

**TOWN OF PLYMOUTH MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 14, 2022 –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 via ZOOM. Mayor Hawkins called the meeting to order and 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

The opening prayer was offered by Councilman Wobbleton, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mayor Hawkins.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

III. PUBLIC HEARING - None

IV. PRESENTATIONS TO COUNCIL - None

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 no requests had been received.

VI. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

1. Financial – The Finance Officer presented the report for the period ending January 31, 2022:

	Budgeted	Expenses	Variance
General Fund (10)	\$3,115,636.00	\$1,623,088.03	\$1,492,548.09
Water Fund (61)	\$1,417,219.00	\$816,708.76	\$600,510.24
Sewer Fund (62)	\$1,009,103.00	\$540,109.97	\$468,993.43
Solid Waste Fund (66)	\$582,500.00	\$328,722.89	\$253,777.11
Stormwater Fund (67)	\$110,000.00	\$58,026.18	\$51,973.82

After answering questions from Mayor Pro Tempore Brooks regarding the negative variances shown in revenue, Mayor Hawkins asked the Finance Officer for an update on the last audit performed for the Town. She reported that the last audit has been submitted and the Council has a copy. The Finance Officer further explained that the issue with the current audit is that it will also be late. After clarifying the reasons regarding the status of the current audit, Mayor Hawkins asked that staff monitor the report so that it is not documented that the Town is the reason for the delay. The Finance Officer reported that it has already been documented and submitted to the Local Government Commission that the reason for the audit being delayed is because staff was not prepared. Interim Town Manager Layton added that the auditor amended the documentation to indicate that there were also back-up and delays at the auditor's office. After further discussion, Interim Town Manager Layton reported that an RFP for a new auditor will be published sometime late Spring. Mayor Pro Tempore Brooks instructed the Interim Town Manager and Town Clerk to ensure processes are in place so that information for audits can be submitted in a timely manner.

2. Tax/Utility Collections. Ms. Nadine Moore reported: 1409 utility bills were mailed on February 2, 2022 with a due date of February 15, 2022. The amount billed was \$278,255.38. 1023 payments were received for a total of \$211,379.85. 72% of customers paid on time and 28% did not. 181 payments were received for property and vehicle taxes in the amount of \$116,004.56. Delinquent tax payments covering the period of 2015 – 2021 were in the amount of \$463,280.42.

Councilwoman Teel asked about the status of garnishments. Ms. Moore stated that she will follow-up with Councilwoman Teel with an update.

3. The Director of Public Works reported:

- On-going projects: WWTP Grit Removal Lift Station: the Lift station tank and electrical panel have been delivered. Delivery of the pump is expected in April. CDBG: The brine tank installation has been completed. The SCADA server installation is expected to be completed in April. Water tower/wells: The heat strips and the sensors for the water tower on East Main Street are being installed. AIA Water Line: The engineer reviewed the draft report and is making final corrections. Domtar Restrooms: The Town is still waiting for approval from Domtar Trustees. HMGP (FEMA) – Generators: Close out is still in process. Paperwork has been submitted to FEMA for reimbursement. Convenience site: Staff is researching cost, locations, and possible grants.
- Streets:
 - Repaired sidewalk sections at the west end of Town from Washington Street to Jefferson Street
 - School signs flashing beacons have been installed
- Building & Grounds:
 - Repaired decks and boardwalks
- Water: Repaired leaks:
 - 409 Winesett Circle
- Sewer: Cleared out blockages:
 - 110 Brinkley Place
 - 333 West Avenue (twice)
 - 529 Monroe Street
 - 824 Hwy 64 East
 - 707 East Main Street
 - 102 Spencer Street
 - 203 Brinkley Place
 - 67 Hwy 64 East
 - 740 Wilson Street
 - 210 Matt Ransome Drive
 - 327 Wilson Street
 - 306 Latham Avenue
 - 112 General Pettigrew Drive
 - 241 Hwy 64 West
 - Replaced collapsed sewer pipe at 409 Winesett Circle
- Pump Stations:
 - Installed cooling lines to pump at Washington Street
- Sanitation
 - Picked up trash piles around Town
 - Picked up litter around Town using 65 gallon bags

