

**TOWN OF PLYMOUTH MEETING MINUTES  
AUGUST 14, 2023 – VIA COUNCIL CHAMBERS AND ZOOM  
7:00 p.m.**

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

Mayor Roth called the meeting to order and welcomed all attendees. Mayor Roth then announced that Town Manager Floyd will not be attending the meeting and that Town Attorney Isenberg will be joining the meeting via ZOOM. Councilman Boston led with prayer and Mayor Roth led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENT	ABSENT	COUNCILMEMBER
X		Mayor Roth
X		Mayor Pro-Tempore Spencer
X		Councilman Boston
X		Councilwoman Byers
X		Councilman Harps
X		Councilwoman Williams
X		Councilman Wobbleton

**II. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Mayor Roth stated that he was aware of three changes that need to be made on the agenda:

- New Business A. Consideration of 2022 – 2023 Audit Contract be moved to immediately follow the Jeff Best, CPA presentation to Council.
- New Business C. Consideration of Amended Rekor Contract be removed at the request of Attorney Isenberg.
- Request for Closed Session by Attorney Isenberg under N.C.G.S. 143-318.11 (a) (3) and N.C.G.S. 143-318.11 (a) (6).

There being no further changes, a motion to approve the agenda with the three modifications was made by Councilman Boston with a second by Councilwoman Byers. The motion passed unanimously.

**III. PRESENTATIONS TO COUNCIL**

Mayor Roth called upon Jeff Best, CPA to present the 2021 – 2022 Fiscal Year Audit Findings.

After handing out the audit and presenting the audit information and findings, Mr. Best entertained questions from the Council. Mayor Pro-Tempore stated that the

Town needs an internal auditor as well as an external auditor to ensure things are being looked at correctly and in a timely fashion. Mr. Best explained the close-out process, which in the past was performed by Auditors. He continued by explaining that the laws have changed, and in turn following the rules of the close-out process and adjusting finances on a monthly basis will assist the Finance Officer in being more qualified to find issues that might have not necessarily been found, which in turn equals a self-audit. Mayor Roth mentioned the UAL training that will be discussed later in the meeting and Mr. Best stated that the UAL training will be very helpful and educational for the Council. Finance Officer Wallace explained the reason for the retirement finding in the audit. Upon the completion of the presentation, a question and answer session, and upon consultation with Attorney Isenberg, a motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tempore Spencer to accept the 2021 – 2022 Fiscal Year Audit with a second by Councilwoman Byers. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Roth then turned to the subject of the 2022 – 2023 Fiscal Year Audit Contract. Clarification was made about the date of the contract, when the audit is due, and how long it can be extended before the Town is no longer in compliance. Mayor Roth commended staff as they are undertaking their third audit in the last 14 months. Mr. Best stated that his office is ready to begin, and Finance Officer Wallace stated that the Town is ready to begin as well.

Mayor Roth then called upon Mr. Eric Koss of the Soundside Group who presented their proposed Technology Plan for the Town of Plymouth. Mr. Koss stated that this vision will allow the Town to strategize the purchase of IT equipment over an extended period of time. He further pointed out a chart that was included in the Plan after having met with Town Manager Floyd that shows what the Town's immediate needs are vs. what can be purchased over the next few years. When asked if certain items were a part of this year's budget, Finance Officer Wallace stated that she will follow up with the Council in regard to what is in the budget for this fiscal year. A brief explanation took place regarding why much of the hardware needs to be replaced, which is due to the operating systems, as well as an extended discussion regarding the Town's firewalls, back-up system, anti-virus, security cameras for Town Hall and the Police Department, and wireless systems took place. Mr. Koss concluded his presentation by pointing out the budget years that are being suggested for replacement of various pieces of equipment, as well as suggestions to boost the wi-fi signal in the Town. Mayor Roth asked that Town Clerk Wallace to make a note for next month's meeting to consider bringing this topic back up with the Council and get a report from the Town Manager Floyd to give the Council an implementation plan and how it will dovetail with the budget. Councilwoman Williams asked for a list of the priorities and Mayor Roth asked about the SCADA System that the Town has in place and how it fits in with the Town's security. Mr. Koss explained.

