

Town of Mount Olive
December 2, 2024
Regular Board Meeting
Minutes

Mayor Jerome Newton called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M. Those in attendance per roll call were Mayor Pro-Tempore Barbara Kornegay, Commissioner Delreese Simmons, Commissioner Danny Keel, Commissioner Tommy Brown, Town Attorney Carroll Turner, Town Manager Jammie Royall and Town Clerk/Administrative Assistant Sherry Davis.

Mayor Jerome Newton delivered the invocation and led us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Jerome Newton read the Conflict of Interest Statement; there were no conflicts.

Mayor Jerome Newton requested a motion for an excused absence for Commissioner Vicky Darden. Commissioner Tommy Brown made the motion. Mayor Pro-Tempore Barbara Kornegay seconded and the motion passed 4-0.

Mayor Jerome Newton requested a motion to approve the published agenda. Commissioner Tommy Brown made the motion to approve the published agenda. Commissioner Danny Keel seconded and the motion passed 4-0.

Mayor Jerome Newton requested a motion to approve the November 4, 2024 Regular Board Meeting Minutes. Mayor Pro-Tempore Barbara Kornegay made a motion to approve. Commissioner Danny Keel seconded and the motion passed 4-0.

Mayor Jerome Newton then opened the public forum.

Ms. Cindy Bell of 109 Ramblewood Drive, Mount Olive, NC 28365, 919-658-5491. She spoke about the recent water discoloration and the Town Alert that was posted the day before a four -day holiday. It is the duty of the Town Manager to keep the citizens informed. We still have no street signs. Lighting, street repairs and the moratorium are still and issue.

Why has there been a lack of maintenance on the water system when predictive and preventative maintenance should be performed every three years. The estimated cost is one hundred and fifty thousand dollars, just do it. She wanted to know why this was not budgeted. The notice stated the water was safe to drink. Do you really think your word is enough due to the lack of town leadership. Take responsibility, when you do nothing our town gets further behind.

Mr. Gerald Bell of 305 North Center Street, Mount Olive, NC 28365, 919-222-4870. He stated he recently visited Cody County, Wyoming. They publish their meeting minutes in the local newspaper, itemized everything on the audit. Our current audit is yet to be available and there are no updated for 2023-2024 audit. The citizens in Wyoming have one hundred percent confidence in their leaders. We have zero percent here. We need to get back to one hundred percent. He asked how the Airport Commission exists and who appoints them. He introduced Abby Cavanaugh with the Duplin Journal and thanked her for coming tonight. He hopes we can get more information out to the public. Mayor Jerome Newton requested Mr. Gerald Bell to contact him or Town Manager Jammie Royall.

Mrs. Brenda Davis of 101 Ramblewood Drive, Mount Olive, NC 28365, 919-658-4553. She wanted to discuss ordinances and the sewer system. She stated we have all these boarding rooms in single- family dwellings. If she gets it then surely the Town does. The neighborhoods are not maintained and it is unsightly. She is not criticizing Code Enforcement Office Justin Hill. She stated the Ordinance workshop was cancelled and maybe some of these issues should be discussed. Housing is overrun throughout the state and houses are not within a certain distance of each other. Businesses are not ADA compliant. All of these things make the Town unappealing, She came to Mount Olive in 1976. She loves this town and would like to see it continue to be beautiful. She requested a projected update for the sewer moratorium.

Mr. Robert King of 238 Franklin Street, Mount Olive, NC 919-920-4853. He stated he has been the president of the Concerned Citizens since 2013. He has seen nothing done except little things. He promised Hobart Yates, Margaret Wider and Sadie Raines he would continue to serve.

Commissioner Delreese Simmons asked Mr. Robert King if he could list some of the things he wants done. Mr. Robert King said he did not have his paperwork with him but will get it to him. Commissioner Delreese Simmons thanked Mr. Robert King for attending.

Mrs. Amy Herring of 204 South Southerland Street, Mount Olive, NC 28365, 919-738-6794. She stated she owns two pieces of property that had a ditch. The ditch was covered in and tile was placed. The tile is now collapsing and she assumes it goes on to the next street. She spoke with Town Manager Jammie Royall and was advised the Town is not allowed to go on personal property. She feels since the Town put it in, the Town should fix it. Mayor Jerome Newton advised this issue has been somewhat addressed.

Mr. Michael Herring of the same address listed above said it is a large main ditch located on Main Street to the old medical park. Maylon Weeks and Lloyd Warren replaced part of the old system. The tiled old into new at a ninety degree angle toward Crest Drive.

Mayor Jerome Newton thanked them for their comments and closed the public forum.

Mayor Jerome Newton then discussed Non-Action-Memo 12-26 – Draft of the Minimum Housing Code. Town Attorney Carroll Turner advised this is only a draft. He combines this section with another section of our ordinances to present this update. He discussed Division four rooming houses. He explained that NC General Statute 160 A was abolished and is now 160D, this means most of our current ordinance has been repealed and it is time to update. This is not for discussion tonight, it was only to introduce the draft. We plan to discuss this further at our next ordinance workshop.

He then discussed Section Four – Minimum Floor Area. The Federal Floor Act sets a standard. Rooming houses allow no more than two people per bedroom plus one additional occupant. Hopefully this will be discussed in the next ordinance workshop. We will present the final document to the Planning Board and then hold a public hearing.

Mayor Jerome Newton said we need to make sure we have a way to enforce it. Town Attorney Carroll Turner stated it is like trying to thread a needle because some families have ten children and we would need to make an exception for that.