- 1 bag – Rankin Lane
- 3 bags – East Fourth Street
- 2-1/2 bags – Golf Road
- 2 bags - Main Street
- 3 bags – Third Street
- 3 bags – Bear Track Landing
- ½ bag – West Fourth Street
- ½ bag – Winesett Circle
- 4-½ bag – Adams Street
- ½ bag – Madison Street
- 2 bags – Jefferson Street
- 4-1/2 bags – Brinkley Avenue
- 7 bags – Wilson Street
- ½ bag – West Avenue
- 3-1/2 bags – South Monroe Street
- 2 bags – Anne/Luvera Street

Mayor Pro Tempore Brooks began a discussion regarding the huge amounts of trash that looked as though it had been thrown from car windows and dropped along the roadsides. Several suggestions were made by Councilmembers to address this issue including involving individuals that need to complete community service, people from the Correctional Center, citizens, signage, and the possibility for extra staff that could be dedicated for picking up litter and brown goods.

4. Public Works Director Wright reported on behalf of Code Enforcement Officer Dennis Brown:

- Move Outs – Two move outs. The landlords cleaned them both up.
- Dilapidated Houses – One dilapidated property that is still in the process of clean up located at 709 Madison Street.
- Abandoned Vehicles – Six notices were sent out and six vehicles have been removed. Two vehicles had to be towed.
- Grass and Weed Nuisance – One complaint was received with one positive response. Other complaints are still under investigation.
- House Nuisance – Three complaints were received. After investigation, the homeowners abated the nuisances.
- Ordinance Complaints – Five complaints were received, and four are still under investigation. Staff is still concentrating on dilapidated and nuisance properties. The biggest activity is the cleanup at 709 Madison Street. The building has been demolished, but the cleanup process is still ongoing as there was a great deal of furniture and clothing at the site. The next property to be concentrated on will be the burn down at 305 East Fourth Street.

5. Police Department – Chief Williams gave an update regarding the status of hiring applicants for the Department and reiterated that the process is long due to law enforcement training and standards. Chief Williams also reported that a lot of progress is being made on the installation of the cameras. NC Dominion Power is working on a contract for the Town to review in regard to installation of the cameras on the poles. He also reported that discussions have taken place with Public Works Director Wright and Interim Town Manager Layton for placement of the cameras. Some of the cameras will be placed in areas where litter has been an issue. Mayor Pro Tempore Brooks asked if there will be a cost associated with mounting the cameras. Interim Town Manager Layton responded that there will be costs as a result of permanent installation and explained what the minimal costs would be. Chief Williams then spoke about receiving complaints of speeding on Gurkin Lane. He stated that there are no speeding signs on Gurkin and that he will bring a recommendation to the Council about installation of the signs. Councilman Arnold asked that the Police Department follow-up regarding speeding on Jackson Street and Councilman Wobbleton asked the same for Gleaves Road.
6. Fire Department – Cliff Everett, Fire Department Training Officer reported on behalf of Chief Timothy Miller who was not able to attend the meeting due to his work schedule. Mr. Everett reported that the burn down of the house located on Fourth Street is tentatively scheduled for March 15th and that it will be a night burn. Notification of the burn will be given to the surrounding areas. The ISO inspection is tentatively scheduled for June 30th. Mr. Everett reported that the Town's ISO rating is five and the Fire Department is now hoping for a four. Mr. Everett announced that a celebration is being planned to commemorate the Fire Department's 100 anniversary. Mr. Everett also informed the Council that the Department needs a new truck. After a brief discussion it was suggested that this subject be addressed during budget deliberations.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

The Consent Agenda contained:

- A. Approval of Minutes from the January 10, 2022, Council Meeting
- B. Approval of Real Estate Insolvent Requests for 111 E. Main Street owned by Washington County and the Town of Plymouth and 60 Dogwood Lane owned by Phillip Styons, Jr.
- C. Approval of Resolution 2022-03, a Resolution of the Town Council of the Town of Plymouth, North Carolina, for Verification of Relationship with the Town of Plymouth and the Plymouth Volunteer Fire Department
- D. Approval of Resolution 2022-04, a Resolution of the Town Council of the Town of Plymouth, North Carolina, to Approve and Authorize