#### **IV. PUBLIC COMMENT - None**

#### **V. DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

##### **1. Financial Report**

Finance Officer Wallace gave the Finance Report for the period ending July 31, 2023. Finance Officer Wallace explained that the lower percentages of revenue are due to the beginning of the fiscal year and that the Town is still expecting revenues that are due from the end of the previous fiscal year. Finance Officer Wallace explained that higher percentages that appeared in the report were due to paying out encumbered contract services. She also pointed out the line item for supplies for Planning and Zoning which is a part of Code Enforcement and explained that the Council may have to address increasing that line item in the future. Finance Officer Wallace also explained that the revenue line items will increase as the tax and water income increase. All other outstanding questions asked by the Council were addressed.

##### **2. Police Department**

Chief Williams gave an update regarding the significant decrease in shots fired inside the Town limits. Chief Williams reported that he has received a lot of feedback from the community telling him that things are improving and that they are pleased about the several arrests that have been made. Chief Williams commended the police officers and how they were able to gather information in order accomplish the improvement. Chief Williams reported the success of National Night Out and how the community was involved. Chief Williams spoke about Faith N' Blue and commented about remarks that were made about Pastors not speaking out and clarified that Pastors are indeed participating and speaking out, although it might not be in the manner that some expect. He stated that the pastors are concerned, dedicated, involved, and are trying to come up with solutions. Chief Williams reiterated that the Town has to come together as a community, because law enforcement nor the Council cannot resolve this issue alone. Councilwoman Williams commended Chief Williams on the success of National Night Out. Councilwoman Williams then asked about a statement that Mr. Koss gave earlier regarding the cameras not working properly. Chief Williams stated that he voiced concern with the Council previously in the Department was experiencing problems with the company that the Department purchased the cameras from. He stated that there is buffering, however the Department is still able to gather pertinent information. Councilwoman Williams emphasized that the issue with the cameras be worked on for the safety of the community and the Police Department. Councilman Boston asked Chief Williams to announce upcoming plans that Faith N' Blue. Chief Williams announced that on Wednesday, a group of young people will be taken to Chocowinity to a

skating rink, which is one way to get the community as well as parents involved. Councilman Boston then spoke about some of the things that he encounters as Assistant Principal of Washington County Middle School, and how Faith N' Blue could help not only Plymouth, but all of Washington County. Chief Williams reported that Faith N' Blue met with some young people and received their input as well. Councilman Boston spoke about taking pride in the youth and how even the importance of a nice basketball court can make a difference. Chief Williams then spoke about the hiring process taking longer due to a change in rules and reported that there are three prospective hires in the pipeline for the Police Department.

### 3. Code Enforcement

Code Enforcement Officer Brown presented the report that was included in the Agenda Package. Councilman Boston asked about the changeover in the provision of garbage services and how he wished that the public had been informed about the transition earlier. Councilman Boston also stated that he had hoped local citizens were given the chance to work with the new company.

Town Clerk Wallace asked Mayor Roth to recognize for the record that no one signed up for Public Comment.

### 4. Town Projects/Public Works

#### Streets:

- Mowing right of ways
- Cleaning ditches on Jackson Heights Drive

#### Buildings & Grounds:

- N/A

#### Water:

- Repaired leaks at:
  - 115 Brinkley Place
- Installed water faucet at County Park
- Repaired 2 inch water line on Hyman Lane

#### Sewer:

- Cleared out blockages at:
  - 523 Jefferson Street
  - 107 Winesett Circle
  - 767 US Hwy 64 East
  - 1003 Wilson Street
  - 206 6<sup>th</sup> Street

