



TOWN OF PRINCEVILLE
Special Call Meeting
October 30, 2022, 5:00PM
201 S Main Street, Princeville, NC 27886

Amid the COVID-19, the Board of Commissioners meeting will be open to 20 citizens, all other citizens can join via teleconference.

Board Present: Mayor Bobbie Jones, Mayor Pro-Tem Alvin Jones, Commissioner Linda Joyner, Commissioner JoeRoam Myrick, Commissioner Milton Bullock

Staff: Town Manager Glenda Knight, Town Clerk Jessica Rudd

- I. Call to Order and Roll Call (Mute phones please. Presider, please state the date for recording purposes)- Mayor**
- II. Invocation-Melvin Muhammed**
- III. Pledge of Allegiance-N/A**
- IV. Announcement (Read by Mayor Bobbie Jones)**
 - 1) Optum Serv is no longer providing services at Heritage Park, however testing is still available at Freedom Hill and Vidant walk in clinic.
 - 2) Next Farmer's Market October 29, 2022, from 10:00am-2:00pm
 - 3) Christmas Tree Lighting on Freedom Hill on November 27, 2022
 - 4) Princeville Christmas Parade on December 3, 3033, at 1:00 pm
 - 5) Application deadline for Princeville Yard Decoration Contest is December 2, 2022 for by noon
- V. Presentation**
 - 1) Sheriff Clee Atkinson or designee- Detective Joe Cofield from Edgecombe County Sheriffs Office stated his position has been rewarding yet frustrating by the things happening in the community and stated it is carrying over to the schools. He added the Sheriff's Department is going to need community support in the task to control violence and crime. Detective Cofield stated in the last couple of weeks there have been multiple shootings and what is happening is young men are running wild and instilling fear and intimidation in the community. He stated they arrested 4 individuals last week from the ages of 14-25 and stated they are carrying automatic weapons. He added the sheriff's department is working hard to get the guns off the street but it is a difficult task. He stated the young hybrid gangs are the most dangerous and are the ones committing the most crimes. He added it is trickling down to the middle and elementary schools. Detective Cofield stated the community needs to come together and decide enough is enough. He stated everything starts at home and it's time for adults to step up with more mentoring programs. Mr. Dunn chimed in and stated its going to take years and years to reverse the situations that's happening. He stated we have got to train these parents to do the right thing and be

responsible for these kids. He stated its nice for them to come to mentoring programs but he works better with the kids whose parents are involved. No further questions.

- 2) Dr. Jacquelin Shaw- She stated she is a mental health therapist and stated she was raised in Edgecombe County. She added she chose to work in the alternative school because of her passion for troubled youth. She added what she has discovered is that there are some mental health issues that could be fueling those negative behaviors. Dr. Shaw stated the human body is made up of 3 components; the body, the soul and the spirit. She added if we don't take care of all 3 components then things get out of whack. Sometimes mental illness can be biological (chemical imbalance) or environmental situations. When it comes to imbalances, children have to be taught to take care of themselves, physically and mentally. She added they are like sponges and will absorb whatever they see. Dr. Shaw stated we have to be careful of the examples set before them and need to teach them to be leaders and not followers. Dr. Shaw shared some statistics and stated a lot of mental health issues coupled with substance abuse is what causes some of the violence that's going on. She discussed intergenerational trauma and how that can contribute to violence as well. Dr. Shaw stated family therapy, conflict resolution training, and even sometimes medication can be used to help with metal illnesses. She stated resources such as Eastpointe can tell you all the mental health agencies in our region.
- 3) Reverend Richard Joyner- He stated he was going to speak about community grassroots strategies that they are trying to apply in the City of Rocky Mount and also using for Conetoe. Reverend Joyner stated they are trying make sure that what they are doing is community led and not institutional led. He stated at the City of Rocky Mount their goal is empowering and following the lead of their community and citizens. He mentioned they are working with community-based and faith-based organizations. He added they are here to serve the community and not blame them.
- 4) Melvin Muhammad- He stated that even though he doesn't reside in the community he still feels home. He has a passion, love, and desire for people in general. Mr. Muhammad quoted it is easier to build a strong child, than to repair a broken man. He stated he would like to share some ideas or solutions that would help the community. Mr. Muhammad stated it does not take a lot of money to get groups or organizations started. He stated if the community comes together, they can get things done. He stated he was always taught to do the work and the money will come. Mr. Muhammad gave examples of how they were able to get programs started. He stated if someone is trying to start an organization, they could reach out to the Town to hold meetings. He stated if you continue to do the work other entities will see and potentially give you what you ask for.

