

**MINUTES**  
**Town of Marshall Board of Alderman**  
**Regular Meeting**  
April 17, 2023  
6:00 p.m.

In attendance were Mayor Nancy Allen, Aldermen Billie Jean Haynie, Thomas Jablonski Aileen Payne, Christiaan Ramsey and Laura Ponder Smith. Also in attendance were Town Administrator Forrest Gilliam and Town Attorney Jamie Stokes.

Mayor Allen called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

Item 1

Upon motion by Alderman Jablonski, seconded by Alderman Haynie, the Board voted 5-0 to approve the agenda as amended to insert Beautification Working Group Members as Item 6, and changing the numbering for Administration Report from Item 6 to Item 7.

Item 2

Upon motion by Alderman Haynie, seconded by Alderman Payne, the Board voted 5-0 to approve the minutes from the March 20, 2023 regular meeting, March 20, 2023 public hearing, and April 13, 2023 special meeting.

Item 3

Upon motion by Alderman Smith, seconded by Alderman Ramsey, the Board voted 5-0 to authorize the Mayor and Town Administrator to approve the 2023 Municipal Election Agreement with the Madison County Board of Elections, and to authorize the Mayor and Town Administrator to sign all appropriate documents related to this agreement as requested by the Madison County Board of Elections. The Madison County Board of Elections will administer the entire election process for the 2023 municipal election, including candidate filing and election administration. The Board of Elections will bill the Town for the cost of the election. If pending legislation in the North Carolina General Assembly to change Marshall's municipal election to a partisan election passes prior to the start of candidate filing in July, a Primary Election will have to be held. This will require a new or modified agreement with the Board of Elections, and the Town will have to pay for the cost of the Primary Election.

Item 4

Discussion took place regarding a request to change the name of the upper end of Hardwick Branch, accessed from Hill Street, to differentiate from the lower end of Hardwick Branch which is accessed from South Main Street. The middle section of the road is not maintained in a manner sufficient for daily traffic. Since most commercial GPS services show the road as a through road that is drivable from one end to the other, there have been complaints from both ends of the road about people having trouble turning around when they realize they can't get through. Discussion took place regarding the condition of the road, turnaround space, number of dwellings on each end, and options to address the issue. Upon motion by Alderman Ramsey, seconded by Alderman Jablonski, the Board voted 5-0 to table the item until the May regular meeting.

#### Item 5

For decades the Town of Marshall has provided space on the Island for the Madison County Youth League to maintain a field for baseball games. The Town has furnished bleachers, provided restrooms and other facilities, with the Youth League raising funds for additional improvements and agreeing to maintain the field. Following back-to-back floods in December of 2018 and April of 2019, Youth League leadership and volunteers determined that the effort to repair the field just to see it flood again was not worth it, and has been playing in other locations throughout the county since then. The Youth League last year began using the field at the old Walnut School, and the Town of Marshall has loaned its bleachers to that site for use during the baseball season. The Town has invited the Youth League to return to the Island, but the volunteer leaders of the organization have determined that the best course for them is to maintain a field at Walnut. Games have not been held on the Island field since 2018, and the unused dugouts are in a state of disrepair. Given the decision of the Youth League to prioritize Walnut, the lack of use of the field and dugouts, the cost of repair, and the potential nuisance and safety issues of leaving them standing, Alderman Haynie moved, seconded by Alderman Smith, that the dugouts be removed by the Maintenance crew. The motion passed 5 to 0.

#### Item 6

Upon motion by Alderman Payne, seconded by Alderman Smith, the Board voted 5-0 to appoint Suzanne DuVall and Katie Thompson to the Beautification Working Group. The Beautification Working Group is a group of volunteers who will be a subcommittee of the Parks and Recreation Committee. The two newly appointed members will join Sherie Hill, who is a member of the Parks and Recreation Committee and was previously appointed chair of the Beautification Working Group. The group will focus its efforts on beautification of the publicly owned properties in the downtown district, and will work through the Parks and Recreation Committee and Town Administrator for approval of any projects. Any substantial projects involving permanent changes will need to be approved by the Board of Aldermen. Discussion took place regarding the condition of concrete planters previously purchased by the Town and located on the sidewalks throughout Town. The working group and Parks and Recreation Committee will discuss this item at the next Parks and Recreation meeting and report back to the Board of Aldermen.