Execution of the 2022 - 2023 Agreement Regarding Fire Protection
and Mutual Aid with Washington County
E. Budget Amendments

Interim Town Manager Layton stated that two corrections needed to be made on the Resolution related to the ISO rating. Resolution 2022-03 needs to be altered to remove the word "Volunteer". Resolution 2022-04 needs to be altered to remove "Plymouth Fire Department" from the last line of paragraph 6. After clarification regarding the change in language was made by Attorney Isenberg, Interim Town Manager Layton and Mr. Cliff Everett, a motion was made by Councilman Wobbleton to approve the Consent Agenda, with a second by Councilwoman Williams. After discussion, a roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 6-0.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

A. UPDATE ON WILSON STREET PARK

Mayor Hawkins asked Interim Town Manager Layton to address this issue. Interim Town Manager Layton informed the Council that a drawing, made by Public Works Director Wright, was included in their agenda package. The drawing represented the final plan that was developed along with the input of Councilwoman Williams and Councilman Wobbleton. He further explained that the drawing represented a hybrid plan of the three plans that were presented at the last council meeting. Interim Town Manager Layton explained the components of the design, including the issue of drainage, the placement of the track, a picnic area, equipment, and the associated costs and possible funding. After extensive discussion that included additional details from Public Works Director Wright, as well as preparation of schematics and bid documents by the Wooten Company, a motion was made by Councilwoman Williams approve the plan presented by Public Works Director Wright with a second by Councilwoman Teel. Upon further discussion, the motion was amended by Councilwoman Williams to approve the plan as presented and authorize staff to work with The Wooten Company to finalize the engineering and prepare the bid documents, with a second by Councilwoman Teel. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 6-0.

B. UPDATE ON PORT OF PLYMOUTH AND MARITIME MUSEUM LEASES

Mayor Hawkins asked Interim Town Manager Layton to address this issue. Interim Town Manager Layton reported that the lease between the Town of Plymouth and the Port of Plymouth Museum expired on October 31, 2021. In order to continue that arrangement, the lease was reviewed with Attorney Isenberg. Interim Town Manager Layton noted the draft that was given to Councilmembers in their agenda packages. The Washington County Historical Society asked that the language in Item 7, page 4, Lessor's

Reservation of Rights be changed so that the Town not be allowed to have automatic access to the museum structure in the old train station because of storage of equipment. He further explained that the process to have the lease approved requires a 30 day public notice period and asked if the draft is sufficient enough to issue a public notice to discuss the lease at a public meeting. The approximate date of the public notice would be in April 2022. Interim Town Manager Layton reported that in addition, it was discovered that State Statutes only allow a ten year lease period. The current lease period with the Maritime Museum is for 25 years. Interim Town Manager Layton is asking for a minor amendment that will place the Town in compliance with State law. The lease will expire in 2024 and would also require a 30 day notice for public hearing. After further discussion, Mayor Pro Tempore Brooks asked that staff research State statutes or common practices and agreements between other towns or counties and museums or organizations such as these and report back to the Council. Mayor Hawkins suggested that the Maritime Museum lease be approved as it only pertains to amending the start date, and for staff to report back to the Council at Mayor Pro Tempore's suggestion for the Port of Plymouth Museum. A motion was made by Councilman Wobbleton to authorize the public notice to be advertised for the Maritime Museum amended lease and to bring back the draft agreement with the Port of Plymouth Museum next month with a report on other agreements that towns have with museums, with a second by Mayor Pro Tempore Brooks. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 6-0.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. UPDATE ON AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN

