

TOWN OF NEWLAND
02/13/2024
MONTHLY BOARD MEETING



ATTENDING:

MAYOR: Derek Roberts

ALDERMAN: James Johnson, Christie Hughes, Gail Haller, Kenan Foxx

GUEST: Donna Garland, Bod Garland, Drema Hayes, Cindy Aldridge, Dennis Aldridge, Will Gittner, Susanna Gittner, Nathan Gittner Susan Rash, Rick Roberts, Mike Gragg, Bonnie Banner, Tiffany Moon, Phillip Banner, Ellie Lecka, Melodie Johnson, John Jones, Maria Roberts, Nancy Davis, Theresa Foxx, Christy Ray, Beverly Hoyle, Larry Hoyle, Samuel Furgiuele, Christian Gardner, Faith Lacey, Donnetta McKinney

STAFF: Town Administrator Bill Bailey, Town Clerk Mackenzie Tipton, Finance Officer Jessica Buchanan, Police Chief Byron Clawson, Police Captain Michael Fields, Deputy Chris Clark, Deputy Nathaniel Ruppard, Deputy Dillon Isaacs, Deputy Tyler Stockton, Public Works Director Gary Lewis, Public Works Rodger Hicks, Town Attorney Gerald McKinney

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m., reminded everyone of ethics awareness, and led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance. Alderman Haller motioned to approve the January minutes; Alderman Foxx seconded the motion. All agreed by a show of hands and stating aye.

Alderman Hughes made a motion to add closed-session reference personnel to the agenda. Town Attorney Gerald McKinney noted there would also need to be a closed session for legal discussion. Alderman Hughes made a motion to adopt the modified agenda. Alderman Haller seconded the motion. All agreed by a show of hands and stating aye.

CLOSED SESSION

No decisions were made during the closed session.

AGENDA

MAYORS REPORT

Mayor Roberts stated that 811 was contacted while the maintenance was in progress at Classic Cuts and that the maintenance was needed. Bob Garland reported that the work was not completed adequately and asked as to when it would be completed. Mayor Roberts stated the work had been put on hold and would resume when the board chooses. Who at the state was in

communication with the town, whether materials were paid for, and the cost of labor to complete the project were topics of substantial discussion. Carl's compensation, as stated by Bob Garland, consisted solely of labor, and Bob thought that there was not enough work done in comparison to the amount of money that was spent. Bob continued by stating that the minutes indicated Carl was being compensated at two different hourly rates, and that only two of the invoices show an hourly rate. Mayor Roberts presented before and after photos of the work completed. Ellie Lecka requested the mayor to facilitate an orderly meeting. Mayor Roberts stated that the dissemination of the information was necessary to put an end to the fabrications. Tiffany Moon recommended that one seek guidance from the high-country council of government regarding the proper conduct of local affairs in a professional manner. Alderman Haller stated she had already called them. The Mayor mentioned that he was tired and weary of the lies that were being stated, and he inquired as to if there were any questions.

ADOPTION OF CAMPING ORDINANCE

Alderman Foxx made a motion to adopt the camping ordinance. Alderman Hughes seconded the motion. All agreed by a show of hands and stating aye.

JUNK VEHICLE ORDINANCE

N/A

LIVESTOCK ORDINANCE

Mayor Roberts stated that he had complaints about Alderman Johnson's chickens. Gerald suggested that the ordinance was unclear and may be revised. Melodie Johnson stated they didn't think anything of having chickens because there was another house within town limits that also had them. Mr. Banner stated that he was the other house that had chickens and elaborated on why he kept them. Mayor Roberts said that Mr. Banners' chickens are exempted due to grandfathering. Tiffany Moon asked the board to consider the 4-H program that teaches kids to care for animals. Alderman Johnson stated the chickens were his sons, and he is working on a project with FFA that will allow him to get a scholarship. Gerald stated that the ordinance is unclear. Bill indicated that the planning board will discuss the ordinance in the following months. Gerald proposed implementing a strategy to refrain from enforcing the ordinance until the planning is completed.

MOTION: Mayor Roberts asked for a motion to suspend the ordinance until Alderman Johnson's son is finished with his FFA project. Alderman Haller made a motion. Alderman Foxx seconded the motion. All agreed by a show of hands and stating aye.

PUBLIC WORKS STAFFING

The board directed Bill to advertise the job.

VACANT TOWN COUNCIL SEAT

Mayor Roberts stated Dave Calvert was the next highest vote-getter. Alderman Hughes said she would like Mr. Calvert to speak with her before a decision is made. Alderman Haller stated she

was fine with Mr. Calvert. Alderman Johnson stated he would like to be approached by Mr. Calvert before a decision is made. Alderman Foxx stated he would like to go with the next highest vote-getter.

PLANNING BOARD TERMS

Theresa Foxx, vice-chair, and Nancy Davis, chair, were each appointed to a term of three years. Christy Ray and Martha Hill were both appointed to two-year terms. Nicole Hogan was appointed to a one-year term.

