

BOARD OF ALDERMAN

September 14, 2020

The Board of Aldermen of the Town of Connelly Springs met at 7:00 pm at the Town Hall Board Room in Connelly Springs, North Carolina. The following board members were present: Mayor Johnny E. Berry, Alderman Terry Childers, Alderman Josh Phillips, Alderman Steve Smart, Alderman Ramona Duncan, Alderman Carroll Turner, and Alderman Kimberly Sigmon. Also, in attendance were: Attorney Redmond Dill, Town Administrator Tamara Brooks, Deputy Brian Sigmon, and Planning Board member Bobby Tomlinson. The Board meeting was recorded in accordance with North Carolina General Statute 160A-72, 171.

CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME: Mayor Berry called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and welcomed all in attendance.

INVOCATION: Alderman Turner offered an invocation and Mayor Berry asked those in attendance to rise and give the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Alderman Duncan made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Alderman Turner seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES: Alderman Turner made a motion to approve the minutes from the Board of Aldermen's regular meeting on August 10, 2020, as presented. Alderman Sigmon seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

PUBLIC AND BOARD COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

CLOSED SESSION QUESTION:

Planning Board member, Bobby Tomlinson asked about the purpose and outcomes of the last closed session, regarding the property located at 1170 Tomlinson Loop. He asked if he could review the minutes from the closed session. Attorney Dill said no formal action was taken as a result of the closed session and minutes would remain sealed as long as necessary to avoid frustrating the purpose of the closed session.

NEW BUSINESS:

TOWN WEBSITE:

Alderman Sigmon said the town's website had been changed and needed attention. She said the front page was missing the banner, the minutes had not been updated since June and that Alderman Phillips's was not on the Council & Staff page. Attorney Dill said the minutes would have been current because the council did not meet in July and the August minutes were just approved. Administrator Brooks said she had not made any changes and normally updates the minutes as they are approved.

Alderman Sigmon said she had scheduled a meeting with Ronnie Harmon to follow-up on updating the website and asked that Pamela Baker come to the October meeting to take new photos of the council for the website for a cost of seventy-five dollars (\$75.00). Alderman Sigmon made a motion to have new photos taken for the website. Alderman Phillips seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

ISRAEL CHAPEL AME ZION – VANDALISM:

Mayor Berry reported on the recently discovered vandalism at Israel Chapel AME Zion Church. He read a statement to be posted on the town's behalf on social media and the newspaper (see attached), showing support for the church and its members and asking anyone who has information to come forward. He suggested that the town put forward a reward of one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) to help with the investigation. Alderman Smart made a suggestion to offer a reward of one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) for someone who could provide information that would lead to the arrest and conviction of the person responsible for the vandalism at Israel Chapel AME Zion Church. Alderman Sigmon seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUND (CRF) : Administrator Brooks said the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) monies could be used for salary costs of emergency personnel, which includes Deputy Sigmon. Alderman Smart made a motion to allocate all of the CRF monies for the purpose of being reimbursed for Deputy Sigmon’s salary. Alderman Duncan seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT: Administrator Brooks said due to COVID-19 there was nothing on the calendar to report.

ATTORNEY’S REPORT:

TOMLINSON PROPERTY: Attorney Dill said the bid of fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000.00) for the Tomlinson property (2295 Tomlinson Loop) by Baron Kuritski was not accepted by the county. He said that Kuritski had spent quite a bit of time researching the cost of cleaning up the property and repairing what could be salvaged. He asked if the town wanted to pursue the purchase of the property since Kuritski’s offer had been rejected and there were no other known offers on the table. Alderman Smart made a motion to move forward with the purchase of the Tomlinson property at cost plus expenses and attorney’s fees. Alderman Turner seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

ANNEXATION OF PROPERTIES – SOPHIA AVENUE: Attorney Dill said he had the petitions drawn up and once those are signed by the property owners; they would need to be certified by the clerk. He said the two adjacent properties would need to be surveyed to make certain they qualify for annexation into the town limits. Alderman Smart made a motion to hire West Consultants to survey the properties and Sophia Street for the purposes of annexation and Powell Bill. Alderman Phillips seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

MAYOR’S REPORT: Mayor Berry reported that he attended the VEDIC Committee Meeting via ZOOM on August 27th. He and Administrator Brooks met with Congresswoman Virginia Foxx here at Town Hall on September 9th. He is scheduled to attend the WPCOG Policy Board Committee Meeting on September 22nd and VEDIC Committee Meeting on September 24th.

FINANCE: Alderman Smart presented the financial statements for review. He said the town’s income is in line with where it should be for the year.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES:

POLICE: Alderman Childers asked Deputy Sigmon to give his report for August.

Disturbance – 1	Gunshot / Stabbing – 1	Breaking and Entering – 4
Fraud – 1	Suspicious Vehicle – 1	
Warrant for Arrest – 3		

TOTAL CALLS FOR SERVICE: 142

SPEED TRAILER: Deputy Sigmon said the town would soon be getting the speed trailer from the Town of Valdese to use. The reason for delay is due to the trailers not being tagged and insured through the county. Once these issues are resolved, we can pick up the speed trailer and park it in town limits.

REPUBLIC SERVICES: Administrator Brooks said she has had trouble accessing the town’s account online for payment. She has attempted to contact the municipal representative, Dana Chapman, but has not been successful in reaching her. She has left several messages and has only received word that Dana is traveling and will call back when she’s back in the office. Administrator Brooks has called Republic Services’ customer support line numerous times and has more than one IT tickets open with them trying to resolve the online access issue. She said she had to make this month’s payment via phone in order to bring the account current. Alderman Smart said not to issue any further payment until someone returns our calls and resolves the current issues we are experiencing.

WATER/SEWER: None.

PARKS AND RECREATION: Alderman Duncan said the Old Fashioned Youth Jubilee sponsored by Abee’s Chapel Baptist Church will be here at the town’s new pavilion on September 21st through September 25th. She asked that everyone attend at least one night. She asked that Administrator Brooks put an announcement on the marquee sign.

PERSONNEL: None.

PROPERTY:

IRRIGATION: Alderman Phillips presented quote from Foothills Outdoor Solutions for replacing the irrigation system and a concept drawing for the landscaping of the town hall grounds. The quote for replacing the irrigation system is twenty-four thousand, five hundred thirty-three dollars (\$24,533.00). After a brief discussion, it was decided to table this until spring.

1170 TOMLINSON LOOP: Alderman Phillips said Tyler Watts with 1st Choice Grading would be back out on the 1170 Tomlinson Loop property to install a drain pipe and make the road entrance into the property at no additional cost.

BEAD BLASTING: Alderman Phillips reported that the front sidewalks and pavilion would be cleaned later this week.

TRANSPORTATION: None.

OTHER BUSINESS:

TOWN SEALS:

Alderman Smart made a motion to purchase two (2) 36” polystyrene seals from Artcraft Press to be hung on the pavilion and front gable of town hall. Alderman Sigmon seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

REOPENING TOWN HALL/COVID-19:

Alderman Turner made a motion to reopen town hall to the public with regular hours. Alderman Childers seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

ADJOURNMENT: With no further business before the Board of Aldermen, Mayor Berry called for a motion to adjourn. Alderman Turner made a motion to adjourn with Alderman Phillips seconding the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Johnny E. Berry, Mayor

Tamara Brooks, Town Administrator/Clerk