

**TOWN OF GARLAND
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2020
6:00 PM**

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Town of Garland was held virtually via GoToMeeting on Tuesday, October 20, 2020 at 6:00 pm.

The following members of the Board of Commissioners were present:

**Austin Brown (Present in the Boardroom)
Eddie Bronson, Jr. (Present Virtually)
Jo A. Strickland (Present in the Boardroom)
Barbara A. Peterson (Present Virtually)
Carolyn R. Melvin (Present Virtually)**

Also present in the Boardroom: Town Clerk Pamela Cashwell, Mr. Neil Carroll and Mr. Brandon Hairr, and Mr. Chase Jordan of the *Sampson Independent*. There were unidentified callers as well in attendance virtually. Mr. Glenn Heath of *Core & Main* and Mr. Joseph Andrews of *Star Communications* joined the meeting virtually to make presentations.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Winifred H. Murphy was present virtually. She called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm and welcomed everyone in attendance. Town Clerk, Pamela Cashwell, was present recording notes for the minutes.

QUORUM

Mayor Winifred H. Murphy and Clerk Pamela Cashwell established there was a quorum present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Winifred H. Murphy requested the Board review the agenda for approval. Mayor Murphy stated she has a few items she would like to move up on the agenda as she is not feeling well, and Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown has agreed to facilitate the meeting after the administration report. She requested to add item 5 A. 7. Census Data, move item 6. 1. Planning & Zoning, Fees and Penalties to 5. A. 8. and move item 7 3. Chapter 160D Planning and Zoning to 5 A. 9. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown made a motion to approve the agenda with said changes, seconded by Commissioner Carolyn R. Melvin and carried with a vote of four to none with Commissioner Barbara A. Peterson not casting a vote due to technical issues with her virtual connection. (See attached).

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were received.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

ADMINISTRATION

Board Meeting Format- Mayor Murphy noted in the last meeting a motion was approved for all board members to be present in the boardroom for meetings. She asked for reconsideration of this motion with the increased number of positive cases of the Covid-19 virus. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown stated he would rescind his motion and make a motion to leave it up to each board members preference as to whether to attend in person or virtually for meetings, seconded by Commissioner Carolyn R. Melvin and carried unanimously.

Neptune Software Update- Mr. Glenn Heath of *Core & Main* joined the meeting virtually to discuss the status of the Neptune 360 Software upgrades. He stated the three collectors the town has are V3 and they will need to be upgraded to V4. The town has a service agreement in place to cover the upgrade cost, however it will cost the town \$1,500.00 for the collectors to be taken down, sent off for the upgrade and for re-installment once the upgrade is complete. Mr. Heath encouraged Mayor Murphy to contact the vendor for the town's software system, *Southern Software*, to discuss changing the file format currently being used to a V4 file format that will enable the use of the Neptune 360 Upgrades. Mr. Heath stated once the collectors are taken down for upgrades, a drive by unit will be used to get the monthly reads for billing purposes. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown asked how long the upgrades to the collectors will take. Mr. Heath replied four to eight weeks which will affect two billing cycles. He assured board members that he and/or Brandon would be in town assisting with getting the drive by reads while the collectors are being upgraded. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown asked Mr. Heath what the ramifications were if the software company couldn't set up a V4 file format for the Neptune 360 upgrade. Mr. Heath stated the upgrade would work on the current format, yet the town wouldn't be able to utilize all the benefits of the upgrade. Mayor Murphy asked Mr. Heath if he could come out and assist public works employee, Randy, with determining the issues related to some of the meters not reading into the system. Mr. Heath stated he would be glad to come out and assist as requested. Mayor Murphy thanked Mr. Heath for this presentation and for all his help in the Town of Garland. Mr. Heath left the meeting after his presentation.

Fiber Installation Update- Mr. Joseph Andrews of *Star Communications* joined the meeting virtually to provide an update on the fiber installation. He reported three of the five planned projects for the Town of Garland has been completed. The next two projects are scheduled to begin soon, and they have been able to provide several customers with fiber cable services in town. It was noted during one of those drop installations for fiber services, a secondary sewer line was damaged. A lengthy discussion followed as to who is liable for repairs done on private property during fiber installation. The conclusion of the discussion yielded that the Town of Garland is only responsible for damage that occurs up to the right of way connection for water/sewer services and the property owner or vendor contractor is responsible for line damages pass the tap for services on private property. Mayor Murphy asked if fiber services were now available for the ballpark complex. Mr. Andrews stated they were, and she stated she would contact them tomorrow regarding those services.

