

Town of Macclesfield
Regular Session Board Meeting
Including CDBG-NR Public Hearing
Monday, November 13, 2023
5:00 pm @ Town Hall

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Pro Tem Paula Lewis at 5:04 pm. Members in attendance were Mayor Pro Tem/Commissioner P Lewis, Commissioner Jean Wooten-Jiles, Commissioner Joyce Braxton, Commissioner Charles Lewis, Public Works Director Benjy Lassiter, Town Clerk Gracieann Etheridge, and Town Administrator Jennifer Stanley. Mayor Emily Turner was present via phone. Special guests in attendance were Mrs. Pam Hurdle (NCLM), Tirence Horne (UCPCOG), Rich Moore (McDavid), Michael Speight (Mayor Elect), Jason Taylor (Commissioner Elect), and Tina Waters (Town resident). Mayor Turner expressed her gratitude to all in attendance and specifically to Mrs. Hurdle for all her help last year. All in attendance recited the pledge to the American Flag.

Commissioner Wooten-Jiles made a motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner C Lewis seconded the motion and with none opposed the motion carried. Commissioner P Lewis made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 9th regular and closed session meetings, and October 23rd special called and closed session meetings. Commissioner Braxton seconded the motion and with none opposed the motion carried.

The meeting was then turned over to Mr. Horne for the Public Hearing regarding the CDBG-NR Grant. Mr. Horne began by giving a recap of the grant process thus far as well as what to expect in the coming days, weeks, and months. The application is being submitted for \$930,000.00 (nine hundred thirty thousand dollars for replacement of three homes: two on N Second Street and one on W Green Street. The amount requested will cover the cost of the homes, permits, survey costs, legal fees, relocation of the homeowners and storage. When asked how long the process is for home replacement, Mr. Horne explained that the grant award, if approved, should be in January 2024. After that the title opinions, surveys, etc. will have to be completed. It is expected to take approximately 1.5 years for the homes to be completed. It was explained that the funds will come as a forgivable loan – Once completed, the homeowner or their heir will be required to stay in the home for a minimum of eight (8) years for the loan to be forgiven. The inspector did the assessments on the homes that were submitted. The application will be submitted on Tuesday, November 14 and the town will receive a copy of the application once submitted.

There were no citizens wishing to speak.

Mr. Rich Moore with McDavid Associates addressed the board with multiple items. The first item was the Water system AIA grant. The town was awarded \$203,900.00 which will include a complete evaluation of the water system, GIS mapping of the system, Capital Improvement Plan, etc. and will take approximately two (2) years to complete. Commissioner Wooten-Jiles made a motion to approve the offer and acceptance letter and the resolution for the project. Commissioner Braxton seconded the motion and with none opposed the motion carried. The Wastewater AIA grant was next. The town was awarded \$392,250.00 and will include complete evaluation of the system, GIS, Capital Improvement Plan as well as cleaning 100% of the collections system. Commissioner P Lewis made a motion to approve the offer and acceptance letter and the resolution for the project. Commissioner Braxton seconded the motion and with none opposed the motion carried. The town has also been awarded a \$5,143,000.00 ARP grant for the WWTP upgrade. This project will move the portion of the plant located in the flood

plain out of it as well as adding secondary facilities to enable repairs to be made without shutting down the whole plant. The current state regulations require a seventy-five (75) foot buffer area between the plant and adjacent property. This will require the purchase of more land to meet those requirements. The same landowner that sold the land for the existing plant is willing to sell the required amount of land (approximately two [2] acres) for \$12,500.00. The town will have to purchase the land and then get reimbursed from the grant. When asked if there are funds available, Mrs. Stanley stated that the funds could come out of the Capital Outlay fund. Commissioner Braxton made a motion to purchase the land required to meet the state requirements. Commissioner C Lewis seconded the motion and with none opposed the motion carried.

Mr. Moore stated that he will be providing progress reports to the board at the monthly board meetings. He will also be working with Mrs. Stanley to obtain the necessary information for the Golden Leaf grant to help with the storm water and drainage issues causing flooding.

Next on the agenda was the fire tax discussion. Mr. Ethan Strickland, Fire Chief, came in January to present to the board and ask the board's approval of the resolution to impose a new fire tax for the town to be billed with the property tax. His proposal will add approximately \$40 per year to each resident's tax bill. It was mentioned that the property taxes have not been raised in about ten (10) years and will probably be going up soon. Does the town want to impose another tax at this time? It was also mentioned that the fire department doesn't do fundraisers like they used to. The fire department's rating is a 6 (out of 9). It was asked what financial condition the fire department is in without the tax and with the tax but without the annual donation from the town. Commissioner P Lewis made a motion to table until some of the questions could be answered. Mr. Lassiter stated that he would ask the Fire Chief to attend the next meeting in December to answer any further questions. It was also asked what would happen if the tax were not approved. Commissioner Braxton seconded the motion to table until the next meeting. Commissioners Wooten-Jiles and C Lewis opposed the motion. With a tie, the mayor stated that she felt it should not be tabled. Commissioner Wooten-Jiles made a motion to go ahead and approve the fire tax resolution. Commissioner C Lewis seconded the motion. Commissioners P Lewis and Braxton opposed the motion. Mayor Turner gave the tie-breaking vote to go ahead with the approval of the fire tax resolution.

