

**TOWN OF PLYMOUTH MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 12, 2022 – VIA COUNCIL CHAMBERS AND ZOOM
7:00 p.m.**

I. CALL TO ORDER – Mayor Brian Roth

The Mayor opened the meeting and welcomed all attendees. 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 Harps
X		Councilwoman Williams
X		Councilman Wobbleton
X		Mayor Roth

NOTE: Attorney Natalia Isenberg attended the meeting via ZOOM.

II. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mayor Roth asked if there were any additions or deletions to the Agenda. He then stated that Interim Town Manager Styons asked to add UAL letter D. under IV. Presentations to Council. Presentations to Council. The Finance Officer asked that Letter C (Budget Amendment 2022-06) be added, and that Letter D be changed from Approval of Ordinance 2022-08 to Approval of Ordinance 2022-07 under the Consent Agenda. Mayor Roth asked that Letter D Community Input Night be under IX. Old Business II be added. Councilman Wobbleton asked that Letter C. Landfill Fees be added to X. New Business so that Mr. James Arnold can speak. Councilman Wobbleton stated that it would take longer than the three minute time allotment allowed under Public Comment. A motion to approve the agenda with the additions was made by Councilman Boston with a second by Councilwoman Byers. A roll call was taken. The motion passed 6-0.

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS - None

IV. PRESENTATIONS TO THE COUNCIL

A. Mr. Jeff Best, CPA- 2020 – 2021 Audit Report

While the Finance Officer and Mr. Best handed out the reports to the Council, Interim Town Manager Styons asked that Mr. Best be excused for the 2021 – 2022 Contract discussion. Mr. Best gave his appreciation to the Council and thanked the Town staff for their work. Mr. Best then explained the report,

while pointing out specific pages such as the Management Statements Statement of Income and Expense, Enterprise Funds, Capital Assets, Governmental Activities, Capital Improvement Projects, Restricted Cash, Net Changes, Long Term Debt, various Retirement Funds, as well as findings and Management Letters. Mr. Best recommended that enterprise fund rate changes be addressed on a yearly basis in order to cover the expenditures and cash accumulation. It was noted that rates have not been changed for five years.

After Mr. Best's presentation, Interim Town Manager Styons made it clear that the Audit that Mr. Best presented was for fiscal years 2020 – 2021 and that it is late. Interim Town Manager Styons then came to the Finance Officer's defense, in that the short time he has worked with her, he found her to be extremely capable and intelligent, would like to continue to see her as a part of the Town's senior management team and was adamant that no one person can be all of the jobs that she was given to do. Interim Town Manager Styons then asked Mr. Best to be extremely candid as to why the audit was late. Mr. Best stated that the financial records had not been adjusted. After further discussion regarding why the audit was late, Mr. Best explained that auditing rules have changed, and auditors can no longer come in and adjust the Town's books. Interim Town Manager Styons explained that Mr. Best, could perhaps in the future, assist the Town on a consulting basis in order to get the books ready for an audit. Mr. Best took questions from the council. Mayor Pro-Tempore Brooks stated for the record that at the time that three positions were given to Ms. Wallace, the Town was in the process of trying to find an Interim Town Manager and asked that the Council look at a different way of filling that position. Interim Town Manager Styons stated that he promised the Town that when he took the position in order to assist the Town, and he asked that the meeting be recessed, and at the next meeting he will present concrete recommendations that the Town will hopefully follow.

After advisement from Attorney Isenberg, a motion to accept the 2020 – 2021 Audit report was made by Councilman Boston with a second by Mayor Pro-Tempore Brooks. A roll call vote was taken. The motion based 6-0.

B. Ratification of 2020 – 2021 Audit Contract Extension

Interim Town Manager Styons explained that in order for the Local Government Commission to accept the 2020-2021 Audit report from Mr. Best, Mr. Best would have to be under contract with the Town. The contract with the Town expired, and therefore had to be extended before the audit could be submitted. A poll was taken via telephone as to whether or not the Council would approve the contract extension. Now that the Council has gathered, a formal Ratification of the 2020 – 2021 Audit Contract Extension must take place. A motion to Ratify the 2020 – 2021 Audit contract Extension was made

by Mayor Pro-Tempore Brooks and seconded by Councilman Wobbleton. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 6-0.

