Stoneville Town Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
September 9, 2025
6:00 PM – Council Chambers

Regular Meeting

Present were Mayor Kathy Stanley-Galvan, Council members Johnny Farmer, Curt Bennett, Lee Shelton, Henry Thornton and Daisy Smith. Also, present were Town Administrator Michael Sands, Finance Officer Mary Ann Greer, Town Clerk Deleia Hutcherson, Police Chief Rebecca Dixon, Public Works Director Byron Curry, Fire Chief Joel Freeman, and Town Attorney Eugene Russell.

Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance, and Invocation: Mayor Galvan called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited followed by an invocation.

Agenda: Councilman Thornton made a motion to approve the September 9, 2025 agenda. Seconded by Councilman Bennett. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes: Councilman Shelton made a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes from August 5, 2025. Seconded by Councilwoman Smith. Motion carried unanimously.

Proclamation: Mayor Galvan issued a Proclamation declaring September 17-23, 2025 as Constitution Week in recognition of the two hundred and thirty-eighth anniversary of the drafting of the Constitution of the United States of America by the Constitutional Convention. The Proclamation was presented to Ms. Janice Tate of the James Hunter Chapter, NSDAR. Copy incorporated into the minutes.

Oath of Office: Mayor Galvan administered the Oath of Office to Finance Officer Mary Ann Greer. Copy incorporated into the minutes.

Public Hearings

Case Z-2025-02 Consideration of a rezoning request from applicant, CRGG Development LLC, to rezone Parcel 125910/Tax PIN 793807573566 (40.6 acres +/-) from Residential Suburban/Residential Agriculture to Residential Suburban/Conditional Zoning District – Councilman Thorton made a motion to open the Public Hearing. Councilman Shelton seconded. Motion carried unanimously. Applicant, Mr. Charles Rakestraw formally made his request to the Council to rezone approximately 40.6 acres on Ponderosa Road for an 81-lot subdivision. He described the lot sizes and his request for conditional building setbacks of 20' versus 25' for front yard and 15' versus 20' for rear yard. He stated home sizes will be 1,500 – 2,800 sq. ft. and price points in the $200,000 - $250,000 range. He also spoke on HOA covenants and infrastructure commitments. Access and utilities have been reviewed by NCDOT, County Fire Marshal, and Public Works Director.

Public Comments: Mr. Bobby Stanley of 628 Young Road, Stoneville, NC spoke in favor of the development, citing tax base and business growth. Mr. Paul Ewing, owner of Southern View Mobile Home Park on Church Street expressed concerns about inadequate drainage and flooding on Church Street that could be further impacted with this development. He stated he was not opposed to the development but asked that approval be contingent on NCDOT installing larger pipes to handle existing and increased water flow. There was back and forth discussion between the Council, Mr. Ewing, and Mr. Rakestraw. It was noted that Church Street is a state-maintained road and this area has been an ongoing issue with regard to flooding. The request will be made to NCDOT by the Town Administrator and/or the developer to revisit the site for possible solutions. Councilman Thornton made a motion to close the Public Hearing. Seconded by Councilman Farmer. Motion carried unanimously.

Council Decision – The rezoning request is consistent with the Town of Stoneville's existing Comprehensive Land Development Plan and in the public interest as the proposed development site is in an area appropriate for low-density residential uses. Based on the Findings of Fact and favorable recommendation provided by the Town of Stoneville Planning Board, Councilman Farmer made a motion to approve rezoning request Z-2025-02 and the Reasonableness and Consistency Statement as presented by staff. Councilwoman Smith seconded. Motion carried unanimously with a 5-0 vote. Copy incorporated into the minutes.

Case Z-2025-03 Consideration of a rezoning request from applicant, AVENTZ LLC, to rezone three parcels identified as TAX PIN 793806490861, 793918309122, and 793918400162 from Residential Agriculture to Residential Agriculture/Conditional Zoning District - Councilman Thorton made a motion to open the Public Hearing. Councilman Bennett seconded. Motion carried unanimously. Applicant, Mr. Chris Avis, presented plans for redeveloping the following three properties:

206 E. Main Street - Presbyterian Church will be renovated and renamed The Meeting House. It will be used as a small wedding venue, business meeting center, and community events venue. Property has been purchased at the rear of the property for parking.

