

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

January 22, 2024

**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 Soña Cooper  
Alderwoman Robyn Chadwick  
Alderman Marvin Lackman  
Alderman Raul Palacios  
Alderwoman Adrian Thompson

**Others Present:**

Carly Autry, Town Clerk  
Sergeant John Bittinger, Spring Lake Police Department  
Sergeant Daniel Hernandez, Spring Lake Police Department  
Officer Matthew Jean, Spring Lake Police Department  
Banard Lemon, Audio Visual Coordinator  
Sergeant Brandyn Lyles, Spring Lake Police Department  
Dysoaneik Spellman, Spring Lake Police Chief  
Lieutenant Danny Sutton, Spring Lake Police Department  
Sergeant Keshore Taylor, Spring Lake Police Department  
Sergeant Mack Utley, Spring Lake 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**

Bishop Marshall gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3. Additions or Deletions**

Mayor Pro Tem Cooper requested to add a brief discussion regarding the Audit Committee meeting.

**4. Approval of Agenda**

**Action:** Approval of the Agenda with the addition of a brief discussion regarding the Audit Committee meeting under New Business, Item e.

**Motion by:** Alderman Palacios

**Second by:** Alderwoman Thompson

**Vote:** Unanimous

## 5. Approval of Consent Items

**Action:** Approval of Draft Minutes of January 8, 2024, Regular Meeting.

**Motion by:** Mayor Pro Tem Cooper

**Second by:** Alderwoman Chadwick

**Vote:** Unanimous

## 6. Public Comment

None

## 7. Presentations

- a. Black History Month Proclamation – Mayor Kia Anthony – Mayor Anthony stated there would not be another Board meeting before the beginning of February, so the Proclamation was put on this week's agenda. Mayor Anthony did not read the Proclamation as it was provided in the agenda packet.

## 8. New Business

- a. Special Olympics Update – Sgt. Mack Utley, Spring Lake Police Department – Sgt. Utley stated the Police Department raised \$16,592.98 for the Special Olympics through merchandise and events that were held, which was the most ever raised by the Spring Lake Police Department. Sgt. Utley stated it was about \$5,000 more than what was raised last year and their rank was 24<sup>th</sup> out of 114 departments. Sgt. Utley acknowledged those who helped with the event. Alderman Palacios acknowledged several departments regarding this event and asked if the Police Department was on the shirt this year and Sgt. Utley stated yes because if \$8,000 is raised, that department is automatically put on the back of the shirt. Mayor Anthony and Mayor Pro Tem Cooper acknowledged and congratulated the Police Department. Alderman Lackman asked Sgt. Utley if there will be a run/walk again this year. Sgt. Utley stated there will be one, however, it might be a little different than in previous years, as they will be working with the Fayetteville Police Department and the Cumberland County Sheriff's Department.
- b. Board Discussion Regarding the Installation of Fiber Optic Lines in the Deerfield Subdivision and Other Subdivisions – Alderman Raul Palacios – Alderman Palacios stated there have been citizen complaints received regarding the fiber optic lines installed in the Deerfield neighborhood, specifically regarding the notice of the work. Randy Thompson and Ethan McLamb from Lamberts Cable Splicing were present at the meeting to share any feedback. Alderman Palacios stated this is a public utility and there are certain easement rights for the installation of these fiber optic lines, the company was issued Town permits for the work, the work began, and asked Mr. Thompson if none of these had gone beyond the threshold for the DOT requirements. Mr. Thompson stated that was correct because if it is a city-owned road, they must have permission from the city or a permit from the city if the city requires it. Mr. Thompson stated if they must apply for city permits then it is in the city's hands to notify the citizens of the city that this work is fixing to take place. Alderman Palacios reiterated that since the streets in Deerfield are Town-owned, then it would have fallen on the Town to give notice, and asked if that was correct. Mr. Thompson stated yes, that is the normal routine since the Town issued permits, and

unfortunately, Spring Lake is part of Fort Liberty CO so they must sporadically jump around to where they are allowed to work. Mr. Thompson stated they had five (5) A-frame plastic signs that said high-speed internet coming to your neighborhood stolen off the side of the road in Spring Lake. Mayor Anthony briefly explained her personal experience and the issues with this work. Mr. Thompson stated he could fix some of those issues. Alderman Palacios stated that he sees on the email received that all the boring has been completed in Deerfield and Mr. Thompson stated that is correct, but they still must pull the cables and test them. Alderman Palacios asked how many other neighborhoods are completed and Mr. Thompson stated that is the only one they have completed. Alderman Palacios recommended for the future, to possibly put notice updates on the water bills to inform the citizens of upcoming work. Mayor Pro Tem Cooper asked Mr. Thompson if it was possible when they were getting ready to go into a neighborhood, to let the Manager and Clerk know, and since only one (1) neighborhood is being done at a time, it should be easy to manage. Mr. Thompson stated that will not be the case going forward as he just received an email stating they got over 200,000 feet of boring that has to be done in three (3) months so they are fixing to send probably four (4) to five (5) more crews here. Mr. Williams asked Mr. Thompson how much of that is in Spring Lake. Mr. Thompson stated if he remembers the email correctly, around 40,000 are on the base, and the rest will be in Spring Lake. Mr. Williams requested for Mr. Thompson to let the Town know where they were going so something could be put out to inform the Town and the citizens as the permits could be used for up to a year.