Mr. Lassiter began to update the board on the next two agenda items. The building of the barbeque shelter at the community building is scheduled. The contractor stated that it would be two to four weeks before they could begin construction. We are currently in the second week. The rock pad has already been put in place. Xylem Tree Services has started trimming around the primary electric lines, they are beginning week four. When first contracted, the town was told it would take approximately four weeks to complete the job. The crew is trying to say they need another week to finish. Mrs. Stanley and Mr. Lassiter will ride through town and see what they have left to cut and if that is a valid request. They had to bring in a "skid steer" to trim up the pines across from the fire department. The town staff began working on the secondary trimming today.

Commissioner Wooten-Jiles attended Unit Assistance List training and stated it was very informative. She did bring back information to share with the town. They talked about why towns are on the list, identifying risks, how it could lead to LGC oversight of the town, etc. They also spoke about the City of Dixon and "the fraud triangle" that was uncovered there. At the end of the day, final authority rests with the board.

Mrs. Pam Hurdle from NCLM spoke about some of the free services available through the League. There are services available from internet issues, engineering services, legal consultation

services, to finding and administering grants. She also stated that the UCPCOG is available to assist as well and her contacts there are Betsy Kane and Ben Farmer. She reminded the board that they have one year from being elected to complete the Ethics training.

Mrs. Stanley reported to the board that they had received an invitation to participate in the Rocky Mount Christmas parade on Sunday, December 3rd if anyone was interested. She asked them to be mindful of the deadline for applications of November 17th. Commissioner Wooten-Jiles stated that she would let Mrs. Stanley know if she could attend.

Mrs. Stanley gave the finance report. She reminded the board that they had received the balance sheet in their packets last week. The interest earned for October was \$3,092.94; The total of invoices paid and payroll for the month was \$59,892.32. Commissioner Wooten-Jiles asked if any of the reserves could be used to purchase lighted speed limit signs. Mrs. Stanley stated that with the two big street repairs completed, the Powell Bill allotment for the year was used up. She would investigate to see what the process would be to use some of the reserves to make the purchase or if that was even allowable.

Mr. Benjy Lassiter reported that when the board changed the grass violation height limit from 24" with 15 days to correct to 12" with 5 days to correct, it made an issue with the violation letter. The letter has several violations on one letter and some of them cannot be completed within 5 days. Mr. Lassiter recommended making one last change to allow 10 days to correct any violations. Commissioner Wooten-Jiles made a motion to change the verbiage to 10 days to correct violations. Commissioner P Lewis seconded the motion and with none opposed the motion carried.

Mr. Lassiter stated that there was only one outage in the past month. There have been two complaints regarding the tree trimming contractor, but they have been taken care of. There will be two violations regarding the testing at the WWTP. Neither should have any fines associated with them.

Mr. Lassiter stated that in January the Public Works staff will be starting on the Lead and Copper Inventory for the water system. Homes built after 1986 should not have any lead lines. He will be sending out information to the residents to let them know what the town staff will be required to do and what they can do to assist.

Commissioner P Lewis stated that on Sunday there was a funeral, and she received a complaint from one of the mourners that they had stepped off into a hole on E Edgecombe Street. Mr. Lassiter stated that he has been trying to obtain the material to do the repair but is having trouble finding some of the needed materials.

Commissioner C Lewis asked about the trimming around the secondary lines, and it was stated that the public works staff would be working on that.

Commissioner Wooten-Jiles asked about the cleaning of the curbs – particularly the edging on Brick Mill Road. She also asked about the dead tree that belongs to her neighbor. Mr. Lassiter stated that he has spoken to her neighbor several times about cutting down the tree and that the public works staff is working on the curbs in between other responsibilities.

Commissioner Braxton asked about the two jeeps belonging to Mr. Etheridge that are parked on SW Railroad Street. Mr. Lassiter stated that Mr. Etheridge has been sent letters asking for the vehicles to be moved and the Highway Patrol tagged both vehicles. They are in a town right of way but the vehicle owner stated that the land is their property. Mr. Lassiter is awaiting an answer from the town attorney as to what the town is allowed to do.

With nothing further, Commissioner Braxton made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner C Lewis seconded the motion and with none opposed, the meeting adjourned at 7:04 pm.