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**TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
NOVEMBER 13, 2023 6:30 PM
AGENDA**

CALL TO ORDER	MAYOR BARBARA MALLET
INVOCATION	MAYOR PRO TEM RUSH
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE	MAYOR BARBARA MALLET
WELCOME	MAYOR BARBARA MALLET

Present: *Mayor Barbara Mallett Board Members: Mayor Pro Tem Shawn Rush, Alderman Albert Smith, Alderman Dwayne Holmes, Alderman Curtis Cowan, Alderwoman Deloris High. Town Manager Michael Douglas, Town Clerk, ShaTaira Bailey, Town Attorney Thomas Brooke.*

Absent: *Alderman John Noble*

APPROVE MINUTES of regular meeting on October 2, 2023.

A motion was made to approve regular meeting minutes on October 2, 2023, by Mayor Pro Tem Rush; seconded by Alderman Smith. Motion passes unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT Please note that comments shall be limited to five minutes and the Town Council reserves the right not to act on requests first presented this evening.

Mr. Doggett asked the Mayor and Board of Alderman for an exemption. Mayor Mallett asked Mr. Douglas: "Is it a variance he needs?" Mr. Douglas said yes and explains with a variance it will explain the correct height, width, and style for fences in East Spencer. Mr. Doggett explained that his trash cart kept getting stolen, which is why he went ahead and put up the fence. He did not know he had to get a permit and did not want to take it all down since it had already been put up. Mayor Mallett told Mr. Doggett that code enforcement will be in touch with him.

A motion was made to amend the agenda and remove item #1 by Mayor Pro Tem Rush, seconded by Alderman Smith. Motion passes unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Postmaster Update

2. USDA Loan Discussion

Mr. Douglas explains that as East Spencer continues to grow, so do resources. The Town requested \$14.5 million from the State Legislature to help build a new municipal complex that would house fire, police, and administration. In response to the request, the State Legislature appropriated \$2M for a capital improvement project. The Town is grateful for the amount, but it is not enough to facilitate a municipal complex. Mr. Douglas explains the Town of East Spencer is asking the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to help build a fire station under the USDA's Community Facilities Grant & Loan Program. This program is designed to help municipalities to bridge the financial means to build a large facility they could not ordinarily complete. Mr. Douglas also explains that there has been an initial discussion with the Town of Spencer regarding the possibility of merging East Spencer and Spencer fire stations due to lack of personnel. Both stations are finding it difficult to find and retain fire fighters. Chief McBride explained that the building is old, the building floods the annex has mole, its compact and not suitable for fireman to stay over which means they can't get the truck out at night for calls. Mr. Rush asked if joining Mr. Douglas explains right now both towns are only in the conversation stage, and neither managers will go any further until both managers have spoken with their board. Chief McBride stated both towns are having issues, but he would like the fire station to stay in East Spencer. Deputy Chief Fleming stated that if we continue to not have night coverage our ISO ratings will change. Mr. Douglas explains that it is a two-part discussion with East Spencer taking on responsibility to build its on fire department and second, it is feasible to merge with Spencer Fire department? Mr. Douglas shows the board a chart of revenues for East Spencer for the next few years. Mr. Douglas explains he also uses "worst scenario" figures to show even then the town would be ok. Mr. Douglas explains that East Spencer has 4 solid tax bases. East Spencer still has 176 homes that need to be built. Mr. Douglas explains that if East Spencer applies for the loan now, it will be locked in at the 3.5% interest rate, anytime after December 31, 2023, the rate will increase. If rates go up, we will not be able to apply for the loan. Mayor Pro Tem Rush asked Mr. Douglas if he could apply for the loan now. Mr. Douglas states if the town proceeds with adopting the resolution tonight he can proceed with the loan process. Alderwoman Deloris High asked Mr. Douglas if both towns merge how long will take? Mr. Douglas tells Alderwoman High that the conversation of this possibility just started about 2 weeks ago and that East Spencer along with Spencer both have history that they may not want to give

up by merging together. Alderwoman Deloris High asked what will happen with the merger if East Spencer decides to get a building, Mr. Douglas explains that Chief McBride and himself would then have a conversation with Town Manager in Spencer, along with Spencer Fire Chief and let them know East Spencer has a new fire station and ask would they like to come onboard and start putting a plan together if that happens. Mayor Pro Tem Rush asked Chief McBride do we have a place for training. Chief McBride said yes and began to explain the training and classes. Alderman Smith stated, "So we want to do a loan for the truck and a fire station?" Mr. Douglas said yes. Mayor Mallett asked about the leaf vac and Alderman Smith asked when will the town get the leaf vac. Mr. Douglas explains that East Spencer should have the leaf vac by the end of November. Mayor Mallett stated, "this is kind of scary, we have never had this much debt, but we have also never had this much revenue" She also asked Mr. Douglas does the LGC has questions and Mr. Douglas explains that every loan is looked at by the LGC. Mayor Mallett stated, "she likes that". A motion was made to approve the USDA loan by Alderman Holmes; seconded by Alderman Smith. Motion passes unanimously.

3. Road Naming Policy Change

Mr. Douglas explains that the town adopted a road naming policy in February 2022 that allowed for anyone to request a roads name to be changed within East Spencer, but due to the rich history of the Town of East Spencer, the town needs to revisit how the naming and renaming of roads are conducted. Mr. Douglas recommends that the board ratify its current policy to reflect that only new roads, that are not yet established and named, fall under the road name change policy. He explains that this will allow the history of the current roads that are named to stay intact. A motion was made to approve the road name policy with the modifications by Mayor Pro Tem Rush; seconded by Alderman Smith. Motion passes unanimously.

4. Octavia Arthur

Mr. Douglas explains that Ms. Arthur has been selling the Town's property for nearly two years and that she is requesting to purchase the property on Mitchell St. Ms. Arthur is expected to pay full price for the property. Mr. Brooke, the Town Attorney tells the Board and Mayor that Ms. Arthur will still have to go through the upset bid process, Mayor Malett asks to confirm Ms. Arthur is indeed going through the right procedures and Mr. Douglas said yes. A motion was made to approve Ms. Arthurs request by Alderwoman High; seconded by Alderman Smith. Motion passes unanimously.

5. Manager Comments

Mr. Douglas reminds the board about Thanksgiving break and about his upcoming conference and the dates he will be out of the office.

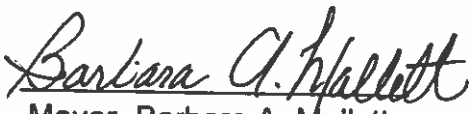
Regular Meeting
November 13, 2023
STB

6. Council Comments

The council introduce and congratulate Dr. George Jackson on his winning campaign.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made adjourn by Alderman Smith; seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Rush. Motion passes unanimously.



Mayor, Barbara A. Mallett



ShaTaira Bailey, Town Clerk

