

## **BOARD OF ALDERMAN**

**December 06, 2021**

The Board of Aldermen of the Town of Connelly Springs met at 6:30 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 Steve Smart, Alderman Josh Phillips, Alderman Carroll Turner, Alderman Ramona Duncan and Alderman Kimberly Sigmon. Also, in attendance were: Attorney Redmond Dill, Town Administrator Tamara Brooks, Deputy Brian Sigmon, Clerk of Court Mabel Lowman, Mayor-Elect Dennis Seagle, Alderman-Elect Jeffrey Beck and several members of the community (see guest sign-in sheet for record). 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 6:30 pm and welcomed all in attendance.

**INVOCATION:** An invocation was given by Alderman Turner 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 Sigmon seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

**APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES:** Alderman Smart made a motion to approve the minutes from the Board of Aldermen's regular meeting on November 01, 2021, as presented. Alderman Turner seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

**PUBLIC AND BOARD COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Alderman Josh Phillips received a request from town resident Elaine Shook to read a letter to the Board in her absence. The letter explained her family's history in the town and her disapproval of comments made about Mayor Berry and the town on social media during the election by Alderman-Elect Jeffrey Beck.

Alderman Smart addressed Alderman-Elect Jeffrey Beck concerning the inaccurate statements he made during the Candidates Forum sponsored by the Burke County Chamber of Commerce. He asked Mr. Beck where he obtained his information regarding Administrator Brooks' salary and asked if he had supporting documentation. Mr. Beck said he would prefer not to say who told him and that he did not have any documentation to support his statement. Alderman Smart asked Mr. Beck about Mayor Berry using the Tomlinson Loop property for hunting. Mr. Beck responded by saying he had spoken with people whose property joins the Tomlinson Loop property. Mr. Beck said they claimed to have seen Mayor Berry and Alderman Phillips hunting on the property. Alderman Smart told Mr. Beck that he had been misinformed. He cautioned Mr. Beck on making libelous statements regarding the town. Alderman Smart told him that prior to taking his oath; he is a private citizen, however; when he takes his oath and becomes and member of the board, the statements he makes become a liability for not only for himself but for the town as well.

Mayor Berry asked if anyone else had any comments.

Alderman Sigmon told Mr. Beck she did not appreciate the comments he made on social media about her family. She told him she is also related to Mayor-Elect Dennis Seagle, Alderman Terry Childers and Alderman Ramona Duncan.

### **ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:**

Administrator Brooks reminded the Board that Town Hall would be closed for the Christmas and New Year's holidays. She also made note of continuing issues of sending and receiving mail at the post office.

**ATTORNEY'S REPORT:** Attorney Dill has received petitions from property owners on Sophia Street and Sophia Avenue requesting the town incorporate their roads into the town's Powell Bill street maintenance program. He has researched the deeds and additional signatures are needed. Administrator Brooks will contact those property owners requesting their signatures. Once those petition forms are completed, the Board will need to approve the petitions to proceed with surveying and engineering to continue the Powell Bill process.

**MAYOR'S REPORT:** Mayor Berry said he and Administrator Brooks attended the WPCOG Policy Board Meeting in Taylorsville on November 23rd. He attended the VEDIC Committee Meeting on December 2nd where they discussed at the splash park in Valdese.

**FINANCE:** Alderman Smart presented the financial reports and said they are available for review. He said the town's income is five percent (5%) higher than what was anticipated for the year.

Alderman Smart made a motion for Mayor Berry to continue to be the representative for the Town of Connelly Springs on the VEDIC Committee. Alderman Duncan seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

Alderman Smart made a motion to approve the bonuses for both Deputy Sigmon and Administrator Brooks. Alderman Sigmon seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

**GOVERNMENT SERVICES:**

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

Larceny – 1

Warrant for Arrest – 1      Order for Arrest – 1      Criminal Summons – 1

**TOTAL CALLS FOR SERVICE: 55**

**WATER/SEWER:** None.

**PARKS AND RECREATION:** Alderman Duncan said the planning for the Summer Concert Series and Town Day Festival would begin in January.

