

Minutes of the Work Session of
The Liberty Town Council
Held on April 19, 2021 5:30PM

Present

- Mayor: The Honorable Filmore York
- Council: Chris Compton, Larry Coble, Don Herndon, Tyson Nixon and JR Beard
- Interim Town Manager: Scott Kidd
- Town Clerk: Jessica Brown
- Staff: Parks & Recreation Assistant; Logan Maness, Police Chief; David Semrad; Fire Chief; Matt Talbott, Finance/HR Director; Kathy Bond, Safety Director Bret Pedigo, and Public Services Director; Terry Crouse
- Town Attorney; Bill Flowe

To Order

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm and welcomed everyone. He welcomed Sandra Martin and the Liberty Arts Guild.

Adoption of Agenda

Council Member Tyson Nixon made a motion to adopt the agenda with the change remove #4 Police Steering Update by Billy Judson.. Mr. Judson is unable to be here and will speak at the next meeting. Council Member JR Beard seconded the motion which passed unanimously with a roll call vote: Council Member Larry Coble voted yes, Council Member Don Herndon voted yes, Council Member Tyson Nixon voted yes, Council Member JR Beard voted yes, and Council Member Chris Compton voted yes. The Agenda was approved with the change.

Meter SYS Advanced Metering Solutions Presentation

Andy Honeycutt of Meter SYS came forward and introduced himself. He said he previously worked for Progress Energy. AMI (Advance Metering Infrastructure) is based in Raleigh. It started in 2015 and has locations in the Carolinas and Florida. They offer full program support. It improves accuracy and doesn't burden the staff with meter reading. It includes alerts and alarms and allows for maintaining control of the billing process. It increases utility revenues. Mechanical meters slow down over time. It allows for higher levels of customer service. We would be able to see where spikes in usage were. They created this product for small areas to help clear up staff. Mayor York asked about the life expectancy of these meters. Mr. Honeycutt said to expect about fifteen years. Mayor York also asked if it helps stop theft and tampering. Mr. Honeycutt said it

would flag and let you know immediately. Council Member Larry Coble asked about the cost. Mr. Honeycutt said it was about \$330.00 per meter. Council Member Chris Compton asked the time of installation from start to finish. Mr. Honeycutt said it would be about four to five months once they got the green light. Town Manager Scott Kidd said it takes at least four people three to six days to read meters now. Council Member Chris Compton asked if customers could go online and see their usage. Mr. Honeycutt said yes they could see consumption, create alerts, and pay bills. Council Member Tyson Nixon asked if there was ever a time where it could not be used in a residential setting? Mr. Honeycutt responded that Carthage is very spread out with rolling hills and they had to do it with cellular service.

Information

Monthly Reports

The Town Manager has included the monthly Manager's reports in the agenda for the Council to review and discuss if needed.

Safety Director Brett Pedigo said Osha was very impressed with our safety record. Police Chief David Semrad said he still has one opening and domestic criminal activity is on the rise. Council Member Compton asked if there was any commonality for these crimes and Chief Semrad said it was drugs, alcohol, and mental health issues. Mayor York thanked the Fire Department for burning an abandoned house. Parks and Rec Director Logan Maness said they have worked hard to get things ready for the Farmer's Market. Their first baseball game is this week. She is working with Kelly Harrell at Liberty School to possibly have an afternoon basketball skill program. Public Service Director Terry Crouse said there was some damage to Swannanoa and Highfill streets due to the detour wehn DOT was repairing a drain pipe. They approached DOT about it but they said that it was not on their route. Council Member JR Beard asked how this could be avoided in the future. Mr. Crouse said by engaging with DOT more on the best detour routes. Council Member Tyson Nixon said they could specify no trucks through route and Council Member JR Beard said they could set a weight limit. Terry Crouse said the police did have a heavy presence in the area which helped. The abandoned house on 314 E Kime is gone and seed and straw have been put out in the yard. They are determining ways to put lien on property with the attorney. The Fire Department burned the house at 305 S Murphy Street. They are working on an agreement with the landowner at 415 W Dameron to burn. Terry Crouse said he is shocked at the amount of land the Town is responsible for mowing including: well sites, Kimrey place, Town Hall, Public Works, water tower sites, parks, wastewater treatment plant and the railway right of way. Council Member Larry Coble asked if there are any other options but Terry said the new meter system will help.

Administrative Reports

Manager's Report

Town Manager Scott Kidd gave a report. We had our pre construction meeting for the CDBG grant. Construction should begin in the first part of May. Scopes of work have been approved for AIA Water and Sewer. We are waiting for the state to get back with us on the ASADRA plans. We are still waiting to hear about the LWCF grant. Liberty should receive \$780,000.00 in aid from the American Rescue plan. He does not have a full explanation regarding the funds yet. Budget Amendments #40, #41, #42 are

attached. Public Works now has a Ford F450 which can do limbs, sewer backups, and increases productivity.

Finance Report

Finance Director Kathy Bond gave the report. She went over the cover sheet and mentioned that the library is requesting money from the Lowe account for construction projects.