- 127 Hilly Circle
- 333 West Avenue
- 306 General Pettigrew Drive
- Flushed manhole on Rankin Lane
- Repaired broken sewer line on Hyman Lane

#### WWTP

- N/A

#### Pump Stations

- N/A

#### Sanitation

- N/A

Public Works Director Wright then reported on Town Projects. He stated that there are still a few projects in the close-out process due to staffing at respective grant entities. The lift station inspection has been completed for the Sewer Line Grant. Public Works Director Wright reported that he will meet with engineers to set up a schedule for smoke testing. He also spoke with the engineers about the possibility of using some sort of dye to change the color of the smoke so that he can let citizens know that their property is not on fire. Public Works Director Wright stated that he submitted a grant for putting in a Pump Out for the Ferry System for \$20,000 and it was approved. He further reported that he is waiting for a contract for the grant. The grant for \$16,000,000 Viable Utility Grant was approved at \$500,000 for water. The Town ranked #10 out of 155. \$500,000 was approved for sewer system and the Town ranked #38 out of 135. Public Works Director Wright also explained that he was told that the Town can take out a loan for the amount that was not approved. Finance Director Wallace stated that the Town cannot take out a loan in the amount of \$15,000,000. Mayor Roth explained that funds for the grant that the Town did receive, will need to match the amount dollar for dollar. He further stated that it was his understanding that by the time the Town will need to begin repaying the loan, there are other loans that the Town has taken that will age out, and because of that the Town will should be able match what is needed for Viable Utilities. Finance Director Wallace stated that strategies will be discussed relative to this topic under the UAL section of the agenda. She stated that unfortunately, the Town waited too long before increasing utility rates and when the rates were increased it only affected Sanitation and Stormwater. Finance Officer Wallace stated that a plan is being discussed about small incremental increases that will assist in paying back the loan. She also stated that citizens need to understand that the rates must be increased in order to sustain the Town's system and that this is a State requirement. Councilwoman Byers agreed that the Town is regulated by the State, in addition to other areas such as the costs of



maintenance and chemicals. Mayor Roth reiterated that it is a requirement of the State to ensure towns maintain their water/sewer systems.

Public Works Director Wright let the Council know that a decision must be made as to what will be done with the Viable Utilities grant. He presented some options that were discussed after some of the staff met with the Wooten Company. One possible option is to work with Streetscape plan on the water side. On the sewer side, possibilities include rehabilitation of the lift station that the Town services that is located at the site for the new school in Washington County. Access to that lift station is limited as it is, and if something were to happen, there is the chance that it might take one to two days to fix any problems, which could result in shutting down the school for that amount of time. Public Works Director Wright presented another possibility which is to replace the out of date generator on Washington Street, as well as make it aesthetically pleasing, or pick a neighborhood that requires both water and sewer rehabilitation. He explained to the Council that he ran some numbers for the different scenarios that included contingency, design, administration, and construction.

Councilwoman Williams asked how Streetscape would be affected. Public Works Director Wright explained the water and sewer line logistics. Councilwoman Williams also asked for more information about speaking with County Manager Curtis Potter about the lift station at the new school site. A discussion also took place as to whether or not the lift station will be able to handle the added capacity of the new school and when the new school construction will be complete. Mayor Roth suggested partnering with the County and asking the State for an economic development grant as it is likely that there will be additional construction due to the location of the school. Public Works Director Wright also pointed out that the school will be a disaster evacuation site, which prompted a discussion about a FEMA grant.

Public Works Director Wright then announced that the Town did not receive approval for the PARTF grant and explained what took place while he listened to the approval procedure. Public Works Director Wright reported that he expects a letter stating that the Town was not approved. Councilwoman Williams asked to see the letter when it is received. Attorney Isenberg asked if there is a process for appealing the decision. Public Works Director Wright stated that he is not aware of one. Mayor Roth explained why the State needs to change the law regarding PARTF as it is unfair to small communities.

