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**Stanley Town Council Special Meeting  
Official Minutes  
Monday, July 6, 2020**

The special meeting of the Stanley Town Council was held on Monday, July 6, 2020 via Zoom conference call. The following elected officials and staff were present:

Steven Denton, Mayor  
Cathy Kirkland, Mayor Pro-Tem  
Jimmy Ingold, Council Member  
Kerry Hart, Council Member  
Bud Pate, Council Member  
Victoria Kiser, Council Member

Heath Jenkins, Town Manager  
Olga Grishin, Town Clerk  
Eric Withers, Fire Chief  
Craig Roseberry, Public Works Director  
Tug Deason, Recreation Director  
Kevin Haney, Financial Director  
Derek Summey, Police Chief  
Lorinda Brusie, Principal of Kiser Elementary

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***Call to Order:***

Mayor Denton called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

***Invocation:***

Council Member Bud Pate gave the invocation.

***Pledge of Allegiance:***

All citizens present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

***Approval of Agenda:***

Mayor Denton asked if there was a motion to approve the agenda as presented.

Manager Jenkins said that there were two changes that needed to be made to the agenda. The Town received a request from the applicant to postpone the hearing until August for the case #19117 Meritage Homes Project and the case # 19164 Arbordale Phase 5.

***Approval of Minutes:***

Mayor Denton asked for a motion to approve the May 4, 2020 Closed Session Meeting Minutes. Mayor Pro-Tem Cathy Kirkland made a motion to approve the minutes as presented and Council Member Bud Pate seconded the motion. A vote was held, and the motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Denton asked for a motion to approve the June 1, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes. Council Member Kerry Hart made a motion to approve the minutes as presented and Mayor Pro-Tem Cathy Kirkland seconded the motion. A vote was held, and the motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Denton made a remark that there was a recent Legislation regarding public hearing comments requirements allowing people 24 hours to make comments before and 24 hours to comment after a public hearing is held as a part of a virtual meeting. Mayor Denton addresses the Town Clerk to see if any comments were made after the Public Hearing. Per madame Clerk, none were submitted.

Mayor Denton asked if any of the Council members would want to change the vote on the Budget Adoption that was made June 22, 2020. No changes were made.

Mayor Denton asked for a motion to approve the June 22, 2020 Special Meeting Minutes. Council Member Kerry Hart made a motion to approve the minutes as presented and Council Member Bud Pate seconded the motion. A vote was held, and the motion passed unanimously.

***New Business:***

**A. Resolution to approve fireworks show Stanley Parks and Recreation**

Mayor Denton asked for a motion to approve Resolution for fireworks show Stanley Parks and Recreation. Council Member Victoria Kiser made a motion to approve the resolution and Mayor Pro-Tem Cathy Kirkland seconded the motion. A vote was held, and the motion passed unanimously.

**B. Resolution to approve fireworks show Community Pentecostal Holiness Church**

Council Member Kerry Hart asked if there was sufficient space between the Church and the school to conduct fireworks. Fire Chief Eric Withers replied that there were specific regulations and guidance one must follow to have the fireworks.

Mayor Denton asked for a motion to approve Resolution for fireworks show Community Pentecostal Holiness Church. Council Member Bud Pate made a motion to approve the resolution and Council Member Jimmy Ingold seconded the motion. A vote was held, and the motion passed unanimously.

**C. Approval of a Resolution supporting Powell Bill and NCDOT Maintenance Funding**

Manager Jenkins explained that this was the requirement from the Community Development Block Grant provider in Raleigh. All funds were expended from that account. After several years, it was the time to close that account completely.

The account from the CDBG funds was at zero. The Town had paid all the final bills.

Mayor Denton asked for a motion to approve a resolution supporting Powell Bill and NCDOT Maintenance Funding. Mayor Pro-Tem Cathy Kirkland made a motion and Council Member Kerry Hart seconded the motion. A vote was held, and the motion passed unanimously.

**D. Consider approval of a temporary traffic pattern for the upcoming school year**

Manager Jenkins explained that the plan, that was put in place last year, ended when the school year ended. With the start of the new school year, they need to have a new traffic pattern put together. But the school was not intended to do so. Instead, they were asking to extend the existing pattern.

Chief Summey stated he did not see the new pattern and was asking if anything changed.

Manager Jenkins replied that no changes were made; they were asking for the extension.