Old Business

Approval March Finance Report

The March Finance Report needs to be approved by Council.

New Business

Chamber of Commerce Grant Request

Amanda Pabst Liberty Chamber Executive Director presented a request for a \$18,515.00 request from the Town. They attached a letter with a formal request. Ms. Pabst said they have provided their financials for the past two years as requested. This would be a one time request. They did not get to have events that bring in money due to COVID and this would help them get back on their feet. The request includes: \$8,515.00 to pay for the Fireworks Display, \$5,000.00 to pay off loan taken out to cover the costs of the electronic sign that they could not pay out of pocket, and \$5,000.00 to be used at their discretion to help supplement the costs of the following items: to pay bands for the July Festival, pay bands for the Christmas parade, pay labor to have the Christmas lights removed and put back up, supplies for the luncheons, banquet, Taste of the Town event, and educational classes. The Chamber also needs new gravel to be put at the Chamber lot, Lawn care and maintenance of \$1000.00 per year, landscaping around the Chamber lot and the new sign, caboose door to be fixed so it locks properly, and maintenance on the caboose itself. Council Member JR Beard asked if they get revenue for the sign and Ms. Pabst said they had two pay in advance last year. Council Member Larry Coble asked if there were any plans to cancel fireworks? Ms. Pabst said she has not advertised them yet. Council Member Chris Compton said the Town has always paid for the fireworks. Council Member JR Beard said the former company that did them gave the Town a great discount. Council Member Larry Coble asked if they would get more bids. Ms. Pabst said they just approached the company that did them last year. Council Member Don Herndon said it is good to have things going on that will welcome new businesses. Ms. Pabst said they have ten new businesses. Council Member Tyson Nixon asked the price of the new sign. Ms. Pabst said it was just under \$30,000.00. Town Manager Scott Kidd said we will have an overall Budget Presentation next month and a Public Hearing in June.

Auditor RFP FY 2021

Town Manager Scott Kidd and Finance Director Kathy Bond will go over RFP's for an auditor for the 2021 Fiscal Year. It is best practice to get proposals for a new auditor every few years. The Town has not done this in ten years. We sent five to ones close by and got three back. They were roughly the same price. The staff recommends CPA Deborah Wentz. She wants to educate towns and is willing to help teach. We are not currently 100% satisfied when we reach out to the current auditor with questions. She is located just outside of Charlotte. The Town Manager said it is common for our current auditor to ask for extensions.

Budget Amendment #38

This amendment is to move funds from Enterprise Fund Balance Appropriated to Sewer Capital Outlay Equipment (Preventative Maintenance on Pump). The Purchase Order has already been approved but funds need to be moved for the new year.

Committee Report

ABC Report - Douglas Hardin

ABC Board Chair Douglas Hardin said things are going well at the ABC Store. They have \$79,090.00 profit YTD as of February. He does not have the March numbers yet. They have a new POS system. They have bar code scanners for inventory and an upgraded alarm system. They want to focus on giving back to employees and beautifying the store. They now have a full time Manager Tammy Moore.

Citizen Comments

Sandra Martin President of the Liberty Arts Guild came forward to speak. She handed out a letter requesting a grant of startup funds in the amount of \$15,000.00 in order to lease space and to fund related expenses. She said they have twelve members that attend the meetings and are growing.

Del Pearce of 521 Dogwood asked if the new water meters would be compatible with a Mac computer.

Council Comments

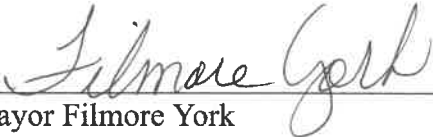
Council Member Don Herndon said he met Saturday April 10th in the Town Hall Parking Lot with volunteers to pick up trash. They picked up thirty three bags of trash in two hours. He suggested more signage prohibiting littering.

Mayor Comments

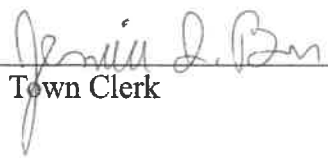
Mayor York thanked Council Member Herndon for organizing the Community Clean up. He said there were funds left from the Downtown Revitalization Grant that are now being used by Experience Liberty to enhance Downtown. They have put gravel in the parking lot and painted the former LTD building grey. They are continuing to change windows, paint, and pressure wash. They will try to be done by June. He has not heard anything in a few weeks about the Newlin property. He thanked the Fire Department for hosting COVID shots and the Sheriff's hot dog supper. He said the Farmers Market hosted by Insurance of the Carolina went very well.

Motion to Adjourn

There being no further business to discuss, Council Member Tyson Nixon motioned to adjourn the meeting and Council Member Larry Coble seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Council Member Larry Coble voted yes, Council Member Don Herndon voted yes, Council Member JR Beard voted yes, Council Member Tyson Nixon and Council Member Chris Compton voted yes. The meeting was adjourned.



Mayor Filmore York

ATTEST: 

Town Clerk

