

REGULAR MEETING CITY COUNCIL

May 17, 2021

The City Council of the City of Albemarle met in a regular session on Monday, May 17, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall. Mayor Ronnie Michael presided, and the following members were present, to-wit: Mayor Pro Tempore Martha Sue Hall and Councilmembers Bill Aldridge, Martha E. Hughes, Chris Whitley, Benton Dry, Dexter Townsend, and Shirley D. Lowder.

Mayor Michael called the meeting to order.

Special Presentations:

Presentation of a City Retirement Certificate to Colleen Conroy – 25 Years of Service

Ms. Conroy came forward with her mother and son. The Mayor presented Ms. Conroy a plaque in gratitude for her 25 years of service in the Finance Department, most recently as Finance Director. Ms. Conroy retired on April 1, 2021.

Council and the Mayor thanked her for her service. Ms. Conroy gave a few remarks. First, to the citizens of Albemarle she noted that it has been her honor and privilege to serve them for 25 years. She appreciated Council’s support of her over the years, and thanked former Finance Directors Bob Stewart and Joyce Almond for hiring her and providing her with the chance to grow. She stated that the City would be in good hands with the promotion of Jacob Weavil to Finance Director. Mr. Weavil will do a fabulous job. She thanked City management and noted that they are dedicated, care about the City and want to do the best job. Finally, she recognized City Manager Michael J. Ferris and thanked him for the good times they had working together and for his support over the years.

The Mayor asked Ms. Conroy if she wanted to recognize her mother. Ms. Conroy introduced her mother who is 100 years old and came here to Albemarle to be present for her retirement ceremony tonight. Her mother said that she is very proud of her daughter. Ms. Conroy introduced her son, as well as her sisters who were in the audience and came from out of state to be here. Ms. Conroy closed her remarks by thanking everyone again.

Centralina Regional Council Award – COVID19 Resiliency Award for Remote Learning Center at EE Waddell Community Center

Parks and Recreation Director Lisa Kiser came forward to present and discuss this award. She noted that Albemarle’s Parks and Recreation Department received the award for developing and implementing the Remote Learning Center and Program at the EE Waddell Center in 2020. She briefly recounted the history of how the program was created and supported. Back in 2020 after Stanly

County Schools decided to turn to all remote learning for the last part of the 2019-2020 school year and the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year due to the pandemic, Brentwood (Brent) Kirven and she brainstormed the idea of a remote learning program for elementary and middle school students. The objectives of the program were and continue to be provision of: a dedicated space for young school-aged children to learn remotely; a means of socialization for children; and recreational activities. Ms. Kiser noted that Parks and Recreation was able to parlay a \$31,300 CARES Act grant into the program to financially support partnerships with Stanly County Schools and the YMCA.

Ms. Kiser recognized and thanked Brent, Todd and the cleaning/maintenance crew, City Manager Michael J. Ferris and Assistant City Manager Nyki Hardy for their vision and support for the program, the City's IS team for the technology set-up and support, the City's HR team for recruitment and hiring of personnel needed for the program, and Stanly County Schools for their partnership with the City.

Stanly County Schools representatives present were invited to make brief remarks. Beverly Pennington, Director of Student Services and Athletics, noted that the COVID19 Resiliency Award is a true name considering the need to be resilient to develop and implement the program to meet students' needs quickly. She thanked Brent for being such a visionary and applauded Parks and Recreation for the Remote Learning Program.

Central Elementary Principal Melissa Smith thanked Brent for being a visionary who brings plans to fruition.

National Public Works Week Proclamation

Public Works Director Ross Holshouser came forward to make remarks about Public Works Week. The American Public Works Association is proud to announce "Stronger Together" as the theme for the 2021 National Public Works Week May 16th – 23rd. This year's exciting theme challenges elected officials and community citizens to think about the role public works plays in creating a great place to live. By working together, the impact citizens and public works professionals can have on their communities is magnified and results in the ability to accomplish goals once thought unattainable.

Public Works helps maintain a community's strength by working together to provide an infrastructure of services in transportation infrastructure, fleet maintenance, stormwater management, public buildings & grounds, solid waste & recycling services, and right-of-way management. Public Works provides togetherness needed for collaboration with all the stakeholders and other departments in capital projects, infrastructure solutions, and quality of life services throughout the City of Albemarle.

