

## TOWN OF LITTLETON

## LITTLETON, NORTH CAROLINA

Town Hall  
112 East South Main Street

January 28, 2020

### ROUNDTABLE SESSION

6:30 p.m.

1. Call meeting to order
2. Motion to approve the agenda
3. Approval of bills
4. NCLM – Perry James, audit presentation
5. USDA – Housing Preservation Grant, Byron Waters
6. Black Heritage Month Proclamation
7. Gaming
8. Zoning Code Update
9. Ordinance update
10. Equipment Grant Update
11. Cemetery upkeep
12. Aerator repair
13. Mayor's remarks
14. Motion to go into Closed Session pursuant to NCGS143-318.11(a)(4) to discuss matters relating to economic development.
15. Adjourn

**The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Littleton held the regular monthly Roundtable Session, Tuesday, January 28, 2020, at 6:30 p.m. at the Littleton Town Hall.** Present were Commissioners Steve Barcelo, Bonita Knight, Gerleen Pitchford, Ophelia Gould-Faison, Lynn Moseley, Town Attorney Kris Gardner, Police Chief Phillip Trivette and eleven members of the public. Mayor K. Owen Scott presided over the meeting. Mayor Scott called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Commissioner Knight made a motion; seconded by Commissioner Barcelo to approve the agenda with the addition of Equipment Grant Update between agenda item 9 and 10. Motion voted and carried unanimously.

Commissioner Barcelo made a motion; seconded by Commissioner Knight to approve the bills as presented. Motion voted and carried unanimously. A copy of the bills is hereby incorporated into the minutes.

**NCLM – Perry James, audit presentation** – Mr. James introduced himself and passed out information about the League and their services. He then focused on the town's audit. He explained how the audit is organized, observations made about the audit, and oversight priorities.

Mr. James informed the Board the town had operating losses in both General Fund and Water and Sewer. The town's fund balance was used to cover these losses. The town should have \$700,000 in fund balance to be in line with other municipalities the size of Littleton.

Mr. James gave the board five things to do: 1. Prioritize- have good strong organizational system, bank reconciliations, good financial computer program, fund balance policy 2. Stay away from getting too tight with budget-underestimate revenues and overestimate expenses 3. At monthly meeting look at reports and manage money 4. Manage fund balance and adopt fund policy 5. Have good internal controls—have good internal checks and balances.

**USDA – Housing Preservation Grant, Byron Waters** - Mr. Waters came back to speak about the town partnering with the Roanoke Chowan Housing Authority to help with improvements at Rolling Hills Apartments in Littleton. He introduced Tyrone Lyndsey the new Executive Director of the Housing Authority, who would be partnering with the town if a decision was made to move forward. Mr. Waters once again explained the town would be the one to apply for the grant. It is not a matching grant; the town would not be out any funds. The town would be able to take a fee for administering the grant. The application is due in July, and awards are made in September. Work would probably not start on the apartments until spring of 2021.

Mr. Lyndsey spoke about his background and what he has done to help other communities through community block grants and revitalization of downtown. He emphasized the importance of partnering with others to move communities forward. After some discussion Commissioner Barcelo made a motion; seconded by Commissioner Gould-Faison to moved forward and partner with RCHA to try to obtain a grant to help with improvements with Rolling Hills apartments. Motion voted and carried unanimously.

**Black Heritage Month Proclamation** – Mayor Scott read and signed the Black Heritage Month proclamation.

**Gaming** - Town attorney, Kris Gardner spoke and informed the board since the town had decided to phase out gaming there is a process to go through to do so. He said letters were sent to businesses in town that operate gaming machines asking them to attend this meeting. Littleton Tobacco and Laundry had sickness and could not attend. Minit Chek was represented by Jeremy Parker who supplies machines.

Mr. Gardner explained the town wanted to find out from each business what amount of time would be necessary for them to recover any money tied to the machines. Mr. Parker said in speaking with his attorney five years was the amount of time that would affect both Mr. Parker and Mr. Gubari financially. Mr. Gardner asked Mr. Parker to please present some documentation that explains his five- year time frame. Mr. Parker was instructed to submit the information to the town clerk or the town attorney.

**Zoning Code update** – Mr. Gardner came to the board with news from the NC Legislature. He informed the board at the last session the legislature had voted to merge county and city/town zoning. This basically required the town to adopt a brand new zoning code. All implemented state requirements need to be in place by January, 2021. Mr. Gardner suggested the town contact American Legal Publishing Company to see if they have a model zoning code to follow

that included the new changes. If not, Mr. Gardner's paralegal will type up current zoning and manually add the new code. American Legal Publishing Company should be able to give a quote for the cost involved in updating the zoning.

Mr. Gardner also informed the board the town needed to have a land use plan completed by July 1, 2022. He explained the plan gives a history of the area, demographics, current land use, and any future land use. Mr. Gardner suggested getting a graduate student to help with this project. He said he had contacts and could help the town when the time comes to move forward.

