

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

October 23, 2023

MINUTES

6:00 pm

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 Soña Cooper
Alderman Marvin Lackman
Alderman Raul Palacios
Alderwoman Adrian Thompson

Others Present:

Tiffany Anderson, Local Government Commission
Carly Autry, Town Clerk
Lieutenant Justin Bonsignore, Spring Lake Fire Department
Kendra Boyle, Local Government Commission
Patricia Hickmon, Inspections Supervisor/Zoning Administrator Officer
Banard Lemon, Audio Visual Coordinator
Captain Timothy Patterson, Spring Lake Fire Department
Michael Porter, Town Attorney
Dysoaneik Spellman, Spring Lake Police Chief
Lieutenant Danny Sutton, Police Department
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

Minister Saffold gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Additions or Deletions

None.

4. Approval of Agenda

Action: Approval of the Agenda with no additions or deletions.

Motion by: Mayor Pro Tem Chadwick

Second by: Alderman Palacios

Vote: Unanimous

5. Approval of Consent Items

Action: Approval of Draft Minutes of October 9, 2023, Regular Meeting and Community Appearance and Sustainability Committee Application – Patrick Morrison.

Motion by: Alderman Palacios

Second by: Alderwoman Cooper

Vote: Unanimous

Alderman Palacios thanked Mr. Morrison for volunteering to be a part of the Appearance Committee and stated he is a well-known business owner and appreciates the volunteer work he has done in the community. Alderman Palacios stated the Appearance Committee no longer has any vacancies. Mayor Anthony reminded the citizens the committees are open to the public.

6. Public Comment

Priscilla Burton, Sandhills Family Heritage Association, 230 Chapel Hill Road, read a letter of thanks to Mayor Anthony and the Board regarding the recent Proclamation declaring the old Spring Lake Civic Center a building of Historical Significance. (**Attachment #1**)

Daniel Gerald, 180 Tram Road, stated that 8% is what is required for the Fund Balance, and the Town of Spring Lake was well above 8%, even though \$400,000 was missing, which was supposed to be watched by the Board. Mr. Gerald stated what he finds fascinating is that \$1 million dollars was stolen in Orange County and their government was not shut down so where is the parody of treatment, what are we trying to do, what precedents are we trying to set? Mr. Gerald stated George Bush, voodoo nomics, which this term might be familiar with some and may be very familiar with the LGC because he wonders how in the world could the Town save up \$11 million dollars if the Town is below 8%, voodoo nomics or was it a competency level. Last, Mr. Gerald stated to always be careful who you let into your house.

Julius Wyman, Spring Lake, stated he is 73 years old, recently relocated back to Spring Lake, and is currently looking for employment. Mr. Wyman stated he is in excellent shape and just wants to work.

7. Presentations

- a. Veterans Day 2023 Proclamation – Mayor Kia Anthony – Mayor Anthony stated there would not be another Board meeting before Veterans Day, so the Proclamation was put on this week's agenda, however, she did not read it as it is provided in the agenda packet. Mayor Anthony stated the Town will always honor the military heritage and she acknowledged those who are Veterans on the Board and in the audience and thanked them for their service. Mayor Anthony stated the mural gets to pay homage to soldiers just in time for Veterans Day.
- b. September 2023 Code Enforcement Report – Derek Mabe, Code Enforcement Officer, Alliance Code Enforcement, LLC. – Mr. Mabe presented a presentation regarding a Code Enforcement report update on the progress made in September 2023 to include the address, violations, and status of the violation. Mr. Mabe stated that 22 cases were opened and 15 cases were abated, and since starting with the

