

TOWN OF PLYMOUTH MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 11, 2021 – COUNCIL CHAMBERS AND VIA ZOOM
7:00 p.m.

I. CALL TO ORDER – Mayor Vershumn Hawkins – 7:00 p.m.

The Mayor opened the meeting and welcomed all attendees whether they were attending in person or via ZOOM. The opening prayer was offered by Councilwoman Teel, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mayor Hawkins. Mayor Hawkins then asked the Town Clerk to proceed with a Roll Call:

PRESENT	ABSENT	COUNCILMEMBER
X		Councilwoman Brooks
X		Councilman Arnold
X		Councilwoman Byers
X		Councilwoman Teel
X		Councilwoman Williams
X		Councilman Wobbleton
X		Mayor Hawkins
TOTAL		
7		

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Hawkins asked the Council if they had any changes to the agenda. There being no changes, a motion was made by Councilwoman Byers to approve the agenda with a second by Councilwoman Teel. Roll call vote was taken. Motion passed 6-0.

III. PUBLIC HEARING

Discussion of Election Ward Redistricting Due to the 2020 Census was led by Interim Town Manager Layton. He explained that on August 12, 2021, the 2020 Census Data was released by the U.S. Census Bureau. The Town is required by law to review the data upon its release and determine if the Town's three wards need to be redrawn to correct substantial imbalances between the wards. In order to be in compliance with the +/-5% criteria, the Town must adopt new wards. He continued by explaining that the Council must hold two public hearings, and that this public hearing is the first of the two. Interim Town Manager Layton provided an overview of the options that were developed by staff and its contractor. The Council chose to move forward with Option #2. There being no questions from the public, Mayor Hawkins adjourned the Public Hearing.

IV. PRESENTATIONS TO COUNCIL

Presentation of the Fiscal Year 2019 – 2020 Audit was made by Jeff Best, CPA

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mayor Hawkins asked the Clerk if she had been contacted by any citizens to request to speak to Council. The Clerk responded that she had not been contacted. Mayor Hawkins then asked if anyone was present that wanted to make a comment. There was no response.

VI. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

1. Financial – The Finance Officer explained that the Council had received a summary report of the Budget vs. Actual amounts for the date ending September 30, 2021. The Finance Officer further explained that the report represents income and expenditures for the first quarter of the fiscal year. She stated that the amount of expenses average in the 25th percentile – which is on par with one quarter. Information Technology expenses are at a higher rate due to the Town having to pay for a number of subscriptions, such as licensing for software and cybersecurity during the first quarter; however, those subscriptions run for the entire fiscal year.

	Budgeted	Expenses	Variance
General Fund (10)	\$3,046,744.00	\$726,614.03	\$2,320,129.97
Water Fund (61)	\$1,408,389.00	\$407,457.13	\$1,000,931.87
Sewer Fund (62)	\$1,009,103.00	\$38,580.97	\$727,762.50
Solid Waste Fund (66)	\$582,500.00	\$140,423.57	\$442,076.43
Stormwater Fund (67)	\$110,000.00	\$25,532.98	\$84,467.02

2. Tax/Utility Collections. Ms. Nadine Moore presented the report as follows: 1439 utility bills were mailed on October 1, 2021 with a due date of October 15, 2021. The amount billed was \$256,107.85. 1349 payments were received for a total of \$204,389.23. Ms. Moore reported that 61% of customers paid on time and 39% did not. 326 payments were received for property and vehicle taxes in the amount of \$124,644.33. Delinquent tax payments cover the period of 2015 – 2020 in the amount of \$318,458.51.
3. The Director of Public Works reported:
 - On-going projects: WWTP Renovation timeline: Headworks auger parts are in. The Town is now waiting on the contractor as well as the final cost approval for grit removal. CDBG: Water pipe is being installed along Hwy

32 and a connection has been made to the water plant. AIA Water Line: The engineer is reviewing a draft report for corrections. The report will then be given to the Interim Town Manager and the Public Works Director to approve, at which time the engineer will present the report to the Town Council. Domtar Restrooms: The Town is still waiting for approval from Domtar Trustees. Wilson Street Park Renovation: The drainage study has been completed and is expected to be forwarded to the Public Works Director in approximately two weeks. HMGP (FEMA) – Generators: The transfer switch has been received and is scheduled to be installed by the end of the week. A start-up test is anticipated to take place in two weeks. Convenience Site: Research for location and costs continues.

