

**TOWN OF PLYMOUTH MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 14, 2021 – COUNCIL CHAMBERS AND VIA ZOOM
7:00 p.m.**

I. CALL TO ORDER – Mayor Vershumn Hawkins

The Mayor opened the meeting and welcomed all attendees whether they be I person or on ZOOM. Mayor Hawkins then asked the Town Clerk to proceed with a Roll Call:

PRESENT	ABSENT	COUNCILMEMBER
X		Councilwoman Brooks
X		Councilman Arnold
		Councilwoman Byers
X		Councilwoman Teel
X		Councilwoman Williams
X		Councilman Wobbleton
X		Mayor Hawkins
TOTAL		
6		

The opening prayer was offered by Councilman Wobbleton, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mayor Hawkins. Councilwoman Byers presence was acknowledged after the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Hawkins asked the Council if they had any changes to the agenda. There being no changes, a motion was made by Councilwoman Byers to approve the agenda with a second by Councilman Wobbleton. Roll call vote was taken. Motion passed 6-0.

III. PUBLIC HEARING

Mayor Hawkins reported that the previously scheduled public hearing will be delayed until another time.

IV. PRESENTATIONS TO COUNCIL – The Mayor call for Mr. Tom Harrison, who was not present at the time. Mayor Hawkins asked the Town Clerk if she was aware of his status. The Town Clerk reported Mr. Harrison informed Interim Town Manager Layton that he is running late. Mayor Hawkins stated that Mr. Harrison's presentation could be pushed back.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mayor Hawkins asked the Clerk if she had been contacted by any citizens to request to speak to Council. The Clerk responded that someone called on inquire about speaking, but did not follow-up. Mayor Hawkins asked if a sign-up sheet was available, and the Clerk stated that she can make one available.

VI. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

1. Financial – The Finance Officer explained that the Council had received a summary report of the Budget vs. Actual amounts for the date ending May 31, 2021:

	Budgeted	Expenses	Variance
General Fund (10)	\$3,401,898	\$2,510,561.85	\$677,844.80
Water Fund (61)	\$1,356,319	\$1,165,826.09	\$190,492.91
Sewer Fund (62)	\$862,550	\$780,958.50	\$81,591.50
Solid Waste Fund (66)	\$604,897	\$542,050.48	\$62,846.52
Stormwater Fund (67)	\$107,000	\$90,955.33	\$16,044.67

2. Tax/Utility Collections. The Town Clerk presented Ms. Nadine Moore's report in her absence. 1429 utility bills were mailed on May 25, 2021 with a due date of June 15, 2021. The amount billed was \$264,207.89. 1340 payments were received for a total of \$223,288.16. The delinquent balance, which is \$297,441.96 encompasses 2015 – 2021. 94 payments were received for property and vehicle taxes in the amount of \$58,271.94. Delinquent tax payments cover 2015 – 2020 in the amount of \$360,417.18.
3. The Director of Public Works reported:
 - On-going projects: The Town is still waiting on CAMA to close out the Bulkhead Extension project. A revised design was submitted to the Town for the downtown sidewalks. The SCADA system training will take place June 9, 2021. The piece of equipment for Grit removal for the Wastewater Treatment Plant needs to be replaced. The Wooten Company will install a pump station at no cost to the Town. The Town has received final engineering design approval as well as additional funding approval from CDBG. The award for the contractor and a pre-construction meeting are to be scheduled. There is still some field work to be completed on elevated tanks for the AIA water line. The status for the Domtar restrooms remains the same in that costs have been submitted to the attorney. An electrician has been contacted for the installation of a hand dryer at Wilson Street Park. The Town is still waiting for an engineer to evaluate the field drainage in regards to the walking track. A generator was

installed and wired up on a concrete pad at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Demolition of the building at Roanoke Avenue is almost complete, at which time a pad will be installed there as well. A Contractor is on site for demolition of 101 – 103 West Water Street. The contractor is now packing sand at that site.

- Streets:
 - Repaired sink holes @ 510 and 12114 East Main Street
 - Patched potholes on Water Street and Adams Street
 - Cleaned up lot at West Main Street and West Water Street
 - Cut right of way on Anne Street, Campbell Street, Pine Street, Crescent Drive, Plywood road, Latham Avenue and the Nature Trail.
- Building & Grounds:
 - Repaired decking & railing at the museum and boardwalks
 - Replaced awning at 110 Washington Street
 - Installed vinyl flooring in the Police Department breakroom
- Water: Repaired leaks:
 - Roanoke Avenue
 - 764 Hwy 64E
 - Replaced fire hydrant and valve at 312 East Main Street
 - Installed meter, riser and box at 539 Jefferson Street
 - Installed ¾ water tap at 307B Winesett
- Sewer: Cleared out blockages:
 - 103 West 4th Street
 - 214 Golf Road
 - 105 Country Club Drive
 - 201 Matt Ransome Drive
 - 828 Wilson Street

Mayor Hawkins inquired about the contractor for Wilson Street Park. Public Works Director Wright clarified that the contractor was there to install the hand dryer and that a new engineer needed to be found in regards to drainage.