Town a couple of months ago, a total of 62 cases were opened, of which 35 were abated, and now he plans to move forward with a lot more minimum housing. Mayor Anthony thanked Mr. Mabe for his hard work and the relationship-building with the community but asked in comparison to last month if there had been a good amount of transition or cleaning up. Mr. Mabe stated he had seen a little slow down but better than some of the other Towns he does code enforcement for. Alderman Lackman thanked Mr. Mabe for his work in the Town and asked him in some of these open cases, what is the time frame from opening to some sort of closure. Mr. Mabe stated the way the new process works is the initial letter for anything, other than minimum housing, is a 12-day period, and anything that is minimum housing gets a 30-day minimum, and after those 12 or 30 days, if he does not get a response from anybody, those cases move a little faster, however, if he does get a response, he gives them direction on how to move forward, but after those 12 or 30 days, comes a second notice of violation, which is a notice of hearing, and that is where he conducts a hearing with the individual or property owner. Mr. Mabe stated that is set no earlier than ten (10) days from the day it goes out and no later than 30 days, which is state law, and after that, if there is still no compliance, a final letter will be issued, and a ten (10) day tow notice will be also issued if it is a junk vehicle, meaning another ten (10) days. Mr. Mabe stated if a final letter is issued and there is communication, then he has no problem granting additional time if he sees progress, but if no progress or communication, that is when action will take place. Alderman Lackman stated he sees the signs out on the properties and they do help and has received feedback from others regarding those signs. Mr. Mabe agreed those signs have helped create the communication needed to get people to clean up the property. Alderwoman Cooper thanked Mr. Mabe for his progress on getting yards cleaned up but asked about a nuisance sign in a yard on Goodyear Drive that is not on the list. Mr. Mabe stated that case will fall on October's list but please reach out to him if there are ever any questions. Alderwoman Cooper asked how to go about people who cut their front yard but not the back. Mr. Mabe stated it is still a violation if it is above the allowed inches.

8. New Business

- a. Monthly Financial Update – Kendra Boyle, Local Government Commission – Ms. Boyle presented a presentation regarding the Town's financial status as of July 15, 2023, regarding a fiscal summary, status of Audits, an update on significant goals, Budget Amendments, and the General Fund and stated these were the last three (3) updates that were presented to the Local Government Commission. Ms. Boyle explained what the Budget Amendments were, which were for a Ladder Fire Truck and some additional expenditures for insurance for fire equipment, a direct allocation of legislative dollars that were given to the Town, and a Grapple Truck that was needed to pick up trash. Ms. Boyle stated in each one of these updates, there is a fiscal summary talking about where the bank reconciliations are and where they stand because that was one of the items not being done as the last Audit was done on June 30, 2020, so the Commission now stays up to date on the status of those, however, after June 30, 2020, those records were not auditable, so that requirement was waived, but 2022 is in the process of being worked on. Ms. Boyle stated there was a Budget Amendment done to appropriate \$35,000 to pay North Carolina League of Municipalities dues that had not been paid for many years even though the League was still providing services but were not being paid. Ms. Boyle stated the roof for Town Hall needs to be replaced, so \$120,000 is being moved around in the Budget to get that done. Ms. Boyle mentioned the Mid-Carolina Council of Government has stepped in to help with the Human Resources process that

needs to be in place. Ms. Boyle stated one thing in the Fiscal Accountability Agreement is for the Audit Committee to get processes and procedures updated, which is essential, because to follow all the Statutes and rules, the Town's policies must be updated to match those changes in the rules and Statutes. Ms. Boyle explained the unaudited internal use-only Budget vs Actual in detail regarding appropriated funds and revenue. Ms. Boyle was explaining the sales tax and she stated the State is predicting sales tax collections to increase about 3 ½ % more this year than the prior year but will find out in December what the actual percentage is. Ms. Boyle stated she wants to give this information in a format that is understandable and if she gave too much information tonight, please let her know. Mayor Anthony stated the Board wants to stay on top of Spring Lake's finances so the Town does not return to the position before, which is why she specifically asks the Board to start prepping for the transition. Mayor Anthony requested to receive this information sooner so the Board could look over it and prepare to ask questions if needed and Ms. Boyle stated she would. Mayor Anthony requested Ms. Boyle to clarify to the public what she meant when she stated "found the money" for the Budget Amendments. Ms. Boyle stated that refers to reallocating funds. Alderman Palacios stated if anybody in the public wants a hard or digital copy of this, please ask the Town Clerk and asked Ms. Boyle if she could do a similar format to what David Erwin used to present and add the comparison of the prior year so it is easier for people to see what that looks like. Alderman Palacios asked Ms. Boyle if she had a date the Town is supposed to receive the \$419,000 from the county and Ms. Boyle stated it may have been September 30th but will confirm with Debra Mack. Alderman Palacios stated the Board had a training recap in Raleigh recently and there was a misconception of this 8% General Fund Balance law, which the citizen Daniel Gerald referred to earlier in Public Comments about the requirement of 8%, and he was the previous Town Manager who was fired twice in that position, but 8% is not actually a general requirement. Ms. Boyle stated no, it is called "the myth of 8%" and explained the history of that myth. Ms. Boyle stated the General Fund Balance is based on the Town's level of expenditures and basically the Town needs to at least cover half a year's worth of expenditures, so there is no 8%. Alderman Palacios reiterated how the Town got into the financial position it is in now and stated there were three (3) audits passed due, a nonprofit created to circumvent North Carolina law, and economic development practices that were done, causing an investigation, and the Auditor received some backlash and impedance, causing the State to step in to take over the Town's funds and books, and found over \$500,000 of taxpayers' funds missing at that time. Ms. Boyle stated a lot of it has to do with the internal control environment and the tone at the top. Alderman Palacios stated regarding internal controls, there were a lot of red flags, and if anybody went back to that investigative audit that was done by Beth Wood's office, there is a lot of information there where things were done incorrectly. Alderwoman Cooper stated the Town wants to be an open book and as a public entity, whatever happens on this Board, she wants everyone to be able to come in and see all rules and policies are being followed correctly and that is the kind of government she wants to be a part of. Alderwoman Cooper stated she has expressed to Debra Mack regarding the collection of property taxes, the signed contract states the Managers would agree from time to time on how often the funds are transferred over and her concern is that every day it sits in their bank account, it is earning interest, so she would like to find a way to do an amendment to the agreement giving a specific amount of time and amounts like if it is over this amount, it gets transferred immediately because the Town should receive that interest from those funds. Ms. Boyle stated Ms. Mack has suggested that many times as well, but it is incumbent upon the Board to know what is in these agreements, and every agreement should be reviewed by the Town Attorney, and there should be a comparison to other units of local government and what their