C. Consideration/Discussion of 2021 – 2022 Audit Contract

Interim Town Manager Styons discussed the fact that it will be too late to issue an RFP for a new auditor, the holidays will soon be upon us and after that time auditors will concentrate more on taxes rather than audits. He then recommended that under the circumstances the Council approve the 2021 – 2022 audit contract for Jeff Best, CPA. Councilwoman Byers made a motion to approve the 2021 – 2022 Audit Contract with Jeff Best, CPA with a second by Councilman Wobbleton. After a brief discussion, which included Attorney's Isenberg's advice that it is generally recommended by the League of Municipalities that every so often an auditor be switched; however, she agreed with Interim Town Manager Styons that in order to get caught up and move forward, we use Mr. Best. There being no further discussion, a roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 6-0.

D. Unit Letter

Interim Town Manager Styons reported that at his first day on the job, he received a copy of a Unit Letter from the State Treasurer's Office. He discussed what a Unit Letter means and his concern regarding the Town. He stated that he studied the Town's accounts and found that over the past few years, the Town was spending money, but not raising revenues to cover those expenses. After continued explanation regarding revenues, expenses, and the fact that the Town was classified as a community in distress which would allow the Town to be eligible for Viable Utility Grants, Interim Town Manager Styons reiterated that he plans to continue this discussion at the recessed meeting he requested for September 19th.

V. OLD BUSINESS PART I

A. Gold Road Speed Hump Petition

Mayor Roth reported that the Agenda Package contained a letter from the NC Department of Transportation, stating that an employee examined the area in question, and gave recommendations regarding the speed humps. Interim Town Manager Styons reported that he had been brought up to date on the issue by speaking with the Town Clerk, the Chief of Police and Attorney Isenberg relative to a recent policy that was adopted regarding petitioning neighbors regarding speed humps. Interim Town Manager recommended that the policy be revoked. Interim Town Manager asked Chief Williams to reiterate his previous recommendations. Interim Town Manager also asked Attorney Isenberg for her opinion. She stated that this issue is at the

discretion of the Council, and can be confused to imply that safety decisions, by General Statute, can be left solely up to the citizens, when it is actually in the hands of the council. Attorney Isenberg also recommended that the policy be revoked. After extensive discussion, a motion was made by Councilman Wobbleton to remove the speed humps and change the speed limit to 25 mph from Wilson to Alden, and 15 mph from Alden around the circle with a second from Councilwoman Byers. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 5 – 1 with Councilwoman Williams dissenting.

A motion was then made by Councilman Brooks to revoke the Speed Hump Policy with a second by Mayor Pro-Tempore Brooks. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 6-0.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS – None

**VII. DEPARTMENT REPORTS
(Included in Agenda Package – Not Orally Presented)**

1. Financial – For the period ending August 31, 2022:

	Budgeted	Expenses	Variance
General Fund (10) (16%)	\$3,047,232.00	\$475,750.94	\$2,571,481.06
Water Fund (61) (21%)	\$1,437,040.00	\$305,202.69	\$1,131,837.31
Sewer Fund (62) (14%)	\$1,030,939.00	\$144,521.18	\$886,417.12
Solid Waste Fund (66) (15%)	\$607,613.00	\$92,738.09	\$514,874.91
Stormwater Fund (67)	\$110,000.00	\$14,819.43	\$95,180.57

2. Tax/Utility Collections: 1401 utility bills were mailed on August 29, 2022 with a due date of September 1, 2022. The amount billed was \$218,823.19. 1357 payments were received for a total of \$218,314.75. 58% of customers paid on time and 42% did not. 30 payments were received for property and vehicle taxes in the amount of \$32,240.16. Delinquent tax payments covering the period of 2015 – 2021 were in the amount of \$421,139.43.

3. Public Works:

- On-going projects: WWTP Plant Rehabilitation: The project close out is in process. CDBG Construction: The project is in close out is in process. Viable Utility Grant (Water) application to be submitted September 30, 2022. Viable Utility Grant (Sewer) application to be submitted September 30, 2022. Domtar Restrooms: The Town is still waiting for approval from

Domtar Trustees. Wilson Street Park Renovation: Bid opening – only one bidder; rescheduled for September 29, 2022 at 2:00 p.m. HMGP (FEMA) – Generators: Close out is in process; received FEMA payment. Convenience site: Staff is still researching costs, locations, and possible grants.

