

**TOWN OF PLYMOUTH MEETING MINUTES  
JANUARY 9, 2023 – VIA COUNCIL CHAMBERS AND ZOOM  
7:00 p.m.**

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**I. CALL TO ORDER – Mayor Brian Roth**

The Mayor opened the meeting and welcomed all attendees. Mayor Roth explained that there were technical difficulties and as a result, ZOOM will not be used. Councilman Boston led with prayer and Mayor Roth led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENT	ABSENT	COUNCILMEMBER
X		Mayor Pro-Tempore Brooks
X		Councilman Boston
X		Councilwoman Byers
	X	Councilman Tharps
X		Councilwoman Williams
X		Councilman Wobbleton
X		Mayor Roth

**II. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Mayor Roth asked if there were any additions to the agenda. Mayor Pro-Tempore Brooks asked to add the Distribution of the Agenda Packages. It was added under New Business A. Councilman Boston asked that topic of discussing the Albemarle Ram be added to the agenda. It was also added under New Business B. Adoption of Marine Sewage Pump-out and Dump Station Grant Resolution was moved to New Business C. A motion to approve the agenda with the changes was made by Councilman Boston with a second by Mayor Pro-Tempore Brooks. The motion passed unanimously.

**III. PUBLIC HEARING – None**

**IV. PRESENTATIONS TO THE COUNCIL - None**

**V. PUBLIC COMMENT - None**

**VI. DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

The order in which the reports were given was changed. All reports are included in the agenda package.

**1. Police Department**

Chief Williams informed the Council that his monthly report was included in the agenda package. He also reported that two officers have been added, one of which would begin BLET and that the Department was three positions short. Chief Williams spoke about an incident that took place on the previous Friday at the Washington County High School. After significant discussion, Chief Williams explained that the High School is under the jurisdiction of the County; however, he stated that he will meet with the Chief Deputy Sheriff and offer the Plymouth Department's assistance to provide security. Councilman Boston offered his appreciation.

Councilman Wobbleton stated that the public needs to be aware of the turn lanes, and how people riding bikes are often riding in the turning lane. Councilman Wobbleton was concerned because of the severity of the situation if a person gets hit, especially at night without the proper lighting. After continued discussion, including the possibility of publicizing bicycle safety and education for the public, as well as patrol officers pulling the bicycle riders over, Chief Williams recounted how this has been an issue for quite some time and agreed to come up with a solution.

Mayor Pro-Tempore asked if Councilpersons could be notified, as had happened in the past, when incidents such as what happened at the school took place. Chief Williams agreed and explained that when something that involves the Plymouth Police Department and its jurisdiction, he notifies the Town Manager, and in turn the Town Manager notifies the Council. Interim Town Manager Styons reassured the Council that Chief Williams does keep him informed when something happens in the Town's jurisdiction.

2. Interim Town Manager Styons reported that he met with the Tax Supervisor and as a result an internal program has been established. Notices will be sent out if taxes are past due for the 2022 tax year, and the owner will have until a certain date to pay, including penalties. If taxes are older than 2022, the owners will be sent another notice that will include attorney fees and suit costs.
3. Public Works:

On-going projects: WWTP Plant Rehabilitation: The project close out is in process. Viable Utility Grants: The Town should receive notification sometime in February. Domtar Restrooms: Waiting on trustee's approval. Wilson Street Park: Two bids were obtained that were out of range; now working with smaller contractors on smaller portions within the project so as to stay within ARP guidelines. New service heads have been installed in the bathrooms. Electrical panel and service pole will be installed. HMGP (FEMA) Generators The Project is still in close out. Convenience site: researching cost, location, and possible grants.

Streets:

- Picking up yard debris

Buildings and Grounds:

- Picking up trash
- Removing Christmas decorations

Water:

- Repaired leaks at the following addresses:
  - 103 Gold Road
  - 101 Oakford Avenue
  - 200 Rankin Lane (x 3)
  - 109 Golf Road
  - 904 Wilson Stret
  - 101 Oakford Avenue
  - 103 Logan Avenue
  - 209 Brinkley
  - 419 Washington Street
  - E. Main Street
  - 100 Old Roper Road

Sewer:

- Cleared out sewer blockages at the following addresses:
  - 115 Winsett Circle
  - 413 East 3<sup>rd</sup> Street
  - 906 Jefferson Street
  - 205 Winsett Circle
  - 115 Jackson Heights Drive
  - 519 E. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street
  - 124 West Water Street
  - 330 West Avenue
  - 307B Winsett Circle
  - 101 Woodlawn Terrace
  - 413 Gold Road
  - 902 E. Main Street
  - 102 Wilts Avenue
  - 204 Hampton Drive

WWTP:

- Waiting on starter for grit removal auger

Pump Stations

- N/A

Sanitation:

- Picking up trash piles around Town
- Picking up litter around Town
- Sanitation
  - Picking up trash piles around Town
  - Picking up litter around Town

Councilwoman Williams asked about street signs that need to be ordered because a constituent said that there were none in their area. Public Works Director Wright stated that he is going to order the signs and asked that if anyone else notices street signs are missing to inform him. Councilwoman Williams also asked about leaf pick up and Public Works Director Wright explained the schedule, and how the Town can sometimes get behind depending upon what is happening at the time.