209 E. Main Street – (Formerly the Ruby Rose Tea Room and Restaurant). This facility will be an Air B&B and primary support for the Meeting house. The property will provide 15-20 parking spaces with an entrance off Main Street and an exit onto Simpson Street. Mr. Avis also requested flexibility to potentially reopen the Tea Room which is not in the immediate plan.

207 E. Main Street – The Taylor House is almost complete and will serve as an Air B&B. It will also cover any overflow in accommodations from the Ruby Rose property.

Mr. Avis made a formal request to the Council to rezone the properties from Residential Agriculture to Residential Agriculture/Conditional Zoning District that allows for specific uses across multiple parcels, while ensuring compatibility and safeguards for the surrounding community. No one signed up for public comments. Councilwoman Smith made a motion to close the Public Hearing. Councilman Bennett seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Council Decision – The rezoning request is consistent with the Town of Stoneville's existing Comprehensive Land Development Plan and in the public interest as the proposed rezoning is in an area appropriate for low-density residential uses and an area compatible with the proposed uses. Based on the Findings of Fact and favorable recommendation provided by the Town of Stoneville Planning Board, Councilman Farmer made a motion to approve rezoning request Z-2025-02 and the Reasonableness and Consistency Statement as presented by staff. Councilman Bennett seconded. Motion carried unanimously with a 5-0 vote. Copy incorporated into the minutes.

Old Business: None

Public Comments: None

New Business

Consideration to sponsor Veterans Day Parade and Fireworks – Mr. Howard Terry spoke on behalf of the Madison Merchants Guild and requested that the town consider being a sponsor for the upcoming Veterans Day Parade & Fireworks. The event is scheduled for Saturday, November 8, 2025 at 5:30 p.m. in Downtown Madison. The Council discussed and spoke about regional cooperation between the towns to honor and recognize our veterans. Councilman Farmer made a motion for the Town of Stoneville to be a Corporate Sponsor at an amount of $200.00. Councilman Thornton seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Consideration to sponsor Rotary Fall Festival – Mrs. Mitzi Evans spoke on behalf of the Stoneville Rotary Club and requested the annual Fall Festival sponsorship of $500.00 from the town. Councilman Farmer made a motion to approve the $500.00 town sponsorship for the Rotary Fall Festival. Seconded by Councilwoman Smith. Motion carried unanimously.

Consideration of request to review agent of record for employee benefits – Mr. Jerry Smith, Health and Life Insurance Agent for Stoneville Health Insurance Store spoke on this item. He provided hard copies of information to the Council prior to addressing his concerns. Mr. Smith formally requested to be named the agent of record for the employee benefit programs, including health, dental, and related insurance coverage stating that significant mistakes had occurred during the prior review and presentation of proposals, leading to misrepresentations of cost comparisons. He asserted the following key points:

- Proposals he submitted had been incorrectly presented as being approximately $20,000 higher than those of a competing broker.
- In reality, his proposals would have been nearly $10,000 less expensive across five lines of coverage.
- Based on those savings, the Town could have established a Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) of approximately $883 per employee, with additional first-dollar benefits through United Healthcare, including preloaded debit cards.

- The agent emphasized his long-standing history in the insurance industry (38 years) and prior service as the Town's agent of record under a former manager.
- He stressed that he was not requesting a change in insurance carriers at this time, but rather a change in the designated agent of record to correct the previous error and ensure local representation.
- He stated that such an agent-of-record change is a standard practice in the insurance industry, requiring only a letter from the Town to the carriers (Blue Cross Blue Shield and Guardian) reassigning representation.

He stated the Town's administration had acknowledged mistakes in the way proposals were reviewed and presented, which he felt resulted in him being unfairly disadvantaged. He urged the Council to act in good faith, correct the record, and assign him as the agent of record moving forward.

Council members engaged in an extended and detailed discussion, raising concerns and seeking clarification on several points as listed below:

- Impact on Employees: Multiple members expressed apprehension about any changes that could potentially disrupt employee coverage, especially for employees who may have already met deductibles or incurred medical expenses under their current plans.
- Clarification of Request: The agent reiterated several times that he was not seeking to change the Town's insurance carriers or benefits at this time, but only to replace the current broker of record with his agency. Employees would retain their existing coverage, premiums, and plan details.
- Process Concerns: Council members and staff discussed whether the Town's process for reviewing and selecting brokers should have been conducted through a formal Request for Proposals (RFP). The agent provided examples of RFP's from other municipalities, stating that such an approach would have provided a clearer and more transparent process.
- Timing Issues: Concerns were raised about the June 27th timeline in which council members were presented spreadsheets for a decision that had to be made almost immediately for a July 1 effective date, leaving little room for proper review.
- Acknowledgment of Mistakes: Several members, including the Mayor, acknowledged that mistakes had been made in how the information was presented and apologized for the errors. However, some expressed the view that correcting the mistake now by changing the agent of record could create new risks or confusion for employees.

