

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

March 13, 2023

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:

Carly Autry, Town Clerk
Tim Garner, Director of Water Treatment Plant
Terry Hock, HR Director
Banard Lemon, Audio Visual Coordinator
Michael Porter, Town Attorney
Dysoaneik Spellman, Chief of Police
Jason Williams, Spring Lake Fire Chief/Interim Town Manager

1. Call to order

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

2. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Fredricka Sutherland gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Additions or Deletions

Mayor Anthony added under New Business agenda item 8f. Discussion of Town Meeting Structure – Alderman Raul Palacios.

4. Approval of Agenda

Action: Approval of March 13, 2023 Board of Aldermen Regular Meeting agenda with additions.

Motion by: Alderwoman Cooper

Second by: Mayor Pro Tem Chadwick

Vote: Unanimous

5. Approval of Consent Items

Action: Approval of Consent Items a. Draft Minutes of February 27, 2023, Work Session Meeting, b. Appearance and Sustainability Committee Application – Cayleb Blad with corrections, and c. Appearance and Sustainability Committee Application – Magi Youseff.

Motion by: Alderwoman Cooper

Second by: Mayor Pro tem Chadwick

Vote: Unanimous

6. Public Comment

No Public Comments

7. Presentation

a. Carvers Creek State Park – Colleen Bowers, Park Superintendent – Ms. Bowers presented a PowerPoint discussing the Long Valley Farm Access, the History at Long Valley Farm, Sandhills Access, why it was named Carvers Creek State Park, and Why We Prescribe Fire to the park.

b. Community Financial Empowerment – Fontashia Johnson, Founder/CEO – Ms. Johnson presented a PowerPoint that started off with a brief introduction of herself and how she started her own nonprofit organization (501 c 3) in Community Financial Empowerment. Ms. Johnson discussed financial awareness counseling and teaching services, financial empowerment tips, grant opportunities, and the Spring Lake community program offerings. Ms. Johnson ended her presentation by explaining the Town of Spring Lake Personnel Project. With grant opportunities, Ms. Johnson discussed the Bank On Movement, Summer Job Connection, and a written Sample Letter of Support.

c. Pinwheel Garden Planting, Child Advocacy Center – Faith Boehmer, Prevention and Volunteer Coordinator - Ms. Boehmer presented a PowerPoint discussing highlights of the Child Advocacy Center, human trafficking in Cumberland County, child abuse prevention workshops, volunteer opportunities, and group projects. Ms. Boehmer explained more about the Pinwheel Event that the Town of Spring Lake will hold at Walgreens in Spring Lake on Wednesday, April 5, 2023, at 12:00 noon.

New Business

a. Discussion of Spring Lake's Birthday – Mayor Kia Anthony – Mayor Anthony stated Spring Lake's 72nd birthday is coming up on Sunday, April 9, 2023 and we are looking to put together a very small celebration with residents, business owners, and anyone who wants to come and celebrate the history of our town. Mayor Anthony stated staff is currently working together with other business owners and employees to put together a small presentation.

b. Discussion of Draft Mission Statement, Vision, and Strategic Plan – Mayor Kia Anthony – Mayor Anthony stated Saturday, February 18, 2023, the Spring Lake Board of Aldermen, the Town Manager, and the Town

Clerk were present for our second strategic planning session that was a continuation of the strategic planning session September 2022. Mayor Anthony stated she wanted this before the public before the Board started to deliberate on how we wanted to make this permanent, give the community a chance to be involved, and see what the board is planning for this town. Mayor Anthony stated before we begin to plan, we want public input, so this will be brought back before the community at the upcoming work session to pick it apart and open for public comments and feedback. Mayor Anthony stated we do not want to make decisions and start to plan the trajectory of this town without community input. Mayor Anthony stated to please read the mission statement, the potential mission and vision statements, and the strategic plan with a five-year plan for the Town beginning with things as small as orchestrated cleanups to major infrastructure repairs. Mayor Anthony stated she wanted to highlight one major fact, the strategic planning was with Mr. Paul Meyer, and he echoed these sentiments, the Board was shocked to see the progress made in a short period of time. Mayor Anthony stated the goals at the last strategic planning session in September and to see those quantified, laid out, and able to check those blocks on all the things that were accomplished, and the citizens do not see a lot of the changes made because they were made internally. Mayor Anthony stated we had to fix the foundation but now we are on a direct path to seeing some real growth in our town.

