**TOWN OF CLARKTON**
**REGULAR TOWN BOARD MEETING**
**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2024 @ 6:00 P.M.**
**MINUTES**

**INDIVIDUALS PRESENT:**

Mayor Jerome Myers
Commissioner Linda Croom
Commissioner Elbert Troy Mitchell
Commissioner Stephen Hester
Kentrina Woods, Town Clerk/Finance Officer
Daniel Alonzo, Public Works Director
Sydney Wheeless, Attorney
Keith Lanier, Town Maintenance Employee

Reba Little
Charles &Nannette King
Wanda Burch
Linda Rivenbark
Marsha Burney
Marshall McAuley
Mitchell Edwards
Maria Flores
Sue Annie Long &Librado Calles
Sarah Heustess
Krystian Heustess

**CALL TO ORDER:**
Mayor Jerome Myers called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**INVOCATION:**
Mayor Jerome Myers delivered the invocation.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**
Commissioner E. Troy Mitchell led the Town Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**
Commissioner Linda Croom made a motion to approve the consent agenda as follows:

A. Approval of Minutes
    1. Regular Town Board Meeting Minutes-October 1, 2024
    2. Special Town Board Meeting Minutes-October 8, 2024

The motion was seconded by Commissioner E. Troy Mitchell and the motion carried unanimously.

**ACTION FROM PUBLIC HEARING (Each must be voted on separately)**

A. Mayor Jerome Myers asked Attorney Sydney Wheeless, regarding Librado Calles & Sue Anne Long's request to rezone 230 W. Green Street, whether it would be possible to postpone the decision. Attorney Sydney Wheeless advised that they could table the matter. Commissioner Stephen Hester motioned to table the matter of rezoning 230 W Green St until the next Town Board meeting on December 2, 2024. Commissioner Linda Croom seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.
B. Mayor Jerome Myers advised that this property, 10193 N. College Street, will not be rezoned; the property owner will apply for a special use permit. Commissioner Stephen Hester motioned to approve the special use permit for 10193 N. College Street. Commissioner Linda Croom seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.
C. Commissioner Stephen Hester motioned to table the matter of rezoning 214 W Green Street until the next Town Board meeting on December 2, 2024, at 6:00PM. Commissioner Linda Croom seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

D. Commissioner Stephen Hester motioned to table the matter of rezoning 216 W Green Strr until the next Town Board meeting on December 2, 2024, at 6:00PM. Commissioner Linda Croom seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously

## PUBLIC FORUM

**Thelma Flores, Restaurant Operator at 10424 N College St**

Ms. Thelma Flores introduced herself as the operator of El Torito Mexican Restaurant, located at 10424 N College Street. Ms. Flores stated she would like to sell beer and alcoholic beverages at her restaurant. Ms. Flores produced five pages of signatures of community members who would support her restaurant selling alcoholic beverages. Town Clerk/Finance Officer Kentrina S. Woods stated that she believes the Town would have to adopt an ordinance allowing the sale of single drinks in order for Ms. Flores to proceed. Town Clerk/Finance Officer Kentrina S. Woods stated that she has spoken with David Richardson from the Lumber River Council of Governments, but he has not followed up with her at this time. Mayor Jerome Myers stated that this matter may be something to address at the next meeting. Attorney Sydney Wheeless stated she will investigate this matter and do some research before the next Board meeting. Commissioner Linda Croom motioned to table this discussion until the next meeting to give Attorney Sydney Wheeless time to research the sale of alcoholic beverages by a business. Commissioner E. Troy Mitchell seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**Wanda Burch – Christmas Tree Lights at Butler's Park**

Wanda Burch introduced herself and thanked the Town for not cutting down the tree in Butler's Park. She asked if the Town could assist them in buying a new tree to put behind the existing tree next year and cut down the existing tree. Wanda Burch continued, stating the Beautification Committee wants the Town and the Beautification Committee to work together on this and get along with one another. Mayor Jerome Myers stated the Board will handle the Christmas tree lighting this year. Wanda Burch asked if the Beautification Committee purchased 1500 lights and will not be able to use them. Commissioner Linda Croom advised that the Town Board has already addressed this matter. Linda Rivenbark said, "so what you are saying is that the Beautification Committee has purchased 1500 lights and will not be able to use them". Mayor Jerome Myers asked Wanda Burch whether they already had the lights and Wanda Burch confirmed this. Commissioner Stephen Hester advised that the Town Board does not have jurisdiction over Butler's Park. Commissioner E. Troy Mitchell stated that the Town leases the park. Town Clerk/ Finance Officer Kentrina S. Woods stated that she has not been able to find any such lease. Wanda Burch advised that many years ago, the Board permitted the Beautification Committee to upkeep Butler's Park. Commissioner Stephen Hester asked the Board if the Town's only responsibility is to assist in putting up the lights and Mayor Jerome Myers confirmed that it is correct. Commissioner Stephen Hester advised that he felt the Town was treading down a path that it does not need to. Commissioner E. Troy Mitchell asked who was responsible for the broken bench at Butler's park. Linda Rivenbark stated that the Beautification Committee is responsible for it and will take care of it.