4. Code Enforcement Officer Dennis Brown reported:
- Move Outs – Three move outs. Three homeowners were contacted and took care of their leftover trash.
 - Dilapidated Houses – The dilapidated property at 420 Jefferson Street was burned by the Fire Department.
 - Abandoned Vehicles – One notice was sent out today and one vehicle was removed via towing company.
 - Grass and Weed Nuisance – Eight complaints were received with seven positive responses. One given adequate time to respond before action will be taken.
 - House Nuisance – Two notices were sent and two positive responses were received via letters of intent.

- Ordinance Complaints – Two complaints were received – spoke with residents and they were satisfied with the results
- 5. Police Department – Chief Williams reported that a new person with seven (7) years' experience, Officer K. Knigge has been added. Chief Williams further reported that the department is in the midst of mandatory training for the year. He stated that he hopes to be able to provide updates to some cases that are still open.
- 6. Fire Department – Chief Timothy Miller reported that the department has gained four (4) new members, three of which are attending the fire academy. Chief Miller reported on the house that was burned on Jefferson Street for purposes of demolition. He also reported that one of the fire trucks is located in Rocky Mount undergoing repairs.

VII. PRESENTATION TO COUNCIL

Mayor Hawkins turned the floor over to Tom Harrison for his presentation. Mr. Harrison stated that he had two items to discuss. After experiencing technical difficulties, the Mayor suggested that Mr. Harrison be moved further down the agenda so that the Council would be able to see the presentation.

VIII. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. The Consent Agenda contained three items:
 - a. Approval of Minutes from the May 10, 2021 Town Council Meeting
 - b. Approval of Minutes from the May 27, 2021 Special Meeting
 - c. Approval of Resolution 2021-07, A Resolution to Adopt an Agreement to Continue Participation in the North Carolina Small Town Main Street Program 2021 – 2022.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Byers to approve the Consent Agenda, with a second by Councilman Wobbleton. Mayor Pro Tem Brooks asked that the minutes dated May 10, 2021 be changed to reflect Quail Drive rather than Roanoke Avenue under the Director of Public Works report. A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed 6-0.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

A. DISCUSSION WITH DANIEL BERGEVIN, PRESIDENT, DAVID'S TRASH SERVICE

Mayor Hawkins asked the Interim Town Manager Layton to elaborate. Interim Town Manager Layton stated that there was significant discussion regarding the service provided by David's Trash Service at the Council's June 1st work session. Council requested that the Interim Town manager write a letter

requesting that Mr. Bergevin be present at the today's Council Meeting to discuss complaints that each Council Member has been receiving regarding the company's performance. Mr. Bergevin was then given an opportunity to discuss the issues. Mr. Bergevin stated his case, while trying to clear up what he felt were misconceptions. Mr. Bergevin passed around pictures that he had taken, and stated that he has never had any problem with any other town that he has worked with except for Plymouth. After lengthy discussion of complaints with the Council, as well as input from staff, staff was given instructions to meet with Mr. Bergevin in order to work out a solution to the ongoing problems. Councilwoman Byers and Councilman Wobbleton volunteered to attend the meeting as well

B. DISCUSSION/CONSIDERATION OF AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO EXECUTE A LETTER WITH THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE DECLINING A RURAL DEVELOPMENT LOAN IN THE AMOUNT OF \$942,291 FOR A DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION – SIDEWALK PROJECT

Mayor Hawkins asked Interim Town Manager Layton to elaborate on this item. Interim Town Manager Layton stated that in July 2019, the Town entered into an agreement with the United States Department of Agriculture for a Rural Development Loan in the amount of \$942,291 for a Downtown Revitalization – sidewalk, project. Prior to the execution of the loan documents and the receipt of Local Government Commission approval, the scope of work for the project changed. The project lay dormant and the USDA extended the loan agreement for a period of two years, with the second year expiring on July 8, 2021. The USDA has requested that the Town either decline the funds or request another extension of the loan agreement. Since there are currently no plans to construct the sidewalk project as originally approved in the loan agreement and the funding can only be used for purposes that were approved in the agreement, staff recommended that the Town decline the loan by sending a letter from the Mayor indicating that action. Councilwoman Byers asked if there was a plan in place to improve the sidewalks without the loan. Interim Town Manager Layton responded that he is not aware of another plan; however it does not mean that improvement of sidewalks cannot be addressed. He reiterated that the project has been sitting for more than a year without any movement. Interim Town Manager Layton expressed that there was also the issue of repayment of the loan. After further discussion, Mayor Pro Temp Brooks moved to terminate the loan with the understanding a plan will be put in place to fix the sidewalk, return with a new plan for the sidewalks, water and sewer. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Williams. After discussion, a roll call vote was taken. Motion passed 6-0.