Mayor Pro Tem Hall read the proclamation aloud.

The Mayor called for a motion to adopt the proclamation and designate May 16th to the 23rd as Public Works Week sponsored by the American Public Works Association. Upon a motion by Councilmember Aldridge, seconded by Councilmember Townsend, unanimously carried, the motion passed.

[National Public Works Week Proclamation]

NC State University ITRE Road Scholar Program Awards

Public Works Director Ross Holshouser came forward to discuss the ITRE Roads Scholar Program and to present awards to 2 Public Works employees.

Local government agencies in North Carolina who have the responsibility for streets and roads are entrusted to see that these streets and roads are safe and properly constructed and maintained. Employees must be trained in the basics of construction and maintenance as well as staying current in the latest practices.

The Roads Scholar and Advanced Roads Scholar programs provide special training programs administered by North Carolina’s Local Technical Assistance Program (NC LTAP) that allow local government agencies access to high quality training for their employees at a reasonable cost. The Roads Scholar Program consists of one- or two-day training sessions, regularly offered through NC LTAP each year. To become a Roads Scholar, 7 of the 19 offered training sessions identified below must be completed.

Mr. Holshouser presented awards to Public Works employees Kevin Luther and Doyle Hatley.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Aldridge, seconded by Councilmember Lowder, unanimously carried, the minutes of the May 3, 2021 regular and closed meetings as submitted were approved.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Ordinance 21-19 – Zoning Amendment 21-06 to Rezone 1611 Almond Street GHBD to R-

10

A public hearing was conducted to consider a request for a Zoning Map Amendment ZMA21-06 to rezone Tax Parcel 155 from GHBD/General Highway Business District to R-10/General Residential District. The petitioner requested a rezoning because the property has always been a residential use, but is zoned GHBD due to proximity to US 52. The property is located within an established neighborhood, and in order to complete the renovation of the property it must be rezoned.

The Mayor announced that he has a conflict with this rezoning request due to owning a property near the property in question and requested that Mayor Pro Tem Hall preside over the hearing.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Whitley, seconded by Councilmember Aldridge, unanimously carried, Council recused the Mayor from the public hearing and deliberations on this rezoning request.

Senior Planner Ellie Sheild presented the ordinance and summary of the zoning change to Council. Ms. Sheild noted that on May 6, 2021, the Planning and Zoning Board held a public hearing and unanimously recommended City Council approve ZMA21-06 with the adopted consistency statement.

Petitioner John Huneycutt came forward to make a few brief remarks. He thanked Ms. Sheild for her help when he decided to remodel his house to make sure it was within code. He also thanked her for her help in obtaining the appropriate permits for the remodel and guiding him through the process.

Mayor Pro Tem Hall called for the public hearing to be opened and asked if anyone would like to speak on the topic. No one came forward to speak.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Townsend, seconded by Councilmember Aldridge, unanimously carried, the public hearing was closed.

Councilmember Whitley commented that the Statement of Zoning Consistency as written in the rezoning packet Council received did not make sense. The Statement was as follows:

The Albemarle City Council finds the action to amend tax record 155 from GHBD/General Highway Business District to R-10/General Residential District to be consistent with the adopted 2028 Land Use Plan. Council finds the General Residential District zoning on this parcel not to be reasonable and in the public interest.

Ms. Sheild noted that there was a typographical error in the Statement and that there should be removal of the word “not” in the second sentence in order for the Statement to correctly convey Council’s approval of the rezoning amendment request.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Dry, seconded by Councilmember Townsend, unanimously carried, Ordinance 21-19 containing the request for Zoning Map Amendment 21-06 was approved with the following amended Statement of Zoning Consistency with Adopted Land Use Plan:

The Albemarle City Council finds the action to amend tax record 155 from GHBD/General Highway Business District to R-10/General Residential District to be consistent with the adopted 2028 Land Use Plan. Council finds the General Residential District zoning on this parcel to be reasonable and in the public interest.

[Ordinance 21-19 - To Rezone 1611 Almond Street GHBD to R-10]

The Mayor returned to the dais.