- Streets:
 - Cleaned ditch at 809 Wilson Street
 - Installed speed humps on Winesett Circle
 - Installed children playing signs at Madison and 4th Street
 - Mowed ditches at the airport
 - DOT encroachment has been approved for flashing crossing signs at school. Research is taking place as to what type of signs to use
- Building & Grounds:
 - Repaired bathroom doors at Flowers Park
 - Repaired railing and decking on boardwalk
- Water: Repaired leaks:
 - 302 West 4th Street
 - 116 Brinkley Place
- Sewer: Cleared out blockages:
 - 113 Brinkley Place
 - 203 Brinkley Place
 - 507 Adams Street
 - 201 Matt Ransome Drive
 - 318 General Pettigrew Drive
 - Clear cut sewer pipe outline falls
 - Collection system state inspection to be held October 29, 2021
- Pump Stations:
 - Old Roper Road (pulled and cleaned pumps)
- Sanitation
 - Picked up trash piles around Town

Councilwoman Teel asked Public Works Director to make sure that a better job is done regarding the upcoming paving of railroad tracks located on Rankin Lane. She stated that the tracks on Rankin Lane are in terrible condition. Public Works Director Wright reported the Town will be responsible for paving this set of tracks and reassured the Council that the tracks will be paved correctly.

4. Code Enforcement Officer Dennis Brown reported:

- Move Outs – Five move outs. One landlord paid fees for the Town to pick up the brown goods
- Dilapidated Houses – One dilapidated property located at 417 Jefferson Street was taken down
- Abandoned Vehicles – Three notices were sent out and two vehicles have been removed.
- Grass and Weed Nuisance – Seven complaints were made with six positive responses. One complaint is still under investigation
- House Nuisance – Five complaints were received. After investigation, the property managers and homeowners abated the nuisances
- Ordinance Complaints – Five complaints were received and two are still under investigation.

Code Enforcement Officer Brown informed the Council that he has been using a new system that includes posting notices on doors and keeping more accurate time logs. The first notice informs the tenant/owner of the nuisance. The second notice warns of a citation. The third notice is an actual citation for code violation. Code Enforcement Officer Brown stated that this new system has been very effective in that quick responses are being received.

Councilwoman Teel asked Code Enforcement Officer Brown about the empty trailers located on Wilson Street. Code Enforcement Officer Brown reported that he has been working with the County due to some older regulations. He further reported that the owner has been trying to fix some of the issues; however, it will take some time. Code Enforcement Officer Brown stated that he will follow up with the County in terms of a time frame to address the remaining issues. Councilman Wobbleton asked that an update that includes a timeframe be presented to the Council at its next meeting.

Councilman Arnold made an inquiry about abandoned vehicles. After discussion with Code Enforcement Officer Brown, it was determined that the vehicles in question were not abandoned.

Councilwoman Williams asked about streets signs that are being taken down around the Town. Both Code Enforcement Officer Brown and Public Works Director Wright addressed the issue. They stated the signs were being put back up. Chief of Police Williams stated that the police are now involved as well.

5. Police Department – Chief Williams spoke to the issue of turnovers in the Police Department and current potential applicants. He reported that all shifts were being covered with the assistance of some auxiliary officers. Chief Williams reported that he has been discussing the turnovers with Interim Town Manager Layton and stated that the main reason for the turnovers is

money. Chief Williams stated that a police salary survey of surrounding counties is being conducted and added that police departments around northeastern North Carolina, the State and the country are short-staffed. Chief Williams asked that the Council allow him and Interim Town Manager Layton to prepare a proposal to address the salary issue. Interim Town Manager Layton stated that he is in the process of trying to flush out a plan. Mayor Hawkins asked if the plan would be available for the next Council meeting. Interim Town Manager Layton responded that the plan will be available at that time. Further discussion took place between Council, Chief Williams and Interim Town Manager Layton regarding possible ideas.

