

Minutes of Meeting

June 15, 2026

6:00 p.m.

The regular meeting of the Old Fort Board of Aldermen was held in the Board Room located in Town Hall on June 15, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.

Governing Board Members present: Mayor Protem Iretha Hancock, Aldermen Wayne Stafford, Alderman Melvin Lytle, and Alderman Erin Adams. Absent: Alderman James Grindstaff

Visitors: See attached sign in sheet

Meeting was opened by: Mayor Protem Iretha Hancock

Prayer: Opening prayer was led by Alderman Wayne Stafford

Pledge of Allegiance: Alderman Melvin Lytle led the pledge of allegiance

Approve the Minutes:

Alderman Wayne Stafford made the motion to approve the prior month's minutes. The motion was seconded by Alderman Melvin Lytle and approved 4 – 0 vote.

Public Comments:

Marcella Calloway was present to discuss the dog park and how she and a few friends would like to volunteer their help. Ann George with the Beautification Committee has been meeting with the Fonta Flora Friends team and let Ms. Calloway know there is some funding available through their organization that could help with creating shade for the dogs and providing water for them as well. Carrie Lofits and Janet Felton also spoke to the Board on the same concerns for the dog park. Ms. Felton expressed her concern about mowing being needed where the asphalt is being pushed up and the bathrooms not being accessible for visitors. Ann told the ladies she would be glad to meet with them after the meeting and discuss these issues.

Becky Johnson addressed the Board about the water leak on South Church St on the side of the Post office which drains down on the property for her business. The leak is scheduled to be fixed at the latter part of this week by Chonzie, Inc. Becky inquired about possibly putting up a sign for "no trucks" on that street. It has been a continuous problem with the trucks causing damage to the corner of her property.

Mason Black with the Old Fort Library stated that over 200 people came by during the Trails and Trains event. The library has lots of kids and adult programs for the months of June and July. Friends of the library are back as a group (flier attached for upcoming events).

Cathy Moore gave updates on the 250 Committee. She also gave updates on the turnout for the Depot during the Trails and Trains event (see attachment).

Ann George with the Beautification Committee brought some stickers she has designed to hand out for fund raisers. They will be placed in businesses to ask for donations. The Committee will be meeting on Wednesday at 5:30 p.m. at the dog park and on Saturday, June 20th at 8:00 a.m. for cleanup and weeding around town.

New Business:

Alderman Melvin Lytle made the motion to accept the quote for painting at the Depot by Bioview Solutions LLC (attached to the minutes). The motion was seconded by Alderman Erin Adams and approved 4 – 0 vote.

Alderman Wayne Stafford made the motion to open the Public Hearing for the 2026-2027 budget. The motion was seconded by Alderman Iretha Hancock and approved 4 – 0 vote.

There is a proposed increase in the water/sewer rates in the amount of 10%, of which 5% would be implemented as of July 1st til December 31st. The additional 5% would be implemented as of January 1st until June 30th. There has not been a rate increase for the water/sewer in the past 4 years.

There is also a proposed tax rate increase of .08/cents, an increase from .42 to .50/per \$100. There has not been a rate increase for the taxes in 3 years.

Alderman Melvin Lytle made the motion to close the Public Hearing. The motion was seconded by Alderman Iretha Hancock and approved 4 – 0 vote.

Alderman Wayne Stafford made the motion to adopt the proposed budget with both increases to water/sewer and taxes. The 2026-2027 budget is in the amount of \$2,015,500.00. The motion was seconded by Alderman Erin Adams and approved 4 – 0 vote.

Alderman Erin Adams made the motion to write off the 2014 taxes in the amount of \$549.64 (attached). The motion was seconded by Alderman Wayne Stafford and approved 4 – 0 vote.

Alderman Erin Adams made the motion to write off the delinquent water/sewer bills in the amount of \$6,994.01 (attached). The motion was seconded by Alderman Wayne Stafford and approved 4 – 0 vote.

Alderman Melvin Lytle made the motion to adopt the Capital Asset Policy (attached). The motion was seconded by Alderman Erin Adams and approved 4 – 0 vote.

Alderman Iretha Hancock made the motion to adopt the Enterprise Capital Project Ordinance for Helene Disaster Recovery (attached). The motion was seconded by Alderman Erin Adams and approved 4 – 0 vote.

Alderman Erin Adams wanted to discuss the possibility of not cancelling the July 4th Parade due to construction of Street Scape on Catawba Avenue. She asked if an alternate route can be considered. There were several comments and suggestions from different individuals, and it was finally decided the parade is back on with the lineup beginning at the Old Fort Finishing parking lot to S. Spring Street, right onto N. Railroad St, left onto S. Cemetery, left onto East Main St, left onto Catawba Avenue, left onto S. Railroad St and back to Old Fort Finishing parking lot. The lineup will be at 3:00 p.m. and parade will start at 4:00 p.m.

Old Business:

Alderman Wayne Stafford made the motion for monies left over from the SRF funding project on Catawba Avenue be transferred to the project for the new water tank on Highway 70. The motion was seconded by Alderman Melvin Lytle and approved 4 – 0 vote.

Alderman Wayne Stafford made the motion to go into Closed Session as permitted by NCGS 143-318.11. The motion was seconded by Alderman Erin Adams and approved 4 – 0 vote

Alderman Wayne Stafford made the motion to come out of closed session. The motion was seconded by Alderman Iretha Hancock and approved 4 – 0 vote.

Alderman Wayne Stafford made the motion to participate in the Rail/Passenger study, with the Town's part being \$40,000 to be paid out of Fund Balance. The motion was seconded by Alderman Iretha Hancock and approved 4 – 0 vote.

Alderman Wayne Stafford made the motion for the town to reimburse Clint and Ann George for their expense on their repairs to the water and sewer at the back of their buildings (attached). The motion was seconded by Alderman Iretha Hancock. The motion carried 3 – 1, Alderman Melvin Lytle opposed.

At 8:00 p.m., Alderman Wayne Stafford made the motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Alderman Melvin Lytle and approved 4 – 0 vote.

Mayor Protem, Town of Old Fort

Attest:

Renee 'Taylor, Town Administrator