After extended discussion, Councilman Farmer apologized to Mr. Smith if there were mistakes made when staff presented the information to Council. He also stated that the Council, in good conscience, made a motion to enter into an agreement with Salem Insurance and he encouraged Mr. Smith to participate in the bid process for 2026-2027. Councilman Farmer made a motion that the Town remain with its current agent of record, Salem Benefits, and not make a change at this time. Councilwoman Smith seconded the motion. Councilman Shelton and Councilman Bennett opposed. A roll call was conducted. Yes Vote – Councilman Farmer, Councilman Thornton, and Councilwoman Smith. No Vote – Councilman Shelton and Councilman Bennett. Motion carried with a 3-2 vote. The Town will continue its relationship with the current broker, Salem Benefits.

Mr. Smith reiterated that the Council had acknowledged errors and stated that he considered himself to have been adversely impacted by those mistakes. He requested that the Clerk note this acknowledgment in the permanent record and that he would also submit an email for the record.

Mr. Smith's Permanent Record Request (Verbatim):

"So this council is going to acknowledge mistakes. Correct? You're acknowledging mistakes were made to my detriment for me to be adversely selected against. That's what you've acknowledged, correct? Madam Clerk, make sure you have that down correct. I want to send you an email to be made a part of the permanent record too, okay? Okay. I don't appreciate it."

Consideration to convert part-time Public Works position to a full-time position – Town Administrator, Michael Sands stated the transition from a part-time to a full-time position would allow the department to improve services and increase efficiency. The position would also provide support for the increased demand that will be needed as new homes and developments are added to the town. The request should not exceed $22,000 for the remainder of the fiscal year and would be funded through a budget amendment from Administrative Salaries to Public Works Salaries. Councilman Farmer made a motion to convert the part-time Public Works position to a full-time position as presented by staff. Councilman Thornton seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Consideration to approve street paving proposal – Public Works Director, Byron Curry presented recommendations for consideration to address some of the needed paving projects throughout town. Mr. Curry recommended paving the following streets in Phase 1 of the project: Mebane, Clark, Stone, Glendale, and Golden Eagle. Based on the estimates of $355,000, Phase 2 can be accomplished under budget with a contingency amount to allow for fluctuations in the price of asphalt. The recommendation is based on the pavement study as well as high traffic areas around the school and surrounding buildings. This recommendation also includes paving the parking lot adjacent to the Post Office. The recommendation excludes state-maintained roads and any roads that are slated for water line replacements or sewer line improvements. Councilman Farmer mentioned that approximately $450,000 was allocated for paving projects in the 2025-2026 budget and allocations will continue each budget year until all streets on the pavement study are addressed. Councilman Farmer made a motion to approve the proposal for paving projects as presented by staff. Councilman Shelton seconded. Motion carried unanimously. Copy incorporated into the minutes.

Consideration to approve Budget Amendments 09092025-01 and 09092025-02 – Budget amendment 09092025-01 was presented to allocate funds of $200,000 from the RDED grant for the renovation of the bank building. Budget amendment 09092025-02 was presented to reallocate funds of $22,000 from Administrative Salaries to Public Works Salaries for the position being converted from part-time to full-time. Councilman Bennett made a motion to approve the two budget amendments. Councilwoman Smith seconded. Motion carried unanimously. Copies incorporated into the minutes.

Town Administrator Report: Mr. Sands commented on the following: Staff is looking at Christmas event planning and downtown decorating. The tree near the Rotary Stage will be trimmed in October. The bank building renovations are progressing and on schedule.

Upcoming meetings and events were announced by Mayor Galvan.

Motion to adjourn made by Councilman Shelton. Seconded by Councilman Thornton. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

Kathy Stanley Galvan
Mayor, Kathy Stanley-Galvan

Deleia Hutcherson
Town Clerk, Deleia Hutcherson

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