Mayor Murphy thanked Mr. Andrews for his presentation and Mr. Andrews exited the meeting.

Resolution for Mrs. Dorothy Crenshaw- Mayor Murphy read aloud a resolution honoring the life of Mrs. Dorothy Crenshaw. (See attached).

Breast Cancer Awareness- Mayor Murphy read aloud a proclamation recognizing October as the National Breast Cancer Awareness month. (See attached). She thanked the Garland Volunteer Fire & Rescue Department, especially Mr. Rommie Melvin for painting two of the town fire hydrants pink in recognition of Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

Gift Agreement- Mayor Murphy acknowledged a gift presented to the Town of Garland by Mr. E.L. Rackley. He gave the town the sign that was on the former depo station that has historical significance. He requested if the town ever decides to relinquish the gift that it be given back to the heirs of E. L. and Connie Rackley. Mayor Murphy read aloud an agreement to memorialize the gift with the requests noted. (See attached). Commissioner Jo A. Strickland made a motion to accept the gift given by Mr. E. L. Rackley and family, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown and carried unanimously. Mayor Murphy congratulated Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown and Mrs. Hanna Brown on their recent marriage. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland provided them a gift on behalf of their fellow board members. Mayor Pro Tem and Mrs. Austin Brown thanked the board for their support and encouragement.

Census Data- Mayor Murphy reported data received from a county official noting the state average of self-responders for the census is 63.4% with Sampson County's average being 56%. She reviewed the municipality averages and noted the Town of Garland's average is less than the county's average. She stated hopefully the averages will increase when the total responses are all collected. A decrease in census numbers can adversely affect the revenue the town receives over the next ten years.

Planning & Zoning Fines & Penalties- The Planning and Zoning Board met several weeks ago and made recommendations for the board to consider regarding the three mobile homes that were placed without an approved zoning application. They recommended for the mobile home that was placed at the corner of E. Fourth & N. Bladen Avenue be required to be removed from the property. The mobile home that was placed behind a home on W. Fourth Street must file an appeal to the planning and zoning board. The mobile home that was placed in the ETJ area south of town be approved for the zoning application after paying \$250.00 for attorney fees while waiving the remaining daily fines. Board members discussed these recommendations and discussed the amount of work that was required to process these applications. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland made a motion to approve the zoning application for the mobile home that was placed in the ETJ area south of town after the citizen pays the town \$250.00 in attorney fees and \$100.00 in processing fees for a total of \$350.00, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown and carried unanimously.

Chapter 160D Planning & Zoning- Mayor Murphy discussed the new state law requiring municipalities update their planning and zoning ordinances which becomes effective July 1, 2021. She stated two public hearings are required prior to adopting the new planning and zoning ordinances, so this will require the town to have the

ordinances updated by May of 2021. Additionally, a Comprehensive Land Use Plan has to be created and will become effective in July 2022. She noted if municipalities fail to meet these requirement deadlines, they will lose their ability to make decisions regarding planning and zoning. She stated some municipalities are hiring planning consultants and some are consulting with the Mid-Carolina COG. She encouraged the board to think about how they would like to proceed with these requirements, she suggested either hiring consultants or working together with other small municipalities in order to meet these requirement deadlines.

Mayor Murphy thanked Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown for facilitating the meeting at this time.

