



**Board of Commissioners
Town Board Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 14, 2025 at 6:00 P.M.**

Attendance: Mayor Tony Lapis
Mayor Pro-Tem/Commissioner Lori Furr
Commissioner Chris Carter (absent, excused)
Commissioner Steven Dixon
Commissioner William Meadows
Commissioner Justin Simpson
Town Administrator Randy Holloway
Town Attorney John Scarbrough
Town Clerk Amy Schueneman

Also Present: Erin Burris, Crystal Smith, Ally Schueneman, Rodney Schueneman, Deputy A. Sellers, Deputy T. Beverly, Pastor Niles Sandeen, Dustin Sneed, Austin McDonald, and Rita Gilmore.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Tony Lapis called the meeting to order.

INVOCATION

Pastor Niles Sandeen of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church led the Board in prayer.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Lapis led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Public Forum

No one spoke.

A motion to excuse Commissioner Carter from the Board Meeting was made by Commissioner Furr with a second by Commissioner Simpson. (4-0, Commissioner Carter absent)

2. Conflict of Interest

The Mayor and Commissioners are asked at this time to reveal if they have a Conflict of Interest with any item on the Agenda in order to be recused for that item.

(No member shall be excused from voting except upon matters involving the consideration of the member's own financial interest or official conduct or on matters on which the member is prohibited from voting under G.S. 14-234 or 160D-109(a). NC State Statute 160A-75 and no public official shall knowingly participate in making or administering a contract, including the award of money in the form of a grant, loan, or other appropriation, with any nonprofit with which that public official is associated. NC State Statute 14-234.3)

No one had a conflict of interest.

TOWN OF MOUNT PLEASANT

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3. Approve Agenda

Mayor Lapish added two items to the Consent Agenda:

- C. Conflict of Interest Policy
- D. Budget Amendment #9 Project #26 final cost adjustment

A motion to approve the amended Agenda was made by Commissioner Meadows with a second by Commissioner Dixon. All Board Members were in favor. (4-0, Commissioner Carter absent)

4. Consent Agenda

- A. Minutes December 9, 2024
- B. Minutes Special Called Meeting December 23, 2024
- C. ADD ON-Conflict of Interest Policy
- D. ADD ON-Budget Amendment #9 Project #26 final cost adjustment

Commissioner Furr made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as submitted with a second by Commissioner Simpson. All Board Members were in favor. (4-0, Commissioner Carter absent)

5. Staff Reports

- A. Town Manager-Randy Holloway
- B. Town Asst. Manager- Planning & Economic Development Director - Erin Burris
Ms. Burris highlighted several items from her "End of Year Highlights Report":
 - 3 zoning permits were issued for new homes within the Town limits and 3 for the ETJ in 2024
 - The population increased by 8 people for the year. According to the State Demographer estimate the Town grew by 16 people between 2022 and 2023. Our population is now 1758 which is a population growth of 79 people since the 2020 census at a rate of 1.5% annually. The Town has averaged 8 new people a year since 1940.
 - There was a net gain of 9 businesses mainly at the Studios at the Mill.
- C. Town Clerk/Finance Officer - Amy Schueneman
- D. Human Resources/Events- Crystal Smith
- E. Code Enforcement/Grant Writer- Jim Sells
- F. Public Works- Daniel Crowell
- G. Fire Department-Dustin Sneed
- H. Cabarrus County Sheriff's Department

6. Old Business

A. Receive update on Water Treatment Issues.

Randy Holloway provided a timeline summary regarding ongoing water system issues. Eighteen months ago, July 2023, water tests came back from the lab with elevated THM's and HAA's from the Marathon and Walker Road testing sites, which are selected by the State. Town Staff reached out to other jurisdictions and to an engineering firm to ask for suggestions. Everyone replied this situation is very common in the summertime; ground temperatures and water temperatures are up, and the Town should just flush the system by flowing hydrants to correct the problem. The Town flushed the system multiple times prior to the October testing. The October 2023 test results came back with close to the same results as in July 2023. Once again, the Town flushed the system and began to investigate other possible causes. An engineering firm that was under contract with the Town, Mr. Holloway, and the Town Engineer had a phone conversation after receiving the October 2023 results discussing how the Town had secured funding of \$985,000 to help bring the water quality back into compliance and would they look at the situation and design a plan to correct the

elevated THM's and HAA's. Early spring of 2024, the engineering firm sent a proposal for \$350,000 in engineering fees and a recommendation of a \$3.5 million carbon filtration system, even though they were made aware of the \$1 million budget. For the Town to implement the proposal, a \$2 million loan would be necessary resulting in extremely high water and sewer rates for residents. The Board and Staff knew this was not feasible for customers and sought other recommendations. The Town then consulted another firm looking for a more cost-effective solution and went through an extensive amount of testing over the summer and fall of 2024. Testing revealed that the water leaving the plant has slightly elevated THM's and HAA's when it enters the waterlines.

The water is still safe to use. The EPA have shown a person would have to drink the town's water every day for 70 years to have even a very slight chance of developing cancer. While studying the results of the data collected, all three engineering firms are looking at solutions to correct the issues. *(A schematic of the water storage system was shown on screen. A copy is included in the Minute Book.)*

The Town is currently consulting with 3 engineering firms to determine the best course of action to help alleviate the elevated numbers of THM's and HAA's. The first step would be to replace all the filter media inside the water treatment plant to reduce the byproducts in the water. The company that installed the initial system at the water treatment plant has gone out of business, and they sold all remaining supplies to a company in Utah that has a branch office in Hickory, NC. It took several months to locate the company and receive a quote to replace all the filter media and replace system components. The system is so old that the company went to their microfiche files to find the details of the original schematics to give a quote to rebuild the interior workings of the water system. *(A quote from WesTech Engineering, LLC was displayed on screen. A copy is included in the Minute Book.)* The equipment cost is \$127,599 with labor cost of \$218,511 which totals \$346,110. WesTech will come into the plant and replace all the internal working components (filter media, settling tubes, etc.) inside the system. A meeting has been scheduled for January 22nd to discuss their proposal and how it will affect plant operation while the machinery is being repaired. After this step there is still money left over to add other components to improve water quality, if it is needed.