Ordinance 21-20 – Zoning Amendment 21-07 to Rezone 323 Brooks Street from CBD to

LID

A public hearing was conducted to consider a request for Zoning Map Amendment ZMA21-07 to rezone Tax Parcel 17648 from CBD/Central Business District to LID/Light Industrial District. The petitioner requests zoning change because Crook Motor Company has leased this property to wash heavy duty trucks. The electricity was disconnected several years ago, and upon attempt to reconnect, it was discovered that the proposed use is no longer permitted. The property directly across the street is zoned Light Industrial.

Senior Planner Ellie Sheild presented the ordinance and summary of the zoning changes to Council. Ms. Sheild noted that on May 6, 2021, the Planning and Zoning Board held a public hearing, and unanimously recommended City Council approve ZMA21-07 with the Zoning Amendment Statement. Recent text amendments that adopted by City Council in 2019 sought to encourage pedestrian-scaled city center, and eliminated a handful of auto-related uses in the Central Business District, including washing establishments. This created a non-conforming use on the property, which due to being discontinued for more than 180 continuous days, requires the proposed use to be brought into conformity with zoning code 92.022. Rezoning to LID will have the following dimensional requirements: 30' front setback, 0' side setback, and 20' rear setback with no maximum height.

Although this rezoning is inconsistent with the 2028 Land Use Plan, Ms. Sheild noted that staff still would recommend that Council approve this request either as reasonable due to previous use of the structure as a truck wash and/or that this continued use of the truck wash structure is in the public's interest. Ms. Sheild advised Council that should they decide to approve the rezoning request, there should be some rationale noted in order to establish precedence for future rezoning requests which may involve an amendment to the 2028 Land Use Plan.

Brooks Street is currently a substandard city street, and staff has concerns of this rezoning's impact directing increased truck traffic on this street and expanding/encroaching industrial uses in proximity to city center.

The Mayor called for the public hearing to be opened and asked if anyone would like to speak on the topic. The Mayor invited the petitioner to come forward to make remarks. Mr. Richard Almond, President of Crook Motor Company, made a few remarks. The facility where the truck wash structure is located has been there for 30 years. In that time things changed in terms of the zoning, and the company was not aware of that change. He pointed out that Garmon, which is in the vicinity, is zoned as LID. Mr. Almond concluded his remarks by expressing his gratitude for Ms. Sheild's assistance. She has been very professional, and worked with the company to take a step in the right direction to come into compliance with the updated zoning ordinances.

The Mayor asked if Council had any questions at this point. Mayor Pro Tem Hall asked for clarification of staff's recommendation to justify the rezoning request should they decide to approve it under a zoning amendment. Ms. Sheild confirmed that Council should provide some rationale, or findings to support the inconsistent use which would answer the reasonableness and/or public interest standards.

The Mayor asked if anyone else wanted to come forward to speak for or against the rezoning request. Mr. Bob Garmon Jr. of Garmon Mechanical Services, Inc. came forward. He said that Crook Motor Company was good for the area and told Council that he appreciated the City for addressing the 503 Old Charlotte property. He requested that Council go with the rezoning request.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Townsend, seconded by Councilmember Dry, unanimously carried, the public hearing was closed.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Hall, seconded by Councilmember Dry, unanimously carried, Ordinance 21-20 containing the request for Zoning Map Amendment ZMA21-07 was approved with the following findings and Zoning Amendment Statement:

Findings:

- The structure on the parcel when built was consistent with the zoning code at the time; and
- Parcels surrounding this parcel are currently zoned LID.

The Albemarle City Council finds the action to amend tax record 17648 from CBD/Central Business District to LID/Light Industrial District to be inconsistent with the adopted 2028 Land Use Plan; however, rezoning the property will achieve the public interest and shall be deemed reasonable. The aforementioned map amendment shall amend the City's Land Use Plan.

[Ordinance 21-20 – To Rezone 323 Brooks Street from CBD to LID]

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Preview of the Alleyway Design Project

Assistant City Manager Nyki Hardy introduced the presentation. This design concept has been informed by feedback from staff and business owners abutting the alleyway. Staff representing this project include, Bryan Hinson (PU), Dennis Curlee (PU), Ross Holshouser (PW), Joy Almond (ED), Keith Tunnell (ED), Nyki Hardy (CMO), and Lisa Kiser (PRK). McAdams is the landscape architect firm hired to develop the alleyway design and support project management.