#### 4. Code Enforcement

Interim Town Manager Styons shared with the Council that he asked Code Enforcement Officer Brown to begin to attend meetings in person and report verbally to the Council, as he understands that the Council might have questions for him regarding demolition.

Code Enforcement Officer Brown reported that for the month of December 2022:

- Move Outs
  - Two – contacted two of the homeowners and they were taken care of
- Dilapidated Houses
  - Demolished Properties:
    - 502 Madison
    - 102 Bowser Court
  - Processing
    - 402 Wilson Street (burned structure)
- Abandoned Vehicles
  - Five notices sent; all five have been removed
- Grass and Weed Nuisance
  - Two complaints; one positive response; waiting on the other response
- House Nuisance
  - Three notices sent; received three positive replies
- Ordinance Complaints
  - Eight complaints with six positive responses. Two are still in active investigation.

Councilwoman stated that Fourth Street looks better; however, from Fourth to Monroe is worse. Code Enforcement Officer Brown stated that he will look into it.

5. Financial Report – For the period ending December 31, 2022

Interim Town Manager Styons addressed the format of the Financial Report as well as how to understand where the Town stands each month in terms of department budgets and line items, the importance of studying the report more in-depth moving forward; and the importance of changing auditors as well.

**VII. CONSENT AGENDA**

The consent agenda contained:

**A. ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE NO. 2023-01 – AIA WASTEWATER VUR PROJECT**

Town Clerk Wallace explained that the project ordinance pertained to a \$160,000 grant received from the North Carolina Division of Water Infrastructure for Asset Inventory and Assessment. A motion to approve Ordinance No. 2023-01 was made by Councilman Wobbleton with a second by Councilman Boston. The motion passed unanimously.

**B. APPROVAL OF BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 2023-01**

Finance Officer Wallace explained that per reporting requirements for a special grant received for the Fire Department, a separate accounting fund must be established. A motion was made to approve Budget Amendment 2023-01 by Councilman Boston and seconded by Mayor Pro-Tempore Brooks. The motion passed unanimously.

**C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE NOVEMBER 3, 2022 SPECIAL MEETING (TOWN HALL) MEETING**

There being no changes, a motion was made by Councilman Boston to approve the minutes with a second by Councilman Wobbleton. The motion passed unanimously.

**D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE NOVEMBER 14, 2022 REGULAR MEETING**

There being no changes, a motion was made by Councilman Boston to approve the minutes with a second by Councilman Wobbleton. The motion passed unanimously.

**VIII. NEW BUSINESS**

## **A. DISCUSSION OF METHOD FOR DELIVERY OF MEETING AGENDAS**

Mayor Pro-Tempore Brooks began the discussion by seeking clarity of Councilmembers not being able to attend in person but can attend via ZOOM. Attorney Isenberg discussed the remote attendance policy that the Council passed and attempted to clarify the policy. After discussion, Attorney Isenberg stated that she would provide the Council with the N.C.G.S. statute regarding attendance. Mayor Pro-Tempore Brooks then recounted how in the past, the Council used to receive printed Agenda documents, rather than on-line, and how she would like to return to printed method. After discussion, it was determined that Councilwoman Williams preferred to have hers sent electronically, and Councilman Boston would like to receive his via both methods. Part of the discussion included how it might be positive for citizens to see patrol officers in different areas as the agendas are delivered, as well as possible foot patrols. A motion was made to have the meeting agendas printed and delivered via patrol officers by Councilwoman Byers with a second by Mayor Pro-Tempore Brooks. The motion passed unanimously.

## **B. DISCUSSION REGARDING ALBEMARLE RAM**

Councilman Boston asked about the Albemarle Ram on display on the waterfront and reported that one of the citizens gave him a book. He reported that the book contains information that the Ram was used to kill black slaves. Councilman Boston stated that he did not approve of something that was negative. He suggested that Council obtain a copy of the book. It was stated by Councilman Wobbleton that the RAM was used to stop big ships from coming in. There were differing opinions on what the RAM was used for.

