

MINUTES
Town of Marshall Board of Alderman
Regular Meeting
October 16, 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 Attorney Larry Leake.

Mayor Allen called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Item 1

Upon motion by Alderman Smith, seconded by Alderman Jablonski, the Board voted 5-0 to approve the agenda as presented.

Item 2

Upon motion by Alderman Smith, seconded by Alderman Ramsey, the Board voted 5-0 to approve the minutes from the September 18, 2023 Regular Meeting.

Item 3

Forrest Gilliam, Town Administrator, provided an update regarding the Downtown Wi-Fi project. Madison County government is the recipient of two sources of grant funds totaling \$51,000 for Downtown Wi-Fi: the first, received in 2019 from the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources as part of the Governor's Hometown Strong program, and the second, received in 2023 from the Dogwood Health Trust. The County holds the funds and is combining them to implement a Wi-Fi program for downtown Marshall.

Matthew Wilson, Strategic Projects Coordinator with the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners, has been placed to work with Madison County throughout 2023, and was able to coordinate the process of issuing a request for proposals for the service. Mr. Wilson worked with Mr. Gilliam to develop the RFP, and the Count received two responses in September. A committee made up of Mr. Gilliam, Mr. Wilson, Ross Young, County Project Manager, and Jaime Lunsford, County IT Director, interviewed the responding companies and recommended the County award the project to Sky Runner, which provides the same service in downtown Mars Hill. The County has since awarded the bid to Sky Runner, which plans to install the equipment for the service in December and January.

The grant funds will pay for the installation as well as the monthly subscription cost for the service, including management and maintenance by the vendor, for three years. There is no requirement that the Town continue the service after the three year period is over, but the Town can seek additional grant funding or turn over the subscription to downtown businesses at the end of the three year period. Once implemented, coverage areas will include all of North and South Main Street from the Depot to the foot of Redmon Road, the Island, and Jerry Plemmons Way.

Item 4

As authorized by the Board of Aldermen at its September meeting, the Town has submitted an application to the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration for \$2,317,635.80 in funding for upgrades to the Town's wastewater treatment plant. If awarded, the amount of Town funds for the local match would be \$463,527. An

answer on the grant funding should be received in the next few months. Town staff and Land of Sky will continue to look for other grant opportunities for this project in the event that the EDA grant is not awarded to the Town.

Item 5

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

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

Following up on discussion from the August and September meetings, Mayor Allen informed the Board that the American Legion has resolved its conflict for Memorial Day in 2024. As a result, the Town of Marshall will plan to hold its Memorial Day observance at 11:00 a.m. on Memorial Day.

Discussion took place regarding the Christmas Parade, scheduled for Saturday, December 9th at 11:00 a.m., and whether the Board wishes to select a Grand Marshal for this year's parade. Upon motion by Alderman Ramsey, seconded by Alderman Jablonski, the Board voted 5-0 to select Mayor Nancy Allen as Grand Marshal in recognition of her years of dedicated service to the Town of Marshall.

Reports from Boards and Community Organizations

Downtown Marshall Association – No report

Board of Adjustment – Met on September 25th to hold a hearing for a request for a Special Use Permit for a campground located at the corner of Redmon Road and Frisby Road. The Board of Adjustment voted to issue the permit for up to five camp sites, and included several conditions requested by Town staff and neighboring property owners who attended the hearing.

Planning Board – No meeting

Parks and Recreation – Met October 11th – The group is discussing options for different uses on the multi-use field on the island with a goal of maintaining as many options as possible for a variety of users. The Beautification Working Group is planning a visit with Santa at the Pocket Park following this year's Christmas Parade.

Department Reports

Fire Department – No report.

Police Department – Report in packet

Public Works Department – Jamie Chandler shared the Unaccountable Water Rate, monthly operating reports for wells, and the monthly maintenance report.

Zoning Department – See Board of Adjustment report.

Public Comment


There was no public comment.

Upon motion by Alderman Haynie, seconded by Alderman Jablonski, the Board voted 5-0 to enter into closed session pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 143-318.11(a)(3), to consult with an attorney employed or retained by the


Town in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege, which privilege is hereby acknowledged for the suit Firley v. Town of Marshall.

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

Upon motion by Alderman Haynie, seconded by Alderman Smith, the Board voted 5-0 to adjourn at 7:08 p.m.



Nancy Allen, Mayor



Forrest Gilliam, Town Administrator