Chief Summey commented he did not have any concerns with the way a pattern was last year. The only concern he had was the possibility of the traffic increase at the intersection of Mauney Rd and Ralph Handsel Blvd.

Manager Jenkins assured if such conditions arose, it would be up to the school to coordinate with Fire and Police chief to ensure there would be no issue with accessibility and the traffic.

Chief Withers wanted to make sure that the pattern would not affect the fire department response.

That pattern specified that should there be any issues with the public safety risk, the school would need to coordinate with the police and fire departments.

Council Member Jimmy Ingold asked about the leverage the Town had to keep the school in compliance to fix the problem, if such arose.

Manager Jenkins proposed to approve the resolution from last year and keep the wording the same to hold the school accountable for communication and coordination with the fire and the police departments to ensure there were no public safety issues. As part of this resolution, the head of the school required to meet with Chief Withers and Chief Summey to discuss procedures in correcting such matters.

Mayor Denton asked for a motion to approve of a temporary traffic pattern for the upcoming school year. Mayor Pro-Tem Cathy Kirkland made a motion, and Council Member Bud Pate seconded the motion. A vote was held, and the motion passed unanimously.

***Public Hearing:***

**i. Closeout of 2016 CDBG Infrastructure Project 16-I-2928 Closeout of 2016 CDBG Infrastructure Project 16-I-2928**

Mayor Denton asked for a motion to open the public hearing. Council Member Kerry Hart made the motion. Council Member Jimmy Ingold seconded the motion. A vote was held and the motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Denton asked for a motion to approve Closeout of 2016 CDBG Infrastructure Project 16-I-2928 Closeout of 2016 CDBG Infrastructure Project 16-I-2928. Mayor Pro-Tem Cathy Kirkland made a motion, and Council Member Victoria Kiser seconded the motion. A vote was held, and the motion passed unanimously.

No Public Comments were made.

Mayor Denton asked for a motion to close the public hearing. Council Member Kerry Hart made the motion. Council Member Bud Pate seconded the motion. A vote was held and the motion passed unanimously.

**i. Subdivision of parcel 134165 into six parcels, 3 lots to face West Buckoak and 3 lots to face Wilson Street for the purpose to construct duplex apartments**

Mayor Denton asked for a motion to open the public hearing. Council Member Jimmy Ingold made the motion. Council Member Victoria Kiser seconded the motion. A vote was held and the motion passed unanimously.

Brent and Lyssa Carpenter submitted a written comment:

We are OPPOSED to development of additional multifamily / duplex housing on this section of land.

- Stanley already has more than enough multifamily style housing between several apartment complexes and the many smaller units that house 2 to 4 families. These units are not “maxed out”, and many units appear to be available for rent every few months. We do not need nor do we want additional apartment / duplex style housing in Stanley.

- We are concerned about the targeted demographics this type of housing will bring to Stanley and the increased probability of crime in our neighborhoods.
- Additional multifamily housing will likely decrease our property value in the near future. Please VOTE NO to additional development of multifamily housing on Parcel 134165. (We are not opposed to development of properly spaced houses on this land, we just do not want more multifamily housing.)

Mr. Dimmer had the floor explaining that the duplexes would be renting at \$1,200-1,500 range. They were not considered as a low-income rental.

Council Member Jimmy Ingold wanted to know how many vacancies were in the Town as a rental property.

No one could provide the exact number.

Mr. Dimmer made a remark that he was planning on doing 3 duplexes, but if the Council not permit that later on, he would revise the plan and would erect single-family houses instead. He had built duplexes before and never had any issue with renting that type of property.

Mayor Denton asked for a motion to approve subdivision of parcel 134165 into six parcels. Mayor Pro-Tem Cathy Kirkland made a motion, and Council Member Bud Pate seconded the motion. A vote was held, and the motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Denton asked for a motion to close the public hearing. Council Member Kerry Hart made the motion. Council Member Jimmy Ingold seconded the motion. A vote was held and the motion passed unanimously.

**i. Subdivision of parcel 134248 into three parcels, 2 lots facing Willson Street and 1 lot access from Short Street**

Mayor Denton asked for a motion to open the public hearing. Council Member Kerry Hart made the motion. Mayor Pro-Tem Kirkland seconded the motion. A vote was held and the motion passed unanimously.