c. Discussion of Town Cut Positions – HR Director Terry Hock – Mr. Hock presented a list of key positions that were cut and eliminated from the budget and explained the salary range for each position including employer fringes and insurance. Mr. Hock started off with the inspections department, the Code Enforcement Officer position which was cut on July 1, 2021, and the Inspection Supervisor position which was eliminated on July 1, 2022. Mr. Hock stated November 2021, the Battalion Chief was promoted to Assistant Fire Chief but those duties were combined and on July 1, 2022, a Police Lieutenant position was eliminated. Mr. Hock stated July 1, 2021, we also lost a meter reader, and up to that point, we had three (3) four-time meter readers then went down to two (2) and that created a big problem because those meter readers were overworked and started seeing increased absences. Mr. Hock stated we lost the Finance Director and Accounts Payable position on April 26, 2021, and did not put a total on for savings because we were not saving money because some of these positions are contracted out but a total of \$536,896. Mr. Hock stated that the figure is misleading because some of these positions are contracted out such as the Code Enforcement Officer and Building Inspector. Mayor Anthony asked Mr. Hock if he knew how much we are paying for Code Enforcement through contracting? Mr. Hock stated that would be a contract so we must get with the Town Clerk as he does not have access to that. Mayor Anthony stated the Inspection position was cut and we now pay \$73.00 an hour for contractors, and we did not set these prices and wanted this to go on record. Mayor Anthony stated the Code Enforcement Officer comes twice a week only, once in the morning and then once in the afternoon. Alderwoman Cooper stated we are also behind in doing business inspections. Mr. Williams stated the inspector that we do have does not come till after 4 pm, so any business that wants to be inspected or any kind of finals, cannot get it till after 4 pm, so it puts us behind the curve a little bit and then there's Finance director and accounts payable which is like those two positions it really should be one other position. Mr. Hock stated we are paying the Finance Director and AP Clerks \$339,676.36. Alderwoman Cooper stated we have not even made it to the full year but we are supposed to be a distressed community. Mayor Anthony stated the contracting staff is selected by the LGC, and we do not have any say and has asked about how much we are paying for these positions and the answer was "I don't know," and as Alderwoman Cooper said, we are a financially distressed community, so to pay such exorbitant amounts for positions that were filled by the LGC or

contractor through the LGC is mind-boggling. Mr. Hock stated to Alderwoman Cooper a correction that we have one (1) full-time Accounts Payable position but the LGC has two (2) people back there supposedly doing accounts payable and the lead person also working on accounts payable so we have three (3) positions working on accounts payable. Mr. Hock stated for the meter reader position, we are not experiencing that \$44,000 savings as we have two (2) part-time people covering that position now because it is too much for two (2) full-time meter readers to handle, so right now we have two (2) full-time and two (2) part-time. Alderwoman Cooper stated she wanted to point out that we are paying Accounts Payable \$100.00 an hour, \$75.00 an hour, and \$65.00 an hour and wanted to make that public that those are the prices we are paying. Mr. Hock stated the salary range is \$33,000 to \$49,000 and those figures are from Greg Eisley, however, we had a temporary AP Clerk in the position before through Robert Half and was charged less than \$30.00 an hour and once that position left, somehow it got transferred to Greg Eisley and now paying \$65.00 an hour. Mayor Anthony stated for the sake of transparency, we are paying anywhere between \$51,000 and \$75,000 a month, some up to \$84,000 and \$85,000 a month for the Finance staff and wanted to make sure we have that on record. Alderman Palacios stated in some of these documents, other than the hourly wage, we are also paying for mileage, meals, hotel expenses, etc., and when the Audit Committee gets together, and we originally started meeting as a result of the investigative audit completed by the State Auditor last year, and the point was to combat a lot of the actions that were cited against the town and the way the town was running. Alderman Palacios stated since then, we have overcome a lot of those things as we shifted recently to our budget and the purpose of meeting is to look over the budget and scrutinize it and see where we are at and how we can save the town more money. Alderman Palacios stated we need to restore our savings ballots for the town and while we are reviewing expenses, expenditures, and encumbrances, we are finding line items that need explanation and one of the key topics that David Irwin with the LGC had presented at the Board was that some of those line items were cited in the budget now as LGC memo, so there is more clarification we need on that. Alderman Palacios stated it looks like money is being funneled out of department budgets and into paying Greg Isley, so that is more information we are needing from David Irwin. Alderman Palacios stated for transparency reasons, he wanted to share that information.

d. 1112 N. Bragg Blvd. Encroachment Exhibit – Interim Town Manager Jason Williams – Mr. Williams stated the business at 1112 N. Bragg Blvd. is wanting to upgrade and bring something in but it is a Town road next to New Street and over time, the Town encroached into his plan. Mr. Williams stated it was sent to the Attorney to discuss the best way to proceed. Mr. Williams stated for some knowledge of this issue, we would cut the street off back where it goes, take it out, and give it back to them, which would probably be the easiest thing to do and would also save us some money.

