Town of Clayton
Regular Town Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 19, 2021 @ 6:00 PM
Council Chambers

COUNCIL PRESENT:
Mayor McLeod
Mayor Pro Tem Thompson
Council Member Grannis
Council Member Holder
Council Member Bunn
Council Member Everett

STAFF PRESENT:
JD Solomon, Town Manager
Francis Raspberry, Town Attorney
Kimberly Moffett, Town Clerk
Rich Cappola, D/Town Manager
Dale Medlin, Electric System Director
Ann Game Customer Service Director
Lee Barbee, Fire Chief
Joy Garretson, Library Director
Robert McKie, Finance Director
Heidi Holland, Deputy Town Clerk

COUNCIL ABSENT:

1 CALL TO ORDER
Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation

a) Mayor McLeod called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. and led everyone the Pledge of Allegiance and offered the Invocation.

2 ADJUSTMENT OF THE AGENDA

a) Item 8b regarding Development Agreements was removed from the agenda and will be presented at a meeting in the near future.

3 CONSENT AGENDA

(Items on the consent agenda are considered routine in nature or have been thoroughly discussed at previous meetings. Any member of the Council may request to have an item removed from the consent agenda for further discussion.)

a) DRAFT Minutes
- December 21, 2020 - Regular Meeting
- December 21, 2020 - Closed Session
- January 4, 2021 - Regular Meeting

b) Budget Amendments

c) Proclamation - All in Red Week

ACTION: Adoption of Consent Agenda as Presented

Motion: Council Member Holder
Second: Council Member Everett
Vote: Unanimous

4 ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

5 INTRODUCTIONS AND SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

6 PUBLIC HEARINGS

7 OLD BUSINESS

a) Town Hall Parking Lot Expansion – Utility Undergrounding
Presenters: Joshua Baird, Town Engineer & Dale Medlin, Electric Distribution System Director

Mr. Baird was present and shared updated details regarding the underground utilities in the Town Hall parking lot project. Several meetings have been held with some of the providers to include Spectrum and Century Link. It is estimated the total cost for undergrounding will be $150,000 and the time frame for project completion would be 4-6 months. The contractor is open to coordinating with everyone to get the parking lot open as soon as possible. Mr. Baird stated a budget amendment is not required at this time, as there is funding available in the Enterprise Fund.

Council Member Bunn questioned why Spectrum and Century Link could not provide a definitive time frame. Mr. Medlin stated it was due to their extremely heavy workload. Mr. Medlin stated his team would be expediting their part of the project.

Council Member Grannis asked what other costs or items might need to be adjusted. Mr. Baird stated remobilization, delays, idle equipment, etc.

Mayor McLeod questioned the possibility of design change. Mr. Baird stated that some of the parking aisles were designed around existing electrical poles and any small change would just make a more symmetrical design.

ACTION: Approval to Move Forward with Project to Include any Change Orders Required

Motion: Council Member Bunn
Second: Council Member Holder
Vote: Unanimous

b) No Parking / Loading Zone - Portion of Second Street
Presenter: Rich Cappola, Deputy Town Manager

Mr. Cappola was present. He stated a meeting was held amongst several stakeholders involved with this project. An agreement has been reached. He stated on January 11th, during peak hours, representatives from My Girlfriends Place and Horne Memorial Church met with town staff on Second Street to discuss details. He shared details about the agreement and further stated it would be revisited by June 15th as we move forward with the Town Hall Parking Lot project.

Chief Barbee stated he was in agreement with the decisions reached. Council Member Holder stated he felt this was just a band aid, but was willing to wait and take another look once the parking lot project was completed.

Mr. Paul Black, owner of My Girlfriends Place, was present and stated he was happy for all the efforts. Mr. Cappola clarified there is a driveway access to the north of the Yellow House that the business does not utilize. The yellow stripe would be removed from that access to provide one more parking spot for My Girlfriends Place.