6. Fire Department – Chief Timothy Miller reported that the Department was busy with structure fires, EMS calls and motor vehicle accidents, one of which resulted in a very serious injury as well as a fatality during the month of September. Chief Miller reported that the Fire Marshall Grant has been completed. A fire extinguisher class was held at Plymouth High School. As a result, eight students requested applications for the Fire Department. Chief Miller also reported that a Career Day will be held at Plymouth High School in October, which is also Fire Prevention Month. Members of the Department will be out in the community promoting fire prevention.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. The Consent Agenda contained:
 - a. Approval of Minutes from September 13, 2021, Council Meeting
 - b. Approval of Minutes from the September 28, 2021, Special Meeting
 - c. Approval of Ordinance 2021-06, an Ordinance Amending Ordinance 2021-01, Division of Water Infrastructure Water improvements Project No. H-AIA-D-20-0194 Asset Inventory and Assessment Grant Project Ordinance
 - d. Budget Amendment for H-AIA-D-20-0194 in the amount of \$7,500.00

A motion was made by Councilwoman Williams to approve the Consent Agenda, with a second by Councilman Wobbleton. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 6-0.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

A. DISCUSSION/CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSED LAW ENFORCEMENT CAMERAS

Chief of Police Williams presented proposals for the purchase and installation of cameras in the Town. After careful review, staff recommended the Town Council authorize that staff enter into an agreement with “Rekor” for the installation of ten surveillance/license plate reader cameras in various locations throughout the Town. The annual cost of the cameras is \$12,000,

including maintenance, software upgrades and data storage. Staff also recommended that the purchase of a new police vehicle be deferred and the funding for the vehicle be used for the cameras instead. After extensive discussion, a motion was made by Councilwoman Williams to approve the first option to move forward and lease the cameras for \$12,000 with a second from Councilwoman Teel. After further discussion, a roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 6-0.

B. DISCUSSION/CONSIDERATION OF ORDINANCE 2021-07, AN ORDENANCE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF PLYMOUTH, NORTH CAROLINA, AMENDING CHAPTER 73: TRAFFIC SCHEDULES, SCHEDULE: STOP SIGNS, TO ADD STOP SIGNS AT THE INTERSECTION OF THE EAST FOURTH STREET AND MADISON STREET TO MAKE THE INTERSECTION A FOUR-WAY STOP

Mayor Hawkins recapped that at the September 13, 2021, meeting a motion was approved requesting that staff draft an ordinance for consideration by the Council that would make the intersection located at East Fourth Street and Madison Street a four-way stop due to a day care being opened in the area and the danger that traffic poses to children. A motion was made by Councilwoman Teel to approve Ordinance 2021-07 to add four-way stop signs at the corners of Madison and East Fourth Street with a second by Councilman Wobbleton. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 6-0.

A motion was made by Councilman Arnold to add Discussion/Consideration of 18 wheeled trucks not being allowed within Town limits except for deliveries with a second by Councilman Wobbleton. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 6-0. The item was added under New Business (B).

C. APPOINTMENTS TO THE BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

Mayor Hawkins asked Interim Town Manager Layton to address this issue. Interim Town Manager Layton reported that Eric Koss who resides at 514 E. Main Street has expressed an interest in serving on the board. Interim Manager Layton stated that in full disclosure, Mr. Koss is the husband of Joyce Koss, an employee of the Town. He further explained that there are two vacancies on the board – one full member and one alternate. If the Council chose Mr. Koss, an alternate would still need to be appointed. Interim Town Manager Layton explained that the terms of appointment will expire on January 13, 2023, at which time all Board of Adjustment members must be reappointed for an additional three years. Interim Town Manager Layton was asked to reach out to Mr. Koss for an updated application. Mayor Hawkins asked the Council to reach out to potential applicants as well.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. DISCUSSION/CONSIDERATION OF CHANGING THE DATE OF TRICK OR TREATING FROM SUNDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2021, TO SATURDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2021, FROM 6:00 P.M. TO 9:00 P.M.

