



**WESTERN UNION MUNICIPAL ALLIANCE
REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, AUGUST 24, 2023 4:00 P.M.
MINERAL SPRINGS TOWN HALL
3506 POTTERS ROAD SOUTH, MONROE NC 28112
MINUTES**

Present: Chairman Jeff Perryman (Weddington), Deb Bledsoe (Wesley Chapel), Andy Wortman (Marvin), Rick Becker (Mineral Springs), Steven Ayers (Stallings), Ron Pappas (Waxhaw)

Absent: None. All member municipalities represented.

1. Open the Meeting and Determination of Quorum

Chairman Perryman called the meeting to order at 4pm and determined a quorum was present.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

Perryman requested to add item “a)” to item 7 on the Agenda regarding NC SL2023-108.

Motion: Pappas moved to adopt the agenda as amended.

Vote: The motion passed unanimously.

3. Approve June 22, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Motion: Steve moved to approve the June 22, 2023 meeting minutes.

Vote: The motion passed unanimously.

4. Public Comments

No one signed up to speak.

Jerry Perryman commented about the recent passing of Union County Chairman Stoney Rushing stating that although he did not agree on many things politically, Stoney “was a father, he was a husband, he was a friend to people. And he did serve this county for quite a while for a long time” and requested we all remember his family in this time. He expressed respect and appreciation for Stoney’s service to the county for many years.

5. Delegate and Municipality Reports

Mineral Springs: Mr. Becker stated that the Annual Festival has resumed and will be held Saturday, September 9th, rain or shine from 10 AM to 4 PM. He highlighted that Vicky Brooks deserved a “huge thumbs up for getting the festival organized again following the three years since COVID halted activities. He mentioned the Parkwood High School band, JROTC and color guard would be opening the ceremonies and the band Aerial View would be performing. Councilwoman Bettylyn Krafft has organized contests and games for the children’s activities - an invitation to all was extended.

Stallings: Mr. Ayers shared updates. The town is waiting on getting Certificate to open a small stint of new Greenway off Stevens Mill Rd where NCDOT required a crossing – hoping that will be open by September 15th. He commented that the town has had a few developers build out a couple of pieces “with the hope that eventually it will connect up throughout the entire town of Stallings so that’s good for us. Obviously, with the sewer situation, one of the- we bought a piece of property in downtown we’re going to try to redevelop it. Since then, probably one of the bigger changes that we’ve had to make is kind of shift gears into kind of short term or medium-term rental. And so, things continue on that front but unfortunately, this is an older building so, it’s probably going to need some retrofitting. And we’ve already found out we’re going to need a bigger sewer line and, and probably a bigger water line. And just in general, one of the problems with that is the- that means we’ll probably have to go back and get recertified for sewer so good, which might cause some problems.” Lastly, Mr. Ayers announced the StallingsFest, which is usually their biggest festival of the year, is happening again this year at 100% since the pandemic.

Wesley Chapel: Ms. Bledsoe shared that the Town is continuing their 25th anniversary celebration and had a commemorative celebration on July 15th at Dogwood Park with around 300 people in attendance and twenty-five (25) commemorative dogwood trees were planted at Dogwood Park. The event had food trucks, bouncy houses, water games and face painting for the kids. In honor of the anniversary there was an elementary school art contest and appreciation dinner for the volunteers. Additionally, the town had a back-to-school jam at Dogwood Park on August 5th. She shared that there have been two historical articles about the Village published in the Enquirer Journal with three more scheduled. Upcoming events include a movie night at Town Hall on the 15th [August], litter sweep in September, a Night Out the first weekend of October, the Fall Bash on October 28th at Dogwood Park and Coco Carols and Santa at Dogwood Park on December 9th. Ms. Bledsoe expressed that she was delighted to be representing Wesley Chapel at this WUMA meeting.