X. PRESENTATION TO COUNCIL

Mr. Harrison showed a presentation of several logos that have been recently proposed to the Washington County Commissioners at their meeting as well as highlights from the Bearfest.

XI. NEW BUSINESS

OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED SOLID WASTE DROPOFF STATION SCHEDULED FOR JULY 16 – 18, 2021

Mayor Hawkins asked Interim Town Manager Layton to address the issue. Last month Mayor Pro Tempore Brooks approached him to inquire about the possibility of the Town holding a weekend solid waste drop-off station event this summer to allow citizens to dispose of household solid waste outside of the normal solid waste pick up provided by David's Trash Service. The annual event had been discontinued several years ago due to abuse of the service, largely caused by lack of security at the drop-off sites, use by non-Plymouth residents, and disposal of inappropriate items, such as tires. It was explained that, in order to hold the event, a location needed to be found that could be secured when not in use, that staff would need to be in place to check both residency and the type of items being disposed of, and that the time of the event should be limited to a weekend, rather than several weeks. Interim Town Manager Layton further explained that the Town does not own a suitable area that can be secured; however, the Washington County Board of Education Maintenance Yard located on Adams Street can be secured and permission has been received to use the location for the weekend of July 16 – 18, 2021. He reported that the cost to hold the event is estimated to be \$10,000 and would be included as part of the FY 2022 Budget. Director of Public Works Mike Wright stated that the process would be handled differently this time should the Council approve it.

XI. TOWN ATTORNEY'S REPORT

Mayor Hawkins turned the floor over to Attorney Natalia Isenberg. Attorney Isenberg reported that she had been working with Interim Town Manager Layton and can give her report in closed session.

XII. INTERIM TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

A. UPDATE ON DISTRESSED UTILITIES DESIGNATION

Interim Town Manager Layton reported that on June 8, 2021, staff as well as the Mayor and Councilwoman Williams participated in an orientation webinar related to the Town's designation as a "distressed" utility. The Viable Utility Reserve orientation session was an initial overview of the program, requirements for "distressed" utility local governments, next steps, and funding support availability. He further reported that requirements for distressed utility local governments include education of staff and governing

bodies, AIA and rate studies, and short and long term action and financial plans. The next steps will consist of the Division of Water Infrastructure providing guidance on how to meet these requirements.

B. UPDATE ON 2020 CENSUS ELECTION IMPACTS

Interim Town Manager Layton also reported that on June 9, 2021, the North Carolina House approved Senate Bill 722 with a few changes, which is related to the 2020 Census and its impact on the 2021 fall elections. The legislation requires that the Town notify the Board of Elections by November 12, 2021, whether or not the electoral districts can be provided by November 17 or December 17, 2021. If provided by November 17th, the filing period will be from December 6th through noon on December 17th. If provided by December 17th the filing period will be from January 3rd, 2022 until noon January 6th, 2022. The Town of Plymouth's election, since it uses the "nonpartisan plurality method" will be March 8th, 2022. Winners will be sworn in at a selected time after the certificate of election is issued. Interim Town Manager Layton reported that the terms of office will be the same as if the election was held in November, 2021.

XIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL

None.

XIV. CLOSED SESSION

A motion was made by Councilwoman Williams to go into closed session under §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, and

§143-318.11(a) (4) to discuss matters relating to the location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by the public body. Motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tempore Brooks. A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed 6.0.

The open session was called back to order. Mayor Hawkins asked the Council if there was anything they wanted to discuss. Councilwoman Byers asked that the Interim Town Manager research extending the loan in order to give the Town time to see what else might be available. After extensive discussion regarding the sidewalks, Councilwoman Byers made a motion to rescind the original request to decline the loan from USDA. Motion was seconded by Councilman Wobbleton. A roll call vote was taken. Motion failed 2 – 4 with Councilwoman

Brooks, Councilman Arnold, Councilwoman Teel and Councilwoman Williams dissenting.

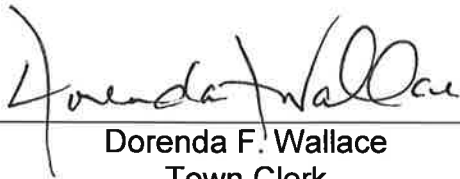
XV. ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Councilwoman Williams and seconded by Councilman Wobbleton to adjourn. A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed 6-0.

Respectfully submitted,



Vershumn "Shawn" Hawkins
Mayor



Dorenda F. Wallace
Town Clerk