

MINUTES OF THE WHITSETT TOWN COUNCIL

July 11, 2023

Whitsett Town Hall Building

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

The regular meeting of the Whitsett Town Council was held on Tuesday, July 11, 2023 at the Whitsett Town Hall. The following members of the Town Council were present: Mayor Richard Fennell, Mayor Pro Tem Jerry Rice and Council Members Craig York and Lee Greeson. Also present were Town Administrator Elaine Garner, Town Clerk Barbara York as well as 7 citizens of Whitsett.

Mayor Fennell called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and noted that a quorum was present. He asked that Mayor Pro Tem Jerry Rice give the invocation.

SPEAKERS FROM THE FLOOR

The mayor asked if there were any Speakers from the Floor and there were none.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Adoption of the Minutes

- Mayor Fennell asked if he heard a motion to accept the minutes from the June 13, 2023 Town Council Meeting. Council Member Craig York made a motion to adopt the June, 2023 minutes. The motion seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Jerry Rice and the adoption of the June 13, 2023 minutes was carried by unanimous vote. Mayor Fennell asked if he heard a motion to accept the minutes from the Public Hearing also on June 13, 2023. Mayor Pro Tem Jerry Rice made a motion to adopt the June 13, 2023 Public Hearing minutes. Council Member Craig York seconded and the Public Hearing minutes from June 13, 2023 were passed unanimously.

2. Update on Ballfield Netting/Labor

- Town Clerk Barbara York reported to the Council that she had spoken with the owner of Prevette who are going to install our netting on the ballfield. The delay in getting us on the schedule has been that their cherry picker truck is in the shop to be serviced and they are unsure of when it will be finished. Mr. Prevette will call and schedule the installation as soon as the truck is out of the shop.
- Mayor Fennell asked if there was any further Old Business and there was none.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Planning Board

- Mayor Fennell stated that the Planning Board did not meet this month, so there was no report.

2. Enforcement Officer/Town Administrator

- Enforcement Officer Elaine Garner gave an update on 7209 Whitsett Park Road. She has been trying to find out more about this house and the construction that has been done on it. The owner brought the blue prints to the house that were torn and crinkled up to the point they were barely readable. The owner stated that the house is a three bedroom and two bath home. Ms. Garner reached out to the previous owner to see if he could possibly give any information on the house and he has not responded. The current owner agreed to provide more current blue prints to the Town so we can see the layout of it and be sure they have the appropriate permits. There are currently no DCC's on the property and the owner was told that she is responsible getting those.

- Town Administrator Elaine Garner Introduced Stephen Robinson and Bobby Norris from the DOT who were invited to this meeting to discuss and answer questions about the possibility of closing Crescent Road due to cars speeding on this road that is a cut-through in Whitsett. Mr. Norris stated that the DOT does not have an issue or an opinion regarding closing Crescent Road that connects Highway 61 to Highway 70, but if anything like that were to be done, the request for that would need to come through the Town in the form of a resolution by the Council. This resolution would need to state that the Town Council approves and recommends the closing of Crescent Road. The DOT would also require statements from Emergency Services (fire department and law enforcement) regarding how the closure would/would not affect them in getting to an emergency via a different route than Crescent Road. There was discussion about traffic from highway 40 when there is an accident, people get off of that exit, come down Highway 61 and use Crescent Road as their cut-through to Highway 70. This includes the large 18-wheeler trucks.

Mayor Fennell asked if they recommended closing the road, would the DOT still be responsible for maintaining it. Mr. Norris said yes, that the DOT would still be responsible for the road, just not as a through road. They would make a few changes including constructing some kind of turn-around site at the end of Crescent near Highway 70. Mayor Fennell asked how many residents are on Crescent Road and the answer is seven homes. The mayor stressed that before any decision was made, the Council would need to hear from all seven of the residents regarding their opinions on this topic.

Council Member Craig York asked Mr. Norris if there were any statistics on the number of accidents on this road for the past five years. Mr. York also asked if the DOT could provide those same statistics for roads similar to Crescent. Mr. Norris said he would get that information for the Council. If this closure were to occur, the DOT would put up signs saying the road is closed. Mr. Robinson gave a potential update on the future construction of expanding Highway 70 to four or five lanes and those potential time lines.