Brent and Lyssa Carpenter submitted a comment:

We APPROVE of the subdivision of this section of land for 3 new homesites. We do have a concern about the creek that originates on parcel ID 134248 that feeds into neighboring property. This creek tends to swell very quickly during heavy rain, and it has been known to flood. We are concerned about the water runoff from development of this parcel. Water runoff would need to be managed carefully during development of these sites. Thank you all for your time and for considering our concerns of the proposed development in Stanley.

Mr. Dimmer reacted to the comment saying that he had done all the research, and complied with all regulations. He would build a bridge, and the creek would remain undisturbed. He added that he was planning to build three houses – one for his son, one for himself and one to sell.

Mayor Pro-Tem Cathy Kirkland asked Mr. Dimmer if he would be using any heavy equipment coming out on the Short St and Willson St.

Mr. Dimmer replied that he would not use any, but his son might use it to store an equipment. All the equipment was DOT regulated. His son would be parking his equipment on his property closer to the main street. The street had a dead-end, and it did not have through traffic.

Council Member Bud Pate asked if the road on Willson St was wide enough to accommodate 2 cars.

Public Works Director, Mr. Roseberry said the road was narrow indeed, but they never had any issues with having public works heavy machinery coming down that road. No road improvements were planned at that time.

Mayor Denton asked for a motion to approve subdivision of parcel 134248 into three parcels. Council Member Kerry Hart made a motion, and Council Member Jimmy Ingold seconded the motion. A vote was held, and the motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Denton asked for a motion to close the public hearing. Mayor Pro-Tem Cathy Kirkland made the motion. Council Member Bud Pate seconded the motion. A vote was held and the motion passed unanimously.

#### **F. Call for a public hearing – Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance – CUP for modular/manufactured homes**

Town Manager, Mr. Jenkins, the changes were made to the Town's current use chart back in 2018. We had been in a process with the Gaston County to relinquish some of the ETJ. Anyone who was trying to place a modular or manufactured home on the property within our 2 mile ETJ needed to get CUP from the BOA. That started being problematic, trying to schedule public hearings only to approve those items in the ETJ. We wanted to hold a public meeting for the Council to reconsider or change the use chart to allow for manufactured/mobile homes in the ETJ.

Mayor Denton asked for a motion to call for a public hearing. Council Member Victoria Kiser made the motion. Council Member Jimmy Ingold seconded the motion. A vote was held and the motion passed unanimously.

## **Special Presentation**

Lorinda Bruise, Principal of Kiser Elementary, gave a presentation:

Kiser serves grades 3-5.

Kiser proudly serves all students with hard work from 15 highly qualified classroom teachers, 2.5 EC teachers, Art, Music, PE, Media and Guidance, as well as Innovation Station, or STEM, and the support of a social worker, nurse, ELL, and AIG teacher

Kiser utilizes Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports to recognize positive behavior and character.

The United Churches of Stanley supplied brand new winter coats for all Kiser students.

Students collected over 200 jars of peanut butter and jelly for the Gaston County Guardian Ad Litem Program.

Kiser participated in Are You Smarter than a 5th Grader.

Kiser is 1:1 with Chromebooks and distributed over 200 devices during the school closure.

Katie Smith was recognized as the 2020 J.B. Anthony Award winner.

Kiser is focused on each individual student through personalized instruction.

A focus on student assessment data allows teachers to plan small group lessons for reading and math instruction that target specific skills.

Programs such as EC, AIG, Composers, Literacy, and ELL provide additional supports for our students.

Our House System provides students with the opportunity to build relationships and a sense of belonging with students and staff across grade levels.

Kiser offers GOTR, Chess Club, Robotics, Battle of the Books, Math Masters, Leadership Team, and more to come in 2020-2021.

Kiser is fully staffed and will be prepared for reopening.

We are planning to add clubs to our Tiger Time once per month.

One Book, One School with *The World According to Humphrey*.

Grab and Go Lunch is available Monday-Thursday at Kiser for any child.

Visit the Kiser website for updated information and pictures.

We will be working on improving our volunteer and mentor program. Contact Lorinda Brusie at 704-836-9105 if you are interested in either opportunity. We are always looking for new ways to be engaged with the Stanley community.

## **Citizens Comments**

The comment came from Michael Hullett, the Town's employee. Mr. Hullett wanted to know why the town had voted not to fund the 24-hour position at the fire department. As a resident, he was worried about his home and a family being protected when he was away at work. He wanted for his comment to be read and answered as to why the Town would continue to spend taxpayer money on downtown improvements instead of staffing public safety positions. There was no good in the improvements if the Town had no firefighters to protect homes and families.

