

Town of Spring Lake  
Regular Meeting of the Board of Aldermen  
Municipal Building  
300 Ruth Street  
Spring Lake, NC 28390

August 27, 2018

**MINUTES**

7:02 p.m.

The Spring Lake Board of Aldermen held a regular scheduled meeting in the Grady Howard Conference Room of the Spring Lake Municipal Building with Mayor Pro Tem James O'Garra presiding.

**Board Members Present:** Alderman Christian  
Alderwoman Soña Cooper  
Alderwoman Jackie Jackson  
Alderwoman Fredricka Sutherland  
Mayor Larry Dobbins - absent

**Others Present:**

Daniel Gerald, Town Manager  
Tom Cooney, Public Works Director  
Claiburn Watson, Finance Director  
Rhonda Webb, Town Clerk

Ellis Hankins, Town Attorney  
Troy McDuffie, Police Chief  
Jason Williams, Interim Fire Chief

**2. Invocation**

Alderwoman Sutherland gave the invocation.

**3. Pledge of Allegiance**

Mayor Pro Tem O'Garra led the meeting in the pledge of allegiance.

**4. Additions or Deletions to Agenda**

The Board added Rate and Fee Schedule Amendment as Item 9b and deleted Item 11, Closed Session.

**5. Approval of Agenda**

The Board approved the agenda as amended.

**Action:** The Board approved a motion to approve the agenda as amended.

**Motion by:** Mayor Pro Tem O'Garra

**Second by:** Alderwoman Jackson

**Vote:** Unanimous

(A copy of the agenda is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes – see attachment one.)

**6. Approval of Consent Items**

a. Minutes of the August 13, 2018 Regular Meeting.

**Action:** The Board approved a motion to approve the consent items.

**Motion by:** Mayor Pro Tem O'Garra

**Second by:** Alderwoman Jackson

**Vote:** Unanimous

## **7. Public Forum**

Michael Allen, 615 Goodyear Drive, Spring Lake, spoke concerning speeding in his neighborhood. He requested that the Police Department patrol the area more. He suggested putting speed bumps in the area to help with the speeding.

Tony Burgess, 208 N. Main Street, Spring Lake, presented the Mayor with a trophy and a check for the Recreation Department for \$500. Mayor Pro Tem O'Garra accepted it on behalf of Mayor Dobbins.

Henry Ponder, 1630 Mack Street, Spring Lake, stated that he is on the Recreation Advisory Committee and stated that on January 26, 2018, Mr. Jones employment with the Town was terminated. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Recreation Advisory Committee resigned and it was assumed that all the members of the committee would resign. He stated the Chair and vice Chair resigned because of the way Mr. Jones termination came about and stated it was clear to many that the termination of Mr. Jones was set in motion at the Board's Special meeting on December 12, 2017 where the following items were discussed:

It was stated that the Town was paying out more than \$140,000 in salary for the Recreation Director and the Assistant Recreation Director and that they are never around. The Board members all agreed that one of them should have been at the Swearing In Ceremony. They all agreed that they are never around and that they both work banker's hours. He stated there are more important issues that the Board of Aldermen should be concerned about that would improve the Town of Spring Lake than to be concerned about someone being in attendance at a Swearing In Ceremony. He stated some of you on this Board were aware that Mr. Jones went on vacation every year around this time. It was also stated that citizens had expressed concerns that the Recreation Center's overall performance is going down. He stated "my question is how many of those citizens utilize the Recreation Center". He stated that he uses the Center at various times of the day and he hasn't seen any of you or many other citizens for that matter. He stated that he knows most of the people who use the exercise equipment regularly and the performance of the facility did not go down, it improved because Mr. Jones didn't sit in his office, he was out networking with local businesses and schools to create activities to keep the children involved. He stated that he joined the center in 2006 and he supported the center and paid his membership fees even though he had the option to use the Fort Bragg facilities at no cost.

He stated the following items were also discussed in the meeting:

1. Hours of operation – who set the hours of operation when the center was open? He stated that he was under the impression that the director at that time with the approval of the Board set the hours.
2. There is nothing for teenagers to do at the recreation center – when has there ever been anything for teenagers to do at the recreation center? He stated it seems the activities at the center are focused on seniors and children under the age of twelve (12).