Mayor Pro Tem Jerry Rice asked if the decision was made to close Crescent Road, would they also close the cut-through on Coleman Road? Mr. Norris said the DOT would do a study of any potential issues and problems for the surrounding area to see what would be needed before making any kind of decisions. There is a lot to consider when doing something like this. Mayor Fennell stated that all of this information will be important for the Council to be aware of when making any decisions regarding Crescent Road. There was discussion about the pros and cons of having guard rails, speed bumps, law enforcement monitoring, cable rails, rumble strips, camera monitoring, signage and flashing speed limit signs.

Town Administrator Elaine Garner stated that she had contacted Guilford County Sheriff's Department who agreed to make their presence known on this road to deter speeding vehicles. One of the residents on Crescent Road asked if the DOT could put cameras on this road to monitor traffic counts and speed. Mr. Norris said that they would do that as a part of their study of this problem.

There was also discussion about the amount of traffic on Highway 70 between Springwood Church Rd. and University Dr. regarding the long delays. It was stated that the DOT really needed to do something to aid in this issue especially with the developments that are quickly increasing in this area. Mr. Norris said this is the reason why the Highway 70 project that Mr. Robinson had discussed is getting moved to the top of the priority list of necessary road constructions and road widening. Mayor Fennell stated that once we get the information from Emergency Responders as well as all of the residents on Crescent Road, then the Town would hold a special meeting to make this decision.

NEW BUSINESS

1. **Discuss purchase of three water meters and the new water billing system, MuniLink** Mayor Pro Tem Jerry Rice stated that the Council needs to go ahead and purchase the three meters and MuniLink so we can get the training started and the Town Clerk comfortable using the system before Hudson Way starts adding new meters. Mr. Rice reviewed the cost of the startup of MuniLink being \$10,000 and then \$450 each month after that. Mr. Rice made the motion to purchase MuniLink and three of the digitally read water meters. The motion was seconded by Council Member Craig

York and the motion carried unanimously. We will be looking into which three properties that we will replace the old water meters with these new ones. Karen Horne has volunteered her property so she and the Town Clerk will decide on the other two properties. David Murphy, the Town's ORC will be able to install the new meters. Ms. York will check on the pricing for installation.

2. **Ordinance Violation Fees** Town Administrator Elaine Garner gave the Council a handout on the proposed violation fees and discussed the order of the violations, what kind of warning the resident would get, and the cost of each of those violations. Council Member Craig York made a motion to accept the proposed violation penalties/fees as discussed. Council member Lee Greeson seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.
3. **New Laptop** Mrs. Garner explained that the IT representative from Brooks Network Services gave us a quote on either changing out the battery in our current laptop or purchasing a new laptop. She referred the Council to the handout with that estimate. The Council asked that we further investigate the options, costs and types of laptops we may need as well as the software that would need to be included. This will be tabled until next month's meeting.
4. **QuickBooks Class for the Town Clerk** Town Administrator Elaine Garner discussed that there is a QuickBooks online class that Town Clerk Barbara York would like to take. The cost of this class is \$70 and includes the class and the QuickBooks manual. Council Member Lee Greeson made the motion for the funds be spent for the Town Clerk to take the QuickBooks online class. Council Member Craig York seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

5. **Any items from Council Members.**

Council Member Craig York let the Council know that he would be presenting a PowerPoint presentation at the next meeting regarding the engineering study that was done on the Town Hall. Mr. York will also review the tree ordinance at the next meeting.

6. **Announcements** Mayor Fennell asked if there were any announcements and Town Administrator Elaine Garner let the Council know that Susan McKinney had started in her part time position of Museum Curator. Ms. McKinney's father Richard Brothers, who was the fire chief for the Town of Whitsett for many years and was one of the original fire fighters for Whitsett and the last of those fire fighters that are still living. He will be 90 years old the end of this week and we have purchased a birthday card for everyone to sign for him.

7. **Speakers from the Floor** The Mayor asked if there were any Speakers from the Floor and there were none.

ADJOURNMENT With no further business before the Council, Mayor Fennell invited a motion to adjourn. The motion to adjourn was made by Mayor Pro Tem Jerry Rice and seconded by Council Member Lee Greeson. The motion carried; and the July 11, 2023 Town Council meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:55 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Whitsett Town Council is scheduled for 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 8, 2023 at the Whitsett Town Hall.

_____/S/_____

Elaine Garner, Town Administrator

_____/S/_____

Richard Fennell, Mayor

APPROVED: