

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

May 9, 2022

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 Kia Anthony presiding.

Board Members Present:

- Mayor Pro Tem Robyn Chadwick
- Alderwoman Soñia Cooper
- Alderman Marvin Lackman
- Alderman Raul Palacios
- Alderwoman Adrian Thompson

Others Present:

- Joe Durham, Interim Town Manager
- Jonathan Charleston, Attorney (via Zoom)
- Melissa Pereira, Town Clerk
- Banard Lemon, Audio Visual Coordinator
- Dysoaneik Spellman, Spring Lake Interim Police Chief
- Jason Williams, Spring Lake Fire Chief
- Tim Garner, Director, Spring Lake Water Treatment Plant

1. Call to order

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

2. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Summer Kindle gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Additions or Deletions

Alderwoman Cooper requested that the agenda be amended to add item 5c, Board Appointment for the Military and Veterans Advisory Committee, Richard Alexander, under Consent Items, and delete item 7c, Resolution (2022) 7, Disposition of Personal Property Valued at \$30,000 under New Business.

Alderman Palacios questioned the deletion of item 7c under New Business. Mr. Durham provided details that the Local Government Commission has taken similar actions previously back in January. Mr. Durham stated the Local Government Commission took that action because of their current financial management status, and it supersedes any action the town would take. Mr. Durham stated we will move forward with any dispositions of the properties identified.

4. Approval of Agenda

Action: Approval of the April 25, 2022 Board of Aldermen Regular Meeting with additions and deletions.

Motion by: Alderwoman Cooper

Second by: Alderwoman Thompson

Vote: Unanimous

5. Approval of Consent Items

Action: Approval of the draft minutes of April 25, 2022, Regular Meeting, and the approval of Board Appointment, Spring Lake Board of Adjustment, Roshalinto Biagas, and delete item 7c, Resolution (2022) 7, Disposition of Personal Property Valued at \$30,000 under New Business, and to add item 5c, Board Appointment for the Military and Veterans Advisory Committee, Richard Alexander, under Consent Items.

Motion by: Alderman Palacios

Second by: Mayor Pro tem Chadwick

Vote: Unanimous

6. Public Comment

Mr. James Christian had concerns regarding the elimination of Christianity from the Invocation.

Mr. Jerry Watkins had concerns with Spring Lake's Main Street redevelopment and drug use within the community.

Mrs. Fredricka Sutherland had concerns regarding the Invocation, and she stated the town has more pressing issues. Mrs. Sutherland gave details regarding the Invocation. She stated the Invocation should not be altered. Mrs. Sutherland had concerns regarding town cleanup.

7. New Business

a. Building Safety Month, May 2022

Mayor Anthony recited the Proclamation for the Building Safety Month of May 2022. Mayor Anthony requested the Board to make a motion.

Action: Approval of the Building Safety Month, May 2022 Proclamation.

Motion: Alderman Palacios

Second by: Alderwoman Cooper

Vote: Unanimous

b. Discussion of the Invocation Policy Guidance

Mr. Joe Durham gave details on the intentions to have an Invocation Policy. Mr. Durham provided information regarding Resolution (2022) 6, Adoption of The Invocation Policy, and the policy guidelines. Mr. Durham explained the legislative prayer at an Aldermen Meeting as compatible with the establishment clause of the US Constitution, and to comply with that, no public body should show preference to a particular religion.