- c. Board Discussion Regarding Community and Economic Development Policy and Resolution – Mayor Pro Tem Sofía Cooper – Mayor Pro Tem Cooper stated this Resolution is in support of resources for community navigators to assist local entrepreneurs in assessing credit and the Board wants to help local entrepreneurs especially ones from marginalized communities that face challenges in navigating the complex loan application process and lack awareness of available SBA loan programs. Mayor Pro Tem Cooper stated this is to provide funding on a national level to help those entities and the benefit of the Town approving this is to support funding for our community of businesses as the Town has a lot of businesses that struggle, so if the Board supports this, the Town can try to request funding at the national level for this Resolution. Mayor Anthony stated the Town does not have an Economic Development position and the Board taking the initiative to find these resources to join in with national organizations that will help extend our reach and provide more benefits to our community. Mayor Anthony stated until the Town can staff that Economic Development position, the Board itself will be diligent in finding alternative means to continue economic development in our community. Mayor Anthony stated to bring this back before the Board at a regular meeting to vote to approve this Resolution in support of resources for our community navigators to assist local entrepreneurs in assessing credit or access or accessing credit.

Mayor Pro Tem Cooper stated there is another Resolution in support of a national agenda for US housing investment and opportunity as the Town's unhoused population has continued to increase, is underserved, and the lack of and would like for the Board to also consider adopting that Resolution in support of so that the Town can try to request funding from the government to assist with funding for more affordable houses in the community. Mayor Anthony stated the Board will move to approve those Resolutions at the upcoming regular meeting.

- d. Board Discussion Regarding Energy, Environment, and Natural Resources Resolution – Mayor Pro Tem Soña Cooper – Mayor Pro Tem Cooper stated that in support of the outdoor recreation legacy partnership program and the outdoors for all is that nobody should be able to be limited from having physical activities in their communities and schools and having that ability increases and provides for better mental health. Mayor Pro Tem Cooper stated that she felt that the Board could also join with NLC in requesting funding for recreational purposes. Mayor Anthony read the summary from the BOA Cover Sheet regarding this Resolution. Mayor Anthony stated that we are on a flight path and air quality is something that should always be kept at the forefront of our mind. Mayor Anthony referenced Carvers Creek Park and stated this is a preserved area that we need to legislatively make sure that we are ensuring the safety and the preservation of our natural resources and the Board will bring this back at the next regular meeting for a vote on approving this Resolution.
- e. Brief Discussion Regarding the Audit Committee Meeting – Mayor Kia Anthony – Mayor Anthony stated she, Mayor Pro Tem Cooper, Alderman Palacios, the Town Manager, and the Local Government Commission met, along with the HR Department, to discuss the pay for the employees here in the Town and are in the process of soliciting a corporation to conduct an official pay study and for backup information, the general pay study done by the North Carolina League of Municipalities will be used, which was done for the entire State, however, there were some discrepancies in the Town and the way the employees are being paid. Mayor Anthony stated the Town wants to be proactive and make sure that competitive wages for the employees are competitive wages are provided, which the Audit Committee is taking the lead on at this time, and an actual format to look at and approve with some actual numbers will be brought forth. Mayor Anthony stated the Town has 91 budgeted positions, with 19 being vacancies so to combat this and the constant loss of employees, the Town is doing what it can and mentioned what vacancies the Town currently has. Alderman Lackman acknowledged Town staff for their hard work and stated this is something the Board is taking seriously. Alderman Lackman stated it does come at a cost and that cost is going to be looking at tax revenue and may cause the citizens' and residents' tax to increase to fund the Town. Alderwoman Chadwick stated she is in agreeance with the pay study and thinks the Town should do right by the employees especially with things consistently going up in cost and needs to make sure that wages earned are consistent with the cost of living. Mayor Pro Tem Cooper stated she believes the Town needs to look at how Town staff is paid and believes the League is going to be contacted to do a pay study just for the Town rather than a private entity, as this is an area of their expertise. Mayor Pro Tem Cooper stated she also thinks the Town should look at how benefits are structured. Mayor Anthony stated the Town is still preparing for the adjustment in sales tax, so that is also being considered while the pay study is visited, as there is a \$1.6 million sales tax payment that will be made every period for the Town, and next year the Town will be approaching the tax reevaluation through the county so this is where property tax will be reassessed as well. Mr. Williams stated he and HR talked to the insurance people and they are working on finding a better rate that would lower family costs to save some money, which the pay study should help accomplish with that. Mr. Williams stated a pay study should have been worked on about 10-15 years ago, and mentioned that the Board wants the pay study done before the new budget goes into effect in July. Mayor Anthony mentioned to the rest of the Board that there are two (2) more meetings planned to try to get some things approved, so the Audit Committee is meeting again with the LGC, HR, and the Town Manager, with the first meeting will be virtual on Thursday, January 25, 2024, at 6:00 pm and will bring back an update, but no decisions will be made before putting it before the Board. Mayor Anthony stated the