Interim Town Manager Styons asked Councilman Boston if he wanted any action taken. Councilman Boston asked that the history be investigated. Interim Town Manager Styons suggested that Tom Harrison be invited to speak about the subject.

## **C. ADOPTION OF MARINE SEWAGE PUMP-OUT AND DUMP STATION GRANT RESOLUTION**

Interim Town Manager Styons reported that he has been working with representatives from the High-Speed Ferry System. He further reported that they would like to dock the boats that come in on the waterfront and the installation of a pump-out is needed. Interim Town Manager Styons explained what the grant entailed and asked for approval to move forward with the grant application. After discussion, a motion to approve Resolution 2023-01 was made by Councilman Wobbleton with a second by Councilwoman Byers. The motion passed unanimously.



## **IX. INTERIM TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

### **A. STREETSCAPES**

Interim Town Manager Styons updated the Council with regards to the Streetscape project. The Town applied for a grant in the amount of \$850,000.00; however, an award was given in the amount of \$750,000.00. He spoke about the plans included in the grant, possible engineering impediments, that he spoke with some merchants, and possible next steps. Interim Town Manager Styons reported that staff has not received any documentation to date other than the letter of award.

## **X. TOWN ATTORNEY'S REPORT**

### **A. WASHINGTON COUNTY REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER/AFFINITY HEALTH UPDATE**

Attorney Isenberg gave the Council an update regarding the status of the Washington County Regional Medical Center/Affinity Health. She updated the Council regarding a payment plan contract that was sent to Affinity Health, and that Affinity Health acknowledged receipt of the letter, and signed it as well. When Affinity defaulted on the payment plan, Attorney Isenberg stated that she sent a certified letter notifying them of the default and the next steps. She further reported that she received a telephone call from an attorney that sits on the Board of Centennial Housing, which is a not-for-profit public interest corporation, and that they are the owners of the Washington County Regional Medical Center that contracted Affinity Health to manage the Medical Center. She further reported that she was told Centennial Housing is working on obtaining a line of credit to pay the bill, and that he would be back in touch with her later this week. Attorney Isenberg then stated that she will share additional information with Council will be under closed session.

Additional discussion took place with Council sharing concerns that they have, including possible ramifications, as well as concerns they have received about the potential of the hospital closing

## **XI. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM MAYOR AND COUNCIL**

Councilman Boston stated that he would like to bring back the former Council members Arnold, Teel, and the former Mayor's mother to present them with plaques in appreciation for their service. After a brief discussion, a motion was made to honor the former Councilmembers and the former Mayor with plaques by Councilman Boston with a second by Councilman Wobbleton. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Roth spoke about a concert that will be held at the Maritime Museum this upcoming Saturday. He asked that the news be spread, and that no tickets will be available at the door. Mayor Roth also asked that Council mark their calendars for the upcoming Construction Professionals Network Institute, Inc. (CPNI) visit that will take place January 25<sup>th</sup> – January 27<sup>th</sup>. He gave a preliminary schedule, that he will provide once it has been finalized. Mayor Roth stated that the group will be concentrating on the downtown area.

## **XII. CLOSED SESSION**

A motion was made to go into closed session under 143-318.11(a)(1) (to prevent the disclosure of information that is privileged or confidential or is not a public record); N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(6) (to consider personnel matters); and N.C.G.S. 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.) to consult with an attorney in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the public body and N.C.G.S. 143-318-11(a)(6) to consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, conditions of appointment, or conditions of initial employment of an individual public officer or employee or prospective public officer or employee; and,

N.C.G.S. 143-318.10(e) Approval of minutes of closed sessions which are not subject to public inspection (the information is protected under the attorney-client privilege and in the case of personnel information under N.C.G.S. 160A-168) by Councilwoman Williams with a second by Councilwoman Byers. The motion passed unanimously.

## **OPEN SESSION**

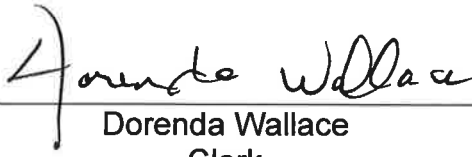
A motion was made by to approve the following closed session minutes taken by the attorney, June 27, 2022; November 14, 2022; November 28, 2022; December 12, 2022 by Councilwoman Williams and seconded by Councilman Boston. The motion passed unanimously.

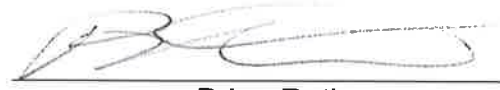
## **XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, a motion was made by Councilwoman Byers to adjourn the meeting with a second from Councilman Boston. The motion passed unanimously.



Respectfully submitted,

  
Dorenda Wallace  
Clerk

  
Brian Roth  
Mayor