

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

March 8, 2021

MINUTES

6:00 p.m.

The Spring Lake Board of Aldermen held a work session meeting in the Grady Howard Conference Room of the Spring Lake Municipal Building with Mayor Larry G. Dobbins presiding.

Board Members Present: Mayor Pro Tem Taimoor Aziz (via Zoom)
Alderwoman Soña Cooper
Alderwoman Jackie Jackson
Alderman James O'Garra
Alderwoman Fredricka Sutherland

Others Present:

Adam Lindsay, Interim Town Manager (via Zoom)
Samantha Wullenwaber, Candidate for Interim Town Manager (via Zoom)
Tonny McNeil, Economic Development
Bob Stafford, Developer
Carl Manning, Kingdom Community Development
Jonathan Charleston, Town Attorney
Catherine Bamba, Attorney (via Zoom)
Debora Johnson-Hudson, Town Clerk
Melissa Pereira, Deputy Town Clerk
Benard Lemon, Audio Visual Coordinator

2. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Alderwoman Cooper gave the invocation and led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Additions or Deletions

Mayor Dobbins added Closed Session N.C.G.S. §143-318.11(a)(4)- Economic Development as item 6a, N.C.G.S. §143-318.1(a)(3) - Attorney Client Privilege as item 6b, and N.C.S.G. §143-318.11(a)(6) – Personnel as item 6c.

4. Approval of Agenda

Action: Approval of the March 8, 2021 Board of Aldermen Work Session Meeting agenda with additions of Closed Session N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(4) -Economic Development.

Motion by: Alderwoman Cooper

Second by: Alderman O'Garra

Vote: Unanimous

5. Approval of Consent Items

Action: Approval of consent items for February 22, 2021 Regular Board Meeting minutes.

Motion by: Alderwoman Cooper

Second by: Alderwoman Jackson
Vote: Unanimous

6. Closed Session

- a. N.C.G.S. §143-318.11(a)(4) – Economic Development
- b. N.C.G.S. §143-318.11(a)(3) - Attorney Client Privilege
- c. N.C.G.S. §143-318.11(a)(6) – Personnel

Action: The Board approved a motion to go into Closed Session pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(4), N.C.G.S 143- 318.11 (a)(3) Consultation with Attorney, and G.S 143.318.11(a)(6) Personnel.

Motion by: Alderwoman Cooper
Second by: Alderwoman Jackson
Vote: Unanimous

Alderwoman Sutherland made a motion, seconded by Alderwoman Cooper, to reconvene in open session.

Action: Approval of the agreement for the Interim Town Manager, Samantha Wullenwaber.

Motion by: Alderwoman Cooper
Second by: Alderwoman Sutherland
Vote: 3-2

Yes
Mayor Pro Tem Aziz
Alderwoman Cooper
Alderwoman Sutherland

No
Alderman O'Garra
Alderwoman Jackson

Alderman O'Garra stated the Interim Town Manager we hired has no prior experience, and we need a manager with experience. Alderman O'Garra stated at this time we need a Town Manager, Finance Director, Town Clerk, and Police Chief. Alderman O'Garra stated the way we are hiring Town Manager's now will deter Town Manager's from coming here because she is also running for that position. Alderman O'Garra stated the Town is in a situational problem with finance, and we need an experienced individual to help us get out of this situation. Alderman O'Garra stated let it be no doubt in your mind that we are sending messages to the citizens of Spring Lake that we are putting an inexperienced manager in charge to pull us out of this situation. Alderman O'Garra stated the person that the Mayor is trying to hire has never been a town manager. Alderman O'Garra stated we have never hired a town manager getting paid a salary with full benefits. Alderman O'Garra stated I have been here twenty years, and it has never been this way. Alderman O'Garra stated Interim Town Managers are not hired as regular workers, only contract. Alderman O'Garra stated someone is leaking financial information to the Town. Alderman O'Garra stated "Spring Lake I hope you are listening, looking and absorbing because this is very important". Alderwoman Cooper stated she believes Ms. Wullenwaber will be a great asset although she has no experience as a town manager. Alderwoman Cooper stated in the past we had a town manager who was voted back in twice, and depleted our fund balance to less than \$10,994 and that is public information shared during the Budget Kickoff Meeting, and there is no leak.

Alderman Cooper stated we need to go in another direction. Alderman Sutherland stated the town should be transparent to all with public information to the citizens. Alderman Sutherland stated it's been alarming about the town's tax dollars that belong to the citizens. Alderman Sutherland stated Mr. Lindsay and Ms. Medlin have been here two months and found factual information for us. Alderman Sutherland stated we tried to find a finance director and it was voted down. Alderman Sutherland stated when they interviewed Ms. Wullenwaber, they told her she would receive \$50 an hour, and I told her she had rights. Alderman Sutherland stated we need qualified people in here. Alderman Jackson stated the financial situation didn't happen yesterday, it started happening in 2014. Alderman Jackson stated you keep hollering experience but you turn around and hire someone with no experience. Alderman Jackson stated we can't go back now but we need someone with experience. Alderman Jackson stated she is coming in with a town manager salary.

Mayor Dobbins stated it was said that the Mayor tried to hire, the Mayor can't vote. Mayor Dobbins stated it's not me trying to hire, the Board made this decision.

Alderman O'Garra stated that he came to the Mayor's office and asked the Mayor not to sign the contract, and allow us to look over the contract before making any decisions. Alderman O'Garra had concerns of receiving Town Manager's contract at the last minute and not following regular protocols. Alderman O'Garra had concerns about a \$28,000 check being signed by the Mayor and never received an invoice.

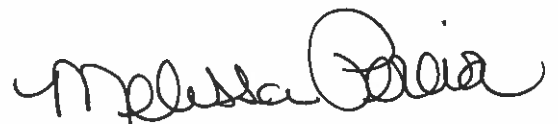
Mayor Dobbins stated he was not going to dignify anything that you don't have any evidence on. Mayor Dobbins stated that you came into my office and put me on blast.

Alderman Sutherland made a motion to advertise the Town Clerk position.

Action: Approval of advertising the Town Clerk position.
Motion by: Alderman Sutherland
Second by: Alderman Cooper
Vote: Unanimous

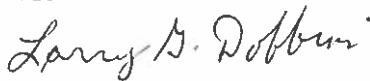
7. Adjournment.

Action: There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned 7:32 p.m.
Motion: Alderman Cooper
Second by: Alderman Sutherland
Vote: Unanimous



Melissa Pereira
Deputy Town Clerk

ATTEST:



Larry G. Dobbins
Mayor