## OLD BUSINESS

**List of Mowing-Ditch Bank Property Owners**

Public Works Director Daniel Alonzo stated that the maintenance department will be going door-to-door to get signatures on forms permitting Town personnel and Glenn Brisson of Twisted Hickory Farms to enter their property to cut and maintain ditch banks. The letters that cannot be hand-delivered will be mailed. Glenn Brisson of Twisted Hickory Farms plans to begin mowing on November 13th. Marsha

Burney asked whether all ditches would be cut or just ditch banks. Mayor Jerome Myers stated that the Town plans to cut ditch banks and remove vegetation that prevents water flow when it rains. Linda Rivenbark asked whether the vegetation in the bottom of the ditches would be cut, and Public Works Director Daniel Alonzo stated that it would be cut if it was able to be reached with the machinery. Linda Rivenbark stated that the vegetation at the bottom of the ditches impedes the flow of water. Mayor Jerome Myers stated that if water is in the ditch, there likely isn't vegetation growing in the water. Marsha Burney stated that the ditch by McDougald's has stagnant water and trees growing out of it. Mayor Jerome Myers advised that the ditch will be cut, and Mrs. Burney will hopefully be pleased with the results.

**Discussion of Christmas Trees for the Town**

Town Clerk/Finance Officer Kentrina S. Woods stated that each Board member has the information in their packet regarding the Trees of Light in the Mosca Designs catalog. The estimated delivery time is two weeks. Town Clerk/Finance Officer Kentrina S. Woods stated there is $5,000.00 in the Christmas budget line item and Commissioner E. Troy Mitchell had advised her to take the difference from the Blighted Properties line item. Commissioner Stephen Hester asked how they would connect the trees to electricity. Mayor Jerome Myers advised they would be connected to the library's electricity. Commissioner Linda Croom advised they will need to get permission from Nathan Cox Jr to put the trees on his property next to the Clarkton Public Library. Commissioner E. Troy Mitchell motioned to approve the quote as presented for $8,328.69 and purchase the Trees of Light from Mosca Designs. Commissioner Linda Croom seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Approval of 2024 Longevity and Vacation Buy-Back**

Commissioner Linda Croom motioned to approve the 2024 longevity pay and vacation buy-back as presented. Commissioner Stephen Hester seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of Proposed Late Fee & Disconnect Policy for Online Payments**

Town Clerk/Finance Officer Kentrina S. Woods explained that while setting up the Town's website for online payments, the Town needs a policy for online payments in regard to late fees and disconnections. Town Clerk/Finance Officer KentrinA Woods advised that this policy will be posted on the website. Commissioner Linda Croom stated that this policy is similar to what is already in place for in-person and mailed payments. Town Clerk/Finance Officer Kentrina S. Woods confirmed this but added that it changes the cut-off time for accepting the payments. Commissioner Linda Croom motioned to approve the Late Fee and Disconnect Policy for Online Payments as presented. Commissioner Stephen Hester seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Discussion of Enforcement of the Town Ordinances**

Town Clerk/Finance Officer Kentrina S. Woods stated this matter is something Commissioner E. Troy Mitchell wanted to discuss with Attorney Sydney Wheeless. Commissioner E. Troy Mitchell advised that there have been several instances in which residents are either non-responsive to letters or non-compliant, and asked Attorney Sydney Wheeless what should be done. Attorney Sydney Wheeless stated that she contacted Gene Anderson regarding the letter that was mailed to him, and he was unaware of the letter and stated he would have the grass mowed on his lot on Peach St. Attorney Sydney Wheeless stated that problems like this are going to be an issue that the Town will face, especially with abandoned or vacant lots, but they should follow the guidance from the ordinances.

