

**TOWN OF WINFALL
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
April 10, 2023, 6:00 pm.
WINFALL TOWN HALL, WINFALL, NC 27985**

The regular monthly meeting of the Winfall Town Council was called to order by Mayor Pro-Tem Preston White at 6:00 pm. Invocation was given by Councilman Preston White, and the Pledge of Allegiance was reciting.

Those in attendance were Mayor Pro-Tem Preston White, Councilwoman Valery McDonald, Councilwoman Carol Cooper, Councilman Christopher Richardson, Attorney Crowe, Valerie Jackson, Town Clerk, Debbie Parker

Mayor Pro Tem Preston White facilitated the Council Meeting due to the absence of Mayor Fred Yates

Citizen's attending were Robert Valentine, Cynthia Cunningham, Steve McDonald, Arlene Yates, Lucretia Washington, Ellis Washington, Ronald Smirlock, Lenay Felton, Debra Long, Arnetta Ormond, Arvin Johnson, Jeremi Holley, Steve Norman, Johvahnice Winslow, Joyce Lee, Jamal Ormond, Reta Blair, Satoria Parker, Eddie Felton, Flora Jennings, and Teressa Blanchard

Mayor Pro Tem Preston White asked if it was a conflict of interest. None was declared. A motion was made by Councilwoman Valery McDonald and was seconded by Councilwoman Carol Cooper and so carried.

Approval of the Agenda: A motion was made to approve the Agenda for April 10, 2023, meeting by Councilwoman Carol Cooper and seconded by Councilwoman Valery McDonald and so carried.

A motion was made to approve the Minutes for March 13, 2023, meeting as is by Councilwoman Carol Cooper and seconded by Councilwoman Valery McDonald.

Financial Report:

The accountant Richard Arnold reported there were changes to the Financials and was amended to *Revenues* to increase vehicle taxes by 6,500, increase permits by \$ 1200.00, *Administration:* increase equipment leasing by \$ 700.00, increase the contingency funds by 7,000. *Fire:* Increase Vehicle Maintenance and gas by \$ 1500.00 (exceeded budget). Decrease Radio Equipment by 1500.00, *Roads & Grounds* increase Roads and Grounds by \$ 1200.00 for telephone, decrease *Roads and Grounds labor* by the same amount, \$ 1200.00, Increase Sewer Funds by \$ 800.00 and decrease Sewer Treatment by \$ 800.00. Councilwoman Carol Cooper a motion was made to approve the *Financial Report* and was seconded by Councilwoman Valery McDonald and so carried.

New Business:

- A. Municipal Election cost to be added to the upcoming 2023-2024 budget. (see attachment from the election board).
- B. Brenda Dillard: *(To be moved to close session at the end).*

Other Information:

Departments:

- A. *Sewer:* Councilwoman Valery McDonald reported that we have one estimate from McPherson. We should have one to come in this week from Eastern Carolina. Councilwoman McDonald reported also that she spoke with Enviro-Tech and they want to come out Thursday to determine what is needed and to get an estimate. She said she tried to get up with Melvin, but he hadn't returned her call, maybe one of the ladies can get up with him because he would recognize the number. Enviro-Tech said anytime Thursday is good for them. We need to put together what needs to be done and get the estimate for it. At that time, we will have the 3 estimates maybe by the budget meeting or next council meeting to know what directions we are going in.

B. Roads & Grounds:

- C. *Public Safety:* The Sheriff Department is patrolling the area. Councilman Christopher Richardson stated that the Police Department has 5 years of dispatch data, and he would like to get it in chart form to discuss with the Council and see if changes need to be made in Winfall. If things are getting worse or better.
- D. *Fire:* No Updates

Committee Report:

Personnel Manager Report: Mayor Pro-Tem White read the personnel Managers report, reporting that grass cutting is here, and Roads and Grounds maintenance are in full force trying to cut the grass and keeping the paper and debris picked up on the streets of the Town.

Administration: There is a training that all Council members must complete. There are 8 units, which include watching and taking the training. She passed out the link and stated that said she could email to Council. Councilwoman Cooper also discussed the credit card information on file in the office (reoccurring payment credit card information from customers) and said that was in a locked desk drawer. She thought about it once appointed to be a financial officer and it was probably a liability for the town. She contacted Mrs. Rountree and sent her the form that they used with the former's Mayor Pro Temp (Ken Rominger)'s signature. She read the statement on the form about destroying after a purchase. It asked for the person's information which is kept in a file. She does not have access to the file, but the building is rented; it's not a stretch to say that someone could break in and have access. She contacted the State and asked them about it and it they felt it wasn't a liability that the Town wanted to have. She contacted each Council person individually and so she went to the office and spoke to Mrs. Debbie Jean Whedbee about it. She thought they were going to take the cards out and shred the slips. The question was raised if they were still on file. She stated that that she called effected customers and let them know that they would no longer be holding credit cards on file, which there was only one complaint. She did not ask Debbie Jean if the papers got shredded but they were going to mail receipts out. Debbie Jean stated that the papers did get shredded. It was stated that maybe in the future they could find a way people can pay online. Councilwoman Cooper stated that they are working on online payment. She shared a personal experience with her credit card on file and a few days before, the 18th her payment had already come through (bill is due on the 20th). She called Debbie Jean and discussed her concerns. Another lady called to make a payment on the payment sheet and the person was informed that she could no longer make her payment on the payment sheet because of Councilwoman Cooper. Debbie Jean disputed that statement and said it was already done; it's water under the bridge, so move on. Councilwoman Cooper reiterated that she

thought it was quite interesting that her name was given to the person regarding making automatic payment. Valerie Jackson explained that the pen numbers were not the customers' regular pen numbers. They were made up numbers for payments. o Councilwoman Cooper stated that when she asked about the form, no one said anything about they didn't want to do it. She stated that it is very difficult when the employees do not want to communicate with Council Members. o Mayor Pro Temp White stated that things that are voted in through Council should be voted out by Council.