3. When kids are out of school, why is the recreation center closed? That is a statement without merit. The recreation center operates Monday through Friday, 7 am until 9 pm, Saturdays 10 am until 6 pm and closed on Sundays and Holidays – the Board approved these hours.
4. The budget is going up and services are less with no activity for children in Spring Lake. He stated the budget goes up every year to operate and expenses, right? He then inquired what services we are referring to.
5. Why is the Recreation Center closed on Sunday? He stated you already know why the center is closed on Sunday. Again, the Board of Aldermen approved the operating hours for the center when it was built. Can you name one Recreation Center in the County that is open on Sundays? It would cost to operate the center on Sunday; will you approve an increased budget so the center can operate on Sunday?

He stated with all of these issues that were discussed at the Special Meeting on December 12, 2017, the issues discussed seems to have been a way to cover up the true intentions of the Board because within two months from the date of the meeting the new Manager was hired and Mr. Jones was terminated. Nothing personal Mr. Gerald. He stated each of you knows there is a Recreation Advisory Committee because the committee members were approved by the Board of Aldermen. The questions that the citizens have about the Recreation Center should have been brought before the Recreation Advisory Committee at the monthly meeting and you, the members of the Board, should have advised those citizens to attend the monthly meeting to address their concerns during the public forum. Their concerns would have been presented to you in the minutes from the committee. He stated he thinks all of you know the purpose of the Advisory Committee. It is there to formulate the Master Plan for the Recreation Center for the Town; to make recommendations to the Board of Aldermen from time to time with respect to the Recreation programs, facilities, resources, and needs of the Town; to advise the Recreation Director with respect to the recreation programs and activities; to assist in coordinating the recreation programs of the Town with private, public, and semi-public agencies of the Town; to perform other such duties as assigned by the Town Board of Aldermen, to advise the budgetary planning of the entire Recreation program. When the Recreation Committee Chair and Vice-Chair resign their position, no one on the Board nor the new Director reached out to any other member on the board to coordinate what action would take place. It was my understanding that the new Director and the Board of Aldermen wanted to wait it out according to the by-laws which state any member missing three consecutive meetings or four meetings total in a calendar year shall be subject to dismissal from the committee upon a majority vote of the committee and ratification by the Board of Aldermen. Members of the Recreation Advisory Committee are appointed by the Board of Aldermen for a three-year term. It was my understanding that the new Director had scheduled a Recreation Advisory Committee meeting for September 2018. I called the new Director and advised him that the remaining members of the Committee wanted to have a regular scheduled meeting of the Advisory Committee on August 20, 2018 at 7 p.m. and he agreed. Four members of the Advisory Committee, which creates a quorum, convened at 7 p.m. on 20 August 2018 but the Director was not there due to personal reasons. We, the remaining members, determined that we will serve out our term. We highly recommend that each of you read the minutes for every Advisory Committee meeting and see what our recommendation will be in future improvement of the activities of the Recreation Center. Let me address it again, the statement about citizens concern and the Center's overall performance is going down. I want to be real about this. There has been

very little upgrades to the equipment in the Center since the opening in 2006. The Town website states, and I quote, it is a state-of-the-art facility. He stated that is an understatement. The Recreation Center has nothing that appeals to citizens between the ages of sixteen and forty. The equipment that is there is limited and the full workout circuit for the Nautilus equipment is not provided. The Center does not have weight equipment for the members who are into body building – why not? The Recreation Center offers citizens free memberships – why? There are areas in the Recreation Center that are not being used efficiently. The room with the pottery and the firing kiln is rarely used and there are only one or two people in there on certain days. I heard that the new Director of the Recreation Center was told to get the new sauna installed. You didn't give him very much of a choice to my understanding. This is something I think should have been brought to the Advisory Committee. Nothing personal Mr. Graves, but the location of that sauna is a bad idea. The gaming equipment was upgraded but how many people really use it? My recommendation or suggestion:

1. The storage room at the back of the equipment room should have been cleaned out and the sauna put in there.
2. Seniors, like myself, should be charged a membership fee to use the facility and get a 10% discount.  
We can use the Senior Center. It has exercise equipment we can use at no cost. Provide weights for those citizens that are into body building. I heard all kinds of excuses as to why the Center will not provide weights for the citizens that are into body building – why not? It would generate revenue.
3. Move the pottery and firing kiln to the Senior Center. There is enough space to accommodate it. I can show you space that is not being used efficiently.
4. The splash pad is in the works, but why not a skate park or a swimming pool? Wouldn't that give the kids something to do when they are out of school as you asked in your meeting?