ACTION: Adoption of Ordinance #2021-01-08

Motion: Council Member Bunn
Second: Council Member Everett
Vote: Unanimous

8 NEW BUSINESS

a) Return Check Policy - Amendment
Presenter: Ann Game, Customer Service Director

Ms. Game was present and stated it was requested to amend the current "return check" policy to state: Upon receipt of the second returned check or other insufficient funds notice, the customer will be advised that all bills must be paid in cash, certified check, or money order for a minimum of five (5) years and will be given another copy of the written policy. At the end of the five (5) year time period, the customer can request this restriction to be removed at the discretion of the Utilities & Billing Director.

ACTION: Adoption of Resolution #2021-02

Motion: Council Member Everett
Second: Mayor Pro Tem Thompson
Vote: Unanimous

b) ~~Development Agreements~~
~~*Presenters*: Chad Essick, Poyner Spruill and Russell Killen, Parker Poe~~

c) AFG Grant
Presenter: Matt Sutphin, Deputy Fire Chief

Deputy Chief of Operations, Matt Sutphin, shared details about this grant which would be used for installation of sprinkler systems at both stations. There would be a 10% match, which would be an approximate cost of $17,500 to the town.

ACTION: Approval for Staff to Proceed with Application Process

Motion: Mayor Pro Tem Thompson
Second: Council Member Holder

Vote: Unanimous

d) Library Grants
Presenter: Joy Garretson, Library Director

Ms. Garretson was shared details regarding a grants she planned to apply for. The first grant is LSTA Planning Grant and is for strategic planning. The consultant would be Karen Dash. Total cost depending on face to face versus virtual meetings would be $11,400. This grant would cover 75% and the town would cover 25% of the total cost.

The second grant is National Endowment of the Arts: Big Read. One book would be selected to be read across Clayton. Along with that, numerous events would be held. The book chosen is The House on Mango Street by author Sandra Cisneros. She shared details regarding partnerships. This grant awards between $5,000 - $20,000. Current estimates are approximately $10,000 from NEA, $4,800 direct or donated costs, and $5,200 in-kind contributions.

Council Member Grannis stated council truly appreciated Joy's enthusiasm and dedication and offered his thanks. Mayor Pro Tem Thompson also offered his appreciation.

ACTION: Approval for Staff to Proceed with Application Process

Motion: Council Member Bunn
Second: Council Member Everett
Vote: Unanimous

e) Uniform Guidance Policy
Presenter: Robert McKie, Finance Director

Mr. McKie provided information regarding a policy that would allow us to incorporate the Uniform Guidance Policy into our own policies. He shared details regarding the different policies based on the type of project.

Council Member Grannis asked how often we run into Sole Source procurements. Mr. McKie replied historically, not a significant amount of federal but a decent amount of local.

Council Member Holder asked if this would save the town any money. Mr. McKie stated he did not believe it would not.

ACTION: Adoption of Resolution #2021-03

Motion: Council Member Grannis
Second: Council Member Holder
Vote: Unanimous

f) **MWBE Policy Update**
Presenter: **Rich Cappola, Deputy Town Manager**

Mr. Cappola stated this is an update to our MWBE (Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprise) policy regarding minority business participation.

Council Member Everett asked why the goal is to only revisit this every 5 years. Town Attorney stated it is a federal standard. Council Member Everett asked if we could increase this. Town Attorney stated he was not aware of any reason why we could not. Council Member Grannis asked about 10-day window frame regarding sub-contractor opportunities. Mr. Cappola stated this is very limited to one type of procurement, which is very rare. Mr. Solomon stated these types of projects are usually very widely known and a 10-day time frame is very appropriate. Council Member Grannis read concerns from a citizen, Ms. Mosley, regarding the 10% and the question/concern of the citizen was previously addressed in that the percentage amount is a federal guideline. The second question from Ms. Mosley was if there were inclusion efforts set for projects with bids below the monetary threshold, Mr. Cappola stated there are efforts to promote and advertise. This policy update will formalize more and make it easier to include. For smaller jobs, there is a self-performed caveat, for smaller jobs some of the contractors are able to complete all tasks within that project. There is an allowance for them to be able to perform those jobs without having to include others.