Mayor Hawkins pointed out that a resolution had been adopted by the County recommending that the Town do the same. A motion was made by Councilwoman Byers to change the date of Trick or Treating from Sunday, October 31, 2021, to Saturday, October 30, 2021, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. After extensive discussion, a roll call vote was taken. Motion passed 4 – 2 with Councilwomen Teel and Williams dissenting.

B. DISCUSSION/CONSIDERATION OF NO 18 WHEELED TRUCKS BEING ALLOWED WITHIN TOWN LIMITS EXCEPT FOR DELIVERIES

Mayor Hawkins asked Councilman Arnold to address the issue. Councilman Arnold stated that he would like to see signs around the Town that prohibits 18 wheeled trucks from entering Town except for deliveries due to the wear and tear on the streets. During discussion regarding deliveries, it was established that the problem seemed, for the most part, to be logging trucks. Interim Town Manager Layton requested that the Council allow himself and Attorney Isenberg to research the issue and report to the Council next month. Mayor Pro-Tempore stated that if any logging trucks carrying loads to DOMTAR and/or Weyerhaeuser posed problems, identification of the hauler is shown on the door of the truck and can be reported by officers, at which point DOMTAR and/or Weyerhaeuser will take action against the haulers. Councilman Arnold agreed to suspend his motion until Interim Town Manager Layton and Attorney Isenberg provided more information at the next Town Council meeting.

X. TOWN ATTORNEY'S REPORT

Mayor Hawkins turned the floor over to Attorney Natalia Isenberg. Attorney Isenberg first thanked the Council for the opportunity to work with the Town and reiterated that if the Council needs her assistance with anything to please contact her. Mayor Hawkins thanked Attorney Isenberg and acknowledged her work for the Town as well as gave his appreciation for all that she does.

XII. INTERIM TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

A. UPDATE EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION DAY

Interim Town Manager Layton reported that the Town will hold an Employee Appreciation Day on Thursday, October 28, 2021. He announced that the

Town offices will close at noon that day and a picnic with activities will be held. He stated that if any employee chose not to attend, they will continue to work that day. Interim Town Manager invited the Council to attend.

B. UPDATE ON CHRISTMAS/HOLIDAY PARADE

Interim Town Manager Layton reported the Town's Christmas/Holiday Parade will be held on Thursday, December 9, 2021, beginning at 5:30 p.m. Councilwoman Williams added that she would like to see the Town hold an Appreciation Day for its citizens.

XIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL

Mayor Hawkins commented on the Homecoming Parade. He stated that there was a good turn-out and that some Councilmembers participated. Mayor Hawkins stated that he hoped that Council will participate in the upcoming Christmas/Holiday Parade festivities.

XIV. CLOSED SESSION

A motion was made by Councilwoman Williams to go into closed session under §143-318-11(a) (1) to prevent the disclosure of information that is privileged (closed session minutes); and,

§143-318-11(a) (3) to consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the public body, which privilege is hereby acknowledged, and,

§143-318.11(a) (4) to discuss matters relating to the location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by the public body.

The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Teel. A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed 6-0.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Byers to come out of closed session with a second by Councilwoman Teel. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 6-0.

XVI. OPEN SESSION

Mayor Hawkins called the meeting back to order. A motion was made by Councilman Arnold with a second by Councilman Wobbleton to approve:

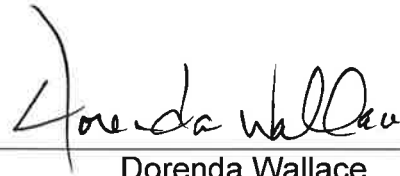
- Minutes from the July 12, 2021, Closed Session
- Minutes from the July 29, 2021, Closed Session
- Minutes from the August 9, 2021, Closed Session, and,
- Minutes from the September 28, 2021, Closed session

without releasing those minutes at this time. A roll call vote was taken. The Motion passed 6-0.

XVII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, a motion was made by Councilman Byers with a second by Councilman Wobbleton to adjourn the meeting. A roll call vote was taken. The Motion passed 6-0.

Respectfully submitted,



Dorenda Wallace
Clerk



Vershumn "Shawn" Hawkins
Mayor