Fire/ Roads & Grounds/Tourism: Councilman Preston White Mr. Belch called about the potholes and stated he should be out here by Tuesday about fixing the potholes. He would contact him (Smith Road, River Road, Post Office, White Street) Councilwoman Cooper asked was there anything said about Cotton Gin Road. Mayor Pro Temp White said nothing was said after the last discussion because it wasn't on the Powell Bill. Councilwoman Cooper asked Mrs. Jackson if she could do it but Mrs. Jackson, she stated that the Mayor was supposed to have done it.

Tourisms, no meeting has been held. There are certain events scheduled, Golf Tournament, Casino Night, Hertford Christmas Parade, etc. (Chamber of Commerce News, see attachment).

Recreation: Councilwoman Valery McDonald reported – Councilwoman McDonald had no information on grants, but the Day of the Child is coming up. She will have an updated meeting.

Attorney: No updates.

Mayor Pro Temp White states that there are a lot of changes going on and he will do the best he can to try to iron some things out if they continue to communicate, they will be able to accomplish those things.

Winfall Community Group (and Grievance Committee) Councilwoman Valery McDonald made a motion to approve the Winfall Community Group (and Grievance Committee) and was seconded by Councilman Christopher Richardson and so carried. (See attached).

Other Information Public Comments:

Brenda Dillard read aloud her letter written to all Council members regarding grievances about working issues this year and, an Uncontrolled Governing Board (unprofessional, unethical behaviors) regarding Councilwoman Carol Cooper.

Cynthia Cunningham (39:11)

* Mrs. Cunningham said that she has been in touch with Legal and has spoken to someone in Raleigh and the Town can expect to hear from them regarding the new Council seat and the way the Council handled the situation. * She stated that Councilwoman Cooper told her that she did not have to apply for the job but at March's meeting, Mrs. Cooper wanted to swear in Mr. Richardson. Mrs. Cunningham stated it was racist and wrong. She has contacted the North Carolina Legal Government and when the attorney contacts them, they will be asking them to turn over certain items. She reiterated to Councilwoman Cooper, that it is not over. She informed her that she did not work with the FBI for over 30 years to let this go. o Arlene Yates * She was making a formal complaint against Councilman Christopher Richardson and wants the Governing Board to investigate him for unethical behavior. She admonished him that when out in the public, he should be ethical, and professional. She accused him of going out talking about her husband Mayor Fred Yates (unable to defend himself due to illness). She is conducting her investigation and will be waiting on the Governing Boards findings, and she will move forward from there. * She wants the minutes of how he became Councilman and information regarding if Councilman Richardson had ethical training. o (42) **Mr. Steve McDonald Strategic Plan** – want to get some people to come in and talk about it. It is scheduled around the 15th. He wanted to improve the quality of the Town with loans and grants. (See attached) o (45) Debra Long * She said the Town has been in total chaos since she has been gone. She read the article in the paper where it appeared that Mayor Yates was totally disrespected. She talked about respecting a person's position. * She talked about the disrespect and tie for tac, not a way to run a government. * Sent a series of emails requesting information with no response. * Prerequisites for Town Council and why it was more restrictive than someone working for Congress. (No response) * Wanted the estimated for the Town Hall building (\$31,000) and sent another email asking for the other estimates that the Town say they would get. asked questions about the revenues to make up for \$31,000, (no response) * Her main concern has been regarding Winfall, and why is it so important for the building to be fixed. She never got a response from any of her emails * She questioned the seating of the new Councilman. * She said that the petty BS in the Town needs to cease and desist. And if they keep it up, the Town will be turned over to the Town of Hertford. * Regarding the Strategic Plans – Mr. McDonald worked on the plan, but she had very little input in the Strategic Plan and Mr. McDonald said, "I, I, I. * She ended with her love for Winfall; she doesn't mind change, but when change is being petty, she does not like it. * She Referenced the drainage and asked for reimbursement to Eddie Felton for paying for his own repairs. o Ronald Smirlock (53). Stated he has a small gas leak at his house, and he tried to contact the fire department and dispatch, couldn't get anyone, please pass that on. Suggested putting a non-emergency number on the Town's website. Mayor Pro Temp asked a motion to go in closed session. Brenda Dillard stated that the Council did not need to go in close session because she quit.

At approximate 8:05 pm. Mayor Pro-Tem Preston White ask for a motion to adjourn the meeting and no one responded.


Mayor-Pro-Tem Preston White


Valerie Jackson, Town Clerk

Town Council Meetings are audio-recorded to maintain the integrity of the various discussions. The meetings minutes are just snapshots in time (recaps) of discussions. Copies of the complete recordings are available upon requests.