Council Member Holder asked how percentages were measured. Mr. Cappola stated that information is included on the application and he could go back and pull some history. Council Member Grannis stated he appreciates of all the work on this.

ACTION: Adoption of Resolution #2021-04

Motion: Council Member Grannis
Second: Mayor Pro Tem Thompson
Vote: Unanimous

g) **Title 6 - Non Discrimination Policy**
Pre*senter:* **Rich Cappola, Deputy Town Manager**

Mr. Cappola stated this is an update to current procurement policies. The NCDOT's Office of Civil Rights is requiring that all municipalities enact a formal Title VI Policy which states that no person, based on race, color or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. Additional categories of protection have been enacted including sex, sexual orientation, low-income, limited English proficiency, age, disability and religion/creed.

ACTION: Adoption of Resolution #2021-05

Motion: Council Member Everett

Second: Council Member Bunn
Vote: Unanimous

h) COVID-19 Update

- Parks & Recreation Department and Library

Presenter: JD Solomon, Town Manager

Mr. Solomon and Ms. Garretson provided information regarding COVID Update. Both Parks & Recreation and the Library would like to begin to open again, possibly as soon as February 15. Ms. Garretson provided information regarding municipalities that are now open as well as those that are still closed. She stated this fluctuates greatly. She stated many towns do not share on their websites information regarding Precautions in Place. Also shared was neighboring Library openings. Libraries currently open are Harnett, Lee, Fuquay-Varina and Wake Forest. Of the 35 public library systems surveyed statewide; 9 remain closed, 22 are open with limited hours/reduced capacity, and 4 are fully open with regular hours.

Library Reopening Plan:
Library opening procedures could include: daily temperature check for staff with sign in attestation, no temperature check for patrons, patron signage/checklist and open limited capacity and hours. Masks and social distancing required.

Parks & Recreation Opening Plan:
Parks & Recreation opening procedures could include offering some classes, opening the walking track, modified and/or reduced capacity for open gym, spring sports to begin April 10, and allowance of facility rentals and holding of tournaments.

Mr. Solomon stated this was for information only and we would continue to gather information. We have had limited clusters and he felt it was due heavily to the fact that our facilities have been closed. He further stated we don't want to be the lead and it would be best to open on a 30-60 day basis and go from there. He stated there are no easy answers. The intent is for a phased plan opening. Council Member Holder feels opening prematurely is a big mistake. Council Member Grannis shared his concerns. Ms. Garretson stated new advice is that the virus is not transmitted via surfaces but rather is an airborne virus. She further stated all books are being disinfected.

Mayor McLeod stated he has not been getting pressed and was wondering where this was coming from. Ms. Garretson stated patrons ask constantly when the Library will re-open. She further stated that Mr. Barnard is also being asked from residents.

9 STAFF REPORTS

a) Town Manager

Mr. Solomon spoke about our community being safe and of being very proud of our police department. He wanted to ensure as we move forward in the next few weeks that it is understood what a great job our officers are doing. He stated Acting Chief of Police Greg Tart has done a great job and has helped us through some tough times. He showed a portion of the report that has been received from the outside investigation. There is a 400-page summary with an additional 1500 pages of exhibits and testimony. He stated receipt of this report is the first step and we will now do an internal review which may trigger some smaller investigations. We are estimating the timeframe to be 30-60 days. He stated there is only a limited amount of information that can be released and reminded everyone is entitled to privacy due to personnel protection. He stated he was disheartened by what he has read in the report. He stated there is a SBI criminal investigation going on as well. He stated he will not kick this down the road and will get this right with the assistance of Chief Tart. He further stated there were many positive comments about Clayton in general and a mutual belief of goodness of fellow police officers.

Mayor McLeod confirmed where we are in the process in that staff would now go through the reports and if required get clarification. Mr. Solomon stated yes staff along with Town Attorney would move forward. Mayor McLeod asked what would occur following that. Mr. Solomon stated a final report would be provided once all the above was complete. Mayor McLeod thanked Mr. Solomon for the clarification.

