died so that we could sit back like fat cats and enjoy what they fought for. She stated that the fight is not over; there is more work to be done and let's do the work.

d) *Doris Garner-Clarifications*

Mrs. Garner greeted the Mayor, Board citizens and surrounding communities and was followed by a prayer. Mrs. Garner stated that she was not present for the January 18th meeting but wanted to address statements she had heard from citizens. She was told that her place of residence wanted the tree down as well. Mrs. Garner stated that was not a true statement. She admitted that there was a conversation with Mr. Martin about the tree and power lines. However, the tree did stop a car from hitting her home a few years back. Mrs. Garner urged everyone to move on from the tree because there are more pressing matters that need attention. She mentioned how Mr. Martin said she would come back behind him and say things to the Board. Mrs. Garner said she did not know what those things were because she had not spoken with anyone on the Board nor him. She has no fault with anyone on the Board but holding them accountable since they did solicit her vote.

ITEM NINE: CODE ENFORCEMENT

Mr. Brown did not have anything to report for the month of January.

ITEM TEN: ANIMAL CONTROL REPORT

Mr. Stanback gave his report. (Report on file in clerk's office.)

Commissioner Moss asked had any progress been made to the house that had twenty plus cats. Mr. Stanback said it was 612 Washington Avenue and a man feeds the cats regularly in the yard. Therefore, the cats migrate to that house and 704 Washington Avenue. Between the two houses, there were forty to fifty cats. Recently he has caught twenty-seven cats in one week but says people are still feeding the cats. Mr. Stanback has been reminding people to not feed the cats.

ITEM ELEVEN: POLICE DEPARTMENT

Deputy Chief Avens gave his report. (Report on file in clerk's office.)

Commissioner Moss mentioned that she recalled breaking and entering into sheds from last month's report and wanted to know the current status of those. Deputy Chief Avens said no arrest has been made but the cases are still open.

ITEM TWELVE: FIRE DEPARTMENT

Chief Bolt gave his report. (Report on file in clerk's office.)

He reminded everyone that it was bush fire season. People are raking and burning leaves along with the wind blowing and it being dry is what causes brush fire. Chief Bolt cautioned everyone to check the weather before setting fires. Within the city limits, the only fire you can have is for cooking purposes. Rockfish Season will arrive March 1st. An aluminum boat was donated to the Fire Department by Roanoke Valley. The Fire Department has a twenty-five year old boat that has been reconstructed. Fire Engine services will be done in the next two weeks.

Chief Bolt spoke about the campaign American Red Cross is having in the Town on March 25th with a goal to install at least five hundred smoke detector alarms in the town district. He would like to see at least twenty volunteers between the Fire and Police Departments participate. He will have more information by the March Regular Meeting.

Commissioner Robinson wanted to mention that Halifax County's Recreation Grant was now accepting applications and wanted the Boards approval to proceed with the application process. The purpose would be to secure funds for the recreation summer program that the Department Heads and other Town employees would serve as coaches. She wanted to get the Boards approval to move forward with the \$2,000.00 grant before the deadline.

Commissioner Moss made a motion to proceed with the grant application for \$2,000.00. Commissioner Adams second the motion. All in favor, motion carried.

ITEM THIRTEEN: STREET REPORT

Mr. Williams gave his report. (Report on file in clerk's office.)

He also presented pictures of the library along with pictures of sidewalks and roads that he would like to include in his capital improvement plan.

Commissioner Moss is concerned about the swings at the park due to Rockfish season approaching and it becoming a high traffic area during this time of the year. Mr. Williams said he does have new chains and will get smaller hooks that will go on the swings. Commissioner Moss asked if there were mulch remaining that could go in the swing set area. Mr. Williams stated that he got top soil today and will purchase mulch. Another concern Commissioner Moss had was some of the fence post coming down. Mr. Williams stated that they had new pieces of wood at the shop and will take care of the fence post.

Commissioner Smith asked what the purpose of the library and sidewalk pictures was. Mr. Williams said it was to include them in his capital improvement plan. Commissioner Moss stated that Powell Bill money could be used. Commissioner Smith asked if they needed to contract out for the pot hole projects. Mr. Williams said it would have to be contracted out.

Mr. Williams asked Mayor Meacham about the area on the Avenue where the bricks are supposed to go, if that was still the plan or if it needed to be filled in once the sidewalks start being replaced. Mayor Meacham said when the Small Town Main Street was active, they had inquired and it was going to cost \$7,000.00 to complete the project and was put on hold for that reason.