- Streets:
 - Mowing ditches and right of ways
 - NCDOT removed two trees at 107 East Main Street
 - NCDOT removed tree at 320 Washington Street
 - Met with NCDOT concerning Golf Road
- Building & Grounds:
 - Repaired boardwalk and deck
- Water: Repaired leaks at:
 - 211 Robin Drive (twice)
 - 104 Cherry Street
 - 307 General Pettigrew Drive
 - 104 Latham lane
 - 521 Wilson Street
 - 28 Ridgeway Drive
 - Intersection of Roanoke Avenue and Kirk Avenue
- Sewer: Cleared out blockages:
 - Manhole at Food Lion (twice)
 - 306 Matt Ransome Drive
 - 101 Linden Street
 - 718 Wilson Street
- Pump Stations:
 - Installed on pump on Jefferson Street – removed by-pass pump
- Sanitation
 - Picking up trash piles around Town
 - Picking up litter around Town

4. Code Enforcement:

- Move Outs – Four move outs and the landlords cleaned them up.
- Dilapidated Houses – There are two dilapidated properties that are to be demolished:
 - 509 Third Street
 - 410 Winesett Circle
 - Demolition of 116 Brinkley Place has been completed
 - 308 E. Fourth Street is in the process of being demolished

- Abandoned Vehicles – Five notices were sent out and four vehicles were removed.
 - Grass and Weed Nuisance – Nine complaints were received with seven positive responses. Two others are under investigation.
 - House Nuisance – Six complaints were received. All complaints were taken care of by the managers and homeowners.
 - Ordinance Complaints – Six complaints were received. One is still under investigation with the main focus being directed towards the dilapidated and nuisance properties.
5. Police Department – Number of events for the month = 252.
6. Fire Department – Fire District new ratings after inspection: Received Class 4/9E for the Conaby Fire District. Received Class 4 for Plymouth.
7. Museums – Port O' Plymouth Museum:
- Washington County Historical Society will have annual meeting on Thursday, November 17th at the Maritime Museum. The speaker will be Leesa Jones with the Washington Waterfront Underground Railroad Museum to talk about the Underground Railroad in the region
 - Archival Cataloging of museum collections is ongoing.
 - Guest attendance for August 2022 was 81
 - Still researching material for new exhibits and putting together a timeline for the county's events.

Maritime Museum and Lighthouse:

- 57 Visitors
- 6 Boats visiting Marina
- 3 Rental Events (estimated) 175 attendees
- Donations of 1 book, 15 photographs; Commemorative USPS items celebrating wooden boats; fish net casting apparatus
- 3 rental events with an estimated 250 attendees
- Donations of 2 books, 3 photographs, and 2 bound articles
- 3 Boats visited the Marina
- NC Poet Laureate, Jaki Shelton Green, will speak on February 17, 2023
- Friends of the Roanoke River Lighthouse and Maritime Museum organization has been created
- "Lake Phelps Canoes" presentation by Queen Anne's Revenge Conservation Lab (NC Office of State Archeology) will be held November 10th
- Ongoing collaborations with
 - Port O' Plymouth Museum
 - Washington County African American Museum

- Somerset Place State Historic Site
- 534 Facebook followers

VIII. CONSENT AGENDA

The consent agenda contained:

A. Approval of Minutes from the August 8, 2022 Regular Meeting

The Town Clerk offered a correction with Councilman Tharps' title. There being no more corrections, a motion was made by Councilman Boston to approve the minutes with a second by Councilwoman Williams. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 6-0.

B. Approval of Ordinance 2022-06 – An Ordinance of the Town Council of the Town of Plymouth, North Carolina Amending a Grant Project Ordinance for the Town of Plymouth Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds.

The Finance Clerk explained that the line item for Stormwater had been decreased to zero, and a line item for Buildings and Grounds had been added for \$16,000, leaving an unassigned fund balance of \$371,142.00. A motion was made by Councilwoman Byers to Approve the Amended Ordinance 2022-06 (previously 2022-05) with a second by Councilman Wobbleton. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 6-0.

