

TOWN OF COLUMBIA BOARD MINUTES January 2, 2024

The Town of Columbia Board of Aldermen met in regular session at 7:PM, Tuesday, January 2, 2024, in the Meeting Room of the Columbia Municipal Building. Aldermen attending were Lloyd Armstrong, Sandra Owens, Lynda Mastronardo and Bryan Owens. Mayor James W. Cahoon presided.

Mayor Cahoon called the meeting to order and congratulated Town Attorney Will Crowe for his birthday and for the arrival of a new child. He asked Alderman Armstrong to offer prayer for the board.

Upon motion of Alderman B. Owens the Consent Agenda was unanimously approved. This included:

1. Minutes of the December 4, 2023 Regular Session Board of Aldermen Meeting
2. Tax Discoveries –

Brightspeed	\$ 4,352.75
Dominion Power	\$ 4,808.71
AR&T Mobile	\$ 1,277.68
Piedmont Natural Gas	\$ 624.80
American Tower Corp.	\$ 594.15
Verizon Wireless	\$ 1,014.81
SBA Communications Corp.	\$ 372.82
Trolleys, Inc.	\$ 11.35
MCI Metro Access	\$ 9.53
3. Tax Releases – Venus Alexander \$ 399.76

Mayor Cahoon announced the Pubic Comment Period inviting attendees to voice comments or concerns about town issues. There were no comments and the Public Comment period was ended.

Sheriff Kevin Sawyer was not present so there was no Law Enforcement Report.

Town Manager Rhett White reported on the CDBG-NR Project, explaining that construction of two houses is underway. He said a project extension has been granted that extends the project deadline to July of 2025, but the town is still awaiting word on how the remaining funds can be used. Alderman Mastronardo was designated by consent as a signee on the CDBG checking account.

Mr. White reported that there has been no action on the Free 'n Easy property transfer or the ZIP Line proposal.

Mayor Cahoon reported on the Harbor Town Ferries Project, including how the \$2,000,000 in funds allocated to the town will be used. He reported that the ferry Penelope had visited Columbia to determine dockage and distances to and from Edenton and other sites. He said late March or April will be the earliest scheduled ferry run.

Upon motion of Alderman B. Owens the engineering agreement for the Bridge Street stormwater project was unanimously approved.

attachment # 1

Mary Ann Hassell, Tax Collector presented the tax collection report, noting the report provided is a collection report dating to 1993, rather than the current monthly report which allows the Board to accurately know the taxes collected to date in the current tax year. After much discussion Mayor Cahoon asked that the reporting format be changed to reflect as of the current month. It was noted that the tax collections are 58.65% of billings which is low at this time of year.

Finance Officer Monica Mauffray reported that General Fund income stands at 55% of expectations while expenditures are at 44% of budget. She said the town will still have to watch the budgets carefully in the second half of the year.

She reported the Water/Sewer Fund at 63% of anticipated income and 37% of anticipated expenditures. She described the Water/Sewer Fund as looking good.

Mr. White presented the Manager's Report, announcing that the Powell Bill allocation was up slightly for the half-year at \$12,295.18. He said that several inquiries about Oakwood Cemetery have been received. He noted that the issue with the Friends of Oakwood Cemetery still needs to be resolved.

He reported on an inquiry from a Charlotte company interested in establishing a live weapons version of lazier tag. Discussion indicated concerns about such a game. He also shared information about Social distancing as allowed in Edenton, Manteo and Elizabeth City.

Alderman S. Owens said she wanted to discuss with the Sheriff the loud mufflers on several vehicles and the offensive noise they make. She asked if something could not be done to lessen the noise.

Alderman Mastronardo complimented the owner of the house on 2nd Hicks Street for his renovations and repairs to the long-vacant home. She indicated that others should be encouraged to make similar improvements.

Mayor Cahoon announced the Martin Luther King holiday with offices closed and the Economic Development Committee Meeting at 6:PM on January 18th. He appointed Alderman B. Owens to set in for Alderman Hal Fleming who has been absent due to illness.

With no additional business and motion by Alderman S. Owens with unanimous vote, Mayor Cahoon adjourned the meeting.

This the 2nd day of January, 2024



Mayor James W. Cahoon

Attest:



Rhett B. White, Clerk