

Stoneville Town Council
Special Meeting Minutes
July 22, 2025
9:00 AM – Council Chambers

Special Meeting

Present were Mayor Kathy Stanley-Galvan, Council members Johnny Farmer, Curt Bennett, Lee Shelton, and Henry Thornton. Also present were Town Administrator Michael Sands, Finance Officer Shannon Tucker, Town Clerk Deleia Hutcherson, Town Attorney Eugene Russell and Public Works Director Byron Curry.

Mayor Galvan announced that Councilwoman Smith was unable to attend and her absence was excused due to a scheduling conflict. The meeting continued with a quorum present.

Agenda: Mayor Galvan asked for a motion to approve the June 27, 2025, agenda. Councilman Thornton made a motion to approve the agenda. Councilman Shelton seconded. Motion carried.

Special Meeting Items:

Citizen Concern – Maintenance of Duncan Street (gravel portion) - Town Administrator Michael Sands presented a request from Mr. Ronnie Bullins regarding the deteriorating condition of the gravel section of Duncan Street. He explained that the road itself was in the ETJ (Extraterritorial Jurisdiction) but the citizens living on the right side of the road were within town limits. The request was for the replacement of rock on the road down to the culvert section due to washout from rains, making the area difficult for residents, postal services, emergency vehicles, and Waste Management trucks. Public Works Director Byron Curry had evaluated the situation and estimated the cost would be approximately 68 tons of gravel at roughly \$2,600, plus labor costs for a couple days of work. Councilman Farmer expressed concern about the precedent this would set, questioning if there were other roads in similar situations where the town could be asked to do the same type of work. He emphasized that the town generally doesn't provide services on private property. Town Attorney, Eugene Russell clarified that the road was a subdivision street, which is a right of way for residents, and that the town doesn't typically have responsibility for maintenance.

Mr. Bullins addressed the Council and stated that the Town of Stoneville previously maintained the road and had installed the culvert pipe. He reported having called the town on March 12th and said the NC Department of Transportation (DOT) had informed him it was Stoneville's responsibility. He expressed frustration about the condition of the road and claimed town employees had placed mud instead of gravel on the road. The Public Works Director Byron Curry disputed the claim that the town had placed mud on the road. Mr. Bullins warned of potentially restricting access to town utility services if repairs were not made.

Town Clerk, Deleia Hutcherson noted that the town had received an email from DOT stating they could find no record of either the state or the Town of Stoneville being responsible for the gravel portion of the road. It was also noted that the gravel portion doesn't appear on the Powell Bill map for the Town of Stoneville.

An additional discussion revealed the unique situation where one side of Duncan Street is within town limits and the other side is in the ETJ. It was also noted that the pipe that was installed years ago was much larger than the typical, suggesting it wasn't installed by a private individual. The Town Attorney mentioned the possibility of the contractor installing the pipe during the development of the subdivision. It was also noted that no street maintenance records existed to prove the town took ownership of the gravel portion of the street. There are no notes on the deeds or subdivision plat stating maintenance ownership of streets. It was discussed that property owners may need to discuss creating maintenance agreements.

After extensive discussion about legal responsibilities and precedent-setting concerns, there was consensus among the Council that addressing stormwater runoff from the paved portion, that lies in the town limits might fall within the town's responsibilities. It was emphasized that the town will not assume responsibility for the entire gravel road or private properties. Councilman Thornton made a motion of a one-time fix to approve repairs limited to the section from the end of the town-maintained asphalt to the culvert pipe, using appropriate gravel and grading to mitigate runoff, which may be a town-caused issue. Motion seconded by Councilman Farmer. Motion carried unanimously.

A brief recess took place before moving to the next agenda item.

Citizen Concern – Water and Sewer Service on Ponderosa Road - Mr. Floyd Vines addressed the Council and raised concerns about a prolonged water leak on his property and the placement of water and sewer lines near and on his property. He reported that he had experienced a significant water leak that had gone undetected for approximately 6–8 weeks earlier in the year, and only discovered it when his utility bill spiked dramatically. Upon inspection, Mr. Vine noted that the town's water and sewer infrastructure appeared to traverse his property in a manner that seemed unauthorized or unclear. He is requesting compensation for the water bill with the significant water usage due to the leak. It was discussed that the appropriate credit was given based on our current policy and Mr. Vines requested cancellation of the credit.

Mr. Vines also questioned whether the Town had the proper easements or agreements in place allowing access across his land, and he requested clarity regarding the legal rights and responsibilities associated with utility access and usage on his property. His key concern was that infrastructure may be serving multiple neighboring properties while using his land without formal permission, compensation, or documentation. He is also questioning whether he is on town sewer or a private septic system. He has been charged for sewer service for numerous years but wants clarification on whether he is actually connected to the town sewer.

Town officials acknowledged the importance of the issue. The Town Attorney confirmed that the situation would require further investigation into recorded easements, historical development plans, and any prior agreements between the property owner(s) and the Town. The attorney also noted that, in many older neighborhoods, infrastructure was occasionally installed before comprehensive easement agreements became standard practice.

Mr. Vines also expressed dissatisfaction over how his concerns were handled by staff.

The Council recognized the need for a timely resolution and transparency. Next steps were discussed as follows to address the concerns of Mr. Vines:

- Public Works will provide Mr. Vines with tablets to flush that will determine if he is connected to the town sewer or a private septic system and determine if Mr. Vines has a cleanout.
- Install a $\frac{3}{4}$ line to Mr. Vines property and to his neighbor's property so there is no split going to two houses. A tap should go directly to Mr. Vines and a tap should go directly to his neighbor's property. Pressure will need to be confirmed.
- The Public Works Director will visit the site and map the exact locations of all utility lines on and around the property. He will confirm whether the infrastructure is crossing property boundaries to serve other properties. Councilman Thornton has agreed to be present when work is done by Public Works. The town engineer will be engaged if necessary to verify as-built line locations.
- The Town Attorney will conduct a title and easement search on Mr. Vines' property to determine if valid utility easements exist.
- The Town Administrator will coordinate the findings into a formal report and communicate to Mr. Vines and the Council.
- The Council will review the report and determine the next steps.

Councilman Shelton had to leave the meeting due to a scheduling conflict. The meeting continued with a quorum present.

Consideration of lease agreement with Credit Union – The Council reviewed and discussed the proposed lease agreement between the Town of Stoneville and Acclaim Federal Credit Union. The Town Administrator presented the final draft of the agreement, which had undergone legal review and incorporated feedback from both the Town Attorney and representatives of the Credit Union. Councilman Bennett expressed some minor concerns over the terms of the lease. Members of the Council expressed broad support for the partnership, noting the value it would bring in expanding financial services within the community and promoting local economic development. Councilman Bennett made a motion to approve the lease agreement. Councilman Thornton seconded. Motion carried unanimously. Copy incorporated into minutes.

Closed Session – Mayor Galvan asked for a motion to go into closed session pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(a) (3) to consult with the Town Attorney, and (6) Personnel. Councilman Farmer made a motion to go into closed session. Councilman Thornton seconded. Motion carried.

Councilman Thornton made a motion to come out of closed session. Councilman Bennett seconded. Motion carried.

Mayor Galvan announced the return to open session with no action taken.

Motion to adjourn made by Councilman Thornton. Councilman Bennett seconded. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 12:58 p.m.

Kathy Stanley-Galvan
Mayor, Kathy Stanley-Galvan

Deleia Hutcherson
Town Clerk, Deleia Hutcherson