Alderman Foxx made a motion to accept the terms. Alderman Haller seconded the motion. All agreed by a show of hands and stating aye.

PLANNING BOARD RULES OF PROCEDURE

Alderman Hughes made a motion to adopt the Planning Board Rules of Procedure. Alderman Johnson seconded the motion. All agreed by a show of hands and stating aye.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Drema Hayes requested that each board member explain the factors that influenced their decision to run for office. The board members all answered her question, and then Drema went on to say she was unhappy with the board and the way matters of the town were being handled but expressed gratitude to the town staff.

Tiffany Rominger Moon expressed her dissatisfaction with the way the town handled the boil water notices, spoke about her feelings on the situation, and stated there needed to be policies and procedures put in place. Tiffany offered to volunteer to help the town with policies and stated she was interested in helping with the planning board.

Larry Hoyle thanked Bill for all he did for the town.

Christy Ray stated that she had requested but failed to receive public records. Gerald stated that the town must respond to the request, but the town lacks custody of certain documents. Bill stated the town did respond, but the town does not hold the records on personal devices.

Mayor Roberts stated that Bill's job description needs to be revisited because they still do not know when the parking lot at Classic Cuts will be finished.

Christy Ray thanked Mayor Roberts for interviewing with her and invited all aldermen to interview as well.

Mayor Roberts stated that there needed to be procedures set up for emergencies so Bill could run the town. Gerald stated that if it's an emergency, the work does not need to be bid out. Alderman Johnson suggested an emergency contract. Bill stated the statutes allow for a small work roster and parameters could be set. Alderman Foxx stated that Bill does not require micromanagement and that an emergency procedure needs to be put in place. Mayor Roberts suggested making a list of contractors for the town. Alderman Haller stated that she agreed with Alderman Foxx but

reported that they had requested the information from Bill several times but had not yet received it and discussed the challenges associated with the social media posts blaming the board for Mr. Glatzel's work.

MOTION: Alderman Haller made a motion to fire Bill Bailey. Alderman Hughes seconded the motion. The motion held with a three-to-one vote.

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT

Gary mentioned that he has been overseeing the wastewater treatment plant due to heavy rainfall, and highlighted the necessity to inspect the riverwalk tunnel as it lacks proper drainage. Gary reported power concerns affecting the wells and pumping station and said he is collaborating with the council of government to map the stormwater. Gary proposed adjusting water tap fees due to a discrepancy between our material expenses and the current charges.

FINANCE REPORT

Jessica presented the finance report and confirmed that the LGC 302 report and TR-2 report were both submitted.

POLICE REPORT

Michael Fields provided the police report and mentioned that efforts are being made to address speeding issues and develop a new system for accident reports.

ADMINISTRATORS REPORT

Mayor Roberts asked whether the procedure for terminating Bill was executed in a proper manner. Gerald declared that the matter would be subject to investigation, and the board is upset that Mr. Bailey without their approval spent \$300,000. Mayor Roberts shared that he was unhappy regarding the prevailing rate of employee attrition within the town.

Larry Hoyle asked about the procedure of firing Bill. Gerald stated that because the town has an administrator instead of a town manager the administrator is bound by procedure and does not work for the pleasure of the board. Mayor Roberts stated that he thought that the town might encounter legal complications at this time and noted the current rate of employee turnover. Alderman Johnson stated that an external audit would be necessary. Mayor Roberts stated that a substantial amount of necessary work had been completed and that the town must proceed before losing more employees. There was a lot of discussion regarding the posts and comments on social media, as well as the upheaval that social media produces.

The owner of The Inn at Shady Lawn, Suzannah Gittner, expressed her unhappiness with the board's decision to release their checks online and stated that the town's water issues require attention for the sake of businesses.

Donetta McKinney stated that the board should rehire Bill because terminating his employment would only worsen the town's predicament. Alderman Haller stated that Bill was given numerous

chances, so she does not trust him. Donetta said Bill needed some guidelines. Mayor Roberts expressed his belief that the board should rehire Bill while setting limitations.

Alderman Hughes and Town Attorney Gerald McKinney stepped away from the meeting for a discussion.

Mayor Roberts called Bill to ask about his willingness to be rehired and Bill responded that he would consider the suggestion.

MOTION: A motion was made by Alderman Foxx to rehire Bill. The motion was seconded by Alderman Haller with restrictions until a policy is established. The motion held with a three to one vote.

Alderman Hughes requested that the board have private conversations with Bill if rehired.

Rodger Hicks requested that his name no longer be mentioned in town affairs.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

N/A

ADJOURNMENT

Alderman Foxx made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Alderman Hughes seconded the motion. All agreed by a show of hands and stating aye.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 pm

Town Clerk, Mackenzie Tipton

Mayor, Derek Roberts