

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

March 28, 2022

MINUTES

6:00 p.m.

The Spring Lake Board of Aldermen held a regular meeting in the Grady Howard Conference Room of the Spring Lake Municipal Building with Mayor Kia Anthony presiding.

Board Members Present: Mayor Pro Tem Robyn Chadwick
Alderwoman Soña Cooper
Alderman Marvin Lackman
Alderman Raul Palacios
Alderwoman Adrian Thompson

Others Present:

Tim Garner, Acting Town Manager
Jonathan Charleston, Town Attorney (via Zoom)
Catherine Bamba, Attorney (via Zoom)
Melissa Pereira, Town Clerk
Banard Lemon, Audio Visual Coordinator
Susan McCullen, Local Government Commission
David Erwin, Local Government Commission
Mark Baker, Local Government Commission
Jason Williams, Fire Chief
Dysoaneik Spellman, Interim Police Chief
Sergeant Napoleon McCormick, Spring Lake Police Department
Joe Durham, Joe Durham and Associates LLC
Pastor Vernon Marsh, President of Ministerial Alliance
Chairman Glen Adams, Cumberland County Board of Commissioners, District 1
Lester Lowe, Police Sergeant, Methodist University

1. Call to order

Mayor Anthony declared a quorum and called the meeting to order.

2. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Pastor Vernon Marsh gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Additions or Deletion

Alderwoman Cooper requested that the agenda be amended to delete item 8b, Monthly Financial Report under New Business.

Action: Approval that the agenda be amended to delete item 8b, Monthly Financial Report under New Business.

Motion by: Alderwoman Cooper

Second by: Alderwoman Thompson

Vote: Unanimous

Alderman Palacios provided information that the Local Government Commission is ready to present, however, the Board hasn't seen the numbers so we are delaying the monthly financial report being presented.

4. Approval of Agenda

Action: Approval of March 28, 2022, Board of Aldermen Regular Meeting agenda with deletions.

Motion by: Alderwoman Cooper

Second by: Alderman Lackman

Vote: Unanimous

5. Approval of Consent Items

Action: Approval of the draft minutes of the March 14, 2022, Work Session Meeting, and Senior Enrichment Advisory Committee Application for Regina Thompson-Xadu.

Motion by: Alderwoman Cooper

Second by: Alderman Palacios

Vote: Unanimous

Alderman Palacios welcomed Ms. Regina Thompson-Xadu to serve on the Senior Enrichment Advisory Committee.

6. Public Comment

Mr. James Christian expressed his concerns about the removal of the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance from the agenda. Mr. Christian gave thanks to the Board for their good work with the budget.

Mrs. Fredricka Sutherland expressed her concerns about the removal of the Invocation on the agenda. Mrs. Sutherland expressed her concerns regarding the Public Comment on the agenda being moved at the end.

Pastor Vernon Marsh expressed his concerns with the removal of the Invocation on the agenda.

7. Presentation

Sergeant Napoleon McCormick presented a video. Sergeant McCormick asked the Community to support the 2022 Special Olympics Torch Run on April 23, 2022, at 9:00 am. Mayor Pro tem Chadwick questioned who can participate. Sergeant McCormick stated everyone can participate in the surrounding areas. Sergeant McCormick stated to participate and securing placement on the shirt cost \$7,000, and Spring Lake Police Department has participated since 2013.

The Local Government Commission had no comments.

8. New Business

a. Discussion of the COVID – 19 Requirements for Town Facilities

Acting Town Manager Tim Garner requested the mask mandate to be lifted for all town facilities.

Action: Approval of rescinding the Cumberland County Public Nuisance Mask Mandate for town facilities.

Motion: Alderman Palacios

Second by: Alderman Lackman

Vote: Unanimous

b. Discussion to Amend Proposed Agenda Outline

Mayor Kia Anthony gave details regarding amendments to the agenda outline. Mayor Anthony stated our intention was never to remove the prayer from the town's agenda. Mayor Anthony stated during the Board's training, we learned that the Board was not in compliance with the Constitution. Mayor Anthony stated we are not removing the prayer, but are proposing we amend the prayer to a nonsectarian prayer that complies. Mayor Anthony requested the staff to create a policy on nonsectarian prayer, and bring it back to the Board for approval. Mayor Anthony gave details about creating a roster that would allow all organizations to give the invocation during Board of Aldermen meetings. Mayor Anthony requested the Board to vote for a nonsectarian prayer to be created.

