

Town of Hot Springs  
Board of Alderman Meeting  
December 5, 2022

Present:

Mayor Abigail Norton  
Alderman Jeanne Gentry  
Alderman Vaughn Barnett

Alderman Jimmy Moore  
Ron Moore, Town Attorney  
Fire Chief Josh Norton

Mayor Norton called the meeting to order at 6:06pm.

November 2022 Minutes were not available. They will be available for approval at the January 2023 meeting.

### **Public Comment**

There were no Public Comments

### **Mayor Abby Norton**

Mayor Norton asked Board if she could have a motion to approve the Resolution to Accept the American Rescue Plan. Board approval is needed to accept the one-million-dollar grant. Alderman Gentry made a motion; Alderman Barnett seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Mayor Norton asked Board if she could have a motion to approve the State of North Carolina, Department of Environmental Quality Division of Water Infrastructure: Funding Offer and Acceptance. Alderman Gentry made a motion; Alderman Moore seconded the motion; all were in favor.

### **Carol Avery, with Lowdermilk Church & Co., LLP**

Ms. Avery gave the report on the 2021-2022 audit. She went over the financial highlights and audit findings. The one finding noted was Significant Deficiency Segregation of Duties. The cause is due to the limited number of accounting and administrative staff that are available. The auditor's recommendation is for the Mayor and Board of Aldermen to be engaged in the ongoing review of the financial affairs of the Town to provide oversight.

The audit results noted that the Town agrees with the finding and will adhere to the recommended corrective action: as well as having an outside consultant provide some additional internal controls. The Town of Hot Springs will implement this corrective action immediately.

## **Keith Webb, with mcgill**

Mr. Webb talked about the \$150,000 grant for the water system. If the Asset Inventory and Assessment (AIA) is adopted, this would allow The Town of Hot Springs would receive 100% of the funds. Mayor Norton asked the board to approve a resolution for acceptance of the water system AIA. Alderman Gentry made the motion; Alderman Moore seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Mr. Webb talked about the \$150,000 grant for the sewer system. If the Asset Inventory and Assessment (AIA) is adopted, this would allow The Town of Hot Springs would receive 100% of the funds. Mayor Norton asked the board to approve a resolution for acceptance of the sewer system AIA. Alderman Gentry made the motion; Alderman Barnett seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Mr. Webb presented Proposed Water System Capital Improvements Projects (2023-2032). The estimated project cost for Table E-1 projects is \$6,094,425. He also presented Proposed Wastewater System Capital Improvements Projects (2023-2032). The estimated project cost for Table E-1 projects is \$20,742,325. Mr. Webb said these proposals are not set in stone.

Mr. Webb said that an application for a four-million-dollar grant has been submitted. He said there is also an ARP fund, through Chapel Hill. Twenty-million-dollars is set aside for distressed towns. Certain requirements would have to be met to be eligible.

\_\_\_\_\_part of updated water and sewer. Alderman Gentry made a motion to approve; Alderman Barnett and Alderman Moore seconded the motion; all were in favor.

## **Departments**

### **Fire Chief Josh Norton**

Chief Norton went over information regarding the County Fire Service District requirements to provide service to the rural Hot Springs locations: Down River Road; up 208; Griffy Valley; Firefly; and up 209. He stated what was preferable would be that the Town's Fire Department would include these areas instead of everything going to the County Fire Service District.

Chief Norton explained that the Town would need 35% of the permanent residence, not homeowners, but permanent residence to sign that they would accept a tax increase to have the benefits of using the Town of Hot Springs Fire Department. If the signatures are obtained, then everything would be presented to the Electoral Board for a referendum vote. By having access to the Hot Springs Fire Department the homeowners insurance could decrease. If this is not voted in the homeowners' insurance would not be decreased by the insurance companies.

Chief Norton notified the Board that West Buncombe County still has the title to the new fire truck. West Buncombe will get everything together and forward things on to him.

## **Lisa Hicks – Events Committee**

Asked if the Town had a timer for the Christmas tree lights. Committee doesn't want to leave the lights, especially the spotlights, on all day. The Board asked Ken Koshuba, with the Maintenance Department, to get with Jeremy Trantham (also with the Maintenance Department) to see if they had any type of timer.

## **Board**

### **Alderman Jimmy Moore**

Alderman Moore has spoken with Mr. Keith Webb. All the information has been sent in for Fairview. The people of Fairview would have to agree with the County and Town of Hot Springs as to how the water funds would be used. If this project goes forward the Fairview water works would be dissolved. A water cost would have to be calculated. There is no set formula to calculate the cost. All the hard and soft costs of getting the water to Fairview are taken into consideration. A new water service system line (main line to home) will be paid for by the grant, but once the line is connected homeowner will be responsible. The Board asked Mr. Webb if mcgill would do the calculations for Fairview to get water from the Town Hot Spring.

Mr. Webb told the Board that as of January 1, 2023, Fairview would no longer have a water system operator. Mayor Norton said that the County didn't agree to pay that expense.

Mr. Webb said that James & James has agreed to act as water system operator for Fairview and will charge \$500 dollars per month plus the cost of testing. James & James has also offered to bill the Fairview water customers for a fee of \$100 per month.

### **Alderman Vaughn Barnett**

Alderman Barnett said the manhole cover, at the Presbyterian Church on 25/70, is cracking. He will get Jeremy Trantham to call \_\_\_\_\_ for repairs.

### **Alderman Jeanne Gentry**

Alderman Gentry made a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters; Alderman Barnet seconded the motion; all were in favor.

The Board went into Executive Session at 6:33pm.

The Board returned from Executive Session at 6:44pm. Alderman Moore made the motion to return to regular session; Alderman Barnet and Alderman Gentry seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Mayor Norton announced that the Executive Session discussed extending work for a Temporary Part-Time Employee. She also announced that the Executive Session discussed extending FMLA up to 26-weeks for Maintenance Supervisor Greg Hicks. Alderman Gentry made a motion to approve the extensions; Alderman Moore seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Since there is no other business to discuss, Alderman Moore made a motion to adjourn, Alderman Barnett seconded the motion; all were in favor.

all aldermen approved  
Approved  
Abigail Norton  
Mayor Abigail Norton

1-3-2023  
Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Other