

**TOWN OF PLYMOUTH MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 14, 2022 – VIA COUNCIL CHAMBERS AND 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 that were in person and 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. A motion was made by Councilwoman Byers to add Closed Session to the Agenda, with a second by Councilwoman Williams. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 4-0.

III. PUBLIC HEARING - None

IV. PRESENTATIONS TO COUNCIL

A. REBECCA HARNED, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MARTIN – WASHINGTON COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Mrs. Rebecca Harned, Executive Director, Martin – Washington County Chamber of Commerce provided the Town Council with a brief overview of the non-profit organization. She reported that the Chamber of Commerce recently began to serve Washington County and explained the benefits, services, and levels of membership that the Chamber provides as well as its hours of operation. Mrs. Harned also gave examples of how to support the Chamber via referrals and volunteering.

For the record: Councilwoman Teel joined the meeting at 7:11 p.m.

B. SHADID TEMPLE #233 AND SHADID COURT #212, OASIS OF PLYMOUTH DESERT OF NORTH CAROLINA, REGARDING INTEREST IN ACQUIRING PROPERTY OWNED BY THE TOWN AT 515 WILSON STREET

A representative of the organizations provided an overview of its membership and mission. A wide range of community service programs that they have been involved in were listed as well. A request was made, by Shadid Temple and Court, to acquire property that is owned by the Town, located at 515 Wilson Street Extension. A motion was made to deem the property as surplus and to open it for a bid by Councilwoman Williams with a second by Councilwoman Teel. After discussion, the original motion was retracted by Councilwoman Williams and a new motion was made by Councilwoman Williams to authorize staff to prepare a resolution to declare the property surplus with a second by Councilwoman Teel. After extensive discussion, a roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 5-0.

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 February 28, 2022:

	Budgeted	Expenses	Variance
General Fund (10)	\$3,124,734.00	\$1,862,193.35	\$1,252,540.34
Water Fund (61)	\$1,417,219.00	\$907,941.56	\$509,277.44
Sewer Fund (62)	\$1,009,103.00	\$604,083.80	\$405,019.60
Solid Waste Fund (66)	\$582,500.00	\$370,514.78	\$211,985.22
Stormwater Fund (67)	\$110,000.00	\$66,190.59	\$43,809.41

2. Tax/Utility Collections. Ms. Nadine Moore reported: 1408 utility bills were mailed on February 25, 2022 with a due date of March 15, 2022. The amount

billed was \$223,352.57. 934 payments were received for a total of \$224,486.96. 67% of customers paid on time and 33% did not. 51 payments were received for property and vehicle taxes in the amount of \$25,543.72. Delinquent tax payments covering the period of 2015 – 2021 were in the amount of \$513,864.01.

Finance Officer Wallace reported that she and Watisha Arnold, the Town's Tax Collector, met with Darlene Harrison of the Washington County tax office to discuss their garnishment process. She further reported that staff is putting together the information that will be needed for garnishments and will contact several firms that were recommended by Mrs. Harrison and used in the League of Municipalities North Carolina Debt Set-Off program in an attempt to secure social security numbers. As a part of discussion with the Council, Finance Officer Wallace reported that the collection of social security numbers will be paramount in order to succeed in this endeavor.

3. The Director of Public Works reported:

- On-going projects: WWTP Grit Removal Lift Station: Installation of the tank is in process. Delivery of the pump is expected in April. CDBG: The SCADA server installation is expected to be completed in late April. Water tower/wells: The heat strips and the sensors for the water tower have an expected completion date of March 31st. AIA Water Line: The engineer reviewed the report and is now updating the fire hydrant book. Domtar Restrooms: The Town is still waiting for approval from Domtar Trustees. HMGP (FEMA) – Generators: Close out is still in process. Convenience site: Staff continues to research cost, possible locations, and grants.
- Streets:
 - Installed speed bump on Gurkin Lane
- Building & Grounds:
 - Edged sidewalks in Town
- Water: Repaired leaks:
 - 104 Maple Court
 - 111 East Water Street
 - 116 Brinkley Place
 - County Courthouse
 - 107 Maple Court
- Sewer: Cleared out blockages:
 - 410 Wilson Street
 - 215 West Avenue
 - 529 Adams Street
 - 318 Jefferson Street
 - 702 East Main Street (x 4)
 - Mackey's road Manholes
 - 906 East Main Street

