



TOWN OF PRINCEVILLE
Board of Commissioners
Special Call Meeting Minutes
June 25, 2024, 6:00PM
201 S. Main Street, Tarboro, NC 27886

Board Present: Mayor Bobbie Jones, Mayor ProTem JoeRoam Myrick, Commissioner Vananza Brown, Commissioner Lee V. Staton, and Commissioner Alvin Jones

Staff Present: Interim Town Manager Ronald Jackson, Assistant Town Manager Alexis Carter, Town Clerk Stephanie McBeth

I. Meeting called to order by Mayor Jones at 6:00 PM

II. Invocation: Minister Walston

III. Public Comments: (Limited to five minutes each as announced by Mayor Jones)

- 1) **Ms. Cashella Wheeler (319 Otis Ave., Princeville)** stated that her mother's house needs repairs. She also said the house next door to her mother's house is rat-infested and also needs repairs. Her mother's address is 1258 Greenwood Blvd., Princeville.
- 2) **Ms. Tonya M. Clark (320 Otis Ave., Princeville)** stated that she needed assistance so that she can remain in Princeville.
- 3) **Ms. Patricia Spellman (200 Walston St., Princeville)** stated that her recycling goes 2-3 months at a time. She said that she has spoken with the Town Manager and former Town Manager regarding this. Mayor Jones advised her that recycling gets picked up every 2nd Monday of the month. She also expressed her concern about a neighboring property (202 Walston St.). Mayor Jones let her know that part of that property is private property and is the owner's responsibility to keep it maintained.
- 4) **Ashley Lyons (110 Webb Ln., Princeville)** stated she just moved to this address Memorial Day weekend. She thinks Princeville needs a new recreation center for children which bears our name and budgeted by us. Mayor Jones said that we are currently strategizing the needs of Princeville from socio-economic and health basses, for example.
- 5) **Ms. Alice J. Freeman (738 Greenwood Blvd., Princeville)** expressed concern about Princeville not having things for the youth, and that there's nothing here for them during the Summer. Mayor Jones mentioned to her that Tarboro offers swimming lessons; however, citizens in the audience said there were charges for that. The Mayor advised that there are charges for the lessons but not for use of the pool. She also talked about housing

repair and that they were called and told they were allotted for funding but later informed by “a man” that he/they did not have enough money for their repairs. She asked what could be done to help with their repairs.

- 6) **Mr. Woodrow and Mrs. Bettie Walston (447 Mutual Blvd., Princeville)** mentioned that they are looking for improvements in Princeville and that God was going to fix it and make it better than before! Mayor Jones mentioned the recreation center and let the citizens know that it would be for everyone.
- 7) A citizen inquired about cemetery upkeep, and the Mayor said the Town takes care of cemetery maintenance two times a week. Another citizen also mentioned the condition of the cemetery on Dancy Rd. Mayor ProTem Myrick agreed, and stated the condition did begin to deteriorate when the Town’s equipment started to break down.

IV. Announcement

- 1) In the event of an emergency, please use any exit that is the safest.

V. Special Call Items

1) Proposed Budget 2024-2025 (Recommendation: Approval):

Mr. Jackson said the biggest highlight was the decrease in the budget and due to one of the largest ad valorem taxes, we take in a lot more than budgeted. He also said that his goal is for the Town to be in the black and the end of the fiscal year, considering raw numbers. As we get more money from ad valorem taxes and other sources of revenue, he said this will allow us to do more of what is needed. Mayor Jones asked how much the budget changed by, and Mr. Jackson said we had to account for about \$170,000 in the budget. Mr. Jackson also mentioned that we have new Directed Grants to help us with personnel/salaries, computers, etc. without us having to cut into other budgets.

Commissioner Jones inquired about other projects. He first mentioned the Farmer’s Market. Mr. Jackson explained that it was originally thought of as only a Phase 1 project; however, there was also a Phase 2 project which was funded by a \$500,000.00 grant. He added that ARPA thought they could use some of that funding for things such as home repairs that they later found out could not be used with that grant. Commissioner Jones asked what is in place to keep this from happening again. Mr. Jackson informed him that we would make reimbursement requests first. Mayor Jones also advised the Board/citizens that we now have a Town Manager AND an Assistant Town Manager as a means of

“checks and balances”. Mr. Jackson also explained our invoice and audit process to create separation of duties, and that once he approves expenditures, he has nothing else to do with the process. He also explained Mr. Carter’s role in the office. Mr. Jackson also explained that when we’re dealing with an outside agency, they typically do not have our best interest in mind/at heart. He recommends us to get away from having the State control our funding, because we should be able to do that in-house through our personnel with proper training, to include project management training. Mr. Jackson encouraged us to become more Town-centric so that we can manage companies like Wooten and making them accountable to us.