Weddington: Chairman Perryman explained that Having a Movie Night on Aug. 25th., as current one is moving away for their spouse’s new job. He then spoke of the proposed Latter Day Saints Temple that is rumored for Weddington and indicated they have received a lot of calls and emails inquiring about the proposed project. Demolition had begun but that’s a county permit, not the town. The town hasn’t received any official submissions of paperwork regarding the project as of yet. He noted that a formal conditional rezoning application is forthcoming. He commented on speeding that is occurring in Town and opportunities to receive funding for additional law enforcement resources. There was a recent traffic impact

analysis meeting for the new proposed Liberty Academy which is being planned right across the street from Town Hall. The Town is awaiting the survey results for the revised Land Use Plan in conjunction with input from public involvement meetings which will be assembled and provided to Council with the data to make any necessary updates to the land use plan. The search still continues to hire a new planner as they do not have any full-time planner on staff yet. Town Hall has roof leak as would be expected with the older home they use for Town hall. Good news is that the finance officer normally sets aside money for such occasions though it appears it may cost more. Three bids for repair have been received at this point. They've submitted a request to the State for funds, similar to the Federal ARPA-type funds, for a \$75k grant. There have been discussions about renovations to Town Hall, outbuildings, sidewalks, and park area on property adjacent to Town Hall which the Town owns and will hopefully include an amphitheater, intersection improvements and a big help would be purchasing updated Audio/Visual equipment for Town Hall. Lastly, the town has been told by DOT that the Rae Road Extension is schedule to begin in 2026, "if all goes right."

Marvin: Mr. Wortman shared that Marvin is in the middle of a UDO rewrite to clean up the ordinance. He also shared that the construction of the roundabout at Marvin Road and New Town Road is in process and expected to take 6-8 weeks. In the middle of a rezoning request regarding the first commercial entity in the Heritage District for a "tavern-style restaurant and some mixed-use commercial office space." Questions were brought up in the Public Hearing which resulted in the matter being tabled to clarify some things at the next work session. They've has been chasing a water leak issue in the ground at Village Hall. It may be coming from irrigation and is being fully investigated. Lastly, there will be a continuation of landscaping at Village Hall soon which will include the front side of the building.

Waxhaw: Mr. Pappas noted that the construction of their new town hall is progressing well. He informed everyone that Waxhaw had a successful opening of the new Downtown Plaza area which was well attended in the redesigned area on East North Main Street near the pedestrian bridge. Improvements include new LED lighting fixtures (some with speaker capabilities), road & parking reconfiguration, wider sidewalks with ample seating and a Social District "trial" which was a one-time event served as the test case for possible future use after feedback from the police department and staff. Many Dignitaries attended and fun was had by all. Recent improvements to Downtown have been made possible with TAP Grant. \$6M project of which the Town only had to cover about \$2M. Autumn Treasures Event coming up which is one of the biggest events for the Town with an estimated 12K people that attend. Downtown Waxhaw Association has been formed as a Public-Private Partnership which just received their 501c3 status. This new organization was formed to benefit the Town's Main Street area as a member of the North Carolina Main Street Association. Traffic will become an issue due to upcoming improvements to two railroad crossings which are expected to take 8 days to complete. The Downtown Park is progressing nicely with hopes of opening by the first of the year. There are more improvements in the planning stages.

6. Old Business

a) Review Water/Sewer Status

Chairman Perryman nothing new with the County's water and sewer issues. Partially due to the recent passing of Chairman Rushing. He noted the process for replacing Stoney Rushing which has many different facets and various solutions are being investigated to figure out the funding status for future maintenance and service. Mr. Perryman stated the Union County Board of Commissioners had passed 1.75[%] rate increase for three years, which is a temporary fix. He continued that Union County Manager Brian Matthews has stated that they are still looking for some alternate funding sources from the state, another \$20 Million, to move beyond merely the repair & replace expenses. The County will continue investigating option until a solution for funding has been accomplished.

Mr. Wortman commented on the Town's [Marvin's] potential solutions for water/sewer for He explained that the expanded capacity will be limited, as it will need to be fairly allocated amongst municipalities. Suggested idea of collaborative effort for the purpose of a western union county water/sewer capacity/treatment options. Perhaps negotiation with Mecklenburg County.

Mr. Perryman provided update on Rae Road extension. He was told DOT indicated that they are beginning the ROW acquisition for that project, estimated to be an 18-month process. Once that's complete the Engineering studies (FY-26) will be completed – again, estimated to be an 18-month process. Start construction date expected in FY-27. Funding is the issue. Gas purchasing has diminished which has reduced funding that came from fuel sales. Recent State legislation has indicated that 2% of the General Fund sales tax will be moved to DOT. Within the next few years that will increase to cap at 6% to help DOT to try any make up some funding not coming from gas sales.

Mr. Pappas provided update regarding widening of Hwy 16. NCDOT \$12 Billion shortfall causes delays. Municipalities are faced with contributing to funding if the improvements are to be completed and that every delay increases the shortfall due to ever-increasing costs for construction. He added, "The reality is, like Brian Matthews [County Manager] said, 'There is a tax increase in your future and that's just the way it's gonna work.' "

Mr. Ayers asked about what studies have been done pertaining to where the current sources of funding are originating. How much is coming from out of the area? Out of the State?

