

Stoneville Town Council
Special Meeting Minutes
November 13, 2025
10:30 AM – Council Chambers

Special Meeting

Present were Mayor Kathy Stanley-Galvan, Council members Johnny Farmer, Curt Bennett, Lee Shelton, Daisy Smith, and Henry Thornton. Also present were Town Administrator Michael Sands, Town Clerk Deleia Hutcherson, and Town Attorney Eugene Russell.

Agenda: Mayor Galvan asked for a motion to approve the November 13, 2025, agenda. Councilman Thornton made a motion to approve the agenda. Councilman Bennett seconded. Motion carried.

Special Meeting Item:

Citizen request for investigation of alleged official misconduct – The Mayor stated that the special meeting had been properly called by Councilman Thornton and Councilwoman Smith for the purpose of addressing a citizen’s request for an investigation regarding alleged official misconduct. The Council began by reviewing concerns raised at the prior regular meeting and noting the importance of ethics, public trust, and accountability among elected officials.

The council members discussed the Code of Ethics required by the State of North Carolina and emphasized that council members must uphold integrity, respect, and accountability at all times—both in their official capacities and in their personal conduct within the community. Concerns were raised about how the alleged incident could reflect on the Town Council as a whole, as negative conduct by any member can impact public trust in the governing body.

Several council members noted that additional citizen complaints had surfaced since the original allegation, contributing to the need for clarity and transparency. However, they also stressed that accusations made during public comments are one-sided and should not be treated as findings of fact without a fair process.

A brief discussion was held regarding events at the voting precinct on Election Day. A witness, Mr. Bennett, provided limited recollections of interactions between individuals present, noting that he observed no shouting match but rather general “bantering.” He stated he had not witnessed the events that contributed to the complaint in question. Council members confirmed that the Election Day matter was not the purpose of the special meeting.

Council members expressed a desire to ensure fairness and to avoid prejudging any council member without credible evidence or proper review. Members discussed whether the council had authority to take meaningful action in cases involving personal disputes occurring outside official duties. The town attorney provided guidance on the legal limitations regarding council authority, noting that conduct unrelated to official duties generally falls outside the council’s jurisdiction unless it is so outrageous or infamous as to impair the member’s ability to serve.

Councilman Shelton requested to make a voluntary statement. The Town Attorney advised that Councilman Shelton could voluntarily provide a statement to assist the council in determining whether an investigation was warranted.

Councilman Shelton began by referencing the citizen complaint made by Mr. Mack Rierson, who did not state a specific council member's name in his remarks at the prior meeting. After reviewing the comments made, Councilman Shelton stated the allegations related to his minor son and constituted a personal matter, not a town-related ethics issue.

He then proceeded to read his prepared statement word-for-word, as follows:

STATEMENT OF COUNCILMAN LEE SHELTON (READ VERBATIM)

"Madam Mayor and members of council,

I have prepared the following statement in response to a complaint filed against me.

The person making the complaint began by accusing my underage son of playing loud music while driving by the complaining person's house. My son is not a member of the town council. And while I dispute that my son has done this, I do not believe my son allegedly playing loud music is an ethics issue or a matter for this council to consider, and so I have nothing further to say about the alleged music volume.

I will, however, say that the person complaining, who is a grown man, has himself driven by my house on multiple occasions and yelled curse words and hateful slurs at my underage son, as well as made obscene gestures at him. This person did this not just from his own car, but also while driving a work vehicle by the name of the local business owner.

The person complaining, who again is a grown man, also sent my underage son text messages swearing at him. As a concerned parent, I found this conduct from an adult extremely inappropriate. Since the person making the complaint was driving a work vehicle with a business name on it, I did call that business to complain about their employee's conduct while driving their work vehicle.

I also left a negative review online. However, reflecting on the situation, I have since taken it down, as I did not want to blame the business for the improper conduct of a single employee. When I called the business to complain about their employee's conduct while driving their work truck, I did not demand that the employee be fired. The only reference I made to town council was during introductions on the phone when I was asked who I was. At no time did I state or imply that the matter I was called about related to the town of Stoneville or my role on the council. I called as a concerned parent, something any other parent would do if their child was sworn at by an adult.

The person complaining has claimed he requested private mediation with me, but this is not true. To the best of my knowledge, I have never been contacted by the person complaining or requesting mediation. Neither me nor my son have received an apology for the harassment and inappropriate conduct we have received.

I do not believe my conduct is an ethical violation under the rules of North Carolina or the town of Stoneville. I have not been credibly accused of stealing, bribery, misuse of town property,

financial gain, or any other unethical dishonesty. The matter under discussion today all relates to a personal dispute between the person complaining, my underage son, and me.

I believe investigating a matter such as this as an ethical violation is not within the intent of the Ethics Code of Conduct and risks opening the door to politicized complaints against myself and every other member of this council by any stranger who doesn't like us.

I wish to thank the mayor, the council, and those members of staff that are present for their time."

Council members discussed the nature of the dispute and expressed concern over allowing personal conflicts between citizens and council members to become council business. Many emphasized that if the Town Council were to formally investigate every citizen complaint about a council member unrelated to official duties, the council would be overwhelmed and distracted from its proper responsibilities.

Members also highlighted the need for council members to rise above personal grievances, maintain professionalism, and avoid reacting to personal provocations. The council generally agreed that the matter did not involve town business, misuse of office, or ethical misconduct on the part of Councilman Shelton in his capacity as an elected official.

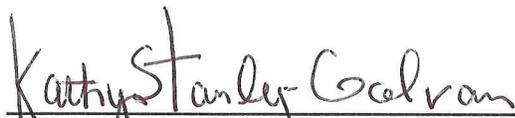
Some members encouraged both parties involved in the personal dispute to seek private mediation if mutually agreed upon.

After extensive discussion, the Council reached consensus that the matter constituted a personal dispute, not an official or ethical violation within the jurisdiction of the Town Council.

Councilman Farmer made a motion stating that, based on the information presented, the matter was a personal issue and not a council matter, and therefore did not warrant an investigation by the Town Council. Councilwoman Smith seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously with a 4-0 vote. Councilman Shelton recused himself from the vote.

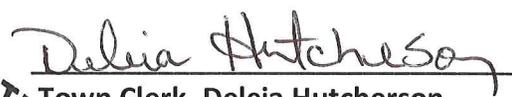
Motion to adjourn made by Councilman Bennett. Councilwoman Smith seconded. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 11:24 a.m.



Mayor, Kathy Stanley-Galvan





Town Clerk, Deleia Hutcherson