FINANCE

Budget versus Actual – Clerk Pamela Cashwell provided and reviewed copies of the current budget vs. actual reports with board members. She noted the percentages should be approximately 35% at this time in the fiscal year. She reviewed revenues in the General Fund and Water/Sewer Fund noting the budget was decreased drastically from last year due to the financial instability secondary to the Covid-19 pandemic and the recent closing of the largest employer in town. Each fund revenue is right at the 35% mark at this time indicating the cuts were needed at this point in the budget. Clerk Cashwell reviewed each department expenditures to date and strongly encouraged board members to please start planning larger projects in the buildings, streets and parks/recreation departments to avoid large projects and purchases during the last month of the fiscal year. (See attached). Commissioner Jo A. Strickland asked Clerk Cashwell to explain why we have expended 42% for legal services to date. Clerk Cashwell stated we pay a retainer fee of \$5,000.00 in the beginning of the fiscal year and once those funds are used, we get monthly bills for legal services. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland stated she wasn't comfortable with this practice as we have no idea how much has been spent and for what services. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland made a motion to request Attorney Alan Maynard send an itemized bill monthly for services rendered beginning July 1, 2020 until the end of each fiscal year, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown and carried unanimously.

Bank Statements/A.P. Check Listing – Clerk Pamela Cashwell provided copies of the bank statements for all three accounts as well as the AP check report from last month to current. (See attached).

Internal Control Monthly Reviews – Clerk Cashwell noted Commissioner Jo A. Strickland is on the rotation schedule for this month to meet with the Mayor and Clerk to complete the monthly internal control checklist.

Credit Card Purchases – Clerk Pamela Cashwell reviewed and provided copies of the credit card purchases for the month with the Board. Two purchases were made, a thermometer for the lagoon and *Norton Antivirus Protection* for the computers. (See attached).

BUILDINGS/CEMETERY

Cemetery Updates- Commissioner Barbara A. Peterson met with Clerk Cashwell last week and reviewed the current records for both cemeteries. The records are not updated and current with correct information. They have come up with a strategic plan to begin getting the records updated and this will involve manpower and time. She stated anyone who was willing to help would be needed and appreciated. Mayor Murphy stated a citizen was interested in changing locations of a plot she has purchased due to a stump being on the plot. She will inform the citizen to contact Commissioner Barbara A. Peterson.

Buildings-Security Needs- Commissioner Eddie Bronson Jr. stated he felt all town owned buildings needed security cameras. It was discussed possibly moving the security system from the former police station to town hall. Quotes will be requested from the vendor who installed the system. The possibility of purchasing *Ring* doorbell cameras was discussed. Mayor Murphy stated she plans to contact Mr. Joseph Andrews tomorrow regarding an in-kind gesture of placing fiber at the concession stand to use with the security system already in place there. The utility drop boxes were discussed after a deputy noted they were not secure and could be vandalized easily. Clerk Cashwell noted the one in the parking lot is being rained into and destroying the payments. It was discussed to move this drop box until another solution can be implemented. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland agreed to work on obtaining security quotes for town owned buildings.

Library-Repairs for Doors and Window Updates- Commissioner Barbara A. Peterson noted pictures she received from Commissioner Jo A. Strickland of a large gap in the doors to the library. She stated she will contact someone to provide a quote to repair. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland agreed to contact a vendor she knows to obtain a quote to replace the glass in the front window of the library that was broken when someone broke into the building.

Mayor Murphy interjected as Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown had moved on to parks and recreation to go back to buildings. She stated Mrs. Mary Brown has agreed to assist with getting pictures of former mayors placed in the museum if Commissioner Barbara A. Peterson would like her assistance. Commissioner Barbara A. Peterson stated she would reach out to Mrs. Brown. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland asked Mayor Murphy if she was in this meeting or not. She stated if you are in the meeting, then why aren't you facilitating the meeting. Commissioner Eddie Bronson Jr. requested to move onto reports for parks and recreation.

PARKS/RECREATION

Lighting Fixture Update at Ball Park- Commissioner Eddie Bronson Jr. stated he had spent half a day on the phone with *Duke Progress Energy* regarding the lights at the ballpark. He stated he then contacted Mr. Leo Skinner who confirmed the lights are owned by the town and the town would have to contract with someone to replace the light pole and lighting fixture. He stated he then tried without success to contact *Terry Long Electrical*. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland advised she had placed arena

lighting at her farm and noted Mr. Mark Sanderhoff out of Clinton had performed the work for her. Commissioner Eddie Bronson Jr. stated he would reach out to him for a quote to replace the pole and lighting fixture at the park.