Consensus to give that piece of land back after the Town has cleaned it up.

e. Spring Lake Military Veterans Advisory Committee Board Removal Request – Alderman Marvin Lackman – Alderman Lackman stated another member of the Military Veterans Affairs did a voluntary removal and thanked Ms. Yolanda Burse for her time as part of the committee but that does leave an opening into the Military Veterans Affairs and currently there are two (2) openings and wants something put out on the town website. Alderwoman Cooper asked if this is something that you all must vote to accept. Alderman Lackman stated with the members of the Military Veterans Affairs, they are appointed by the Board, and in order to be properly removed, it comes back before the Board to clear them of any duties that they

were associated with the committee. Mayor Anthony stated this is not a removal, this is a resignation as she voluntarily resigned but we can table it and look a little further into it just to make sure we are doing it the correct way and bring it back for the next meeting.

Action: The Board approved a motion to table the resignation request and bring it back before the Board at the next meeting.

Motion: Alderman Palacios

Second by: Alderwoman Cooper

Vote: Unanimous

f. Discussion of Town Meeting Structure – Alderman Raul Palacios – Alderman Palacios stated on July 11, 2022, the Board agreed to have one regular meeting a month and one work session meeting a month, so the difference between a regular meeting is action is taken but a work session meeting is for presentations and discussions, and it was not long after, it reverted back to combining the two, so he wanted to bring it before the Board because he wanted to see if they were interested in revisiting that because time is valuable and work of the town is necessary and if there was structure, he feels like it would save time and help prepare for meetings better. Alderman Palacios stated there were three (3) presentations that took a lot of time during this meeting and the last meeting. Alderman Palacios asked if the Board wanted to move these to one (1) meeting as originally approved back in July or do they want to leave them as is. Alderman Palacios also asked if there was a vetting process for people or organizations that want to present to the Board. Mayor Anthony stated about the meeting structure, regular meetings are for presentations or any action taken and work sessions are to discuss whatever presentations, any actions, or anything they want to pick apart, except for the LGC doing their presentation and that should be the only work session presentation ever scheduled. Mayor Anthony stated they must be careful adding presentations to the work sessions because they should be discussing decisions or actions they want to carry out or any presentations that came before the Board previously. Mayor Anthony stated Spring Lake is getting a lot of great attention right now because we lack a lot of resources and sometimes it is going to take a little longer to be in these meetings but there is a lot of work to be done. Alderwoman Cooper stated she agrees with Alderman Palacios to go back to strictly work sessions and strictly business and that needs to apply to everybody, even the LGC. Alderwoman Cooper stated that maybe there is a way we can vet presentations by asking them to send what they want to present well before we have the meeting so we can see if we think it is a good fit and maybe we need a small committee to vet that. Mayor Anthony stated we used to do agenda prep, however, when we went through the management transition, we had to adjust and those kinds of fell by the wayside, and now that we have got a bit more consistency in place, we can bring those back and that way those presentations are vetted before the agenda prep committee and we will know if we want to go ahead and move forward with that a lot of the presentations that come through us. Alderman Lackman stated when we started, that was one of the things that the Town Manager did and that was put on the Interim Town Manager at that time was to vet this process so the best product came before the Board and that it was not a simple opportunity for people to come up here and speak but for the betterment of the town and that is something that the vetting process should include. Mayor Anthony stated this was when Mr. Durham was here and we met every Tuesday before the agenda went out to the public to make sure everything was good and go through the process of who is going to make the agenda or not, so let us try to bring agenda prep back into effect so we can get a bit more control on the meetings.