The alleyway project has been approached with the intent of gathering input from both City staff and affected local business owners. The design to be presented tonight covers a little less than 60% of the detail needed, and this was deliberate in order to solicit Council feedback on the direction of the design before coming back to Council with a 60% developed plan in June.

The project schedule has shifted also with staff learning the process and potential roadblocks since the inception of planning in fall 2020. For instance, the City found out that PNG has scheduled a gas line upgrade in that area for 2022, and so the City is working with the gas company to

coordinate the gas line upgrade with alleyway development. Ms. Hardy introduced Mr. Dan Lambert with McAdams.

Mr. Lambert provided City Council with a presentation on the alleyway design concept. Mr. Lambert also presented the project schedule and took questions from Council. The presentation addressed the:

- Process for developing the alleyway design plan;
- Conceptual design layout in drawings, which included the following features or options: partitioned walls for maintaining businesses' operational function in the back of their stores without them being seen by the public in the pedestrian alleyway; decorative light poles which could also be used for hanging banners, providing light, hooking up security cameras, etc.; a "drivable" alley where box trucks could maneuver to service the businesses but still have room to accommodate pedestrians; beautification touches such as a partial artificial turf area and greenery such as hanging plants and flowers; seating arrangements such as benches and tables and chairs; a portable stage which can collapse and be moved to another site; and the parking plan, which would remove 8 spaces in the upper lot but maintain the 28 parking spaces in the lower lot; and
- The new project schedule, which would place project completion in February-March 2022.

Mr. Lambert took questions from Council. The Mayor commented that the conceptual design seemed to eliminate doors in the back of the businesses and replaced them with green areas. He wondered for one business owner if that would work. Ms. Hardy addressed the comment by replying that a new business owner will be coming into that property, and so the City sees this as an opportunity to transition the business owners' needs as the plan is being developed.

The Mayor inquired whether Pfeiffer University theme colors would be incorporated into the design. Ms. Hardy replied that Council can discuss that now if they chose. The Mayor followed by asking what could be done if there was concern about the name of the alleyway as it sounds similar to a street name. Ms. Hardy noted that Council could discuss these types of items at this point. Councilmember Aldridge suggested the names King Plaza or Pedestrian Plaza.

Councilmember Dry asked if potentially scheduling events at this site would be in conflict with Market Station or other downtown venues. Ms. Hardy replied that the City has the capacity to have 2 spaces for public events.

Mayor Pro Tem Hall had a series of questions. She first asked Mr. Lambert how long he and McAdams has been involved in this project. He replied that the company has worked with the City since December 2020. She then asked Ms. Hardy if the Albemarle Sweet Shop has provided input into the process due to the parking lot by them being affected. Ms. Hardy replied that the City has gotten input from the business owner on the plan in general, but not on the parking plan. Mayor Pro Tem Hall commented that there is a local artist named Scott Nurkin who is renowned for local artistic renderings and has a following and was wondering if that could be something to incorporate into the design. Mr. Lambert replied that this could definitely be an option to be considered for something like a wall mural. Finally she asked about whether there was a prequalified contractor and a timeline. Mr. Lambert replied

that there is a bit of a timeline on finalizing the specifications and it would be good to look into contractors now.

The Mayor asked if there needed to be any follow up with the gas company at this point. Ms. Hardy replied that the City has a contact and a working relationship with that contact and will stay on top of that situation.

Councilmember Whitley asked if emergency services vehicles would have difficulty navigating the space per the renderings. Mr. Lambert replied that emergency vehicle access could occur with the alleyway as currently designed. Ms. Hardy added that Fire Chief Brewton also has signed off on the plan as currently rendered.

Councilmember Dry asked Mr. Lambert if there has been comparative work that McAdams has done in other smaller municipalities in the state. He replied that McAdams designed downtown Laurinburg, and that he himself was involved in designing the Myrtle Beach boardwalk redo 13 years ago.

Mayor Pro Tem Hall asked about the viability of the stage concept. Ms. Hardy replied that she had been looking for a quote but has not gotten a response yet. Although it was not originally part of the project budget, there is some room to consider it. It could be a City purchase for use in other City programs.

Council thanked Mr. Lambert and Ms. Hardy for the presentation.