Water Fountain Repair Update- Commissioner Eddie Bronson Jr. obtained a quote from *Merritt's Pottery* to repair the water fountain in Rotary Park. (See attached). He stated once the quote is approved, it will take approximately two weeks to complete the repairs. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown made a motion to approve the quote as presented, seconded by Commissioner Jo A. Strickland and carried unanimously.

STREETS

Sink Hole on W. Second & Brown Avenue Update- Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown stated this repair has been turned over to the NC DOT. He reported they have completed getting locate to come and mark lines and they plan to dig down further away from the sink hole area to try and make a determination as to why the storm drain collapsed. They have placed a temporary patch over the area until a permanent repair is completed.

Sink Hole on W. Warren Street- Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown reported a new sink hole area at the intersection of W. Warren Street and S. Church Avenue. Public Works employees have roped off the area to prevent accidents. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown stated he will be contacting a vendor to obtain a quote to get this area repaired.

Powell Bill Street Assessment Update- Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown reported he and Commissioner Jo A. Strickland have not had a chance to meet to devise a plan to address repairs and maintenance per the street assessment. He stated they will continue to work on getting this project started.

PUBLIC WORKS – WATER/SEWER/GARBAGE

Violation Letters Update- Mr. Neil Carroll reported he had been in contact with a state representative and they are working on mitigating the fines received by the town in lieu of the town having spent funds to improve and upgrade the water/wastewater systems.

Clock Repair- Commissioner Jo A. Strickland reported she will contact Mr. Hall tomorrow morning regarding the status of the clock repairs.

Leaf & Limb Pickup- Board members discussed setting a date for a leaf and limb collections and decided to set a date for the leaf & limb pick-up at next month's meeting.

Purchase Requests- Mr. Neil Carroll stated he and Brandon were working on a list of things needed for the water/wastewater system and he will present the list to the board members at next month's meeting. He did state he would like to clean, prime and paint the former classroom off the bay area at town hall to store maps and documents for use as needed. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown made a motion to approve purchasing the needed supplies to clean, prime and paint the former classroom as requested, seconded by Commissioner Jo A. Strickland and carried unanimously. Clerk Cashwell reported staff have requested to purchase plastic meter boxes as they don't currently have any in stock. The boxes are approximately

\$50.00 each. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown made a motion to purchase five plastic meter boxes, seconded by Commissioner Barbara A. Peterson and carried unanimously.

SAFETY

Commissioner Jo A. Strickland reported there has been a lot of action in the streets and stated we can't continue to rely on the Sampson County Sheriff's Office to patrol our streets. She stated a lot of non-emergency calls are being called into 911 and everyone should understand that number is to be used for emergencies only. She stated she understands budget constraints but feels the board members need to look into the future needs of the town and figure out some kind of way to have some police coverage for the town. She stated she is open to suggestions from everyone. No suggestions were offered at this time.

OLD BUSINESS

Cares Act Funding & Business Subgrants from CARES ACT Funding- Clerk Cashwell reported no new expenditures with these funds since they received the last expenditure report. Board members discussed moving forward with the small business sub-grants and purchases such a hand sanitizing stands, touchless paper towel and soap dispensers for town hall. Clerk Cashwell reported she had attended one virtual training for the CARES ACT Funding. She stated with the current staffing issues she isn't able to dedicate much time to initiating business grants or other expenditure needs. She suggested each committee review needs that are related to the Covid-19 pandemic. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown agreed to move forward with locating and purchasing the sanitizing items listed above for town hall. Mayor Murphy stressed time is of the essence as these funds have to be expended by the end of the year.

Public Works/Deputy Clerk Vacancies-Commissioner Jo A. Strickland stated she was asked to follow-up on the applications received for the deputy clerk vacancy. All applicants were called for an initial interview opportunity. She reported she and Clerk Cashwell had interviewed five candidates and narrowed the field to two candidates for the full board to interview. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland made a motion for the board to interview the two candidates either virtually or in person Thursday night. Motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown. Mayor Murphy stated she felt if a candidate was available for interview for public works or any other candidates that may come forward for deputy clerk, that they be interviewed as well. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown stated a motion was already on the table. Commissioner Eddie Bronson Jr. stated he needed to know the time before he could vote. Meeting time was set for 7:00 pm. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown called for the vote and the motion carried unanimously.