Mayor Denton replied to the comment by saying that it was not an either/or situation. It was not we either make downtown improvements or we fund public safety. The town has to disperse our assets throughout the different departments, but capital improvements are important as well. The Town has a certain amount of funds to work with and spread out among all the departments. The police department is currently three officers short, and they are the lowest paid in the county. For the past three years, the public works department was asking for a new wood chipper. Downtown improvements are also significant. This is the face of the Town.

Mayor Denton said he met with numerous investors trying to entice them to invest in Stanley. Investors want to see confidence in the Town.

Mayor Pro-Tem Cathy Kirkland said that all departments were in need, and the Council needed to develop a plan to make the full-time Fire Department.

Chief Withers provided a pay-rate comparison file to the Council of other municipalities.

## **Department Reports**

Finance report was presented. There were no comments from the Council.

Public Works report was submitted.

A series of concerns were addressed by the Council:

1. Overflowing dumpsters and trash on the premises of Subway/Family
2. Trash behind Dollar General
3. Overgrown vegetation at 140 Hawley
4. Broken telephone pole located at 404 Sunset Dr.
5. Broken clock.

Director Roseberry explained they had to order some parts that arrived a few days ago. The maintenance personnel were not able to come down to install it due to COVID-19. The appointment was set up in two weeks.

Recreation Department report was submitted. Director Deason commented the Country Fair was cancelled due to the COVID-19.

Police report was submitted. No comments were made.

Fire Department report was submitted.

Chief Withers raised a question there was a difference of \$4,000 in the budget for fire department FY 2020-2021 compare to the last year.

Chief Withers asked for the schedule adjustment. The current schedule was 6:00 a.m.-2:00p.m. and 2:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. They would like to do 6:00a.m.-2:00p.m. and 10:00 p.m. – 6:00 a.m. Data showed Fire station was 3 times more likely to get calls in between the hours of 6:00 p.m. - 6:00 a.m.

Mayor Denton and the Council gave Chief Withers the authority to change the hours.

Police report was provided.

Council Member Jimmy Ingold asked about \$125,000 that were allocated for the radios.

Chief Summey responded that the Town financed the radios over a 3-4 year period. He was not sure if installments were paid. Chief Summey said that it was a question for the finance department.

Council Member Jimmy Ingold raised the question about the body cameras, explaining that many departments would not turn them on.

Chief Summey responded they had been using the cameras. It served as a protection, and it held the officers accountable. That was the Department's Policy to use them.

Council Member Jimmy Ingold asked Chief Summey how long the department was three officers short.

Chief Summey responded that they lost the third officer on June 3rd due to a retirement. The department had been having a difficult time hiring qualified officers because of the low pay. Chief Summey elaborated that the recruitment in law enforcement was down 60%.

Council Member Victoria Kiser wanted a clarification that those positions were not eliminated from the current budget.

Town Manager Jenkins confirmed the positions were still budgeted.

Mayor Denton asked Chief Summey what pay would be competitive.

Chief Summey responded that Dallas was at \$17.50. The Town should raise the pay to \$18.00 to be competitive. For the past few years, Stanley's Police Department was behind every other municipality regarding pay.

Chief Summey gave an update that 800 radio install was completed as well as vehicle radios. The department received a \$24,000 grant for mobile computers. The current computers were too old, and the department had been experiencing constant issues with them.

Mayor Denton moved on to the manager's report.

Manager Jenkins did not have anything else to report.

Mayor Denton asked Manager Jenkins for an update regarding and outside LED sign.

Manager Jenkins replied that the sign was 2-year old and should still be under warranty. Tech support system is in New York City. So far, the problem had not been appropriately addressed by them. The guy who came down to check the sign did not provide any report. The Town contacted the support and was told to wait until they could provide a technician to troubleshoot it.

Mayor Denton asked Manager Jenkins, Chief Withers, and the Council to provide feedback on initial steps that the Town could implement towards setting up a 24-hour Fire Department, an increase in the pay of the police officers, and a purchase of the body cams.

Chief Summey clarified that the purchase of the body cams would cost around \$8,000/year for three years (software, support and unlimited storage would be included into that price).

Mayor Denton recommended a purchase of a wood chipper for the public works department that would cost around \$45,000.

Manager Jenkins responded that the Town had adequate funds to make those additional adjustments to the budget.

Mayor Pro-Tem Cathy Kirkland asked if Recreation Department required anything.