FY2021 Public Housing Agency Plan Update

Public Housing Director Lee Staton came in front of Council to discuss the Public Housing Agency Plan Update. The Five-Year PHA Plan describes the agency's mission and the long-term plan for achieving that mission over the subsequent five years. The information on the FY2021 Capital Fund Annual Statement detailed the awarded amount and intended expenses. The proposed changes to policy are to assess the housing needs of the community and identify resources available to assist in addressing those needs.

A public hearing for Public Housing residents has been set for May 26, 2021 at 10 am. Mr. Staton will come before Council on June 7th for approval of agency plan.

Mayor Pro Tem Hall asked when the plan was last updated. Mr. Staton replied that there are 3 components to the Agency Plan, and that the Plan as a whole has not been updated since 2019:

- ACOP – last updated in 2015;
- Administrative; and
- Section 8.

Mr. Staton noted that a document outlining the changes to be made in the Plan were provided in the meeting packet. A Councilmember asked if public housing residents' needs were considered in the plan. Mr. Staton replied that although HUD requires some changes, the proposed changes include the community too.

Departmental Spotlight – Public Works Department

Ms. Hardy made some introductory remarks. Since this week is National Public Works Week, Public Works will kick off the first of the monthly department presentations that will provide City Council with an overview of the department (services, employees, total budget), current fiscal year update on goals and achievements, and future goals. Each month a different department will provide a "spotlight" presentation with a standard format.

Public Works Director Ross Holshouser came back in front of Council to provide an overview of the Public Works Department. He began by noting that he would provide a high level overview by division, which includes: Warehouse Operations; Fleet Maintenance; Street and Road Maintenance; Downtown Property Maintenance; Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling which includes curbside waste and recycling in partnership with Waste Management; and Administration. In total 39 employees work in Public Works.

Administration has 3 full-time employees. They provide oversight to the other divisions, focus on personnel and safety, maintain the work order management system to reflect input from residents, look for efficiencies in work and budgeting, and are responsible for budgeting and purchasing. Their annual budget is over \$562,000, most of which is for main streets maintenance and the new stormwater management program. Their budget also provides funds for employee training opportunities and staff recruitment.

Warehouse Operations maintains the inventory and shipping/receiving functions for most City departments. There are 2 full-time employees in this division managing over \$3 million in inventory, which is handled via an inventory software system. This division also oversees the fuel monitoring system for the City through software. Their budget is \$164,000 and paid for the following: access and security measures; an upgraded fuel access and monitoring system; fuel tank cleaning; upgraded inventory software; and improved grounds maintenance.

Fleet Maintenance has 4 full-time employees. They are responsible for repair and servicing of over 400 vehicles for the City. All employees are NC certified inspectors so vehicle inspections can be done in-house. There is a vehicle bay but it cannot house the City's largest vehicles due to height limitations of the building. Employees are working towards ASE certifications, and the supervisor Terry Underwood prioritizes training among staff. The division's main services are: warranty records and retention; tire rotation per state requirements; preventative maintenance; and minor and major repairs. Their budget is over \$262,000 and it has paid for: software upgrades for equipment and tools; diagnostic tools for equipment and vehicles; increased efficiency measures in preventative maintenance services where kudos goes to Terry Underwood for this; building improvements; and the purchase of a hydraulic hose crimping tool in order to provide in-house repairs and therefore faster repair service. Councilmember Townsend asked in order to provide on time maintenance schedules for

all City vehicles are 4 full-time employees enough. Mr. Holshouser replied that no there is not enough staff to do this volume work. Mayor Pro Tem Hall followed up by asking whether Fleet Maintenance had enough employees to keep up with preventative maintenance. Mr. Holshouser replied that the crew tries to keep up with this schedule.