- 430 Monroe Street
- 115 Jackson Heights Drive
- 106 Spencer Street
- 327 Wilson Street
- 203 Brinkley Place
- 106 Ridgeway Drive
- 200A Sterling Drive
- 205 Winesett Circle
- 207 Roanoke Avenue
- Pump Stations:
 - Installed pump and motor in Johnson Court
 - Pulled and cleaned pump in Old Roper Road
- Sanitation
 - Picked up trash piles around Town
 - Picked up litter around Town using 65 gallon bags
 - 2 bags – South Jefferson Street

4. Code Enforcement Officer Dennis Brown reported:

- Move Outs – One move out. The landlord cleaned it up.
- Dilapidated Houses – One dilapidated property that is in the process of being demolished. The clean up located at 709 Madison Street is complete.
- Abandoned Vehicles – Three notices were sent out and three vehicles have been removed. One vehicle had to be towed.
- Grass and Weed Nuisance – Five complaints were received with five positive responses. Other complaints are still under investigation.
- House Nuisance – Three complaints were received. After investigation, the property managers and homeowners abated the nuisances.
- Ordinance Complaints – Six complaints were received, and three are still under investigation. Staff continues to concentrate on dilapidated and nuisance properties.

The Mayor and Council addressed concerns regarding the length of time it has taken to address the properties located on Wilson Street. Code Enforcement Officer Brown reported that he was told by the owner that the owner received the procedures from the County on how to pull permits in order to begin working on the properties. Interim Town Manager Layton explained the process that he put into place includes a checklist for each property to ensure that it meets the minimum housing code. Interim Town Manager Layton further reported that Code Enforcement Officer Brown is following that process. Interim Town Manager Layton explained that if a permit has not been pulled, the next step would be for the Town to take next steps and declare the property a nuisance and demolish the property and put a lien on it. After extensive discussion with the Council, staff was directed to get an update from the County on this property as well as the minimum

housing code for all of the properties located in the trailer park on Wilson Street for the next Town Council meeting. Mayor Hawkins also asked that the building located next to 515 Wilson Street be looked into as well.

5. Police Department – Chief Williams gave an update regarding the status of applicants for the Department. He reported that the Department is down by six positions. Chief Williams reported that the cameras have been received and the Department is waiting on the contract with NC Dominion Power in regards to installation of the cameras. Mayor Hawkins asked that the number of warnings given by the Department be added back into the police report, so that citizens can see the difference between actual citations and warnings.
6. Fire Department - Chief Timothy Miller reported that there were no major issues this past month. He stated that the Department is heavily imbedded with paperwork in preparation for the June ISO inspection. Chief Miller also reported that the property on East Fourth Street will be scheduled to burn the night of March 15th. He stated that Code Enforcement Officer Brown canvassed the neighborhood and handed out notices about the upcoming burn.

Mayor Hawkins requested a five minute recess at 8:30 p.m. The meeting returned to order at 8:35 p.m.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

The Consent Agenda contained:

- A. Approval of Minutes from the February 14, 2022, Town Council Meeting
- B. Approval of Real Estate Insolvent Request for property located at 215 Fort Williams Street

A motion was made by Councilman Wobbleton to approve the Consent Agenda with a second by Councilwoman Byers. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 5-0.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

A. DISCUSSION/CONSIDERATION OF ORDINANCE 2022-01, AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF PLYMOUTH, NORTH CAROLINA, AMENDING CHAPTER 73: TRAFFIC SCHEDULES; SCHEDULE III: SPEED LIMITS, TO SET THE SPEED LIMIT ON GURKIN LANE AND CAROLINA AVENUE TO 15 MILES PER HOUR

Mayor Hawkins asked Chief Willie Williams to address this issue. Chief Williams gave a report concerning the traffic and speed limit. He then recommended that the Council set the speed limit on Gurkin Lane and

Carolina Avenue to 15 miles per hour. After discussion, which included posting of signage, a motion was made by Councilwoman Byers to approve Ordinance 2022-01 with a second by Councilwoman Williams. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 5-0.