Mr. Solomon shared his priorities for 2021 as follows:

1. Police Department
2. Relationship with Fire and Police Departments
3. Healing of the Fire Department
4. Policies in General
5. Personnel Policies
6. Contract Management
7. Capital Program
8. AMI Program
9. Parks & Recreation Bond Program
10. IT Contract
11. Town Owned Facilities Maintenance
12. Water Sewer Master Plan
13. Two Mega Projects Coming Before Council Shortly
14. Development Agreements
15. Staffing

He stated we will get back to our roots. He stated the house that Steve Biggs built would get back to its foundation. He discussed re-establishing open communication and the need to have realistic plans. He discussed being responsive to the community. He stated it doesn't mean citizens would get all they want, but they would know where we stand. He stated Clayton deserves to have the best and the town will do what is required to be on the right and best road. He stated he came back because he loves Clayton. He stated the problems were bigger than they needed to be. He stated 2021 will be a year of

challenges, and while they may take a toll personally it will always be what is best for Clayton to continue that Clayton is a great place to live and work.

b) Town Attorney

Town Attorney stated he was happy to be here this evening.

c) Town Clerk

d) Other Staff

- DDA Update

Presenter: Jennifer Gallimore, Economic Development Specialist

Ms. Gallimore provided an update regarding the DDA Advisory Board. She shared highlights of the past year which included the installation of Historic District Signage, relaunch of Advocates Program, reestablished safe Meet-up spot for e-commerce exchanges in Downtown, and created a Joint Greenway Committee with Recreation Advisory Board.

There was discussion on "Downtown Days" Promotion, Small Business Saturday(s), Next Generation Apparel 'Shop Local' fundraising campaign, Christmas Tree Lighting & Storefront Decorating Contest, Annual Awards, and Social Media growth.

Council Member Grannis offered thanks for all the hard work. Council Member Bunn also offered his appreciation.

10 OTHER BUSINESS

a) Informal Discussion & Public Comment

Mr. Edwin Aldridge, Clayton citizen who serves on Fire Advisory Board, JC Economic Development Board and is also a member of the church board was present. He offered his support of Mr. Solomon as Town Manager. He asked that we all unite for the betterment of the town.

Ms. Shirley Kelly, stated she is a mother, wife and professional and citizen of Clayton. She shared her concerns that she had been hired for a full-time job in Johnston County as a teacher. She shared her pride about her children and their accomplishments in school. She stated they were in the 2nd grade when they moved to Riverwood and are now students at Hampton University. She stated she feels as she had been silent for too long. She was concerned about the process and hiring of the Town Manager. She was concerned that based on her research, Mr. Solomon does not live in the ETJ. She again stated she wanted policy and procedure be followed. She offered her appreciation for being allowed to share her thoughts.

Ms. Torciano shared her concerns regarding Second Street parking and concerns with church pick up. She would like to see at least two car lengths on the corners for safety and vision concerns. She would like to see some parking allowed in the designated loading zone, since school is only in part of the day. She stated she was not able to hear the live stream of the meeting

clearly while waiting in the lobby. Mr. Solomon stated this is a temporary situation with regard to the loading zone and it begins 30' from curb. She stated this could be enforced by the Police Department. Mr. Solomon agreed and stated this was the best compromise at this time and it will be evaluated as we move along in the process.

Mr. Sims was present and stated he has been a citizen of Clayton since 2000. He provided his background which included being a marine, senior account executive with Pepsi and supervisor of a Walmart store. Additionally, he has served on numerous volunteer boards. He shared his concerns of perception to the public. He further stated a process should have been followed with regard to the hiring of Mr. Solomon. He shared his concerns about changing an Ordinance to fit the person rather than the person fitting the Ordinance. He wished Mr. Solomon the best and offered his thanks for being allowed to speak.

Mr. Barry Woodard, lifelong citizen of Clayton was present. He offered his thanks to Mr. Sims. He shared a bit of history regarding Steve Biggs and stated he was a visionary. He stated he made some tough decisions and everyone worked together. He stated folks want to be part of Clayton. He stated that the future of Clayton is so important and we are growing based on the sacrifices of many folks. He stated Clayton is a diverse group of people that have worked here their whole lives, those who moved here and business stakeholders. He stated he was here to support Mr. Solomon and felt we needed to move forward together.