The next division is Streets and Road Maintenance. They have 16 full-time employees. The division provides safe, clean streets, walkways, sidewalks and curb and gutter areas. One hundred twenty (120) miles of roads and 7 miles of gravel roads are maintained. City signage is made in this shop. The division mows City and DOT right of ways, assists with road closures for special events, and operates the street sweeper. Streets and Road Maintenance also performs storm clean up and stormwater maintenance services. Their budget is \$1.7 million, is a blend of General Fund and Powell Bill Fund, and has paid for: vacuum truck refurbishment; the downtown street parking plan implementation; downtown walking path improvements and sidewalk replacement; installation of the new APD headquarters sidewalks and parking lot; annual street pavement maintenance (2" resurfacing and microsurfacing); and downtown vitality enhancements such as Pfeiffer downtown campus sidewalk renovation, South Street renovations, and planting new street trees. Mayor Pro Tem Hall asked if Powell Bill funds only go towards street maintenance. Mr. Holshouser replied no they don't but can be used for street-related expenses. They get audited on a regular basis on appropriate use of Powell Bill funds.

The next division is Downtown Property Maintenance. They have 3 full-time employees. They maintain downtown properties that the City owns. In addition they are responsible for flower and tree placement, watering, and change out. They install and maintain the tree lights in the downtown area, and also maintain the ADDC-managed properties including Courthouse Square and Market Station which includes assisting with ADDC's fall and spring flower planting projects. Their budget is \$151,000 and has paid for: a new landscape truck; new APD headquarters landscaping; and lawn mowing for the old cemetery. In addition funds have allowed Public Works to add an additional maintenance worker due to the influx of City properties acquired recently.

Finally there is the Solid Waste Facility/Recycling Center-Landfill. The facility is permitted by NC Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to accept waste in Stanly County. There are 2 landfills on site: a subtitle D municipal waste area and a construction and demolition waste area. The Landfill can accept white goods, tires, and yard waste. For recycling the Landfill will accept many types of plastics, latex paint, batteries, cardboard, electronics, certain metals, paper, and used oil filters. Mr. Holshouser gave a shout out to Michael Barfield as a dedicated Landfill employee who was in attendance. This division operates on funds received through landfill scale fees. Their budget is \$2,830,421 and revenues are expected to reach an all-time high of \$3 million by the end of the year due to the impact of COVID. This has paid for: scale house updates and renovations; installation of a rain flap in 2 MSW landfills to increase space for disposal; payments on the leachate force main and employee building; and closeout on some building project budgets.

Public Works Department priorities and goals are:

- Talent and compensation management
- Organizational capacity (street pavement assessment);
- Safety and security (stormwater management plan);
- Infrastructure (pavement maintenance); and

- Community and economic development through the placemaking/wayfinding project and alleyway project.

City. Council expressed their thanks to Mr. Holshouser and his staff for all they do for the

Departmental Monthly Reports

The Mayor and Council received monthly departmental reports for April 2021 prior to the meeting. The Mayor asked if any Council members had any questions or comments. Mayor Pro Tem Hall commented that instead of providing remarks tonight she sent emails to department directors with any questions or comments she had. The City Manager replied that departments will respond to her in the next day or two.

CONSENT AGENDA

The Mayor asked if Council wanted to move any items on the consent agenda.

Ordinance 21-21 – To Establish a Special Revenue Fund for the Receipt of American Rescue Plan Funds

A separate fund is a requirement for receiving the ARP funding. It does not require a separate banking account, just an internal fund for accounting. The proposed Ordinance establishes this fund.

[Ordinance 21-21 – To Establish a Special Revenue Fund for the Receipt of American Rescue Plan Funds]

Resolution Designating Personnel for American Rescue Plan Funds

The ARP requires the designation of Contract Authority and Administrator of Funds. The attached Resolution designates City Manager Michael J. Ferris as the Contract Authority and Finance Director Jacob Weavil as the Administrator of Funds.

[Resolution 21-11 – To Designate Contract Authority and Administrator of Funds for American Rescue Plan Funds]

Upon a motion by Councilmember Whitley, seconded by Councilmember Aldridge, unanimously carried, Council approved the following:

- Ordinance 21-21 establishing a Special Revenue Fund for the Receipt of American Rescue Plan Funds; and

- Resolution 21-11 designating the Contract Authority and Administrator of Funds for American Rescue Plan funding.

NEW BUSINESS

Information – COVID Impacted Utility Accounts

The Governor's Executive Order prevented utility companies from disconnecting service for non-payment for a period of approximately 4 months. The Order also noted that these outstanding bills did not have to be paid through January 2021. During this time, the City took several additional steps to assist customers, such as: establishing the opportunity for payment plans; extending the non-disconnect courtesy to non-residential customers (as this was not a part of the Governor's Order); provided an additional extension; and extended the deadline for repayment beyond the Governor's Order by 2 additional months.