Mr. Durham stated some Boards have placed invocation guidelines. Mr. Durham gave details regarding the Invocation Policy Guidance. Alderwoman Cooper expressed thanks to the staff for creating the policy and resolution. Alderwoman Cooper explained that the Board is not removing the Invocation, but in fact, receiving more participation from the community. Alderman Lackman expressed his thanks to Mr. Durham and Ms. Pereira for creating the documents. Alderman Lackman stated this item as came before the Board four times, and as an Aldermen I came here to serve the people and to work and try to improve this town. Alderman Lackman expressed his concerns regarding the Invocation being brought to the Board for the last time. Alderman Lackman stated Board members let us put this to bed once and for all. Alderman Palacios questioned voting on the Invocation policy. Mr. Durham stated the Board could amend, choose not to take any action, choose to take action to table the item or choose to take action, and vote. Mayor Pro tem Chadwick stated if no one person signs up to give the Invocation then a board member should be given the opportunity. Mayor Anthony expressed her concerns regarding the Board administering the Invocation because we are in a position of influence and stature, and we have to be an unbiased representation of our community. Mayor Anthony provided information regarding the protection of the town and litigation. Mayor Anthony stated this is not an attempt to attack or remove Christianity but by the way of legislation. Mayor Anthony stated this is a way to protect ourselves, and that we are one representative of the entire community, and not of our personal beliefs. Mayor Anthony provided details as a Board is not what we believe but about being direct reflections of our community. Mayor Anthony stated we take ourselves off, and we put on an unbiased representation. Mayor Anthony stated we let our community present. Alderman Lackman stated no. Alderman Palacios provided details regarding the public to give the Invocation is sufficient enough without a policy to cover and protect us. Alderman Palacios stated as long as we don't shut anyone out, I think it's appropriate. Alderman Palacios expressed his concerns regarding no policy being necessary as long as we open it up to the public. Mr. Charleston explained the Board has options. Mr. Charleston stated the Board can approve the resolution, deny it, or take no action at all.

Alderwoman Cooper had concerns regarding a policy that should be in place while allowing the Board to give the Invocation also. Alderwoman Cooper stated the policy was well-prepared, and we should consider it because it is important to have policies, and for future boards.

Mr. Charleston suggested management revise the policy guidance and procedures and bring them back to the next Board meeting. Mr. Charleston explained it is important for the town to comply with the laws. Alderman Palacios stated he believes the town can comply without a policy. Mayor Anthony stated this policy would be for incoming administrations.

Action: Reject the proposed Resolution (2022) 7 and Invocation Policy Guidance and Procedures, and continue with our accepted practices.

Motion: Alderman Lackman

Second by: Alderwoman Thompson

Vote: 4-1

Yes

Mayor Pro tem Chadwick
Alderman Lackman
Alderman Palacios
Alderwoman Thompson

No

Alderwoman Cooper

c. Update on the State Auditors' Findings and Recommendations

Alderman Palacios gave details regarding the Audit Committee with Mayor Anthony and Alderwoman Cooper. Alderman Palacios stated we had our first meeting on May 5, 2022. Alderman Palacios stated during this meeting, that Mayor Anthony was appointed Chair, and he was appointed Secretary. Alderman Palacios provided information regarding the items they discussed. Alderman Palacios stated they discussed the Audit Committee guidelines, appointed a member from the public, and reviewed the State findings and responses. Alderman Palacios stated the Local Government Commission has waived the FY 20-21 audit, and currently working on FY 22 audit. Alderman Palacios stated the Audit Committee's main focus is the State findings and taking corrective actions. Alderman Palacios stated the meetings are open to the public, and the next meeting is on June 9, 2022, at 5:30 pm in Town Hall. Alderman Palacios provided information regarding the corrective actions that have taken place. Alderman Palacios gave details regarding the next committee meeting. Alderman Palacios stated the Interim Town Manager reviewed with the group a summary of the findings and corrective actions noted by the Town. During the review, it was noted that many corrective actions have been taken and there are also many items not addressed. At the next meeting of the committee, the Interim Town Manager would prepare a list of what has been developed and executed and what remains to be done. This list will include parties(s) responsible and a timetable. Alderman Palacios provided information regarding a discussion on the preparation of a Code of Ethics for all Board members to adhere to, and sample documents would be prepared for review and consideration. Alderman Palacios stated the Board of Alderman and staff will continue to work with the Local Government Commission collaboratively.

8. Adjournment.

Action: There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 6:44 p.m.

Motion: Alderwoman Cooper

Second by: Alderman Lackman

Vote: Unanimous



Kia Anthony
Mayor

ATTEST:

Melissa Pereira, CMC
Town Clerk