Mayor Jerome Newton then discussed action Memo 12-27 - Consider scheduling on Thursday December 5, 2024 at 3:30 P.M. **CLOSED SESSION PURSUANT TO NCGS SEC.143-318.11 (*Motion/Second-Roll Call)**

- (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. General policy matters may not be discussed in a closed session and nothing herein shall be construed to permit a public body to close a meeting that otherwise would be open merely because an attorney employed or retained by the public body is a participant. The public body may consider and give instructions to an attorney concerning the handling or settlement of a claim, judicial action, mediation, arbitration, or administrative procedure. If the public body has approved or considered a settlement, other than a malpractice settlement by or on behalf of a hospital, in closed session, the terms of that settlement shall be reported to the public body and entered into its minutes as soon as possible within a reasonable time after the settlement is concluded.

Commissioner Danny Keel made the motion to schedule a Closed Session meeting on Thursday, December 5, 2024 at 3:30 p.m. in the board meeting room. Commissioner Tommy Brown seconded and the motion passed 4-0.

Mayor Jerome Newton then discussed Action Memo 12-28 -. Consider Approval of Easement Request from North Carolina Natural Gas to Place a Gas Line in the Alleyway from Pollock Street to the Rear of the Evangelical Fellowship Center. This will also Authorize Town Attorney Carroll Turner to Prepare the Easement and Town Manager Jammie Royall or Mayor Jerome Newton to Sign.

Town Attorney Carroll Turner advised North Carolina Natural Gas contacted Code Enforcement Officer Justin Hill during the Thanksgiving Holiday regarding running this gas line for Evangelical Fellowship Center. Piedmont Natural Gas will run a two and one-half feet wide line through the alleyway. An easement to utilities is always required.

Mayor Jerome Newton asked if there were any questions or discussion. Commissioner Delreese Simmons asked, if they come through the alley what about businesses that get deliveries. Town Attorney Carroll Turner responded he is not sure. He did ask if there were additional but this only grants permission to go as far as the Evangelical Fellowship. Mayor Jerome Newton commented that is located on Pollock Street. Nothing in that area gets deliveries. Commissioner Danny Keel stated there is a map on the last page.

Commissioner Tommy Brown made a motion to approve Action Memo 12-28. Mayor Pro-Tempore Barbara Kornegay seconded and the motion passed 4-0.

Town Manager Report:

- He thanked everyone for coming tonight.
- He said regarding the discolored water issue, it was put on face book before it actually got to him. He found out on Monday before Thanksgiving. He has been working with staff and we are doing everything we can to get ahead of this. He has also spoken with the state and we should see improvements within the next couple of weeks.
- He advised Michael Herring that he will meet with him regarding the ditch.
- His entire report will be attached as part of the meeting minutes.

Mayor & Commissioner Reports:

Commissioner Vicky Darden – Excused Absence

Commissioner Tommy Brown

- He thanked everyone for coming out tonight.
- He stated he is tired of being mister nice guy. He has tried to address the lack of leadership but someone is always going to get even, make it a racial thing or has an axe to grind. Then we are threatened if we try to step forward, or coercion tactics are used or threatened blackmail. We can't do anything without the majority of the board.
- He is tired of the mis-management.

Commissioner Danny Keel

- He thanked everyone for coming out tonight.
- He said we have addressed some the issues but still need to address others such as the moratorium and drinking water. Some of these are the Town's fault and some are not. He is trying but one person can only do so much.
- He wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Commissioner Delreese Simmons

- He commented he would not drink that rusty looking water. He went to the hotel on Thanksgiving Day. There was rust in the toilet bowl and it looked like someone had urinated it. There was also dust. The Yummy Orient, McDonalds and Mrs. Price on Breazeale Avenue were also having this issue.
- He said he went to the Boling Tower and there is a thirty to forty thousand dollar piece of equipment just sitting there. We have one hundred thousand dollars that was allocated for the Town Manager Replacement that is just sitting there. He feels the board should hold a special board meeting within the next ten days to move this funding for these repairs.
- He commented we have a new trash truck we can't use because no one had CDL's.
- He stated the water situation is not going to get any better. He has been here three years. Ms. Sam Jones was at board meeting a few months ago stating her water was rusty.
- He is not going to drink that water or let his son drink it. No one here is a medical doctor. He thinks everyone should get a credit on their water. The board has the authority to issue that.
- This Town knows a lot about double dipping. We owe these guys the truth.
- He forgives any commissioner he has had issue with and wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Mayor Pro-Tempore Barbara Kornegay

- She advised our team is working on a resolution to the water issues. The filters may not need to be replaced, just the contents. Flushing the lines has helped but will not resolve all the issues. Please be patient and give them time. We have to get an exact cost and do a total review first. Please let us know if your water is discolored.

Mayor Jerome Newton

- He said what he has to say doesn't carry any now
- He has listened to the Town citizens presentations and he is embarrassed Ms. Cindy Bell mentioned the problem was happening weeks before. We were just not aware it was in the area.
- He stated we have got to do better and he will get with groups this week regarding actions. We need to let the citizens help us. This board needs to make some hard decisions about getting things done and not bickering. We need strategic planning, that way you know we are working on it. Transparency is not trust whether it relates to signs or anything else. We need to come together before two weeks, no promises but we will do what we can.

Our next Regular Board meeting will be held on Monday, January 6, 2025 at 6:00 P.M.

Mayor Pro-Tempore Barbara Kornegay made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Danny Keel seconded and the motion passed 4-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jerome Newton
Mayor

Sherry Davis
Administrative Assistant/Town Clerk