Mayor Hawkins asked Interim Town Manager Layton to address this issue. Interim Town Manager Layton recapped that the Town of Plymouth, is a non-entitlement community, the Town will receive \$1,071,142, half of which has been received, the remaining funds are expected in the Spring. Interim Town Manager Layton explained to the Council that it is time for them to begin to consider how it wishes to use the ARP funds. He further reported that the initial rules for how the funds can be used was restrictive and largely geared towards water and sewer infrastructure. Interim Town Manager Layton further explained that the final rule is much less restrictive with more flexibility and described the difference between Interim and Final rules. Staff has compiled and passed out a list for consideration; however, a final determination of how funds will be used will be needed prior to the expenditure of funds. Interim Town Manager Layton asked Councilmembers to consider brainstorming on whether the money should be spent on one big project or other smaller projects. The funds must be spent by December 31, 2026 and obligated by December 31, 2024, therefore there is time to make a decision. He reported that a meeting will be held with representatives from the Wooten Company on February 15th regarding other viable utilities grant funds that might assist with

the more expensive water infrastructure projects. Interim Town Manager Layton gave some examples of government services that the Town ARP funds could qualify for. They include Wilson Street Park, demolition of dilapidated buildings, repaving of roads, and the purchase of police vehicles for instance. Interim Town Manager Layton asked that Councilmembers send him an email with their priorities so that he can compile them and present them to the Council. Mayor Hawkins asked Interim Town Manager Layton to send the Council a list of the projects that the Town is presently working on as a starting point for the Council in terms of prioritizing.

X. TOWN ATTORNEY'S REPORT

Mayor Hawkins turned the floor over to Attorney Natalia Isenberg. Attorney Isenberg gave a brief report in response to Mayor Pro Tempore Brooks' question about changing the number of members to the Board of Adjustments. Attorney Isenberg stated that the number of members can be reduced but clarified that GS§ 160D-302 reads that the Board must have five members; however, alternate members can be designated. She also shared that the Town's Planning Board may be designated to serve as the Board of Adjustment instead of having a separate Board of Adjustment and an amendment to the ordinance must be made in order to do so. Mayor Pro Tempore Brooks asked if any applications have been received. Interim Town Manager Layton answered that there were not. Mayor Hawkins asked that Councilmembers continue to try to solicit members for the Board. Councilman Arnold asked if once the two Boards were combined could they be separated at a later date. Attorney Isenberg stated that it would take an ordinance to do so. She also added that a Planning Board needs three members.

XI. INTERIM TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

A. PROPOSED FY 2023 BUDGET ADOPTION SCHEDULE

Interim Town Manager Layton explained he is proposing a schedule that seeks to adopt a FY 2023 budget prior to the current election date of May 17, 2022. He informed the Councilmembers that he included a Town Council Budgetary Goals and Priorities Worksheet in their agenda packages to assist him in working with staff to plan the budget. Interim Town Manager Layton asked that the form be completed and returned to him by March 7, 2022, as his goal is to have a draft budget at the April 2022 meeting and be adopted by the current Councilmembers in May 2022. A motion was made to approve the Budget Adoption Schedule for 2023 by Councilwoman Teel with a second by Councilwoman Williams. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 6-0.

B. DATE FOR RESCHEDULED TOWN HALL MEETING

Mayor Hawkins asked Interim Town Manager Layton to address this issue. Interim Town Manager Layton reminded Councilmembers that unfortunately, due to concerns over COVID, the Town Hall Meeting was postponed. He then asked if Council would be ready to provide a date as Allison Platt is now at a point where her preliminary work is complete and public input is needed for the Downtown Streetscape and Riverfront Project. After discussion, the Council decided to schedule the Town Hall meeting for March 22, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

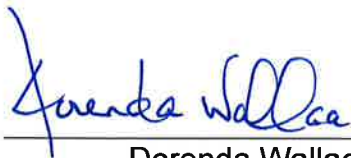
XII. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL

Mayor Hawkins asked if any members of the Council would like to make an announcement. Mayor Hawkins then announced that Pastors Larry and Yolanda Clagon will be sponsoring a COVID Vaccine Event located at 402 Madison Street on Saturday, March 12th from 12:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Appointments will need to be scheduled. They can be reached at (252) 217-8956.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted,



Dorenda Wallace
Clerk



Vershumn "Shawn" Hawkins
Mayor