C. Approval of Budget Amendment 2022-06.

The Finance Clerk explained that the budget amendment reconciles the figures for Ordinance 2022-06. A motion was made by Councilman Boston to Budget Amendment 2022-06 with a second by Mayor Pro-Tempore Brooks. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 6-0.

D. Approval of Ordinance 2022-07 – An Ordinance of the Town Council of the Town of Plymouth, North Carolina for a Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) FEMA-DR-4285-068F

The Finance Officer explained that the Town had previously approved a Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Agreement with the NC Department of Public Safety, Division of Emergency Management; however, she could not locate a grant ordinance for the Grant and wanted to ensure that an Ordinance was in place for purposes of housekeeping. A motion was made by Councilwoman Williams approve Ordinance 2022-07 with a second by Councilwoman Byers. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 6-0.

E. Approval of Budget Amendment 2022-07

The Finance Clerk explained that the budget amendment reconciles the figures for Ordinance 2022-07. A motion was made by Councilwoman Williams to approve Budget Amendment 2022-07 with a second by Councilman Boston. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 6-0.

IX. OLD BUSINESS II

A. APPROVAL OF THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN AND ASSET AND INVENTORY ASSESSMENT PLAN PRESENTED BY THE WOOTEN COMPANY AT THE AUGUST 8, 2022 MEETING

The Town Clerk explained that Mr., Derrick Smith, and Mrs. Elizabeth Webber presented the findings of the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and the Asset Inventory and Assessment (AIA) for the Water and Sewer System at the Council's August 8, 2022 meeting. She explained that the plans need to be adopted so that they can be included in the upcoming VUR applications. A motion was made by Councilwoman Byers to approve the CIP and AIA plans with a second by Mayor Pro-Tempore Brooks. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 6-0.

B. PORT O' PLYMOUTH MUSEUM LEASE

Interim Town Manager Styons reported that he met with the Public Works Director and Attorney Isenberg. He further reported he asked Attorney Isenberg to prepare a lease stating that the Town will maintain the deck subject to the availability of funds and will take control of the flat car underneath the deck. A member of the Historical Society talked about the history of the flat car beneath the deck and stated that the Historical Society will meet as soon as possible. Attorney Isenberg stated that no action needs to be taken at this time; however, she stated that the right to access the building will be given to the Town will not need language specific to an easement, as the Town owns the land.

C. SURPLUS OF PROPERTY LOCATDON SANDHILL ROAD

Interim Town Manager reported that he discussed this item with Attorney Isenberg today and will need to perform more research as to the figure that he would recommend that the Town use to sell the property as a sealed bid and report his findings at the next meeting.

D. COMMUNITY INPUT NIGHT

The Town Clerk asked that a consensus for a date for community input be agreed up so that she can approach possible venues to hold the meeting with the hopes of a more diverse group attending. The Council thought best that the meeting be held the first week of November. The Town Clerk stated that she will update the Council at its next meeting. Councilwoman Byers offered some alternative options.

NOTE: A five minute recess was taken by the Council at 8:36 p.m.

Session began again at 8:41 p.m.

NOTE: A motion to amend the agenda to include Mr. Willie Drye was made by Councilwoman Williams with a second by Councilman Boston. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 6-0.

Mr. Drye announced that the Outer Banks Lighthouse Society asked the Washington County Waterways Commission to help them celebrate the 150th anniversary of Bodie Lighthouse. A group photo will be taken and posted on the National Parks Website. He invited the Council to participate in front of the lighthouse at 11:00 a.m., Saturday, September 11th. He also announced that the application for the Underground Railroad has been submitted to Atlanta and will be judged by a committee of historians.

X. NEW BUSINESS

A. CONSIDERATION/DISCUSSION OF SOLICITATION OF RFP'S FOR TRASH SERVICE

Interim Town Manager Styons reported that he discussed this issue with Attorney Isenberg today. He stated that there has been dissatisfaction with David's Trash Service, and the contract expires July 2023. Interim Town Manager Styons asked for a motion to begin to prepare RFP's and will speak with the Council before they are released. A motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tempore Brooks that the staff be directed to begin to prepare RFP's for a trash contract with a second by Councilwoman Williams. After a brief discussion about a convenience center, a roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 6-0.

B. ATTACHMENT OF LIENS FOR 101 – 103 EAST WATER STREET; 101 – 103 WEST WATER STREET.

Interim Town Manager Styons reported that the liens have not been put on these properties; however, he has been working with Attorney Isenberg on

this matter and will report back to the Council once additional information has been gathered.