Alderman Palacios questioned adopting a nonsectarian prayer policy, and its meaning. Mayor Anthony stated a nonsectarian prayer does not invoke any one religion, and no favoritism is shown to one religion. Alderman Palacios questioned if he would say "In Jesus name", would that be prohibited. Mayor Anthony stated it will be outlined in the policy. Mayor Anthony stated we have no intentions of removing prayer, but to comply without violating the Constitution. Mayor Anthony stated we are predominately Christian which violates the Constitution. Mayor Anthony recommended we follow the same prayer as the North Carolina General Assembly. Mayor Anthony suggested following the outline of the North Carolina General Assembly and the White House nonsectarian prayers. Mayor Anthony stated we need to be inclusive to all. Alderman Palacios agreed with being inclusive to all prayers and inviting people to attend board meetings to give the Invocation. Alderman Palacios questioned the Public Comment placement on the agenda. Mayor Anthony stated this is only a proposed agenda outline, no action is being taken. Alderman Lackman stated he has received no emails or phone calls regarding the Invocation. Alderman Lackman stated he is not in favor of the proposed nonsectarian prayer policy. Alderman Lackman expressed if no one wants to be a part of the prayer, according to the prayer policy outline, they are free to walk out during the prayer. Alderman Lackman stated he is a Christian and a proud Christian. He stated he stands firm with his decision. Alderman Lackman stated that Public Comment needs to be before the Board votes on any New Business items. Alderman Lackman stated this allows the citizens to voice their opinions. Mayor Pro tem Chadwick had concerns with the nonsectarian prayer text. Mayor Anthony stated that's why we create a policy outlining how the board will handle this nonsectarian prayer. Mayor Anthony stated we intend to not remove God, but to be sure will comply with the Constitution. Alderwoman Cooper stated she has received a lot of feedback, and the misinformation that was published was never the Board's intention to remove prayer from meetings. Alderwoman Cooper stated we need to make sure we are being transparent, and open to everyone in the town. Alderman Palacios stated what transpired was the February 28th meeting proposed agenda did not have the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance so people misinterpreted it. Alderman Palacios stated this is not the most important issue of the town, but I can certainly understand being corrected.

Action: Approval of adopting a nonsectarian prayer policy.

Motion: Alderwoman Cooper

Second by: Alderwoman Thompson

Vote: 4-1

Yes

No

Mayor Pro tem Chadwick
Alderwoman Cooper
Alderwoman Thompson
Alderman Palacios

Alderman Lackman

c. Oath of Office, Interim Town Manager Joe Durham

Mayor Anthony administered the Oath of Office to Interim Town Manager Joe Durham. The Board of Aldermen welcomed Mr. Joe Durham as the Interim Town Manager.

Mayor Anthony recessed the meeting from 6:45 pm to 7:00 pm for the arrival of Town Committee members.

d. Town Committees' Orientation

Mayor Anthony expressed her thanks and appreciation to all town committee members for their commitment to serve. Mayor Anthony cited an African Proverb, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together". Alderwoman Cooper provided information that she is the ex-officio for the Senior Enrichment Advisory Committee, and the meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 2:30 pm. Alderman Palacios stated he is the ex-officio for the Appearance and Sustainability Committee. Alderwoman Thompson stated she is the ex-officio with the Recreation Advisory Board. Alderman Lackman stated he is the ex-officio with the Military and Veterans Advisory Committee. Alderman Lackman expressed his thanks and appreciation to all town committee members. Mayor Pro tem Chadwick is the ex-officio with the Board of Adjustments. Mayor Anthony stated she is the ex-officio with the Minimum Housing Authority. Mayor Anthony stated there are no members and the town needs to fill these vacancies so we can start cleaning up the delapation of our buildings and lots. Mayor Anthony asked the community to fill out an application so we can clean up this blight in our town.

Mayor Anthony provided details regarding the rules and guidelines for the advisory board and committees. Alderman Palacios provided information regarding what constitutes a quorum. Alderman Lackman informed the community that they can attend a committee meeting. Mayor Pro tem Chadwick expressed her thanks and appreciation for the town committee members.

Mayor Anthony expressed her thanks and appreciation to Chairman Glen Adams for attending the Board of Aldermen meeting.

9. Adjournment

Action: There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 7:17 p.m.

Motion: Alderwoman Cooper

Second by: Alderman Lackman

Vote: Unanimous

ATTEST:



Melissa Pereira, CMC
Town Clerk



Kia Anthony
Mayor