

Town of Mount Olive
September 9, 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, Commissioner Vicky Darden, Town Attorney Carroll Turner, Town Manager Jammie Royall and Town Clerk/Administrative Assistant Sherry Davis.

Mayor Jerome Newton delivered the invocation and Commissioner Danny Keel 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 to approve the published agenda. Commissioner Tommy Brown made the motion to approve the published agenda. Commissioner Vicky Darden seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Jerome Newton requested a motion to approve the July 1, 2024 Regular Board Meeting, July 2, 2024 Special Called Board Meeting and the August 5, 2024 Regular Board Meeting minutes. Commissioner Tommy Brown made the motion to approve. Commissioner Danny Keel seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Jerome Newton then opened the public forum.

Mrs. Brenda Davis of 101 Ramblewood Drive, Mount Olive, NC 28365, 919-658-4552. She requested making some changes to the agenda. She would like to see more detail in the explanations so the audience can follow along. Stating what each item entails would help. She said she does have a copy of the Town Manager's Report but she would love to see a spreadsheet like the one presented at the last meeting.

Commissioner Delreese Simmons stated certain commissioners don't want us to speak at the end. So he is speaking here, he has received complaints regarding the limbs, ditches and lights. He calls Town Manager Jammie Royall who has split up the Public Works Department and now he doesn't know who is in charge of what. Commissioner Delreese Simmons advised that he has spoken with Mayor Jerome Newton and he said lights are being put up in his neighborhood. He said if you want to know more go to facebook for his report for his district.

Ms. Sam Jones of 110 Elmore Street, Mount Olive, NC 28365, 919-272-1169. She commented there is a water problem in her neighborhood. The water is staining her bathroom sinks, toilet and laundry. If the water drips for more than an hour it leaves brown stains. Her water is discolored and it smells. She requested someone please get this fixed, the people on Elmore Street can't drink the water.

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

Mayor Jerome Newton then discussed Action-Memo 09-09 - Consider Approval of S. Preston Douglas & Associates, LLP's Contract to Audit the Town of Mount Olive Accounts. Finance Director Jamie Butler stated the contract is very self-explanatory. It is their annual audit fee and is an estimate. It could go up or could go down. Mayor Pro-Tempore Barbara Kornegay asked if it was to have begun in August, 2024. Finance Director Jamie Butler answered our target date is October 15, 2024. Mayor Pro-Tempore Barbara Kornegay commented so items can't be sent until then. Finance Director Jamie Butler responded that is correct.

Mayor Jerome Newton asked if there were any other comments. He then request a motion to approve Action-Memo 09-09 - Consider Approval of S. Preston Douglas & Associates, LLP's Contract to Audit the Town of Mount Olive Accounts. Commissioner Danny Keel made the motion . Mayor Pro-Tempore Barbara Kornegay seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Jerome Newton then discussed Action-Memo 09-10 - Consider Scheduling a Public Hearing & Special Called Board Meeting for 2024 CDBG – Infrastructure Grant Application on Tuesday, September 24, 2024. The application is due September 30, 2024. Commissioner Tommy Brown made a motion to hold the Special Called Board Meeting on Tuesday, September 24, 2024 at 6:00 P.M. in the Board Meeting Room. Commissioner Vicky Darden seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Jerome Newton then discussed Action- Memo- 09-11 - Consider Approval of Agreement Between the Town of Mount Olive and Mid-Carolina Regional Council for ARPA Grants. Commissioner Delreese Simmons asked who are they. Mayor Pro-Tempore Barbara Kornegay answered they are a Non-Profit Council of Government. Mayor Jerome Newton asked if there was any additional information. Mayor Pro-Tempore Barbara Kornegay advised they would assist with the grant administration for the Waste Water Treatment Plant Improvements, Sewer Collections and Drinking Water Projects. Mayor Jerome Newton stated he feels very confident in them. Mr. Scott King asked how much would we be paying them. Mayor Pro-Tempore Barbara Kornegay responded five percent. Mr. Scott King replied so we would be saving seven hundred thousand dollars. Mayor Jerome Newton reminded Mr. Scott King this is not the public forum.