Councilwoman Williams asked Public Works Director about a fire in a cemetery that took place in June involving one of the Town's tractors. She stated that the fire took place on a Saturday, and it was not on Town property. Public Works Director Wright stated that he had it taken care of.

5. Fire Department

The report from the Fire Department was included in the agenda package.

**VI. CONSENT AGENDA**

The consent agenda included:

**A. APPROVAL OF JULY 10, 2023 REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES**

A motion to approve the June 12, 2023 Regular Town Council Minutes was made by Councilman Wobbleton with a second by Councilman Boston. The motion passed unanimously.

**VII. OLD BUSINESS**

**A. STREETScape**

Mayor Roth asked Public Works Director Wright to address how the Council might want to move forward. Public Works Director Wright gave an explanation. After discussion, a motion to move the project area from the West 100 block of Water Street to the 100 block of East Water Street on both sides by Councilwoman Williams with a second by Councilman Tharps. The motion passed unanimously. Mayor Roth then referenced a recommendation from the CPNI Group regarding widening the sidewalk. Public Works Director Wright explained why the sidewalk should not be widened because of the depth of asphalt and concrete. Mayor Roth then explained the CPNI Group's reasoning for not widening the sidewalk. After further discussion, a motion was made by to leave the sidewalk the same size by Councilwoman Williams with a second by Councilman Wobbleton. The motion passed unanimously. When Mayor Roth asked staff if there was anything else to address regarding this the project, Town Clerk Wallace and Public Director Mike Wright stated that Allisson Platt might not agree with continuing to work with the project if the sidewalks are not widened. Public Works Director Wright and Town Clerk Wallace made it clear that the project will not be abandoned as the Town has the design and that the project still needs to go out for an engineering bid. Mayor Pro-Tempore Spencer asked what Allison Platt's role is. Public Works Director Mike Wright and Mayor Roth agreed that the project will not be derailed. Mayor Roth offered reasons as to why it would be beneficial for Ms. Platt to continue with the project. Town Clerk Wallace stated that Ms. Platt ultimately needed to hear the Council's decision on how to move forward and clarified that the possibility of Ms. Platt changing her mind was something that the Council needed to be made aware of.

## **B. CPNI SPECIAL MEETING**

Mayor Roth followed up about having a Special Meeting with the CPNI Group about their findings before the next Council meeting. The Council decided to hold a session where CPNI can attend virtually. Mayor Roth then brought up Town Manager Floyd working to set a date with County and Town leaders. Mayor Roth continued by reporting that the County leaders are setting up separate meetings with Town leaders. Mayor Roth stated that the County leaders have proposed August 28<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. at the Cooperative Extension Center next door. Mayor Roth mentioned that in addition to this, Town Manager Floyd and staff will work to put together a quarterly meeting with all elected officials, hopefully sometime in September. After discussion, the Council agreed that the CPNI Group meeting be held on August 31<sup>st</sup> at 6:00 p.m., at the Town Council Chambers.

## **C. CONSIDERATION/DISCUSSION OF DOG PARK**

Mayor Roth reported that the Memorandum of Understanding was included in the Agenda Package and asked the pleasure of the Council. A motion to approve the Memorandum of Understanding by Councilwoman Williams with a second by Councilwoman Byers. The motion passed unanimously.

## **VIII. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. CONSIDERATION/DISCUSSION OF QUALITY OFFICE EQUIPMENT, INC. COPIER CONTRACT**

Mayor Roth stated that Town Clerk Wallace would address this topic. Town Clerk Wallace explained that a new lease contract is needed and that it will fall under the new GASB law. She explained that the two copiers located at Town Hall were traded out due to high volume usage, and the copiers at Public Works, the Police Department, and the Fire Department did not need to be changed. Town Clerk Wallace also reported that the amount of this lease has a cost savings benefit. A motion to approve the Quality Office Equipment, Inc. Copier Contract was made by Councilwoman Williams with a second by Councilman Boston. The motion passed unanimously.