Commissioner Pitchford spoke to the board about Abandoned or Junk Motor Vehicles and properties that put furniture and other things not intended for outdoor use on porches. She asked the board to allow Mr. Gardner to draft ordinances in regard to these issues.

Mr. Gardner explained the town will have to have a public hearing to approve the new zoning ordinances.

After some discussion Commissioner Pitchford made a motion; seconded by Commissioner Barcelo to have the town attorney draft an Abandoned or Junk Motor Vehicles and Property Conditions Prohibited Section C Front Porch ordinance. Motion voted and carried unanimously.

Mayor Scott asked Commissioner Pitchford to contact the American Legal Publishing Company on behalf of the town.

Discussion was also held on what fines would be imposed on abandoned or junk motor vehicles. Mr. Gardner reminded the board the town had made all fines civil, not criminal and that wording would need to be changed in the ordinances.

**Equipment Grant Update** - Commissioner Pitchford gave the board an update on an equipment grant the police department had applied for in the amount of \$24,284. The grant would give the police department new body cameras, computers, scanner, printers, and Microsoft Word. Grants will be awarded in October.

**Cemetery update** – Commissioner Knight informed the board the cemetery needed debris removed and shrubs and trees cut or removed if dead. She asked the board to allow her to put out bids to clean up the cemetery. After some discussion, Commissioner Knight made a motion; seconded by Commissioner Barcelo to put out for bid cemetery clean up using cemetery funds. Motion voted and carried unanimously.

**Aerator repair** – Commissioner Gould-Faison told the board last year the aerator at the wwtp had been removed and repaired by Ray Rightmyer. She said the other aerator needs to be repaired as well. It is not known at this point if it will need to be removed or whether it can be repaired on site. Commissioner Gould-Faison said she did not have a bill for the repair yet, but it would be expensive.

Commissioner Gould-Faison spoke about creating a wastewater committee. She said she would create a sign-up sheet for the February meeting. She said the town should be divided into

quadrants with two citizens from each quadrant. The citizens do not have to live in the city limits, but they do have to have water service with the town.

Buddy Isles, Sr. spoke about business owners not having a say in what is going on in Littleton because they live outside of the city limits. Town attorney Kris Gardner stated Advisory Boards could have members who live outside of the city limits. However, the State Constitution or a state statute says in order to serve as an elected official you have to be eligible to vote and reside you in the town. He said the town could not change that even if they wanted to.

Commissioner Gould-Faison made a motion; seconded by Commissioner Barcelo to go into Closed Session pursuant to NCGS143-318.11(a)(4) to discuss matter relating to economic development. Motion voted and carried unanimously. The Board went into closed session at 8:42 p.m.

The Board returned to Open Session at 8:54 p.m.

**Mayor's Remarks** - Mayor Scott stated he was worried about a divide among the Board. He said he had been working damage control the last couple of weeks with USDA and SERCAP. He said during a conversation between USDA and Commissioner Gould-Faison and Keith Hamm comments were made about SERCAP in a very negative form. It upset both the USDA and SERCAP. SERCAP does not want to give any assistance to the town at this time. They will wait and see how the town progresses. The \$30,000 search grant may be gone as well. The intern with SERCAP will not be coming to work on economic development grants for the town.

Mayor Scott asked that if anyone makes contact with entities that the town conducts business with, to please not represent the town in any way that could cause negative adverse effects with other entities.

Commissioner Gould-Faison stated the board needs to work together for what's best for the town of Littleton. Mayor Scott mentioned he and the town clerk had spoken about having a separate meeting to discuss how to move forward for the good of the town of Littleton. He said the state is kind of forcing us to do this.

Commissioner Gould-Faison apologized for anything she had done. She said she would go forward and work for the best of all the citizens in Littleton. She said she has had citizens asking her why all the properties that were demolished were on Ferguson Street. She wanted to know how it was decided what properties to demolish first. She also wanted to know why other properties in town were not being taken care of now. Commissioner Pitchford answered there is no money at this time to remove any other dilapidated buildings. Commissioner Gould-Faison was told Ferguson Street was chosen because it had the most properties. Commissioner Gould-Faison stated she would tell those who were coming to her asking about the dilapidated properties these answers.

Mayor Scott informed the board the town clerk will be putting an advertisement in the paper to hire an assistant clerk. It is hoped the asst. clerk will be hired by the end of March.

Mayor Scott also mentioned Budget meetings will be coming soon. The clerk informed the Board David Erwin from the League of Municipalities will be coming to help her with the budget process this year.

Commissioner Barcelo made a motion; seconded by Commissioner Moseley to adjourn. Motion voted and carried unanimously.

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Ellen M. Eller, Town Clerk