g. Mayor's Report – Mayor Kia Anthony – Mayor Anthony stated all the things that were happening last month, but she forgot to announce the February birthdays. Mayor Anthony stated very important meeting coming up at the end of this month, the Mayor's Coalition will be hosting the quarterly meeting right here in the boardroom Friday, March 31, 2023 at 8:00 am. And we worked together to move this meeting forward so we had time to discuss the upcoming sales tax change through the county. Mayor Anthony stated if you want to have your voice heard by those who are making this decision, come and express your concerns about the \$1.4 million dollars that Spring Lake stands to lose with this switch and we cannot make change without you, so this is the time to come out in numbers to discuss this initiative that stands to hurt Spring Lake. Mayor Anthony stated last week, she spent her weekend in Raleigh at the Progressive Governance Academy and did a lot of work about leadership styles, mental health, and well-being while you are in this position and sat amongst other local elected officials from across the nation and elected officials from every capacity, so it was a good opportunity to see the diversity, governance, commonality, and challenges that we face as elected officials. Mayor Anthony stated tomorrow (Tuesday, 3/14/23), she is off to the Main Street Conference in Statesville, NC., so we are making sure that we are taking the steps so we can properly rebuild and revitalize Main Street, so hopefully, she will come back with some great initiatives and ideas that can be used to transform and revitalize Main Street.

h. Board of Aldermen Report – Spring Lake Board of Aldermen – Mayor Pro Tem Chadwick stated there is a teacher shortage and this is for anybody that may have a Senior that wants a career in education, CCS (Cumberland County Schools) has a great program that they are offering the Seniors and they will have to commit three (3) years and may also receive a sign-up bonus, so check the CCS website for details. Alderman Palacios stated the Appearance Committees' next meeting is April 12, 2023, and have some great initiatives they are working on, which are Yard of the Month, the mural campaign for downtown Main Street, and repackaging of the Adopt-a-Street Program. Alderwoman Thompson stated on March 23, 2023 at 6:00 pm right here in the conference room, we have the community meeting, Cops & Discussion. Alderman Lackman stated the cleanup along 87 across Deerfield all the way to the Circle K and IHOP, 150 pounds of trash was collected. Alderman Lackman stated there have been a lot of comments regarding Town employees cleaning up and residents driving through noticing the changes that are taking place. Alderman stated Military Veterans Affairs has got some openings and cannot stress how important Friday, March 31, 2023 at 8:00 am is to have your voices heard regarding the sales tax. Alderwoman Cooper stated to highlight the Cops & Discussions because we had a good time at Ruby Tuesday and we had a great conversation, so if you want to let Chief Spellman know what you want to see in the police force, this is the place to be on March 23, 2023 at 6:00 pm, right here in the boardroom. Alderwoman Cooper stated there is a citizen from Fayetteville who is posting on social media that we are discussing a tax increase but we have not had any discussions about a tax increase due to the sales tax change. Alderwoman Cooper stated the North Carolina League of Municipalities (NCLM) CityVision conference is from April 25, 2023 through April 27, 2023 in Concord, North Carolina and they are open for nominations for the Board of Directors as there are several positions open and there can be up to two (2) people from your Town serve on the Board and check out the NCLM website to see who is running for the different positions. Alderman Palacios remembered the Earth Day cleanup is on April 22, 2023 at the Recreation Center at 9:00 am and the Torch Run is scheduled for Saturday, April 29, 2023.

i. Manager's Report – Interim Town Manager Jason Williams – Mr. Williams stated it is great to see citizens come out and this is where you are going to get information from, not the internet or from the news, it is going to be from up here and you are going to hear it firsthand. Mr. Williams stated the employees we have, really appreciate what they have been doing as they have been really working to do everything from Police to water to cleanups and everybody has been working hard to make this town look and function a lot better.

h. Town Attorney Report – Town Attorney Michael Porter – Attorney Porter stated the Cumberland County Bar Association is having a Caribbean Nights Gala on Friday, March 31, 2023 and would be a good opportunity to meet all the District Court judges, Superior Board judges, prosecutors, and Public Defenders.

9. Closed Session

Action: The Board approved a motion to go into closed session pursuant to N.C.G.S. §143-318.1 1(a)(3) – Attorney–Client Privilege and pursuant to N.C.G.S. §143-318.1 1(A)(6) – Personnel.

Motion: Alderman Palacios

Second by: Alderwoman Cooper

Vote: Unanimous

Action: The Board approved a motion to come back into open session. No action was taken.

Motion: Alderwoman Cooper

Second by: Mayor Pro Tem Chadwick

Vote: Unanimous

10. Adjournment

Action: There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:11 pm.

Motion: Alderman Palacios

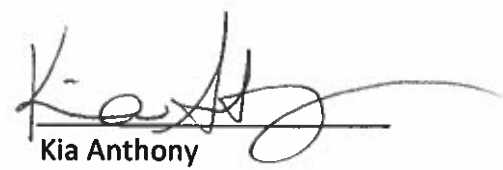
Second by: Alderwoman Thompson

Vote: Unanimous

ATTEST:


Carly Autry
Town Clerk




Kia Anthony
Mayor