agreements look like so the Board understands. Alderman Lackman asked Ms. Boyle when should the Board circle back with her regarding the \$868,000 on the local optional sales tax and Ms. Boyle stated in December so they can compare. Alderman Lackman reiterated to the audience regarding the past financial issues and added that the last real audit done was in 2020 and the Board is here to do what is best for the citizens and one of the things not captured right was the Powell Bill, as it was not being recorded at times, however, that money was there but could not be utilized because it was not being captured on how it was being utilized correctly. Alderman Lackman stated personnel are going through training to become better at the finances and cut and paste is something of the past. Attorney Porter stated to Ms. Boyle, looking at Page 2 of the report update, since this has been a contentious point with the citizens of the Town, he wants to make sure the Board and the Town are aware that the LGC fully supports Chief Williams as Interim Town Manager, it is not for a lack of trying, the Town has tried recruiting a qualified Town Manager and asked if that was going to be literally the last thing that would prevent the Town from being released from the agreement with the LGC. Ms. Boyle stated she cannot speak for the Commission members, but knows it is one of the things staff feels is very important to have, is a Town Manager who is experienced in managing the Town and is aware of all the rules, regulations, and best practices. Mayor Anthony stated she wants to make it clear that there is no question of the competency of the LGC and there is no question of the need for them to be here as the LGC saved the Town because the Town was on the verge of losing its Charter which would mean Spring Lake would no longer exist. Mayor Anthony stated without the LGC stepping in, the contracted Finance staff, and the diligence of this Board, staff, and Manager, the Town would not be in the position that the Town is in today and the LGC is standard. Mayor Anthony stated the Town went from \$1.6 million to \$11 million by adhering to the standards of the LGC.

- b. Ordinance 2023(4) An Ordinance Declaring a Road Closure for Veterans Day Event and Unveiling of Wall Art Mural – Mayor Kia Anthony – Mayor Anthony stated before entertaining the motion, she would like to offer the opportunity for Alderman Palacios and Alderman Lackman to talk about this Veterans event and the Unveiling of the Art Mural. Alderman Palacios stated the Veterans Day ceremony and Mural Unveiling is Friday, November 10, 2023, at 11:00 am and everyone is invited, invitations were just created, and the program is currently in the process of being finalized. Alderman Palacios stated Retired 4-Star General Daniel Allyn will be the keynote speaker of the event, other important people who played a significant role in the painting of the mural will be sharing their stories, and the Color Guard will also be there. Alderman Palacios stated a parachute was donated by a local business owner, which will cover the mural that morning, and there will be a jump master-style unveiling of the wall mural. Alderman Palacios stated due to the location of the unveiling, the purpose of this Ordinance is to close Spring Avenue from Main Street to 1st Street, which will be held on the road. Alderman Lackman added the road closure will be from 9:00 am until 1:00 pm, so there will be a detour. Alderman Lackman stated if anyone would like to get a good picture of it without vehicles, the Beatitude House is closed Monday through Wednesday.