Mr. Pappas stated there have been lost of studies in government. He said that COVID obviously had an adverse impact on the revenue stream. He mentioned the EV "fee" (tax) which is an attempt to make up for lack of fuel tax revenue. He'd just registered an electric car and there was an additional \$140 fee attached because it was electric.

Mr. Wortman added that with people moving to the area it's a double edged sword; you get more revenue but the wear and tear on the roads is also increased.

7. New Business

a) **August League of Municipalities newsletter on NC SL 2023-108.** (added to agenda at the request of Chairman Perryman)

Mr. Perryman expressed concern about some of the contents of the recently passed laws. He commented on the creation of a new North Carolina Residential Code Council. He summarized, "...So basically, what apparently they've done is created a separate group that is now going to look at all residential zoning rules in the state. And that translates to your zoning rules, our zoning rules, everybody's local zoning rules. Law changes of interest to cities and towns include- and some of these seem rather, again is in my corner- but anyway, Section 2.(c) increases the threshold for permit exemptions for certain minor building activities from 20 to \$40,000." [page 22 of SL 2023-108]

Mr. Wortman stated, "From a contractor's point Yeah, I can understand that because of the cost of construction today. They're updating the costs."

Mr. Perryman continued, "Section 3.(a) prohibits local governments from requiring local "pavement design standards that are more stringent than the minimum standards' set forth by NCDOT for private roads, in new developments." [page 24 of SL 2023-108] He continued, " Section 9.(a) and (b) amends the residential building code to include three-family (triplex) and four-family (quadruplex) dwellings, relaxing the code requirements that apply to these dwellings and potentially reducing the costs of building housing. Section 4 talks or Section 10 is changes in fee calculations for erosion and sediment control plans, limiting fees on single family lots. Section 11 directs NC Department of Environmental Quality to apply for approval from the EPA to remove any duplicate ID requirements for applicants that apply to any state or federal agencies for the approval of land disturbing activities, opting instead for a single permit issued by a local government if that government operates its own sediment control plan. A municipality may, and this is Section 12, a municipality may only require connection to a public wastewater system if capacity exists to serve that connection at the time of the connection. And then Section 13.(a), it prohibits requiring payments from developer or landowner for future maintenance of private stormwater control measures, changes the cap on private stormwater maintenance guarantee obligations to 10% of the project's original cost, it didn't say what they were previously, and requires any local government who has required payments for future stormwater control measure and maintenance to make those funds available to the owner. So, and I'll just say this, I know that there's a lot, of a lot of very concerned folks that live in our neck of the woods that talk about all of our zoning regulations and the rules that we make. But they need to be looking a little further to the east, because these, these rules are only going to get more interesting." He went on to state, "[T]hat's why this group is here, because we as the municipalities, or reps for our different councils, need we need as a group to be talking about this. So, if we need to get some of our Union County delegates to come to one of these meetings and explain this kind of stuff- Why? Why was this in here? That's what we're gonna need to do. And you know, and like I said, and we can make, I can make phone calls and try to get them down here to say, Why are you making these kind of rules?"

Mr. Becker stated it may be a potential life safety issue if three and four family residential structures will no longer require anything more than two-hour fire-rated walls and not sprinklers. He stated he wasn't sure if that made it into the final Bill but if it did, it's not necessarily a good thing from a life safety perspective.

Mr. Pappas offered thoughts on reasoning for recent changes being due to housing affordability.

Additional general discussion about state legislative actions took place which included the topic of affordability of housing and the numerous factors involved in decisions.

8. Delegate Comments

Weddington: Chairman Perryman issued a reminder that it's election season and the urge to remain respectful, mindful of the position of an elected official is the representation of the municipality of which they serve.

Marvin: Mr. Pollino thanked Mr. Matthews and Commissioner Williams for attending.

Mineral Springs: Mr. Becker noted that he enjoyed attending and appreciated being part of the team.

Stallings: Mr. Ayers appreciates the updates provided.

Waxhaw: Mr. Pappas had no additional comments.

Wesley Chapel: Ms. Bledsoe said she enjoyed being here.

9. Adjournment

Motion: Deb Bledsoe moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:10pm.

Second: Ron Pappas

Vote: The motion passed unanimously.

Minutes provided courtesy of the Town of Mineral Springs