- 2) **Housing Repair:** Mr. Jackson explained that ARPA funding was not supposed to be used for home repairs, and that we are going to have to find more funding by cutting costs elsewhere. Mayor Jones stated that the \$150,000.00 was not enough and asked how the remaining \$50,000.00 would be. Mr. Jackson went on to explain that in the future, we will need to get more than one bid from contractors to do home repairs, and that we will need at least three bids before closing the bid and choosing a contractor. He said that once a contractor starts work on home repairs, his work should be checked along the way, and if his work is not up to par, he should be terminated. Mayor Jones suggested that we post a bid again, and Mr. Jackson advised him that we must first find some funding. Mayor Jones asked how the citizens would be notified of funding/the repair process and be provided with good and accurate information, and Mr. Jackson mentioned our use of call and posts and that they must first be approved prior to being made. Mr. Jackson also made Mayor Jones aware of lists we are currently creating of citizens needing home repairs, the home repairs they need, and if they were already “approved” for home repairs under the previous administration. Mr. Jackson stated that we are using these lists in addition to our call and post list.

- 3) **GFL Contract Renewal:** Mayor Jones asked if the contract has been approved, and Mr. Jackson advised him that we must first discuss an amendment that would require them to perform their pick-ups as they are supposed to. Mr. Jackson also mentioned a small increase in the rates, but that we must first determine the quality of their service. Mayor ProTem Myrick motioned to approve and amendment to the GFL contract renewal. **Seconded by Commissioner Jones. Vote carried 4-0.**

Mayor ProTem Myrick asked about bulk pick up, and Mr. Jackson informed him that we have met with Sammy with GFL about bulk pick up, and will also work with Mr. Porter, our Public Works Director, on this. Mr. Jackson said that we will also help take up the slack left by GFL through our PW Dept. Mr. Jackson mentioned that in our efforts to build up Princeville, we need to work on getting more equipment. He also mentioned the upcoming Community Cemetery Clean-up Project. Mayor ProTem Myrick encouraged the ladies to contribute by picking up the dead flowers around the cemetery. Mayor Jones mentioned the equipment that “we used to have”. Mr. Jackson said that we are dealing with what we have “now” and moving forward with that. Mayor Jones mentioned that ECU is Working on cemetery mapping of who owns graves/areas of the cemetery, and Mr. Jackson said that would be good so we can hold citizens accountable for keeping their areas clean or paying us to do so. Commissioner Brown also added that morticians could assist us determining cemetery/grave ownership.

Commissioner Brown asked what the bulk pick-up schedule is, and Ms. Carter advised her that we have new packets that can be picked up from our office at any time. Mayor ProTem Myrick mentioned tire pick-ups, and he explained that citizens can take up to four tires at a time to the dump/landfill, which the citizens are responsible for doing themselves. Commissioner Brown expressed concern about annexing not having been done properly in Princeville, resulting in Edgecombe County not responding to requests for tire pick-ups, although our citizens pay their taxes. Mr. Jackson reminded her that we are not responsible for tire pick-up, but our Public Works Dept. is trying to help with that.

Mayor Jones mentioned that ECU is

- 4) **Priority Planning:** Mr. Jackson expressed that this was an initiative that Mayor ProTem Myrick came up with, as he and Commissioner Brown had discussed putting important things in place. Mr. Jackson also stated that Mr. Dwayne Patterson had mentioned that we should find out what is important to the citizens/community and have a special meeting to have this discussion. Mr. Jackson added that we need to come up with a plan and determine how we can measure our goals and determine if they are being met. Mayor ProTem Myrick asked Mr. Jackson if we should set up another town meeting, and Mr. Jackson said that we should. He also said that we need the citizens’ wisdom, vision, input, etc., and if they did not come out and participate in our meetings that they should not complain. Mayor ProTem

Myrick asked the citizens if they would like to have another meeting. Ms. Tate, our Senior Center Director, said that she had just spoken with her seniors earlier today about coming to our meetings so they can see what's being done, get to know our new administration, learn about the organization of the Town, and how important their input is.