**PERSONNEL:** None.

**PROPERTY:**

**OUTDOOR BUILDINGS:** Alderman Turner said he would research options for wall-mount shelving and present those options at the January meeting.

**TRANSPORTATION:** Alderman Turner presented the quote from Evans Construction for both Abee Park Drive and the area behind the fire department. After a brief discussion, Alderman Turner suggested postponing a decision until further options could be discussed with Evans Construction for the fire department project.

**RECOGNITION OF OUTGOING BOARD MEMBERS:** Alderman Smart presented a certificate of appreciation to Alderman Josh Phillips. He then presented a certificate of appreciation and plaque to Mayor Johnny Berry in recognition of his many years of service to the Town of Connelly Springs.

**STATEMENT FROM MAYOR BERRY:** Mayor Berry gave a statement to conclude his term as mayor. He spoke of the issues the town faced at the beginning of his mayoral term and how those were corrected. He reiterated the fact that he has never used the Tomlinson property for any type of hunting or any personal use. He spoke of the improvements made to the town hall properties during his tenure as mayor, such as the new pavilion, picnic shelter and storage building, new flooring upstairs and in the Community Room, new countertops and furniture in the Board Room, a new vehicle for the town deputy, as well as the purchase of the land for future development. All of these were accomplished without the town going into debt. He said he leaves the town in good financial shape because of the practical management of funds throughout his administration. He expressed his appreciation to the Board, Attorney Dill, Deputy Sigmon and Administrator Brooks for their good stewardship over the years and for being able to work together for the advancement of the town.

**OATHS OF OFFICES FOR NEWLY AND RE-ELECTED OFFICIALS:**

Clerk of Court Mabel Lowman issued the oaths of office for Alderman Carroll Turner and Alderman Terry Childers who were re-elected and Mayor Dennis Seagle and Alderman Jeffrey Beck who were newly elected. After the oaths were given, each Board member took their seat and the meeting continued.

**STATEMENT FROM MAYOR SEAGLE:** Mayor Seagle expressed his gratitude to former Mayor Johnny Berry for reaching out to congratulate him on winning the election. He thanked those in attendance for coming and said he looked forward to getting to work.

**COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:** Mayor Seagle said he would like to move Alderman Turner from the Transportation Committee to the Property Committee and Alderman Smart from the Property Committee to the Transportation Committee. He would also like to assign Alderman Beck to assist on both the Transportation and Property Committees.

Alderman Smart recommended assigning Alderman Duncan to the Finance Committee to replace former Alderman Josh Phillips.

Alderman Smart made a motion to accept the new committee assignments. Alderman Duncan seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

**MAYOR PRO TEM:** Mayor Seagle spoke with Alderman Smart who had agreed to continue to serve as Mayor Pro Tem, if approved by the Board. Alderman Duncan made a motion to re-appoint Alderman Smart as Mayor Pro Tem. Alderman Childers seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

**ADOPTING 2022 BOARD OF ALDERMAN REGULAR MEETING SCHEDULE (RESOLUTION No. 2022-01):** Administrator Brooks presented Resolution No. 2022-01 (see attached) adopting the regular meeting schedule for the Board of Aldermen for the 2022 calendar year. Alderman Smart made a motion to adopt the schedule as presented. Alderman Duncan seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

**ESSENTIALS OF GOVERNMENT AND ETHICS TRAINING:** Administrator Brooks explained that those who were re-elected were required to take the two (2) hour ethics training and those courses had not been released yet. The town can no longer participate in the “bulk” webinars that had previously been offered through the WPCOG.

Mayor Seagle said he preferred to attend the online version of the Essentials of Government Training scheduled for December 13th through 15th.

**CLOSED SESSION:** Alderman Smart made a motion to go into closed session. Alderman Duncan seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

**OPEN SESSION:** Alderman Smart made a motion to return to open session. Alderman Childers seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous. No action was taken as a result of closed session

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

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Dennis F. Seagle, Mayor

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Tamara Brooks, Town Administrator/Clerk