Action: Approval of Ordinance 2023(4) An Ordinance Declaring a Road Closure for Veterans Day Event and Unveiling of Wall Art Mural.

Motion by: Alderman Palacios

Second by: Alderman Lackman

Vote: Unanimous

- c. Mayor's Report – Mayor Kia Anthony – First, Mayor Anthony started off by congratulating Town Clerk Carly Autry on graduating from the Clerks Certification Institute in Chapel Hill, where she and Alderwoman Thompson attended her graduation on Friday, October 20, 2023. Second, Mayor Anthony stated “Lunch with the Mayor” is Wednesday, October 25, 2023, at 12 noon at El Tucan Mexican Restaurant. Last, Mayor Anthony stated it is election season so please stay connected to the early voting hours for municipal elections, and the early voting sites are at the Spring Lake Recreation Center and the Cumberland County Board of Elections on Fountainhead Lane in Fayetteville. Mayor Anthony stated Election Day is at the Spring Lake Recreation Center on Tuesday, November 7, 2023.

- d. Board of Aldermen Report – Spring Lake Board of Aldermen – First, Mayor Pro Tem Chadwick stated the Pink D.Y.M.O.N.S. 5K Cancer Run/Walk and Community Festival was Saturday, September 30, 2023, which was a success, and extended an open invitation to the Pink D.Y.M.O.N.S. 2nd Annual Scholarship Fair on Saturday, October 28, 2023, at 6:00 pm at New Life Family Center, 1420 Hoke Loop Road in Fayetteville. Mayor Pro Tem Chadwick stated the guest speaker is Dr. Marvin Connelly, Jr. from Cumberland County Schools, who is also a cancer survivor, and the price of the tickets is \$40.00. Last, Mayor Pro Tem Chadwick mentioned the Exhibition Powwow that Cumberland County Schools is hosting on Thursday, November 16, 2023, from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm at the Cumberland County Arena located at 1960 Coliseum Drive in Fayetteville to learn about American Indian culture and the tickets are free. Mayor Anthony stated this information will be posted on the Town's website.

Mayor Anthony took a Point of Privilege and invited Mr. Carlton Williams to give a presentation to the Board. Mr. Williams is the District Deputy Grandmaster of The Most Worshipful National Grand Lodge of North Carolina where Most Wishful Daniel “DT” Thompson serves as Grandmaster. Mr. Williams attended as a representative for Sister Janice Robertson and the supervisors of Guiding Light No. 18 to thank the Board for their support on Saturday, October 14, 2023, which raised \$4,000 to donate to the Cancer Center to assist women with mammograms, rides to and from treatment, etc. Mr. Williams gave Mayor Anthony and each Board Member a small token of appreciation from Ms. Robertson. Alderman Lackman and Mayor Pro Tem thanked Mr. Williams for coming and for the gift.

Alderman Palacios stated he had no report. Alderwoman Thompson stated there is a Community Watch meeting at the Spring Lake Senior Center on Thursday, October 26, 2023, at 6:00 pm. First, Alderman Lackman asked Jami McLaughlin when was the last time she saw 24 people in attendance for a Board meeting and Ms. McLaughlin stated she feels like the room has grown consistently and Alderman Lackman stated this is due to citizens coming out because they care, and same as the Board. Second, Alderman Lackman gave former Alderman James Christian a birthday shout-out. Third, Alderman Lackman stated tomorrow night, Tuesday, October 24, 2023, is the Military Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee at 6:30 pm and it is open to the public. Fourth, Alderman Lackman stated Saturday, November 4, 2023, at 8:00 am at Southwinds Plaza is the monthly Town cleanup, which will be hosted by Alderwoman Thompson since he will be at the Veterans Service Event that day. Fifth, Alderman Lackman stated Saturday, November 4, 2023, from 9:30 am to 4:30 pm at the Spring Lake Recreation Center is the Veterans Service Event for Veterans to receive help from Veteran Service Officers to update claims. Alderman Lackman stated the Veteran Treatment Court will also be there. Sixth, Alderman Lackman stated Wreaths Across America is on Saturday, December 16, 2023, and will be staged in the back parking lot of Town Hall, and the Town is looking for volunteers with a truck and/or