other meeting is in person on Thursday, February 1, 2024. Mayor Anthony acknowledged the hard work and dedication of the Town employees. Alderman Palacios stated the pay study through the League that is being compared is based on population sizes and the Town's population size is on the low end, as well as the low end of the pay scale, but it does not account for how much revenue the Town brings in, so that is why the pay study is important. Alderman Palacios stated there are meetings lined up but not at the point where they are pulling the trigger on a pay study, as they are just trying to get the basic information, and job descriptions and even prioritizing the positions that need to be accounted for right now.

- f. Mayor's Report – Mayor Kia Anthony – First, Mayor Anthony stated Lunch with the Mayor is this Wednesday, 1/24/24, at noon at Nak Won Korean Restaurant at 138 N. Main Street. Second, Mayor Anthony stated the upcoming Mayor's Coalition will be here in Town Hall, on Friday, February 2, 2024, with breakfast starting at 7:30 am and the meeting starting at 8:00 am. Last, at the end of the Board of Aldermen report, Mayor Anthony acknowledged Mrs. Fredericka Sutherland for her years of dedicated service as an Alderwoman and as the Chair of the Appearance Committee.
  
- g. Board of Aldermen Report – Spring Lake Board of Aldermen – First, Mayor Pro Tem Cooper stated she partnered with Feeding Carolina Communities and there is a food distribution at Bethel AME Zion Church at 255 Vass Road, Spring Lake, on Saturday, February 24, 2024. Second, Mayor Pro Tem Cooper stated on Saturday, March 2, 2024, at 10:00 am, WBC Fay is doing a Financial Literacy Library Tour event at the Spring Lake Branch Library. Last, Mayor Pro Tem Cooper stated the Spring Lake Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity had an induction ceremony this past weekend and Alderwoman Chadwick's son was inducted as a member. First, Alderwoman Thompson stated Cops & Conversations will be Thursday, January 25, 2024, at 6:00 pm at the Spring Lake Recreation Center at 245 Ruth Street, Spring Lake. Last, Alderwoman Thompson stated Cornerstone Christian Empowerment Center at 111 North Bragg Blvd., Spring Lake, is a White Flag Designation, which check-in is at 5:00 pm and departure is at 8:00 am. Alderwoman Thompson stated dinner and breakfast are provided, however, it is not a shelter, just a place for people to get out of the cold elements at night, but some days they do allow people to come in due to low temperatures. Alderwoman Thompson stated they need volunteers and donations, like toiletries and blankets. First, Alderman Lackman acknowledged the audience for coming to the meeting. Second, Alderman Lackman acknowledged Mayor Anthony and Lt. Sutton for the send-off for former Alderman James Christian. Third, Alderman Lackman stated the Military and Veterans Advisory Committee meeting is tomorrow, Tuesday, January 23, 2024, at 6:30 pm here at Town Hall. Last, Alderman Lackman stated Town Cleanup is on Saturday, February 3, 2024, at 8:00 am at Southwinds Plaza. First, Alderwoman Chadwick did a reminder regarding the Benchmarks students are taking this week. Last, Alderwoman Chadwick stated there is still an opportunity to support and win a 2013 F-150 truck and the drawing is Saturday, May 4, 2024., which is sponsored by FYAL and Fitch Boxing Club to help support the children in the community. Alderwoman Chadwick stated the tickets are \$20.00 apiece. First, Alderman Palacios stated the next Appearance Committee meeting is on Wednesday, February 14, 2024, at 4:00 pm at the Spring Lake Recreation Center, where there is a new vacancy if anyone is interested. Last, Alderman Palacios acknowledged his daughter, Emma, 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday, which is Wednesday, January 24, 2024.
  
- h. Manager's Report –Interim Town Manager Jason Williams – Mr. Williams stated no report at this time.

- i. Town Attorney Report – Town Attorney Michael Porter – Attorney Porter was absent due to being sick.

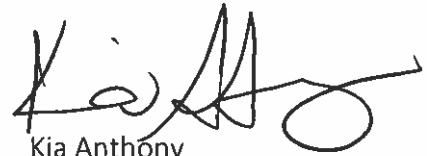
**9. ADJOURNMENT**

**Action:** There being no further business to come before the Board, Mayor Anthony adjourned the meeting at 7:06 pm.

ATTEST:

  
Carly Autry  
Town Clerk



  
Kia Anthony  
Mayor