Additionally public comments received by citizens were read into the record by Town Clerk Moffett. Those comments are made part of the official record and are attached to the minutes.

b) Council Comments

Council Member Everett stated this was not a political stunt but rather he wanted to see the process go through. He stated this was due to perception. He stated outside looking in looks sketchy, he is not saying it is sketchy, but it looks sketchy.

He further stated he had been present at 100% of all meetings and feels there was time for transparent conversations. He shared his concerns about the letter to the JoCo Report. He stated he did not understand why a special meeting needed to be held, when at a previous closed session decisions were made and then changed. He asked that constructive criticism be shared with him directly.

Council Member Holder stated he wished to clear the air. He stated that when a closed session was held regarding Mr. Solomon, it was apparent that the majority wanted him to be permanent town manager, however, several wanted him to go through the full process. He stated there was no secret meeting, all conversations took place one on one. There was a vote of 4-1 in favoring of appointment Mr. Solomon as the Town Manager. He further stated that no change had been made to the Ordinance regarding residency. He stated he

believed there was a definite need for Mr. Solomon to come into the town limits. He stated he felt strongly the decision made was the right one.

Council Member Everett stated just because you can do something doesn't mean you should. He stated after today we will move forward. His concern is appearance and money spent.

Council Member Holder stated the figure of $18,000 keeps getting thrown around, however, the final amount is $15,000.

Mayor Pro Tem Thompson stated there had been a lot of conversation these past few weeks regarding transparency. He stated upon reflection he felt we could have done better. His issue/concern was an accusation of secret meeting. He stated he should have rebutted it at that time. He stated that he felt we were facing an emergency and that is why he felt confident with the appointment Mr. Solomon. He provided details regarding his concerns to include that for past 3 years they have been asking for certain specific information that was never provided by the previous manager. Concerns that needed to be addressed included the over budget AMI project, water amounts, tax bond was sitting still, there was no plan for aging facilities. He stated since his appointment Mr. Solomon has provided updates and information on all these items. He further stated that we have used a search firm for three (3) executive positions and of those, two (2) are no longer with the town. He stated his perception is that Mr. Solomon has accomplished more in a few months than what was accomplished in years with the previous town manager. He stated the concerns were we couldn't hit pause on the process of moving forward, as well as the risk of running out of water. He stated taking the time of getting someone new up to date and the bond sitting doing nothing, to name a few just wasn't something we could do. He stated he has heard clearly that residents want more transparency and he is in agreement.

Mayor McLeod offered his thanks to the citizens for the tremendous amount of support shown to him over the last two weeks. He stated it is extremely humbling and he would keep an eye on the prize of what is best for the town of Clayton. He stated a good mayor should always know the pulse of the community. He wanted to clarify the letter written to JoCo report, specifically that Mayor did not call for a special meeting and council is aware that the mayor is not the only one who can call a special meeting. Further he clarified that the mayor does not set the agenda that is handled by the staff. Council members have the ability to add and/or remove anything from the agenda. He stated we do have to move forward. His concern is the job was given to Mr. Solomon without benefit of details being worked out to include, salary, vacation days and residency requirements. Mayor McLeod stated he knows Mr. Solomon is going to be a good manager but still felt strongly that should have applied for the job and followed the process. He thanked all council members for their service.

11 ADJOURNMENT

a) Adjourn the meeting

With there being nothing further, the meeting was adjourned at 9:17 p.m.

ACTION: Motion to Adjourn

Motion: Mayor Pro Tem Thompson
Second: Council Member Everett
Vote: Unanimous

Duly adopted this the 15th day of February, 2021 while in regular session.

Jody L. McLeod
Mayor

ATTEST:

Kimberly A. Moffett, CMC, NCCMC
Town Clerk

TOWN OF CLAYTON
INCORPORATED
APRIL 1869
CLAYTON, N.C.