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 a public notice hearing has been advertised and scheduled for the April 11th Council meeting in consideration of approving the Maritime Museum lease. Interim Town Manager Layton also reported that he and Attorney Isenberg were requested to research how similar lease agreements between local governments and historical societies/museums are handled. The Council was presented with examples of leases and summarized what was proposed with the Washington County Historical Society. After extensive discussion it was suggested that a monthly report be generated for the Council in terms of the number of visitors and what proceeds are being generated in terms of how taxpayer dollars are spent. Interim Town Manager Layton informed the Council that Mr. Tom Harrison will be making a presentation at the Council's April 11th meeting. Mayor Pro-Tempore Brooks stressed the importance of holding organizations that are funded with revenue from the Town accountable. After discussion, a motion was made by Mayor Pro Tempore Brooks to (1) have the Interim Town Manager contact those organizations and have them added to the agenda and (2) find a town that is of a similar size with Plymouth in order to compare the lease. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Williams. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 5-0.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. DISCUSSION/CONSIDERATION OF OFFER TO DONATE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 116 BRINKLEY PLACE TO THE TOWN OF PLYMOUTH

Mayor Hawkins asked Interim Town Manager Layton to address this issue. Interim Town Manager Layton reported that the Town received a letter last month from Ruben Vargas Gomez offering to donate property located at 116 Brinkley Place to the Town. He further reported that the property was damaged by a fire last fall and needs to be demolished. Interim Town Manager Layton then asked the Council to provide direction on whether or not it wishes to staff to pursue this issue. After discussion, it was the Council's consensus to not accept the donation of the property.

X. TOWN ATTORNEY'S REPORT

Mayor Hawkins turned the floor over to Attorney Natalia Isenberg. Attorney Isenberg stated that she will discuss some information that will be presented in closed session. Attorney Isenberg also stated that she will reach out to contacts

about finding a Town of comparable size with historic museums but advised that she is not sure that there is a Town of comparable population size. She added that there is a governmental function that local governments have to preserve history and culture and the reason that these contracts exist at such low costs is because they are not for profit but for perpetual enhancement.

XI. INTERIM TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

A. DATE FOR RESCHEDULED TOWN HALL MEETING – MARCH 29, 2022, 6:00 P.M.

Interim Town Manager Layton recapped that because of conflicts, the Town Hall meeting has been rescheduled for March 29, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. at the Maritime Museum. He reported that staff will get the proper advertisements and notice of publication out.

B. TOWN COUNCIL GOALS AND PRIORITIES FORM/ARP FORM

Interim Town Manager Layton reminded the Council to fill out the budget priorities forms and forward them to him. There was then a brief discussion regarding how to fill out both the budget and ARP forms, and examples of possible priorities.

XII. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL

Mayor Hawkins asked if any members of the Council would like to make an announcement. Mayor Pro-Tempore stated that she would like to ask Council if they could start creating or developing goals and objectives for the Interim Town Manager this year. Goals that the Council want him to accomplish, not necessarily budget items, but development work in the departments that he can delegate to his direct reports. Mayor Pro Tempore Brooks stated that this can be used as a planning tool to guide Interim Town Manager Layton in the goals and objectives for the Town of Plymouth starting at the beginning of the year and for Interim Town Manager Layton to provide progress reports during the year. During discussion, clarification was made that it will not only to hold the Interim Town Manager accountable, but to develop a plan that will show not only the manager, but the staff and the Town what the Council wants to be accomplished in the next year, such as a road map to follow for the coming year. Mayor Hawkins suggested that this topic be re-visited at either the next Council meeting or a special meeting.

XIII. CLOSED SESSION

A Motion was made by Councilwoman Williams with a second by Councilwoman Teel to enter closed session under §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. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 5-0.

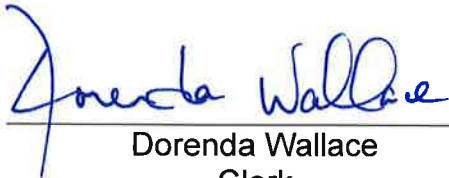
XIV. RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

A motion was made by Councilwoman Williams to return to open session with a second by Councilwoman Byers. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 5-0. Mayor Hawkins asked Councilmembers if they had anything further. A motion was made by Councilwoman Williams to authorize staff to advertise Water Street Development agreement for a public hearing at the April 11, 2022 Town Council Meeting, with a second by Mayor Pro Tempore Brooks. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 5-0.


XV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, a motion was made by Councilwoman Teel to adjourn the meeting with a second from Councilwoman Byers. A roll call vote was taken. The Motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,



Dorenda Wallace
Clerk



Vershumn "Shawn" Hawkins
Mayor