The next step would be to get a carbon activated filtration system by Pure Aqua which was quoted at \$176,000. This is something the Town would like to avoid because of long-term maintenance costs to replace the carbon every six months to keep it working effectively. Also, a very intense UV system could be added for \$99,000, but it may not be necessary.

The third step, if needed, may be to aerate the ground storage tank. The 200,000-gallon ground storage tank is where water leaves the plant and goes out into both the waterline system and the North Drive water tank. Aerating the tank will help circulate the water to reduce THM's.

Initially, it was thought that the lagoon, a 4,500,000-gallon water storage area before entering the water plant, may need to be cleaned since the last time the Town cleaned the lagoon was 2017. However, a company came out to give the Town a quote and said it did not need to be cleaned at this time. If the Town did decide to clean it anyway, it would cost approximately \$100,000. If the Town had to complete all the above-mentioned steps to improve the water quality, dredging the lagoon would still be within the \$985,000 amount budgeted for the project.

Another minor adjustment will be to lightly chlorinate the water enough to kill any bacteria as it is leaving the water plant and to add an additional chlorination point at the ground storage tank before the water enters the North Drive water tank and waterlines. This will reduce the amount of time the chlorine reacts with the byproducts in the water and will lower the THM's and HAA's. The Town stores 650,000 gallons of water for fire prevention in addition to the 200,000 gallons of water used

daily by our customers resulting in more time for the chlorine to continue to react with the byproducts. During the process of the Water Treatment Plant being upgraded, the Town may need to shut the plant down for approximately 10 days and open the water valve from Concord to purchase water from them at a higher rate. Mr. Holloway will have more information for the Board at the February 11th meeting. He asked the Board if they would like to host 2 or 3 Town Hall meetings in March for the customers to ask questions, and the Board members were in favor of it.

Commissioner Simpson asked how long the water stays in the system before being used by customers. Mr. Holloway said that with one full-time and two part-time employees, the plant is having to run fast and hard to fill tanks before the plant can close for the day and/or for a day off, so it may be in storage for 2 to 3 days. When another full-time employee is hired, the plant will run 7 days a week to slow down the process and allow the water more time to filter, which will improve water quality.

7. New Business

A. Consider implementing a \$100 fee for repeated service calls to the same address for the same issue when not following the directions of Town Staff.

Amy Schueneman explained that the Public Works Dept. has been making multiple trips to some of the same residential and business locations each year due to sewer line blockage from “flushable” wipes, tree roots, etc. On December 3rd, they were asked to unclog a line that was packed with “flushable” wipes. Public Works unstopped the customer’s sewer line, and the office contacted the customer to let them know not to put “flushable” wipes down the toilet because although they are “flushable” they are not biodegradable. The customer stated she would tell everyone at the location not to use the “flushable” wipes. On December 23rd Public Works was called back out to the same location for the same issue.

Town Staff requested to add a repetitive service call fee to the Fee & Charges schedule for repeated service calls for “flushable” wipes and other preventable issues.

The Board agreed to develop a fee for repetitive service calls if there is some type of written policy for repeat calls in the same year and at a certain point listed there would be a charge, so there is a clear policy to follow. Town Staff will draft a policy for the February meeting.

Commissioner Meadows asked if these calls are within the right-of-way easement area or on private property. Public Works staff have helped jet sewer lines on private property if the customer has a clean out closer to the road as a courtesy. At the direction of the Board, Mr. Holloway will discuss stopping all work on private property with the Public Works Director.

No motion was made.

B. Discuss utility payment reminders

Amy Schueneman informed the Board that the January cutoffs for “previous” water/sewer balances were high due to the holidays. A customer requested that the Town Staff call him before his water was cut off for delinquent payments. Others have also asked to be called. Several years ago, staff would make phone calls to customers on the cutoff list the day before disconnections were made. It required three employees for six-plus hours each month to call everyone. As the months went by, more customers became dependent on the phone calls before they remembered to make their payments increasing staff time towards this endeavor. It was brought to the attention of the Board, and the Board agreed staff should stop making phone calls.

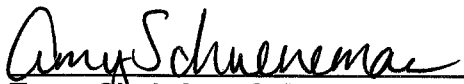
The Town has started using Constant Contact for emails to customers. A component of the program will allow text messages. Staff is asking if the Board would like to allow sign-ups for text messages and/or emailed messages to remind customers to make delinquent payments prior to the 5th of the month. The Board discussed the options and agreed to allow sign-ups for both text messages and email messages reminders to be sent prior to the 20th when payments are due. They did not think sending one out right before cutoffs would be a good idea since it would confuse customers with the conflicting due dates. This message would be a generic reminder of the due date for all payments.

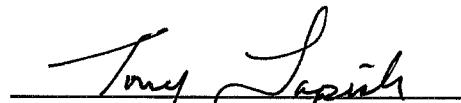
No motion was made. The Board came to a consensus.

8. Adjournment

With nothing else to come before the Board, Commissioner Meadows made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Furr seconded the motion. All Board Members were in favor. (4-0, Commissioner Carter absent)

By our signatures, the following minutes were approved as submitted on Tuesday, February 11, 2025 in the Regular Meeting.


Town Clerk Amy Schueneman


Mayor Tony Lapish