trailer to help transport wreaths to the Sandhills Veterans Cemetery to lay wreaths across graves. Last, Alderman Lackman thanked Fort Liberty for having Military Retiree Appreciation Day for anybody who is retired and utilizes the services they provide. First, Alderwoman Cooper thanked Mr. Carlton Williams regarding the Breast Cancer event she attended on Saturday, October 14, 2023. Second, Alderwoman Cooper stated she, Mayor Pro Tem Chadwick, and Alderman Palacios attended Mr. Finch's boxing tournament at True Vine Ministries in Fayetteville and hopes to bring him back to Spring Lake to support his event because he donates the money back to the children in the community. Third, Alderwoman Cooper stated she and Alderwoman Thompson attended the Spring Lake Middle School Homecoming, which they won, but she and Alderwoman Thompson helped sell hot dogs and shirts to help the different organizations at the school, the Band, and Pep Squad. Alderwoman Cooper stated the Spring Lake Middle School Booster Club still has some shirts available, so reach out to her or Alderwoman Thompson, who is the Treasurer, if interested in a shirt. Alderwoman Cooper stated they are doing a Thanksgiving feeding at Spring Lake Middle School and are looking for volunteers for the day before Thanksgiving to help with prep and to feed on Thanksgiving Day, so please pass this on to anyone who may need a Thanksgiving meal, which can be delivered, and they are partnering with "One Big Family" who will be feeding Fayetteville and surrounding areas, and the head Social Worker for Cumberland County Schools has also been contacted regarding this event to get the word out to any students whose family may need a Thanksgiving meal. Fourth, Alderwoman Cooper mentioned regarding the upcoming election, the last day to apply for an absentee ballot by mail for the municipal election is Tuesday, October 31, 2023, and Wednesday, November 1, 2023, is the last day for a sick and disabled request, which begins at 8:00 am for the sick and disabled municipal election, which an approved Voter ID is required, no exception. Alderwoman Cooper stated an ID is needed but one can be made for free at the Board of Elections. Mayor Anthony stated voting is still allowed, however, a provisional ballot will be issued and that provisional ballot will have to be turned in to the Board of Elections, however, a valid ID is still required and will need to be shown to vote, an expired ID for the elderly over the age of 65 is acceptable, and there is a list on the Cumberland County website of acceptable forms of identification. Last, Alderwoman Cooper stated Haunted Lakes is Saturday, October 28, 2023, from 6:00 to 8:00 pm, and there are QR codes to scan to add your location to pass out candy or to find out the locations to receive candy.

- e. Manager's Report – Interim Town Manager Jason Williams – First, Mr. Williams stated he would get Mr. Finch back to do an event in the Town. Second, Mr. Williams stated the Town has been doing Wreaths Across America for the last couple of years, but like last year, the Military is unable to participate this year, so if anyone has a pickup truck or trailer, please volunteer because he would like for this to happen again this year. Last, Mr. Williams thanked the Board for putting up with him for a year now. Mayor Anthony stated Mr. Williams was supposed to sit in the Town Manager's chair for only two (2) weeks, but it has now been officially a year and acknowledged him for his great work.
- f. Town Attorney Report – Town Attorney Michael Porter – Attorney Porter stated no updates on the legal front but this will be the last time meeting before elections, so this is more for the Town, but this is a really great team, and when he first took this position, his brothers and sisters with the Cumberland County Bar thought he was losing his mind because of the bad reputation, however, it has been a pleasure working with the Board, so get out and vote.

9. ADJOURNMENT

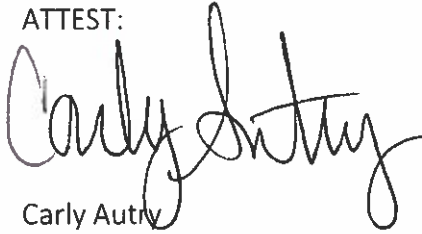
Action: There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 7:31 pm.

Motion: Alderwoman Cooper

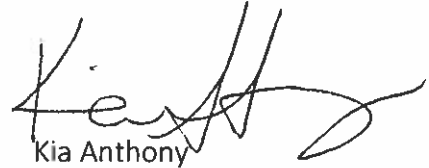
Second by: Alderman Lackman

Vote: Unanimous

ATTEST:



Carly Autry
Town Clerk



Kia Anthony
Mayor