

TOWN OF COLUMBIA BOARD MINUTES NOVEMBER 4, 2024

The Board of Aldermen of the Town of Columbia met in regular session at 7:PM, Monday, November 4, 2024, in the Meeting Room of the Columbia Municipal Building. Aldermen attending were Clydette Overton, Hal Fleming, Sandra Owens and Lynda Mastronardo. Mayor James W. Cahoon presided.

Mayor Cahoon called the meeting to order and asked Alderman S. Owens to offer a prayer for the board. He welcomed the audience.

Upon motion of Alderman Fleming and unanimous vote the Consent Agenda was approved. This included Minutes of the October 7, 2024 Board of Aldermen Meeting. Also, Water/Sewer downward adjustments –

Asante' Marner	\$ 44.62
Maria Azvceno Diaz Robelledo	\$ 325.92
Denise McClese	\$ 77.69
B&E Investments, LLC	\$ 46.56

Mayor Cahoon complimented the organizers of the Columbia Ghost Walk and the Main Street Trunk or Treat.

Mayor Cahoon announced the Public Comment Period, inviting those attending to offer thoughts about the Town. No comments were offered so he closed the comment period.

Jeff Best, CPA, was present to review the annual audit of the Columbia Budget, ending June 30, 2024. Mr. Best complimented the Board for having materials ready for auditors to review. He noted two findings, one due to late receipt of a contractor bill and inadequate segregation of duties. Overall the audit was positive and resulted in compliments to the Finance Officer. Upon motion of Alderman Fleming with unanimous vote the 2024 Audit was accepted.

Sheriff Kevin Sawyer presented the September and October Law Enforcement reports. He reported 25 traffic related citations during October, five arrests, and 6,162 miles driven by Deputies assigned to the Town. He said there were no major issues associated with the Scuppernong River Festival.

Sarah Phelps, Hunter Rose and Dr. Jean Lambert were present to ask permission to renovate the Tennis Courts (Children's Playground) to include Pickle Ball and upgraded court surfaces. This includes applying for a grant from T-Mobile and local fundraising. They also asked that the old light poles be removed from the site.

Upon motion of Alderman S. Owens and unanimous vote, the Board granted the request and also directed that a letter of support be provided to go with the grant application.

There was no report on the Harbor Towns Ferries. It was indicated that the vessels will be secured for the winter. It was noted that the Albemarle Queen dinner boat made a successful voyage under charter from Pocosin Arts, October 26th, and was docked in Columbia for a week.

Discussion followed on the ferries, boardwalk and waterfront improvements. Mayor Cahoon announced that the ad hoc work group will meet to prioritize and take a final look at the proposed waterfront projects. Mayor Cahoon said the existing Municipal Building is due a thorough renovation and the garage building behind the Town Hall is slated to be demolished and debris removed, but that another building for storage and work site will need to be in place to accommodate the demolition. He said the number one project is renovation of the boardwalk and noted that expenditures will have to be approved by the Town, Harbor Towns Ferries and the State Office of Budget and Management.

Upon motion of Alderman Overton with unanimous vote, demolition of the old workshop was approved at a cost of \$8,500.

The Board asked that a letter of appreciation be sent to Ms. Rebecca Liverman for her work in facilitating the ad hoc committee deliberations.

Town Manager Rhett White reported that there has been no further discussions with Dylon Burt concerning the proposed ZIP Line. Mr. White said he will end efforts to move that project forward until the outdoor adventures company decides to move forward.

Mr. White said effort to meet with Ben Solomon with the NC Wildlife Resources Commission on transferring the Free 'n Easy property have been unsuccessful.

Ms. Monica Mauffray reported that Ms. MaryAnne Hassell is no longer with the Town and that three interviews are scheduled. She reported that tax collections are at 25.25%, compared to 13.69% at the same time last year.

Ms. Mauffray reported that General Fund Income is at 32% of budget and expenditures are at 34% of amounts budgeted. She reported that Water/Sewer income is at 46% of expectations while Water/Sewer expenditures stand at 26% of budget.

Upon motion of Alderman Mastronardo with unanimous vote, Alderman Hal Fleming was named to fill the Town's position on the Tyrrell Volunteer Fire Department Board of Directors.

The Manager reported that the Inner Banks RV Park is set to get underway, after changed plans were reviewed by the Columbia Planning Board. This includes the addition of the Charles Swain property. Mr. White reported that the State estimates the Columbia and Tyrrell County populations to have declined again to 596 for the Town and 2,884 in the county outside the town. (3,480 total).

Mr. White asked the Board to declare two vehicles surplus property – 2000 Ford F-150 and scrap items, # 1FT468969YnB94382 and a 1994 Ford Club Van, # 1FBTS31CHB94357 and authorize their sale. On motion by Alderman Fleming the motion to authorize the vehicle sale was approved unanimously.

Mr. White noted that several lights inside the town and on the bridge need replacing. He noted that the street lights and decorative lights along Main Street are owned and maintained by the power company. The bridge lights are maintained by the Town.

Aldermen Overton and S. Owens asked if a crosswalk can be installed at Social Services building and Alderman Mastronardo added at the US Post Office.

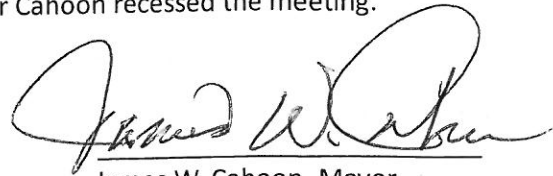
Mayor Cahoon said he wants to dedicate one meeting to neighborhood issues and zoning.

Upon motion of Alderman Fleming and unanimous vote, the Board entered special closed session at 8:05 PM to consult with the Town Attorney under G.S 143-318-11-(a) Attorney Client Privilege.

The Board returned from closed session at 8:45 PM with no report.

With no additional business Alderman S. Owens moved to recess the meeting until 7:PM, Thursday, November 21, 2024. The vote was unanimous and Mayor Cahoon recessed the meeting.

This the 4th day of November, 2024.



James W. Cahoon, Mayor

ATTEST:



Rhett B. White, Clerk