### **B. UAL TRAINING REQUIREMENT FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS**

Mayor Roth asked Town Clerk Wallace to address this topic. Town Clerk Wallace explained that the Unit Assistance List (UAL) provides training for towns on the list. Town Clerk Wallace stated that she has taken the training, and received an email that Mayor Roth has taken it as well. The training is for elected officials, managers, and finance officers. She reported that it is mandatory training for the Town Manager and that it is not mandatory for



elected officials although it is suggested that two to three elected officials attend. Town Clerk Wallace reported that a training session will be held in Greenville on October 25<sup>th</sup>, and that there is a two hour prerequisite that will take place online. She further reiterated what Mr. Best stated in the meeting earlier in regard to the importance of this type of training in that the attendees can be educated about the audit, finances, water, and sewer rates, and how the Town can improve its standing can be addressed as well. Town Clerk Wallace stated that she will follow up with Councilmembers about the time of the training. Councilwoman Byers stated that she would like to try to attend the training. Town Clerk Wallace stated that she will provide Councilmembers with the training information should they choose to participate.

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

### **A. CAMA LAND USE PLAN**

Town Clerk Wallace reported that Town Manager Floyd would like to set a date for presentation of the CAMA Land Use Plan. Mayor Roth suggested to the Council that he call and speak to them about setting a date sometime in September.

Councilwoman Williams asked Town Clerk Wallace about staff putting together information for citizens. Town Clerk Wallace replied that staff were directed to put together a newsletter; however, Town Clerk Wallace reported that the last time she spoke with Town Manager Floyd about it, the newsletter was put on hold indefinitely. Council members reiterated that under their previous direction, a newsletter should be created and published.

## **X. TOWN ATTORNEY**

Attorney Isenberg reported that she is continuing to work on the curfew ordinance and that additional data is needed from the Police Department to verify some information in order to finish the ordinance. Attorney Isenberg also shared that she went to the Municipal Attorney's Conference that was held in Wilmington, spoke at the conference, and met other Town attorneys. Attorney Isenberg stated that she learned about some things that are going on in the legislature and gave a heads-up about a lot of municipalities experiencing issues due to a shortage of auditors. She further reported that there is a push for a new law that will make it punitive if local governments do not turn in their audits on time and that the League of Municipalities and the Governor is lobbying against that law. Attorney Isenberg stated that she has more information to share with the Council in closed session and that only the Council and the Attorney should be involved in the

closed session. Finance Officer Wallace added to Attorney Isenberg's report about audits being turned in late in that local governments will be substantially fined. Attorney Isenberg corrected Finance Officer Wallace and stated that the revenue of local governments will be withheld. Mayor Roth asked for clarification as to whether or not the General Assembly is behind this, and Attorney Isenberg stated that it is coming from the State Treasurer.

#### **XI. CLOSED SESSION**

A motion was made to go into closed session under N.C.G.S. 143-318.11 (a) (3) and N.C.G.S. 143-318.11 (a) (6) by Councilwoman Williams with a second by Councilman Boston. The motion carried unanimously.

NOTE: Council asked for a 4 minute break before entering into closed session.

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

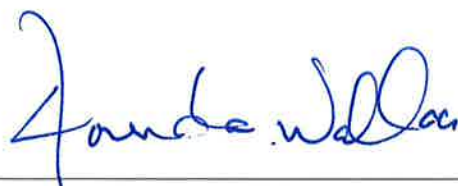
Councilman Boston announced that A Community Oneness will be held at the Uniontown Church of Christ in Piney Woods from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., this coming Saturday. The day will include various activities, and all are invited.

Mayor Roth announced the Washington County Schools Convocation to be held August 24<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m. at Washington County Middle School in Roper, North Carolina.

#### **XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

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

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Dorenda Wallace  
Clerk  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Brian Roth  
Mayor