C. LANDFILL FEES

Councilman Wobbleton asked that James Arnold approach the podium and speak to this issue. There was extensive discussion around the matter that dealt with citizens that live within Town limits are charged landfill fees by the Town as well as the County. After discussion, Interim Town Manager Styons and Attorney Isenberg were directed to speak Washington County Manager Potter and update the Council.

XI. INTERIM TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

A. CONSIDERATION/DISCUSSION OF CHANGE IN LOBBY HOURS

Interim Town Manager Styons stated that for many years, the office hours and the lobby hours were different because it would give time for Customer Service Representatives to set up, open, balance their draws and close in a timely fashion. He asked for a motion to change the lobby hours to 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. A motion was made by Councilwoman Williams to change the lobby hours to 8:30 a.m. To 4:30 p.m. with a second by Councilman Boston. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 6-0.

B. LIFT STATION

Interim Town Manager Styons asked that Public Works Director Wright join him in the discussion. Interim Town Manager Styons reported that some years ago, a spec building was built at the airport. He further reported that the County had a hard time selling the building due to lack of water and wastewater. A sewer line was put in through grant funding from the facility to the Town's pumping station at Paylor Court. He further reported that the building has been sold to a commercial laundry service. The County now wants the Town to operate the lift station and receive the revenue from operations. Public Works Director Wright and Assistant Public Works Director Arnold want to ensure that the lines work properly, before the Town takes it over, as the lift station has been idly sitting for six to eight years. Interim Town Manager Styons stated that Attorney Isenberg will be speaking with County Manager Potter about the issue and will give an update to the Council. Interim Town Manager Styons stated, that for full disclosure, as a consultant, he along with the assistance of Mayor Roth recruited the owners. He is no longer working with the company as a consultant.

C. CHARLIE KNIGHT RETIREMENT CELEBRATION

Interim Town Manager Styons announced that Charlie Knight, who has worked with Public Works for 34 years will be retiring. A celebration in the honor of his service will take place September 21, 2022 at the Volunteer Fire Department, from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. Interim Town Manager Styons invited the Council.

D. CONSIDERATION/DISCUSSION OF OFFICE SPACE

Interim Town Manager Styons reported that he had spoken with each Council member after the Special Meeting in August and had spoken with Councilwoman Williams today about the decision to purchase the facility directly next to the Town office. The reason for the purchase was to get the Finance Department out of the basement, which was originally for storage. After the election of a different Council, it was decided that those offices be used for the Mayor and Councilmembers. Interim Town Manager Styons stated that he opposed that decision. After extensive discussion, a motion was made by Councilman Wobbleton to follow Interim Town Manager Styons' suggestion of moving the staff back into the new part of the building and that an office be furnished only for the senior elected official which is the Mayor with a second by Councilwoman Byers. After further discussion, a roll call vote was taken. The motion failed 4-2 with Councilman Wobbleton and Councilwoman Byers dissenting.

After further discussion led by Councilman Boston, and after clarification that the Interim Town Manager has jurisdiction over the operations and functionality of the office and continued discussion Mayor Pro-Tempore Brooks made a motion to readdress the discussion of office space with a second by Councilwoman Byers. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 6-0. A motion was then made by Mayor Pro-Tempore Brooks to furnish an office for the Mayor and that the Conference Room will be available for all councilmembers at any time they want with a second by Councilman Wobbleton. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 5-1 with Councilwoman Williams dissenting.

XII. TOWN ATTORNEY'S REPORT

Attorney Isenberg stated that she reported everything that she needed to report on during the meeting and has nothing to add.

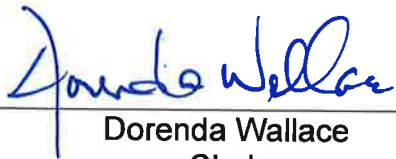
XIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM MAYOR AND COUNCIL

Councilman Boston announced that he was asked by Mr. Wesley Stokes to inform the Council that Congressional Candidate Don Davis will be in Creswell on Saturday, September 17th at 10:00 a.m. at the 523 Café on Main Street.

XVI. ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted,



Dorenda Wallace
Clerk



Brian Roth
Mayor