One of our citizens, Ms. Wilkins, stated that this is a good idea, but when citizens express their ideas, we need to listen and act! She said further that we need to put money into making Princeville look good and lots/properties cleaned up! She said that citizens need to clean up their properties or sell them! Ms. Wilkins said that she wants people to say that Princeville looks good! Mayor Jones assured Ms. Wilkins that we ALWAYS listen to our citizens but may not "act" right away. He added that cleaning up some of these properties is a legal process. Commissioner Staton stated that Princeville is being "held hostage" by people who do not even live here, and that Princeville looked better in 1970 than now.

Ms. Wilkins mentioned street repair that is needed on Dancy St. Mayor Jones stated that the street will be fixed. Mr. Jackson added that the street will be put back like it was prior to it being damaged, and if that is not satisfactory, we are going to have to come up with more money. Mayor Jones mentioned that there are already ten streets slated to be repaired. Commissioner Brown mentioned previous repairs that had not been done correctly and how Edgecombe County had benefitted from that process. Mr. Jackson said that we pay taxes and Edgecombe County needs to do right by us, and the Board needs to hold them accountable.

Mayor Jones asked when we should have the Priority Planning Meeting. Mayor ProTem Myrick posed this question to the Board. Mayor Jones urged us to move on this right away. Mr. Jackson asked the Board to first come up with a "hit list", propose this to the citizens, and then we will go from there. Mayor Jones suggested Tuesday, July 9, 2024, and 6:00 pm for the Priority Planning Meeting. Mayor ProTem Myrick also suggested that we make a call and post to notify the citizens of the meeting. He also encouraged the citizens to tell their neighbors about it. Mayor Jones also suggested that we put up flyers to advertise the meeting.

- 5) **88 Acres Site Design:** Mr. Jackson stated that he had met with TRC three weeks ago. He talked about our Senior Center not being built to specs. and because of this, we cannot get

access to certain Federal funding. He stated that we should have collaborated with companies that had built senior centers before during the planning/design of our senior center. Mr. Jackson said that he wants to include plans for a new senior center in the 88 Acre Project. He added that he wants to be able to merge a senior center and a YMCA next to each other. (See Plans/handouts). Mr. Jackson stated further that there is so much funding out there that a senior center could have access to when it is built to spec. He said that if we could get a new senior center, we could use our current one as a computer lab or something else. Mr. Jackson said that ultimately, we need something that will generate revenue for us. He again stressed the importance of having our own infrastructure and keeping Edgecombe County from controlling everything/all the revenue! Commissioner Brown suggested getting input from our senior citizens on a new senior center. Commissioner Brown also stated that we should start “here” first (the Town of Princeville) and then with the 53 Acres Project/Senior Center, she said “because if it floods here, it’s going to flood there.” Mr. Jackson advised her that we were not funded the \$11M by FEMA for “here”, but we can use the revenue from the projects funded by the \$11M to help the Town do some of the things we need/we would like to see happen.

Mayor ProTem Myrick mentioned the museum being put off three times and them (FEMA) only being able to put the museum back to how it “was”. He stated that we need to add that to the priority list of things we want done. Mr. Jackson responded that if FEMA can put a band aid on things, they will! He stated further that we need to stop this from happening through other projects and getting things built as they should be. He added that we need to find other funding that is non-restricted -- meaning grants that aren’t just for certain things – that address our needs. Mr. Jackson stated that money is out there; we just have to find it/write for grants to access it.

Mayor Jones asked if there were any questions and comments. Mayor ProTem Myrick encouraged citizens to attend our meetings and bring their ideas.

Ms. Ashley Lyons mentioned our citizens having their own businesses and who could contribute their time/resources/ideas, etc., and said that we just need to get the word out. She offered to help in any way she could.

VI. Adjournment: Mayor ProTem Myrick motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Commissioner Jones. Vote carried 4-0.

Bobbie Jones 08/29/24
Bobbie Jones, Mayor Date

Dina Wilbanks 8/29/24
Dina Wilbanks, Finance Clerk Date