Nuisance Properties- Commissioner Eddie Bronson Jr. asked about the status of the old movie theater. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown stated the former deputy clerk was working on this nuisance property and no updates are available at this time. He asked if the camper was still present at a home located on S. Ingold Avenue. Mayor

Pro Tem Austin Brown reported the camper has been moved and the homeowner is currently working on an eviction for the residence.

Meter Tampering- Board members discussed the ongoing issue with a citizen who continues to tamper with his water meter. It was noted now his neighbor is having issues with him tampering with their meter as well. Board members discussed various options to resolve this issue. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland made a motion to have the town attorney notify the resident again, that he has fines of \$500.00 for meter tampering, that he is required to pay attorney fees and all reimbursements must be made within 30 days or his services will be disconnected on day 31. He can also give him the option of placing a well for his water services as he doesn't reside inside the town limits. Motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown and carried unanimously. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown agreed to contact the town attorney regarding the board's decision on this matter.

NEW BUSINESS

2019 CDBG-NR Compliance Plans & Policies- Clerk Cashwell reviewed the 2019 CDBG-NR Compliance Plans and Policies. (See attached). Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown made a motion to adopt the 2019 CDBG-NR Compliance Plans and Policies, seconded by Commissioner Barbara A. Peterson and carried unanimously.

Halloween Guidelines & Times- Commissioner Jo A. Strickland made a motion to set the hours for trick or treating from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm in the Town of Garland, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown and carried unanimously.

Yard Sale Ordinance- Mayor Murphy briefly discussed inconsistencies with citizens obtaining yard sale permits. She stated some pay, and some don't pay for the \$5.00 permit. She encouraged board members to think about a resolution for this ordinance. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown made a motion to table this item to give board members time to review, seconded by Commissioner Jo A. Strickland and carried unanimously.

Sanitizing Town Hall/Deep Cleaning & Routine Cleaning- Commissioner Jo A. Strickland reported town hall has received a deep cleaning and sanitizing, noting she was pleased with the vendors work. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland made a motion to approve the invoice for \$1,100.00 to be paid from the Cares Act funding for the services rendered, seconded by Commissioner Barbara A. Peterson and carried unanimously. (See attached). Commissioner Jo A. Strickland stated she felt we should obtain some quotes for routine cleaning of town hall to determine if we can afford it. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland made a motion to table this item until quotes are obtained, seconded by Commissioner Barbara A. Peterson and carried unanimously.

Dumpster Pricing Analysis with Rate Change Recommendations- Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown reported he has reached out to several representatives from *Waste Industries* to discuss the dumpster rates we are being charged, without success. He stated the current rates for some of the dumpsters we currently have aren't even covering the charges we receive for the services. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland referred back to an email they received from Clerk Cashwell noting services for the *Family Dollar* store were increased in July 2020, yet the rates were never increased

by the town, for the increase in services. The town has been losing over \$200.00/month on these services. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland made a motion to increase the rate fees for *Family Dollar* to \$475.00/monthly effective immediately, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown and carried unanimously. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown stated he would follow up on getting current pricing rates charged to the town and then board members can review rates for all dumpster services.

Surplus Equipment & Vehicles- Commissioner Jo A. Strickland stated these items needed to be placed on an inventory list prior to them being placed in a surplus status. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland made a motion to table this item until next month, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown and carried unanimously.

MINUTES APPROVAL

Clerk Cashwell reported there aren't enough board members in person tonight in the boardroom to approve closed session minutes. Minutes will be reviewed at a later date.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS/CONDOLENCES

Condolences: The Town of Garland sends our sincerest condolences to all of those who have recently lost loved ones.

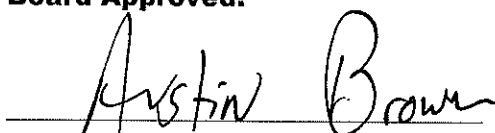
ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Jo A. Strickland and carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm.



Pamela Cashwell, Town Clerk

Board Approved:



Austin Brown, Mayor Pro Tem