At 7/31/20 the COVID balances were:

- 96 non-residential\$162,688.59
- 1,348 residential.....\$806,035.98

At 5/10/21 the COVID balances were:

- 27 Residential.....\$13,145.02 (bills still pending)
- 1 Non-Residential..... \$128.96 (bills still pending)
- 220 Final Accounts....\$184,392.57

Since March 15, 2021, 2,175 accounts paid their COVID balance in full.

COMMENTS

The Mayor asked Council for a show of hands for attendance at the May 25th Stanly County Council of Governments meeting to be sponsored by the City. Councilmembers Hughes and Dry, as well as Mayor Pro Tem Hall, confirmed their attendance. Councilmember Townsend said he might be able to attend.

The Mayor also sought input from Council on reverting back to the original Council meeting seating arrangement now that the Governor has relaxed masking, social distancing, and room capacity guidelines. He noted that the Information Systems Department needs to do some work in Chambers around June 1st and was not sure if that would be completed in time for the June 7th Council meeting. Council agreed that they would revert back to the original seating arrangement around the dais at the July 12th meeting.

City Manager Michael J. Ferris requested that Council bring with them to the budget meetings tomorrow and Wednesday their copy of the budget provided at the May 3rd meeting, as well as the supplemental information he provided tonight.

Councilmember Hughes:

- She noted that Public Works Director Ross Holshouser gave a wonderful presentation about Public Works, and stated that it was a nice reminder of what Public Works does for the City. The information was very well presented.

Councilmember Aldridge:

- He noted that he has spotted some donation boxes by Walmart on Highway 24/27 and on US 52 North by Food Lion. Planning and Development Services Director Kevin Robinson thanked Councilmember Aldridge for noting these boxes. Planning did a sweep a few weeks back and will look into these new locations. Councilmember Aldridge also mentioned that he has seen “we build houses” signs posted on light poles around the city. Mr. Robinson replied that Planning is aware of this and is working on removing them.
- He noted that per his email recently to Council and the City Manager about a property with very high grass, he wondered what the policy and process is about high grass. Mr. Robinson responded with the following information: Grass is allowed to grow to 15”. Anything beyond that Planning sends them a violation notice to address the grass within 15 days. After 15 days, either Public Works or a contractor goes out to the property to mow it. Councilmember Aldridge asked if Planning kept to the 15 day limit. Mr. Robinson replied that Planning considers that the default timeframe but has used a window of between 10 days to 2 weeks, trying to seek middle ground with the property owner.

Councilmember Townsend:

- Re: departmental spotlights – he thought that Mr. Holshouser gave a great presentation tonight. He requested that Mr. Holshouser email the PowerPoint presentation to Council.
- Re: last week’s Employee Appreciation event – he was sorry he missed it but heard it was a good time. He gave kudos to all City employees for the work they do.

Councilmember Lowder:

- She asked for an update on the adopt-a-street signage issue/complaint. The Mayor replied that Council did not enact a policy change, and so if there are any complaints in the future, Council would have to consider taking them down.

Councilmember Dry:

- He thanked Mr. Holshouser for the presentation.

Mayor Pro Tem Hall:

- She noted that almost 13,000 grams of drugs was surrendered at the recent drug takeback event in April per the APD monthly report.

- She gave an “attaboy” to Parks and Recreation for a YMCA event last week where there were games and a lot of participation.
- Last Thursday was the first “Thursdays at Market Station” event. They will be held every Thursday at 7:30 pm.
- Re: last Friday night’s Food Truck Friday – she saw people scattered everywhere but estimated that there were probably twice as many people as the month before.
- Re: last Saturday’s Cruise-In and band event co-sponsored by Tiffany’s and the City – there were a lot of cars to see and a lot of people out. It brought a lot of people into Albemarle.
- Re: upcoming budget meetings – she recommended that fellow Council members bring their strategic planning investment opportunities ranking sheet and the 2020 Capital Improvement Plan document with them.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Dry, seconded by Councilmember Lowder, unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned to Tuesday, May 18, 2021 at 4:00 pm in City Council Chambers for a budget workshop.