Public Comment #1

Kimberly Moffett

From: Jon Christiano <j.christiano@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 07, 2021 8:12 AM
To: Kimberly Moffett
Subject: Fw: Town Manager

Be Advised: **This email originated from outside of the Town of Clayton's network. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.**

Good morning. I would like the comments I submitted below to be read aloud during public comment at the next meeting, please.

Sincerely,

Jon Christiano

From: Mayor <Mayor@townofclaytonnc.org>
Sent: Thursday, January 7, 2021 7:46 AM
To: Jon Christiano <j.christiano@hotmail.com>
Subject: Re: Town Manager

Jon,
Thank you for your email.
If you would like for it to be read aloud during public comment at out next meeting and become apart of the minutes please forward your request to the town clerk
kmoffett@townofclaytonnc.org

Thank you again for sharing your thoughts. I appreciate you.

Sincerely
Jody McLeod
Mayor Town of Clayton NC

Sent from my iPhone

On Jan 6, 2021, at 9:27 AM, Jon Christiano <j.christiano@hotmail.com> wrote:

Be Advised: **This email originated from outside of the Town of Clayton's network. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.**

I would like to see an objective and professional process followed in the selection of the Town Manager. The motions to appoint Mr Solomon outside of that process seems both

opportunistic and privileged. If he wants the job, he should have applied and been considered on his merits along with other candidates.

Regarding the residency requirement for the Town Manager, this absolutely must remain as a condition of employment. I do not want anyone managing our community who is not subject to the consequences of their actions as a resident. This idea also reeks of favoritism, exposing a conflict of interest on the part of the person(s) making the motion.

Sincerely,

Jon Christiano
213 Mantle Dr
Clayton, NC 27527
508-353-7867

Public Comen #2

Good evening Town Council,

I am making these comments as a concerned resident of Downtown Clayton.

Before I begin my points, I would like to thank Ms. Moffett for reading my comments. I am unable to attend Council meetings in person and I appreciate this opportunity for my concerns to be read during the "Public Comments" portion of the Council meeting.

My points and concerns are as follows -

1. The Hiring of JD Solomon as Town Manager

As all of you are well aware, there has been quite a stir surrounding the abrupt removal of Adam Lindsay, the "whys," his severance, and his legacy. Citizens of Clayton voiced their opinions on this last year and also voiced their opinions on the salary of, then, Interim Town Manager Solomon. $24,000 per month is a steep, uncommon, and grotesque salary for anyone working for a Town of this size. On Monday, January 4, 2021, it was decided with a 4 to 1 vote that Mr. Solomon would be made the new Town Manager, with a salary of $196,000.

a. Will the $24,000 Mr. Solomon has been given per month be taken out of his total salary of $196,000 since he up and decided he wanted the job last minute, or will Town citizens be paying this on top of his payments as Interim Town Manager?
b. The decision to hire him as you did is a disgrace, plain and simple. With the controversy surrounding this decision, the Town should have followed the rules and laws to the letter, leaving no stone unturned and leaving no space for doubt among Town of Clayton residents or staff. Instead, you chose to hand him the job. You have forever sullied his reputation or even the belief in his true possibilities or his qualifications. Which leads to point number two.

2. Illegal Meeting of Some Members of Town Council

G.S. 143-318 and G.S. 153A-40 in NC Law have very specific rules in regards to how Council can call different types of meetings - from your regular meetings, to emergency meetings, to closed sessions.

a. *I would like to request to know when an illegal meeting was held that excluded Councilman Everett and Mayor McLeod* to discuss the hiring of Mr. JD Solomon. **Please do explain.**

3. Request for Repayment of $18,000 firm fee - to be repayed by Council members Bunn, Thompson, Holder and Grannis

I am requesting that the four of you split the cost of the firm fee to find a new Town Manager and that it be docked from the money you receive from the Town to serve on Council. That is $4,500 per member.

