

**TOWN OF GARLAND
SPECIAL MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2021
7:00 PM**

The special meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Town of Garland was held virtually via GoToMeeting on Thursday, November 4th, 2021 at 7:00 pm.

The following members of the Board of Commissioners were present:

Austin Brown (Present Virtually) Arrived at 7:09 pm

Eddie Bronson, Jr. (Present Virtually)

Carolyn R. Melvin (Present Virtually)

Barbara A. Peterson (Present Virtually)

Jo A. Strickland (Present Virtually)

ADMINISTRATIVE

Mayor Winifred H. Murphy was present virtually and called the meeting to order at 7:00. She welcomed everyone in attendance. Town Clerk, Pamela Cashwell, was present virtually recording notes for the minutes. There were approximately twenty-two others present virtually.

QUORUM

Mayor Winifred H. Murphy called the roll and established there was a quorum present.

MAYOR'S UPDATE

CDBG-NR- Mayor Murphy has signed paperwork to begin rehabilitation on four homes in early 2022. There are issues with two of the homes included in this grant application. One of the homeowners is deceased and the other homeowner does not have a deed to the home in her name. They are awaiting a second bid for one home and one additional home is slated to be demolished and rebuilt. The project for the C.D. Cain Memorial Park should be bid out within the next several months.

STAR- FIBER- There are approximately 109 homes in town with fiber installation currently.

NEW GRANT AWARD- The town was awarded a \$122,500.00 grant in the last several days by the Office of Recovery and Resiliency for a shared management position with the Town of Turkey and the Town of Autryville. \$22,000.00 of this grant is for payroll and staffing obligations for the town. Mayor Murphy stated she had spoken with Mr. Burns of CPNI who has offered to do an assessment of needs free of charge for the town. She stated this will involve an investment of time for board members and she asked Mr. Burns to contact the town once the new board members have been installed.

ASSET INVENTORY ASSESSMENT (AIA)- Several years ago the town was awarded an AIA grant to provide GIS mapping of critical infrastructure. Mr. Rich Moore of *McDavid & Associates* stated this grant work should be completed in the next

month. This will save the town a lot of time and energy with trying to locate infrastructure.

MUNICIPAL VOTING BOUNDARIES- Mayor Murphy stated she and other board members have worked to clean-up the voter registry for the town in the past as only in town citizens should be voting in municipal elections. She stated when she received the voter registration list this year, some of the ineligible voters were still on the list. She stated she sent a letter to the Sampson County Board of Elections with a list of citizens that should not be on the voter registration lists for municipal elections. She stated the Powell Bill maps were used and the tax office was contacted and most of the names have been removed. She spoke of how the town has several streets that are partially in town and partially out of town. The elections board had two names listed on Gray Avenue that was supposed to be in the Town of Harrells and not in the Town of Garland. She asked if board members had any comments at this time. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland voiced her concern that the letter sent to the Board of Elections was on town letterhead with all the commissioners listed and none of them were aware a letter was being sent and questioned why the mayor choose this time to address this issue and why she sent the letter that appeared to have been approved by the board. Mayor Murphy stated we have tried to clean up the voter rolls verbally, and it has not worked, so that is why she sent the letter. Mayor Murphy questioned whether board members wanted people voting who do not reside in town and pay taxes. A discussion ensued regarding cleaning up the voter rolls, letters being sent out without the board's knowledge and citizen's being asked to file a compliant against the mayor for the letter she sent to the Board of Elections. Mayor Murphy stated since the letter was sent out, she would like someone to make a motion or move to continue efforts to get citizens who do not reside in the town and pay taxes to be removed from the voter rolls. Commissioner Carolyn R. Melvin stated she would make that motion, seconded by Commissioner Eddie Bronson, Jr. and carried with a vote of three to two. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland voted against the motion and Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown voted against the motion stating this is the Board of Elections job and if they cannot do their job, they need to hire someone else in there to direct it. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown stated next time I would like to be notified when my name is on a letter being sent out to have voters removed.

CHANGE IN SPECIAL PERMIT FEE

Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown made a motion to approve the special use permit fee of an additional \$100.00 above the current zoning application fees, seconded by Commissioner Jo A. Strickland and carried unanimously. (See attached).

CODE ENFORCEMENT-COMMERCIAL VEHICLE VIOLATIONS

Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown made a motion to table this item, seconded by Commissioner Jo A. Strickland and carried unanimously.