At this time Mayor Pro Tem O'Garra stated that Mr. Ponder had been given more than the allotted time and thanked him for having so much interest in the gym. Mr. Ponder stated that he will continue to have the interest and thanked the Board for their time.

## **8. Presentations**

### **a. Thomas Court Remembrance Proclamation**

The Court Family was not able to attend the meeting.

### **b. Recognition of Fire Department's Call to Bragg Muffler**

Battalion Chief Richardson stated that the personnel in the Fire Department touch people's lives every day. He stated that being a part of saving someone's life gives you a feeling that you have never experienced before. On April 12, 2018 Spring Lake Fire and EMS personnel responded to Bragg Muffler Shop where Mr. Lynn Allen had no pulse and was not breathing. Fire and EMS personnel worked on him and transported him to Cape Fear Valley Hospital where he made a full recovery and is here with us tonight. Battalion Chief Richardson introduced the following people who worked on Mr. Allen and saved his life: Michael Crower, Angela Barlow, Captain Steven Barker, Lieutenant Tommy Elder and Devon Gloria, Brandon Fitzhugh, Chief Williams and Chief McLamb. Mr. Allen thanked them for saving his life and stated he would not be here tonight if it hadn't been for them.

There was another incident on July 30, 2018 where a man walked into the Fire Department complaining about chest pain. Ms. Carol Shaffer was the first person he encountered. She quickly got him help and stayed with him and prayed for him during the incident. He stated that the last thing he remembers is Ms. Shaffer praying for him. He was in the operating room for four hours and was told after the surgery that he shouldn't even be here. He stated he knows he is alive today because of the help he received at the Spring Lake Fire Department. He stated that he is thankful to God that he is alive today and he thanked the people of the Spring Lake Fire Department for saving his life.

**9. New Business**

**a. Harvesting Timber from Mutzberg Tract and Mendoza Park**

Mr. Gerald stated the Mutzberg tract was purchased with the intent to allow nature trails and passive recreation areas. He requested the Board give him permission to selectively harvest the timber by the highest bidder. The proposed trail alignment will be brought back to the Board for approval. He also stated that we have been granted access to the property through Mr. Carl Manning's property.

**Action:** The Board approved a motion to allow staff to proceed with the project accepting the highest bid regarding the timber removal.

**Motion by:** Alderwoman Sutherland

**Second by:** Alderman Christian

**Vote:** Unanimous

**b. Rate and Fee Schedule Amendment**

Ms. Webb presented the proposed amendments for the Recreation Department's Rate and Fee Schedule. She stated staff is recommending to reduce the deposit for the gymnasium to \$250 and the per hour charge to \$40.

**Action:** The Board approved a motion to approve the amendment to the Rate and Fee Schedule for the Community Center fees.

**Motion by:** Alderwoman Cooper

**Second by:** Alderman Christian

**Vote:** Unanimous

**10. The Last Word**

Alderwoman Sutherland stated it is always a pleasure serving. People sometimes do not understand that you give a lot of yourself when you care and you serve the whole community. She thanked the first responders for all they do and when the first responders arrive on the scene it is going to be a team effort. She stated she appreciates us working as a team for the Town to go forward and be productive.

She stated they went to the schools this morning to greet the students as they returned to school. She stated there was a request and she is looking for volunteers to provide two (2) gallons of red paint, two (2) gallons of blue paint and two (2) gallons of black paint for W.T. Brown.

Lift each other up and not bring people down and the great Town of Spring Lake will go up.

**11. Adjournment.**

**Action:** There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

**Motion:** Alderwoman Cooper

**Second by:** Alderman Christian

**Vote:** Unanimous



*Rhonda D. Webb*  
Rhonda D. Webb, MMC, NCCMC  
Town Clerk

ATTEST:

*Larry G. Dobbins*  
Larry G. Dobbins  
Mayor