

TOWN OF COLUMBIA BOARD MINUTES

JUNE 3, 2024

The Board of Aldermen of the Town of Columbia met in Regular Session at 7:PM, Monday, June 3, 2024 in the Meeting Room of the Columbia Municipal Building. Members present were Aldermen Lloyd Armstrong, Sandra Owens, Lynda Mastronardo and Bryan Owens. Mayor James W. Cahoon presided.

Mayor Cahoon called the meeting to order and asked Alderman Sandra Owens to offer a prayer for the Board. Upon motion of Alderman Armstrong the vote was unanimous to approve the Consent Agenda. This included the minutes of the May 7, 2024 Board Meeting.

Mayor Cahoon announced the Public Comment period and invited remarks or questions from the audience. Ms. Nettie Dyer, on behalf of the "Concerned Citizens" asked the Board to assist in getting a multi-purpose facility for the County. She also asked the Board to get jobs for community members and suggested the county needs a hotel which would provide jobs.

Sheriff Kevin Sawyer presented the May Law Enforcement Report, including a number of charges, investigations and arrests. He said the Sheriff's Office continues to put pressure on the South Road Street and Rail Road Street area.

Mayor Cahoon asked the Sheriff to investigate windows broken by a roaming group of juveniles on a Green Street house, asking for neighborhood patrols. Sheriff Sawyer asked the Aldermen to consider providing cameras throughout town. Ms. Diane Bryant asked where are the town limits?

Alderman B. Owens indicated he plans a meeting of the Social District Committee and will report next month.

Town Manager Rhett White reported that the county still has a Building Inspector vacancy. Meanwhile Allen Pitman from Washington County is doing the inspections at cost plus milage.

The Manager also reported that the Legislative appropriation for the Free 'n Easy plantation house is still tied up in Raleigh. He noted that this also ties up the \$53,000 in funds for the Pontoon Boat.

Mr. White said the Harbor Town Committee should be able to answer questions about the proposed ZIP Line at the next Board meeting. Peter Thompson will be here to talk about the boardwalk, ZIP Line and other items of interest to the Town and Harbor Town.

Mayor Cahoon recessed the Board meeting for the scheduled 7:45 PM Budget Hearing. There were no public questions or comments about the proposed budget so Mayor Cahoon closed the hearing.

Upon motion of Alderman S. Owens the 2024-25 Budget was unanimously approved.

Cemetery concerns followed. Mr. White announced that the remnants of the Friends of Oakwood Cemetery Committee will meet June 18th to determine action on the "Friends" and funds available for cemetery maintenance.

Mayor Cahoon opened discussion on the Harbor Town ferries and the several cancelled schedules due to mechanical or other problems. He expressed frustration at the cancellations and questions about responsibilities.

Tax Collector MaryAnn Hassell reported that the 2023 property tax collections percentage stands at 88.65 % with \$41,915.49 remaining to be collected.

Fiscal Officer Monica Mauffray reported that General Fund revenues are at 96% of billings while expenses are at 85%. She noted there are still some large end-of-year bills to be paid. She reported that the Water/Sewer Fund revenues are at 109% of billings versus 90% of budgeted expenditures.

Upon motion of Alderman Mastronardo and unanimous vote Monday, June 17th at 7:PM was set for a Recessed Meeting to address end-of-year budget items.

The Manager reported on water problems at Columbia Crossing Restaurant and efforts to identify and correct the problems, on contacts with residents using loud mufflers and streetside garage work. He noted several inquiries about business activities and efforts to encourage business activity.

There was no report from the Town Attorney.

Alderman Armstrong said his good-by effective June 30, 2024. He also announced the Alligator White Perch Tournament.

Alderman S. Owens said the manhole cover on North Road Street and Martha Street is loose again.

Alderman Mastronardo announced the Library's Summer Reading Program, asked if the area behind the Library can be sprayed for mosquitoes and indicated continued interest in a farmer's market.

Alderman B. Owens said stray cats on the north side of town are a problem. He said the Animal Control Officer sets traps but some residents come right behind him releasing the cats. He asked if some pot holes on North Virginia Avenue can be patched, calling the street condition poor.

The Juneteenth Celebration will be held at Hills Game Room, according to Ms. Dyer.

Mayor Cahoon called for a closed session. Upon motion of Alderman Armstrong under G.S. 143-318.11(c) (3), Attorney Client Privilege, with unanimous vote, the Board went into Closed Session at 10:06 PM. The Board came out of the Closed Session at 10:10 PM without a report.

With no other business Alderman S. Owens moved to recess the meeting until 7:PM, Monday, June 17th. With unanimous vote Mayor Cahoon recessed the meeting.

This the 3rd day of June, 2024.

JAMES W. Cahoon, Mayor

ATTEST:

Rhett B. White, Clerk