Mayor Meacham said between 4th and 5th street there are pot holes and appreciated if he would look into that. Mr. Williams said that he would.

ITEM FOURTEEN: FINANCE REPORT

Mr. Macon presented the finance report for January.

Under general fund, Mr. Macon highlighted the water fund to show that meters were purchased for the water meter project which was expected to be complete today. There were a few extra water meters that needed to be purchased in order to complete the project.

Commissioner Moss asked about the detailed expenditure report that used to be given along with the financial report. Mr. Macon stated that his report was the only document for his budget presentation. Commissioner Moss said she would show him a copy of the document she was referring to at a later time.

ITEM FIFTEEN: ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Meacham announced that there will be a boxing event at the Halifax Community College Saturday, February 25, 2017. Roy Evans is the owner and sponsor of this event.

Mayor Meacham invited the public to the International Food Day being held at Halifax Community College-The Centre February 22, 2017 starting at 11:00am.

ITEM SIXTEEN: PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Meta Rawls- She has concerns about a house directly across from her house in the 700 Block of County Road. She has sat through the meeting tonight and heard the Board talk about beautifying Weldon and asks they do not forget about the part of Weldon located near the high school. A year has gone by that the Board gave the owner's time to get the house up to code. No improvements have been made to the house and boards are falling down. Ms. Rawls would like the area to have some beautification to enjoy instead of looking at a house falling apart. She is asking the Board to look into this matter as it is her second request and will return before the Board if something is not done.

Antionette Cheatham- Mrs. Cheatham had a concern about the sidewalk located on the side of her home in the 400 block of Elm Street. The tree was removed but the sidewalk was not repaired. Mrs. Cheatham said it is a hazard and has twisted her ankle. Additionally, several people who have come to visit her home have fallen. She requested that the Board add it to their list. The damaged sidewalk is located on 4th Street.

Yvonne Banks- Ms. Banks thanked the Fire, Police and Street department for their help regarding the incident that happened on February 5th across the street from her business. She requested that the Mayor stop putting things in the paper about her business and causing slander and deformation to her character. Ms. Banks asked Commissioner Moss to keep her dog and husband away from her business taking pictures and trying to intimidate her on issues that happened leading up to February 5th. She stated that she has a legitimate business in Town and operates in a legitimate way. Everything she does she follows the rules of the Town and of the Police Department. Anything that the public has heard that happened on February 5th happened across the street. It did not happen in the Heilig Myers building. Ms. Banks mentioned that due to the Mayor calling the Alcohol Law Enforcement (ALE), it caused a mother to have her job put in jeopardy.

Eugene Gatling- Mr. Gatling said that it was hard for him to hear the things he has heard tonight. He stated that it is a power struggle and personal feelings between Board members. Mr. Gatling suggested to Commissioner Edwards to guide the other Commissioners as a senior member on the Board. He also asked the Board to come together to move the Town forward and for the citizens to have respect for the Mayor.

Johnny Draper- Something that happens way too often is that the Board makes a decision and its not followed up or somebody doesn't take it as if it cannot happen. He recently read on RR Spin about the shooting that happened at the corner of Washington Avenue and 2nd Street and was

Embarrassed for the Weldon Police Chief and Department for the Mayor to call the ALE over the local law enforcement. Mr. Draper said that is not the authority of the Mayor unless the Police Chief or Deputy ask.

Christon Martin- Mr. Martin had another point he wanted to address. He stated that when he made the comment about the Mayor, he is not the only person who feels that way. His point was she should do things to help and not harm them as citizens. Mr. Martin said if he offended anybody that he apologized but meant every word he said. He hopes that the Board and citizens can move forward together in unity.

Franklin Williams- Reverend Williams said that there needs to be transparency. He Highlighted the Weldon Police Department. According to the Department of Justice as well as state officials have stated that the best practice is community policing. He stated that the Police Officers do a fine job being in the community, attending civil functions and making themselves available for training. Reverend Williams thanked them for being involved and engaged with the community. His second concern is recreation and wants the Board to consider making a park near the old store on County Road that is across from the water tower. A significant amount of traffic comes through Country Club Road to get to Highway 301. He feels that it would make a big statement for the Town to clean up that spot with basketball courts, picnic tables and other recreational items. The citizens would appreciate the project more than talking about trees being cut down. He suggested to the Board to form an advisory board for the area of consideration and offered to be the spear header of the advisory board.

ITEM SEVENTEEN: ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Moss made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:00p.m. Commissioner Smith second the motion. All in favor; motion carried.



Katherine Parker, Town Clerk



Julia M. Meacham, Mayor