



The Town of Sandyfield's Monthly Meeting Minutes

August 18, 2026

The regular meeting of the Town of Sandyfield was held at Sandyfield Town Hall. The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. on August 18th, 2026.

The following Councilmembers' were present:

Perry Dixon
Randolph Keaton
Leonard Hall
Azalie Graham

A motion for approval of the consent agenda was made by Councilman Leonard Hall and it was properly seconded by Councilman Perry Dixon. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

Abby Nmashie, the new UNC School of Government Lead for North Carolina Fellow introduced herself to councilmembers.

Old Business

None

New Business

- a. Mayor Garry Keaton opened the meeting requesting a motion to adopt Budget Amendment Ordinance – **0-2026-63**. Mayor Garry Keaton explained that the Town would initially pay for water customer connections, with the costs to be reimbursed by the two customers once the connections are completed. Because the funds were not included in the current budget, a budget ordinance amendment was required. A motion to adopt the amendment was made by Councilman Leonard Hall, and it was properly seconded by Councilman Perry Dixon. The motion passed unanimously.

- b. Mayor Garry Keaton opened the floor for approval of the Auditor's Contract with S. Preston Douglas. The mayor stated that the auditing firm has consistently performed satisfactory audits with no issues or questions from the LGC. The proposed contract fee is \$7,950, the same as last year's fee, and is within the approved budget. Councilman Perry Dixon confirmed the amount was in line with the budget. A motion to approve the contract was made by Councilman Leonard Hall, and it was properly seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Joseph Brown. The motion passed unanimously.
- c. Mayor Garry Keaton opened the floor requesting a motion to approve the Town's increase of the water rate fee. Mayor Keaton explained that the bulk water rate increased by \$0.20, resulting in bulk water costs for the Town increasing monthly. He stated that the Town must increase its water rates to keep pace with rising costs and maintain operations, noting that Sandyfield's rates remain lower than those of surrounding municipalities.

Councilman Randolph Keaton discussed the proposed increase, including the relationship between the flat rate and water usage, potential impacts of drought and circumstances outside residents' control, and the importance of clearly communicating the reason for the increase to residents and being transparent.

Councilman Perry Dixon supported a water rate increase but expressed that a \$2 increase would be sufficient rather than a \$3 increase. Mayor Keaton stated that the Board could determine the appropriate amount and noted that an increase would help offset the Town's rising water costs. Councilman Leonard Hall emphasized the need to balance the Town's costs with the revenue generated from water sales.

After discussion with Council, a motion to increase the base rate by \$3.00 effective October 1, 2026, was made by Councilman Perry Dixon and it was properly seconded by Councilman Leonard Hall.

- d. Mayor Garry Keaton opened the floor requesting approval of the Town implementing working meetings again. Mayor Garry Keaton stated that there are concerns about returning to working meetings so residents can attend and participate in discussions, while regular Town Hall meetings would primarily be used for voting. Councilman Perry Dixon asked when the working meetings would be held, and the mayor stated that they would take place on the Thursday preceding the third Tuesday of each month (regular council meetings.) Councilmen Perry Dixon and Leonard Hall agreed that the working meetings were needed. Councilman Randolph Keaton asked what the meetings would consist of, and Mayor Garry Keaton explained that they would be informal meetings strictly for discussion. A motion to bring back working

meetings was made by Councilman Leonard Hall and he moved to hold the working meetings at 7:00 p.m. on the Thursday preceding the third Tuesday of each month, and it was properly seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Joseph Brown. The motion passed unanimously.

- e. Mayor Garry Keaton opened the floor requesting approval for new Town meeting time. The mayor raised a concern regarding the current 7:00 p.m. Town Hall meeting time and proposed moving the meeting to an earlier time, such as 6:00 or 6:30 p.m. Following discussion, A motion to change the Town Hall meeting time to 6:00 p.m. effective September was made by Councilman Leonard Hall, and was properly seconded by Councilwoman Azalie Graham. The motion passed unanimously.

Councilman Perry Dixon also moved to change the working meeting time to 6:00 p.m. instead of 7:00 p.m, and it was properly seconded by Councilman Leonard Hall. The motion passed unanimously.

- f. Mayor Garry Keaton opened the floor with a discussion of the need to hire a Deputy Town Clerk. Claudia Bray provided information regarding advertising the position, as well as potential options through the Senior Aide Program and Temp Agency. Councilman Perry Dixon expressed interest in considering all available options for filling the position. The mayor noted that the Town's personnel policy, including hiring procedures, is currently being developed.

Cul-de-Sac on Andrews Drive: The Mayor reported receiving a call from an engineer with Columbus County DOT regarding a cul-de-sac off Andrews Drive and whether the Town would consider adopting it. The mayor stated that the Town would not incur any construction costs because the road is already paved from Highway 87 to the cul-de-sac. The mayor noted that the Town is not required to adopt the road; however, once adopted, the Town would be responsible for maintaining it and could not return responsibility to the County.

Reports

- a. Ms. Selma Keaton reported that the Parks and Recreation Committee has 12 members; however, some members are no longer active due to age and other circumstances. She requested that all Councilmembers' make Town Hall Day a priority and emphasized the need for additional attention to event setup and cleanup, with setup beginning at 8:00 a.m. She also encouraged additional resident volunteers. Ms. Keaton reported that the Tiny Library project should be completed following Town Hall Day. Final adjustments to the park sign are expected to be completed within the next month or so after Town Hall Day. She also discussed potential upcoming events, including additional movie nights,

with a tentative date of October 3, and a potential community yard sale on October 31.

- b. Councilman Randolph Keaton turned the floor over to Abby Nmashie to provide an update on the Planning Board. Abby provided updates on her current projects and ongoing work. She also reported that the Planning Board will work with Cape Fear Council of Governments member Daniel Adams on a text amendment to the Town's zoning ordinance related to H162, with a meeting anticipated in September.

With no further business or persons to be heard, the meeting was adjourned at 8:22 p.m. A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Councilwoman Azalie Graham and it was properly seconded by Councilman Perry Dixon. The motion passed unanimously.

Garry Keaton, Mayor

Attest:

Claudia A. Bray, Town Clerk, NCCMC, CMC