OPENING OF TOWN HALL

Commissioner Jo A. Strickland made a motion to open town hall to the public with mask optional on Monday, November 8th and to reinstate the \$3.00 processing fee for card purchases, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown and carried with a vote of four to one. Commissioner Eddie Bronson, Jr. stated he did not have to be around them.

ROTARY PARK TRIMMING OF TREES

Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown made a motion to approve the quote of \$1,200.00 for trimming of the trees and bushes in Rotary Park, with funding for this project divided equally from parks and recreation and streets, seconded by Commissioner Jo A. Strickland, and carried unanimously. (See attached).

PURCHASING OF CONES

Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown made a motion to approve the quote for \$408.55 to purchase ten street cones out of the streets fund, seconded by Commissioner Barbara A. Peterson and carried unanimously. (See attached).

CHRISTMAS STREET POLE DECORATIONS

Mayor Murphy stated the town has not purchased any new Christmas decorations for the street poles in the last ten years and some of the current inventory looks bad, some of the electrical connections on the poles aren't working and a complete assessment of the decorations and pole lighting needs to be completed. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland stated she has been looking online for any source we may be able to purchase used decorations, as the cost of new ones are extremely costly. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown stated approximately thirty-seven decorations were hung last year and some of them aren't working. He stated the wreaths look bad as they have been used for a lot of years. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland will continue to follow up on this and reports findings back to the board members as received.

Mayor Murphy stated Mr. Newkirk is working on the metal Christmas tree and the lights for the tree have been purchased.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS/REQUESTS INCOMPLETE/UNFINISHED PROJECTS

Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown asked the board if they would like to do light refreshments after the swearing in of the new board at the December 2nd organizational meeting. Board members agreed this was a good suggestion. Discussion followed on the cost of the reception and funding sources. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown made a motion to approve having a reception after the installation of the new board with cost and funding sources to be discussed and determined among board members, seconded by Commissioner Barbara A. Peterson, and carried unanimously.

Commissioner Jo A. Strickland made a motion to approve having the town Christmas dinner at *Colleen's Country Kitchen* with a date to be determined, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown, and carried unanimously.

Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown made a motion to approve leave requests submitted by Clerk Cashwell, seconded by Commissioner Carolyn R. Melvin, and carried unanimously.

Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown made a motion to give the three town staff members a Christmas bonus in the amount of one weeks pay to be given out at the town Christmas dinner, seconded by Commissioner Carolyn R. Melvin, and carried unanimously.

Commissioner Eddie Bronson, Jr. stated he had contacted Jimmy Driver in reference to the mold at town hall and he promised him he will come out and give an estimate on Tuesday, November 9th around noon. Mayor Murphy thanked Commissioner Bronson for following up on this and noted this could be a major expense to rid the building of the mold. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland asked if this was to give an estimate or to do the actual clean-up of the mold. Mayor Murphy asked Commissioner Bronson if this was to give an estimate and he replied if we keep paying for estimates, it is going to take up all the money for the cleaning, referring to the money that was already spent for the air quality testing. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland replied there should not be a charge for an estimate. Commissioner Bronson stated he did not know of nobody who works for nothing. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland asked Commissioner Bronson several times how much it was going to cost to have this gentleman come out and give an estimate. Commissioner Jo A. Strickland stated she wanted to table this until we have the cost of providing the estimate. Mayor Murphy stated Commissioner Eddie Bronson, Jr. was providing information and they can determine if there is a cost for the estimate prior to the gentleman coming out to provide the estimate.

Mayor Murphy informed the public the board needed to go into closed session and if any of the attendees would like to come back to the open session after closed session to provide their name and phone number so they can be contacted to rejoin the meeting when the board comes back into open session. Five citizens provided their name and phone number to be contacted after closed session.

CLOSED SESSION

Commissioner Carolyn R. Melvin made a motion to enter closed session (Pursuant to G.S. 143-318.11-(3) Attorney-Client Privilege and (6) (Personnel), seconded by Commissioner Eddie Bronson, Jr. The motion failed to pass with a three to two vote. Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown and Commissioners Jo A. Strickland and Barbara A. Peterson voted against the motion to enter closed session. Mayor Murphy stated there are important matters that need to be discussed in closed session. Mayor Pro

Tem Austin Brown replied if there are pressing issues for closed session, they can be discussed at the next regular meeting.

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 8:01 pm.

Pamela Cashwell

Pamela Cashwell, Town Clerk

Board Approved:

Winifred H. Murphy

Winifred H. Murphy, Mayor