#### Item 7

A report the Tax Collection and Water/Sewer collection rates for the month of March was presented to the Board.

A copy of the Monthly Operating Report for the Town's wells from Byers Environmental was presented to the Board, along with the monthly Unaccountable Water Rate for March.

The financial report for the month of March was presented to the Board.

Forrest Gilliam, Town Administrator, and Alexandra Arden, Director of the Downtown Marshall Association, updated the Board regarding plans for a July 4<sup>th</sup> celebration. The event is scheduled for Sunday, July 2<sup>nd</sup>. The Madison County Tourism Development Authority approved a grant to the Town to cover \$5,000.00 of the total \$7,500.00 for fireworks. The cost includes paying someone to shoot the fireworks. Leading up to the fireworks display plans are being made to have a parade and other activities in the late afternoon. Ms. Arden was able to secure a 30-foot by 60-foot United States flag from a town in Florida that is donating the flag to Marshall. A decision will need to be made about how to incorporate the flag into the July 4<sup>th</sup> event.

Mayor Nancy Allen shared that progress is coming along nicely on planning for the Town's upcoming Memorial Day observance. The event will take place at 11:00 a.m. on the courthouse lawn on Monday, May 29<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Gilliam updated the Board regarding potential development of property located at 1501 NC 213 that was recently rezoned from Highway Business to Mixed Use. The person who was under contract to purchase the property did not proceed with final purchase and the property remains on the market. The rezoning to Mixed Use is still in effect.

Mr. Gilliam shared that the Maintenance crew has cleared the road to an old test well on the property recently purchased by the Town on Heck Creek, where the Town already has another well that is in operation. When weather, equipment, and contractors are available a draw down and water sampling will be done on the test well to see if it produces sufficient quality water to bring into operation and add to the Town's system. The Town purchased the approximately 17-acre property in August 22, along with 10 acres across Walnut Creek Road, using funds from the 2021 American Rescue Plan and proceeds from the 2018 Hunter Creek Watershed Conservation Easement to fund the purchase. The Town now owns the total of three wells that are in use on both tracts, eliminating a previous annual payment for which there was no long-term lease. The opportunity to explore for an additional well on the Heck Creek tract was an additional benefit of the purchase. Staff will report back to the Board on the results of the drawdown once it has taken place.

Mr. Gilliam reported on some improvements recently made to the Island using funds received from the streaming series that was filmed in Marshall in 2021. "No Parking" signs have been added at several locations including around the playground, gravel has been added to create additional parking along the road to the playground and wastewater treatment plant, and posts will soon be installed along the perimeter of the parking areas to discourage people from parking on the grass.

## **Reports from Boards and Community Organizations**

**Downtown Marshall Association** – Working on 4<sup>th</sup> of July and June 3<sup>rd</sup> Mermaid Festival

**Board of Adjustment** – No meeting

**Planning Board** – Met March 21<sup>st</sup>

**Parks and Recreation** – Met April 12<sup>th</sup>

## **Department Reports**

**Fire Department** – No report.

**Police Department** – Report is in packet

**Water Department** – Jamie Chandler

**Maintenance Department** – Jamie Chandler

**Zoning Department** – Forrest Gilliam

## **Public Comment**

Lisa Pantzer and Marc Horne each spoke about traffic conditions on Jerry Plemmons Way, and presented a petition to the Board suggesting improvements that the North Carolina Department of Transportation could make to the state maintained road.


Upon motion by Alderman Haynie, seconded by Alderman Jablonski, the Board voted 5-0 to enter into closed session for the purposes of attorney-client privilege, property, and personnel.

Upon motion by Alderman Haynie, seconded by Alderman Jablonski, the Board voted 5-0 to return to open session.

Upon motion by Alderman Payne, seconded by Alderman Smith, the Board voted 5-0 to authorize the employment of Matthew B. Lawson as a part-time reserve police officer effective April 24, 2023.

Upon motion by Alderman Ramsey, seconded by Alderman Haynie, the Board voted 5-0 to set the rate of pay for all reserve police officers at \$20.00 per hour effective April 24, 2023.

Upon motion by Alderman Ramsey, seconded by Alderman Smith, the Board voted 5-0 to adjourn at 7:44 p.m.

  
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Nancy Allen, Mayor

  
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Forrest Gilliam, Town Administrator