4. Former Chief of Police, Mr. Blair Myhand

Town citizens have been practically begging to know exactly what happened with Chief Myhand and Council has provided no answers. A week or so ago, Mr. Myhand spoke in his own words in the Hendersonvile Lightning regarding his bid to become their next Chief of Police. He has since been made their new Chief of Police.

a. I would like to request an answer from Town Council given the words he said about a baseless and fruitless investigation against him.

b. I would also like to know when it was decided that the Chief of Police is expected to subjugate himself to members of Town Council and Town staff when his clear job is to be a public servant, run his law enforcement agency, and lead good officers? Last time I checked, Chief of Police is loyal to his citizens, not obscene bureaucracy or the bloated egos of Council members or Town staff. Chief Myhand had a stellar reputation in this community, on all sides.

c. I would also like to know the cost of this investigation and which budget line sets aside money for this investigation?

5. Changing the Town Ordinance that requires Town Manager live here

The Town Ordinance 31.03 states "At the time of his appointment he need not be a resident of the town or state, but during his tenure of office he shall reside within the town." Discussion was had in regards to changing the Town ordinance because Mr. Solomon does not live in Clayton. I believe changing this law to suit a Town staff member sets a very negative precedent for the future of Town decisions and I believe the law should absolutely stand and Mr. Solomon should be required to move here. If he does not do so, he should be removed.

6. Decorum of Council meetings

I feel it necessary to issue a reminder that Town Council is a non-partisan entity. When we vote for you, we put aside party lines and politics for the good of the Town.

a. I am requesting that Town Manager JD Solomon be reminded of this fact. Every meeting, he finds some way to make political comments that are not only unprofessional, they are inappropriate. I am well aware he is the former head of the Johnston County Republican Party, but he is now Town Manager and his political comments have NO place in Council meetings.

7. Outreach Plan and Guidelines For Recruitment and Selection of Minority Businesses

a. How was this 10% determined?
b. What are the statistical data points that support offering an insulting low 10% to minority owned businesses?
c. For Town jobs that fall below the specific monetary threshold, what percentage of those are given to minority owned businesses.

An equal share would have been a guarantee of 50%.

"If you remember, we about ran out of water."

That quote, made by Interim Town Manager Solomon, is from the last Town Council meeting on Monday, January 4, 2021 (time stamp 2:17:42)

a. Are you referencing drinking water or waste water?
b. This is not the first time it has been said by Mr. Solomon, so I am wondering why no one is questioning such a serious statement in regards to the Town's resources?
c. If the Town is at a vital capacity for water, why does the Town continue to approve residential development (other than the obvious desire for the "millions" you'll make off of it).
d. In Chapter 54 in Clayton Town Ordinances the Town Manager, at his own will, is permitted to adjust rates if there is deemed to be a water shortage or emergency. Knowing this, I am incredibly worried about the overdevelopment of the Town and the stress on our infrastructure, and then knowing that due to the Town's unchecked growth that rates can be raised for a problem residents are not causing. Greed is what is causing these problems.

In closing, I want to say that the actions of some elected officials recently are not only deplorable, they are inexcusable. You are elected officials who sit where you do because you Clayton citizens cast ballots entrusting you with their homes, their families, and their tax funds. I find it a shame to listen to Town staff and Town elected officials **brag** about the financial growth this Town is having while lines at churches for food have doubled and tripled and families are struggling to pay their bills during this Pandemic. I find it a shame to listen to Town staff and Town elected officials **brag** about this financial growth while later questioning if you can even support the hard working Town staff who end up with Covid and need time off - worrying about revenue vs. cost. While you pay the Interim Town Manager $24,000 per month, you paid a firm to find a new manager $19,000, paid an undisclosed amount to have the Chief of Police "investigated," while you approved a grotesque salary of $196,000 to the Interim Town Manager when he becomes Town Manager, and while you paid the former Town Manager a severance package of a full year's salary. I am astounded by the blatant disregard for even taxpayer funds, especially considering the median salary of most of the families who call Clayton home.

May you do better.

To Councilman Everett and to Mayor McLeod - I publicly apologize on behalf of your fellow Council members for the disrespect you were given. You are both doing your jobs as you were elected to do them and I appreciate you.

Thank you, again, to Ms. Moffett for reading my words and for the time given for Public Comment.

Candice Mosley Russell
Downtown Clayton Resident