Mayor Jerome Newton requested a motion to approve Action-Memo 09-11 - - Consider Approval of Agreement. Between the Town of Mount Olive and Mid-Carolina Regional Council for ARPA Grants. Commissioner Tommy Brown made the motion to approve. Mayor Pro-Tempore Barbara Kornegay seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Jerome Newton asked if there were any further questions. He then requested a motion to approve Action – Memo 08-07. Commissioner Tommy Brown made the motion. Mayor Pro-Tempore Barbara Kornegay seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Jerome Newton then discussed Action Memo –09-12- Consider Approval of Budget Ordinance Amendment #1 ARPA transfers into General Fund (PD salaries). Finance Director Jamie Butler stated this is the last amount of our American Rescue Plan Act fund revenue replacement. We qualified and it was set outside of their budget in a special line item. All funds must be expended by December 31, 2026. Commissioner Delreese Simmons asked if these monies go to the police department. Finance Director Jamie Butler answered no, that is just where it has to reside. Commissioner Delreese Simmons wanted to know if it can be used for anything such as employee bonuses. Finance Director Jamie Butler responded yes if the board approves.

Commissioner Delreese Simmons commented, \$139,000.00 would cover \$1500.00 for over one year, \$750.00 for 6 months to one year and \$300.00 for less than 6 months. Finance Director Jamie Butler said the Town will have to pay state and federal taxes. Commissioner Danny Keel stated the Town is covering that this year. Commissioner Delreese Simmons advised there are 68 employees so something is not adding up. There are 52 employees receiving \$1,500.00, 3 receiving \$750.00 and 5 receiving \$300.00. That leaves eight employees who are not getting a bonus. Town Manager Jammie Royall stated he had sent an email to the Mayor and Commissioners advising that 8 employees had chosen raises rather than the bonus. Mayor Jerome Newton asked if the employees elected this or were they forced. Town Manager Jammie Royall responded they elected this. Commissioner Danny Keel said he thought all employees were receiving a bonus. Commissioner Delreese Simmons wanted the list of employees who are not getting a bonus. Mayor Jerome Newton asked if conversations took place with the employees. Town Manager Jammie Royall replied yes, four took the bonus and four took the raise because their job duties have been increased.

Commissioner Danny Keel said it should have been made clear that employees would have the option. He doesn't recall discussing this. Commissioner Tommy Brown responded, he doesn't either. Finance Director Jamie Butler informed the board, the amendment just moves the money. Commissioner Danny Keel made a motion to approve Action Memo –09-12- Consider Approval of Budget Ordinance Amendment #1 ARPA transfers into General Fund (PD salaries) but to table the bonuses. Mayor Pro-Tempore Barbara Kornegay seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Jerome Newton then discussed Action Memo – 09-13 - Consider Approval of Budget Ordinance Amendment #2 Transfer from CIP (fund 30) to Collections and Distribution (Fund 30) to account for large repairs on Breazeale Ave. Finance Director Jamie Butler stated this moves monies into three accounts from the capital reserve.

Mayor Jerome Newton asked if there were any questions then requested a motion to approve Consider Approval of Budget Ordinance Amendment #2 Transfer from CIP (fund 30) to Collections and Distribution (Fund 30) to account for large repairs on Breazeale Ave . Commissioner Tommy Brown made a motion to approve. Mayor Pro-Tempore Barbara Kornegay seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Jerome Newton said he talked with a few citizens and they usually don't get an update. He asked Town Manager Jammie Royall to please read his Town Manager's Report. It is attached as part of the meeting minutes. Mayor Jerome Newton commented for anyone with more questions to please email their questions.

