

MINUTES FOR BOARD OF ALDERMEN MEETING

January 12, 2021

6:00 PM

The following elected officials were present: Mayor Coleman, Alderwoman Morrow, Alderman Cearley, and Alderman Withers. Alderman Huggins was not present at this meeting.

The following staff members were present: Maria Stroupe, Town Manager; Nolan Groce, Development Services Director; Robert Walls, Police Chief; Shannon Whittle, Town Clerk/HR Director; Tom Hunn, Town Attorney; Bill Trudnak, Public Works Director; Brandon Whitener, Recreation Director; Jonathan Newton, Finance Director; and Earl Withers, III, Fire Chief.

Mayor Coleman called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Mayor Coleman opened with the Invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Alderman Cearley motioned to set the agenda with no additions or deletions, seconded by Alderwoman Morrow, and carried unanimously.

Alderwoman Morrow motioned to approve the minutes from the December 8th Regular Meeting, seconded by Alderman Withers, and carried unanimously.

Recognition of Citizens:

No citizens wished to come forward at this time.

Consent Agenda:

In light of the Town Manager's 19 years of service to the Town of Dallas and recently obtaining a Master's Degree in Public Administration, the Board of Aldermen want to increase the Manager's salary by 3 percent. This increase is to be effective on the next payroll. Alderman Withers motioned to approve this increase, seconded by Alderwoman Morrow, and carried unanimously.

Public Hearings:

There were no scheduled Public Hearings.

Old Business:

There was no Old Business to be addressed.

New Business:

Item 8A was concerning the revised Budget Calendar for FY2021-2022. A Budget Calendar for FY2021/2022 was approved at the December 8, 2020 meeting. Part of this calendar was setting a Strategic Planning meeting for Monday, February 15th. The proposed revision (See Exhibit 8A) would move the Strategic Planning meeting from February 15th until Monday, March 1st at the same time and location. This move is to accommodate receiving information that will be discussed at the February 23rd Work Session that may have bearing on the Strategic Planning meeting. Alderman Cearley motioned to approve this revision, seconded by Alderwoman Morrow, and carried unanimously.

Item 8B was concerning a COVID-19 Vaccine Declination. With the emergency approval by the FDA of two COVID vaccines, there has been discussion among local governments as to requiring or not requiring employees to take the vaccine. While it is legal to require employees to take a vaccine, most local governments have decided not to require employees to take the vaccine. The decision on whether to take the vaccine would be entirely voluntary on the part of the employee. Please see Exhibit 8B-1 for a fact sheet on both the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines, which will be distributed to employees to aid them in their decision. While not requiring employees to take the vaccine, it is prudent to have employee sign a declination form, just as they do when declining a HepB vaccine. Please see Exhibit 8B-2 for a copy of the COVID-19 Vaccine Declination Form. Although an employee may initially decline the vaccine, they may change their mind at any time and choose to receive the vaccine. Alderwoman Morrow motioned to approve the decision to with educational materials and to encourage them to take the vaccine, along with requiring the employee to sign a declination form if they choose not to vaccinate. Alderman Cearley seconded this motion and it was carried unanimously.

Item 8C was concerning the proposed Severe Communicable Illness Policy (please see Exhibit 8C). In October 2009, the Board of Aldermen approved a Severe Communicable Illness Policy in response to the H1N1 Flu epidemic. This policy advances employees with insufficient sick leave balances 2 days of sick leave in order to encourage them to stay home and not spread a severe illness. This is an advance and places an employee in a negative balance situation until the advance can be made up through normal sick leave accruals. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFRCA) was enacted on March 18, 2020. This Act provided for up to 80 hours of emergency leave for employees due to COVID-19. The provisions of the FFRCA were allow to expire on December 31, 2020 with the signing of the Consolidated Appropriations Act 2021 on December 27, 2020. Employers have the option of extending the emergency leave until March 31, 2021 and will be eligible for tax credits, however, public employers are not eligible for these tax credits. It is in the best interest of the workforce and community for those with a severe communicable illness to stay home to reduce the risk of infecting others. In order to encourage employees to remain home while ill with a severe communicable disease, the current Severe Communicable Illness Policy could be expanded to grant a determined number of hours to an employee upon a medically documented severe communicable illness. It is recommended that the current policy be modified by increasing the number of hours to 40 hours granted, instead of advanced, to employees during a severe communicable illness and to require medical documentation of the illness in order to qualify for the leave. Alderman Withers motioned to approve this modification, seconded by Alderman Cearley, and carried unanimously.

Item 8D was concerning the budget amendment to appropriate the Duke Energy refund. Duke Energy will be issuing a refund to the Town of Dallas, along with a number of other municipal power providers, based upon an audit review conducted at Duke Energy. This review identified errors in charges that required correcting. Dallas will be receiving \$219,000 as a result of the audit review and ensuing corrections. Please see Exhibit 8D for budget amendment. Alderman Cearley motioned to approve the amendment, seconded by Alderwoman Morrow, and carried unanimously.

Item 8E was concerning the appointment of a candidate to fill the vacant Board of Alderman seat. In August 2020, Alderwoman Stacey Thomas resigned from the Town of Dallas Board of Aldermen. That seat has been vacant until now. The Board of Aldermen have determined that they are ready to appoint a replacement to that seat. The person appointed will be sworn in at the February 9th Board of Aldermen meeting and will fill out the remaining term of Alderwoman Thomas, which is up for reelection in

November 2021. There were four Statement of Interest forms received for this position. The Board was very impressed with the remarkable achievements of each candidate and thanked everyone for taking the time to apply, further stating that it was extremely hard to select a candidate. Alderman Withers motioned to appoint Frank Milton to the vacant seat, seconded by Alderman Cearley, and carried unanimously. Mr. Milton was invited in and expressed his heartfelt thanks for his appointment to the Board.

Manager's Report:

Ms. Stroupe updated everyone on the status of the baseball program, stating that there have been 14 registrants so far. There will be one camp for every age group, starting on January 25th. She then followed up with an update on the Sewer Interconnect Project. The Town is currently waiting on the final contract and is looking to begin work by the end of the month. Next, she informed the Board that the Trade Street parking lot survey is now complete, and concluded by stating that 7/11 is projected to open by mid-February.

Alderwoman Morrow made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Alderman Cearley, and carried unanimously. (6:43pm)

Rick Coleman, Mayor

Shannon Whittle, Town Clerk