**Discussion of Meter Located at 111 Melvin St**

Public Works Director Daniel Alonzo advised that there was a utility meter at 111 Melvin St, but it has been removed due to someone living in a camper on the property using the water without having a utility account. Public Works Director Daniel Alonzo advised that the town maintenance employees have put locking lids over the empty meter box several times, but they have been repeatedly broken into, and the same person has connected the water line to a water hose to get access to water. Commissioner Stephen Hester stated that police involvement is needed in this situation as this person has damaged Town property. Town Clerk/Finance Officer Kentrina S. Woods stated that the land is in the mother's name, but her son is the one damaging Town property. Mayor Jerome Myers advised that Public Works Director Daniel Alonzo needs to call a sheriff's deputy to discuss this. Public Works Director Daniel Alonzo stated he would do so.

**Discussion of Kevin Robinson 90 Day Trial Employment (November 26, 2024)**

Town Clerk/Finance Officer Kentrina S. Woods stated that she was not sure whether the Board would like to discuss whether to hire Kevin Robinson as a full-time employee at this meeting or if they would like to wait until the December meeting, but they will need to go into executive session to discuss it further at the end of the meeting. Commissioner Stephen Hester motioned to table the discussion. Commissioner Linda Croom seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR**

Public Works Director Daniel Alonzo stated that they have already discussed all his concerns apart from approving the annual $150 boot stipend for the maintenance department employees. Commissioner Linda Croom asked Town Clerk/Finance Officer Kentrina S. Woods if this expense had already been budgeted. Town Clerk/Finance Officer Kentrina S. Woods confirmed this. Commissioner Linda Croom motioned to approve the $150 boot stipend for maintenance employees. Commissioner Stephen Hester seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**OPEN DISCUSSION**

Commissioner Stephen Hester asked the Board if the Town could have someone check the Red Hill Swamp to see if a beaver dam is in it because the ditch on S College St at the town limits is full. Mayor Jerome Myers stated he would contact Dean Morris from Bladen County Soil and Water Conservation.

Commissioner Stephen Hester stated that the property owner at 110 Mitchell Ford Road needs a letter sent to them due to excessive trash on the property. Commissioner E. Troy Mitchell stated he would take care of that.

Commissioner E. Troy Mitchell asked Linda Rivenbark whether they had made any progress in assisting Tracy Atkins with cleaning up his property. Linda Rivenbark stated that they have not made any progress at this time, but the Beautification Committee is working on it.

Commissioner Stephen Hester stated that the Fire Chief of Clarkton needs to address the property owner of the cinderblock house across from 110 Mitchell Ford Road.

Commissioner Linda Croom asked if Dietrich Banner has started working on the Clarkton Public Library's roof. Mayor Jerome Myers stated the work has been completed.

Commissioner Linda Croom asked Public Works Director Daniel Alonzo when the maintenance department plans to begin putting up Christmas lights. Public Works Director Daniel Alonzo stated they plan to begin when the lift arrives on November 18th.

Commissioner Linda Croom stated that when the Beautification Committee recently used the Clarkton Depot on November 2nd, the Depot was not cleaned. Linda Rivenbark asked what was not cleaned. Commissioner Linda Croom stated the kitchen was not cleaned and Town employees had to come in and clean the Depot including the kitchen and the tables. Linda Rivenbark stated the kitchen was cleaned, the tables were cleaned, and she mopped the floor herself. Commissioner Linda Croom advised that when the Board of Elections came in on that following Monday, the tables still had food on them. Commissioner Linda Croom motioned to send a bill for cleaning the kitchen to the Beautification Committee and charge the regular fee for use of the Depot. This motion did not receive a second.

Commissioner Stephen Hester motioned to enter an executive session at 6:37 p.m. to discuss personnel. Commissioner Linda Croom seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**********Executive Session**********

Commissioner Stephen Hester motioned to exit the executive session at 6:43 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner E. Troy Mitchell. The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Stephen Hester motioned to hire Kevin Robinson as a full-time maintenance employee with full benefits effective November 26, 2024. Commissioner Linda Croom seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**APPROVAL OF BILLS:**
Commissioner Linda Croom made a motion to approve the bills for October 2024. The motion was seconded by Commissioner E. Troy Mitchell and the motion carried unanimously.

**ADJOURNMENT:**
Commissioner Stephen Hester made a motion at 6:47 p.m. to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner E. Troy Mitchell and the motion carried unanimously.

**Respectfully Submitted by:** Kentrina S. Woods **Date:** 11-19-24
**Kentrina S. Woods, Town Clerk/Finance Officer**