Mayor Jerome Newton requested an estimated time for the sign machine to be operational. He asked Town Manager Jammie Royall if he could get to Goldsboro this week. Town Manager Jammie Royall replied he hopes so. Mayor Jerome Newton asked for an update on the water meter project. Town Manager Jammie Royall estimated four to five months for this project to begin. Commissioner Danny Keel said this sign machine issue has been going on for over a year now and he thinks the board should put a time-frame of thirty days for it to be up and running. He asked if any other board members agree. Commissioner Tommy Brown responded he agrees. Mayor Jerome Newton asked the board if they had any other comments. He said the sign machine should be projected as working within thirty days. If not we should look at something else for signs.

Commissioner Tommy Brown asked everyone to please keep former Mayor Pro-Tempore in their prayers.

Commissioner Vicky Darden stated there is a young lady who does a lot for the community and for our Town. She said she surprised her tonight because she thought she typing this award for someone else. She wanted to praise Town Clerk Sherry Davis for her hard work and dedication. Commissioner Vicky Darden and Mayor Pro-Tempore Barbara Kornegay presented her with a certificate of appreciation. Town Clerk Sherry Davis thanked them for the certificate and for all they do.

Town Attorney Carroll Turner wanted to say something positive about our Police Department. Police Chief Jason Hughes did a wonderful job helping the family of recently deceased citizen who live alone. This was a very unusual situation.

Mayor Jerome Newton commented that even though the board comments are no longer on the agenda, the commissioners should talk with their citizens. He said hopefully next month there should be a power point where citizens can come and hear about what is going on in the Town. Items such as lighting, meters, the Council of Government to show them what we are doing for the citizens. He commented we need to work on adding the reports back. He said he had requested some information from Town Attorney Carroll Turner regarding attorney client privilege. Town Attorney Carroll Turner responded he thought this issue had been resolved, if it is regarding the billing. He advised the State Bar rendered a written opinion but said it is confidential and can't be released to the public.

Town Attorney Carroll Turner stated he is no longer billing the Town for conferring with the Board of Commissioners. There were no charges on last month's bill. It was not a big deal to start with. Mayor Jerome Newton responded you represent them privately, is that not a conflict. Town Attorney Carroll Turner commented for thirty-two years his billing statements have never been a problem, then all of a sudden it was. He is representing them as the Board of Commissioner but not charging the Town. Mayor Jerome Newton said you are providing a service. Town Attorney Carroll Turner replied the privilege belongs to the client not to me. He stated they can post it on facebook if they want to. Mayor Jerome Newton stated let's not go there. Town Attorney Carroll Turner advised if they release the information that is on them. Mayor Jerome Newton brought up a conversation where he stated Town Attorney Carroll Turner talked with an employee at Walmart about a cover-up. Town Attorney Carroll Turner replied he spoke with a former employee.

Mayor Jerome Newton feels that type of conversation should not take place in a Walmart. Make sure you are not speaking or accusing someone. We still need to look into the Conflict of Interest with the Town Attorney further. He spoke of a bible verse from Genesis and the Garden of Eden. There was a serpent in the garden who is slicker than the others. He used that as an example to remind everyone that distractions keep us from doing what we are elected to do. Personalities are clashing and he is trying to nip that in the bud. We need to get rid of our differences and not continue attacking one another. He is asking everyone to please come together.

Mayor Jerome Newton commented we just have to bury the hatchet and work together. He said if we spend as much time trying to fix the Town. Please, please, please let us come together. We need citizen support, one town, one community, one Mount Olive.

Commissioner Danny Keel wanted to know when the bonuses are supposed to be distributed. He asked if the board could meet tomorrow afternoon at 4:00 P.M. or Wednesday at 5:00 P.M.

Mayor Jerome Newton stated Head Water Clerk/Office Manager Tia Best received a state award from the Rural Water Association. She should have been recognized.

Commissioner Tommy Brown made a motion to recess this meeting until Wednesday, September 11, 2024 at 5:00 P.M. in the board meeting room. Commissioner Danny Keel seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jerome Newton
Mayor

Sherry Davis
Administrative Assistant/Town Clerk