Mr. Deason answered that the department did not need anything at that moment. Money was donated to the Town to support the community with food, specifically seniors. Individuals who had given money were provided with reports that show that the funds were going to the public.

Council Member Victoria Kiser stated, "I have a couple of comments. I have come under fire for some of my recent expressions of concern, so I will start by saying, these meetings are part of the "face" of our Town. They deserve to be conducted in a professional manner. Even though we are in a remote setting, the meetings should always adhere to the requirements and specifications that are outlined in the COVID-19 Recovery Act signed by Governor Cooper on May 4, 2020. The fact that citizens must call in to retrieve a password to view the recordings of the town's "open" meetings on the Town's website or Facebook page, sends the message that we are intentionally trying to limit access to them. Furthermore, the documentation of these meetings should be held in the highest regard, and very specific attention to detail should be practiced with any document or advertisement that we are publishing, whether it be in print, on the town's website, or the town's social media platform. While we are a government entity, this is a business, and we are only as good as what our citizens perceive us to be. And, speaking

of public perception, I would like to revisit my issues with the budget that was approved on June 22. While I appreciate that we are now considering these adjustments to be made, as you stated in the meeting minutes from June 1, Manager Jenkins, your recommendation was to take the budget back to flat as of the beginning of FY 19-20. You also stated that if there was a raise was implemented in the budget for 2019, it would remain in the budget. Furthermore, Mayor Denton, you commented that you would like to have a full-time Fire Department, and gave Manager Jenkins specific directions to take the necessary steps into addressing the issue. However, the increase in the budget that was allowed for the Fire Department that was approved in January of this year is not included in the budget submitted for approval during the special meeting held on June 22.

Manager Jenkins, you also stated that there would be no recommendations for raises for the next year, and yet, 35 minutes prior to the budget meeting, there was a request sent by Chief Summey for raises for the police officers. I don't disagree with raises for the police officers, Police Chief Summey, however your department already comprises 41% of our town's budget. Since we are in the habit of comparing our township to other townships, the only other township that has a higher percent of budget allotment to their police department is Ranlo. I am just not sure why we can't raise the department salaries, without raising the budget that has been afforded to you.

In light of the recent investigations and subsequent criminal charges being pursued in other townships, such as the town of Landis in Rowan County, and even as local as our fellow town of Ranlo, I believe now is the most important time for complete transparency regarding our Town Government and Financial Operations. I propose that this council consider establishing a transparency page that completely and accurately spells out all of the inner workings related to the town - from approved employment contracts, to salaries compared to the state average, to itemized expenditures. We have a responsibility to the citizens of this town to manage their tax dollars in the most fiscally responsible way, and we owe it to them to give them every reason to believe that we are not misappropriating the funds, nor are we engaging frivolous spending habits. If a citizen wants to know how much we are spending on toilet paper for the office, they should have access to that information, without having to go to Town Hall to request it. It is, in fact, their money, and they have every right to know how it is being spent. Thank you, for allowing me the opportunity to speak, and, Council, for what I hope will be a very thoughtful consideration of my proposal for complete transparency moving forward".

Mayor Denton responded, "Thank you, Council Member Kiser. One thing I do want to say, and then I'll let the other council members speak, is it has to do with personal attacks on the council. I didn't see them personally, but it was brought to my attention that some of the town citizens have taken to social media, and resorted to 2nd grade behavior by attacking certain members of this council, our department heads, and also our town manager. This just shows an obvious lack of class, a lack of maturity on those individuals. So, to those who may be listening, or will read the July minutes, my advice would be before you embarrass yourself, before you further embarrass your entire family, you might want to consider acting like an

adult, acting like a professional. Contact the council member directly that you have an issue with, or the town manager, or myself, and have a mature conversation instead of acting like a keyboard coward. I think we are all above that. I think that does nothing but cause division, and again it just embarrasses the individuals that participate in such actions.”

Manager Jenkins added, "The Town Hall has never been trying to hide any information. We may not always have the staff time to do some of the things the Council member recommends immediately. Those who have served in the City Council understand my position and my staff's position a little better than those who have been on a Council for two months. But We certainly will try harder".

Mayor Denton asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Council Member Kerry Hart made the motion. Council Member Bud Pate seconded the motion. A vote was held and the motion passed unanimously.

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Respectfully Submitted:

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Steven Denton – Mayor

(OFFICIAL TOWN SEAL)

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Heath Jenkins – Town Manager

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Olga Grishin - Town Clerk