VI. Public Comments- (5 minutes)

- 1) Na'im Akbar stated he came tonight to make a commitment to right some of the wrongs in the community. He added he is affiliated with programs who work to heal people of their trauma and stress. He added he can give them tools and trainings to help them deal with themselves, the community, and their jobs. Mr. Akbar stated what comes to mind after hearing everyone speak is adverse childhood experiences. He stated things that happened to us when we were young, that were never resolved, comes back years later and affect us. He stated to come and see him if they would like to receive more information.

- 2) Maquetta Dickens stated she is back here in the community for a reason and a purpose and will fulfill her mission she is called to do. She stated she thinks this is a complex issue that will take time and intentional and strategic collaboration to influence long lasting change. Ms. Dickens stated while the recent shootings are tragic and painful to see, that is not the majority of our youth. She stated we must remember that the problem is systemic and we must align and come together as a people to break this cycle. She stated she is here today to talk to the Municipality about concerns she is hearing from the community. She added one was establishing a police department. She stated some of the ARPA funds could be used to establish this. She stated she knows that in order to sustain a police department, she knows they have to have funding and added a way to do that is to focus on increasing the tax base. She added she is here to support and work together towards a common goal.
- 3) Kendrick Ransome stated he is a farmer and Agricultural Director for Freedom Organization. He stated the youth are lacking the resources as well as having genuine guidance in all aspects of their lives. He added we need new innovative spaces for their programing, leaders who are direct with the vision of the community and cleaner food. Mr. Ransome stated Freedom Organization and Golden Organic Farms have constantly shown up for their community and will continue to do so. He asked are we really putting the blame on parenting, when parents don't have the resources they need. He stated its frustrating to come to these meetings and deal with the same context and no one is really doing anything. He stated these kids don't need to be medicated, in prisons and need to be on farms and gardens. He added they need grassroot organizations and community leaders to bridge the gap and create change.
- 4) Greg Higgs stated he was glad the board brought this meeting together and stated it took 2 killings to get this meeting but is glad it finally started. He added he loves the kids and enjoys being a mentor to them. Mr. Higgs stated the youth below 16 needs to have programs started to cater to them and someone should be searching for grant money to get these programs running. He also stated the Town needs a police department and shouldn't have to pay Edgecombe County to protect us when they get ready. He stated after 3 meetings, the Town should have something started.

VII. Board Comments- Commissioner Bullock stated he was born across the street 82 years ago and left in 1956. He stated his father told him, whatever you do, don't let them take the land and so he came back. He stated Princeville has been in a special place for a very long time and didn't have these issues because everyone worked together. He added parents aren't what they used to be and it is costing us. He suggested the Town have a curfew so these young kids can get off the streets. Commissioner Jones thanked everyone for coming and sharing their thoughts and comments on what is going on in the community. He stated he also thanked Mr. Akbar for his commitment to the Town of Princeville. Commissioner Jones gave a real life example and stated the Town doesn't want to do anything to take care of the symptoms but must get to the root cause of the problem. He added he has been looking for evidence based solutions and trying to figure out how to tailor them to fit the needs of Princeville. Commissioner Joyner thanked everyone for coming and stated it says that you definitely do have an interest in health of Princeville and surrounding areas. She stated she listened and everyone is pretty much saying the same thing. She added there are some things that's going to take some deep digging and some hard kicking to fix it. She stated they may not fix those that are directly

involved right now, but need to cut some things off at the core. She stated not one person has the answer but if we all come together and not accuse or criticize, then we are moving in the right direction. Mayor stated moving forward they will have another meeting, the last Sunday of next month at 5:00pm. He stated he talked briefly about each Municipality coming together as a sub committee to include 2 parents, 2 students, 1 elected official, 1 mental health professional, 1 member of law enforcement, 1 educator and 1 clergy. All working together to meet at a different time to come up with strategies and look for particular grants to bring to the full meeting next month. He added he will call the other Mayor's to see if they would work with him. He added we can make a difference if we all come together.

VIII. Adjournment- Commissioner Joyner motioned to adjourn the meeting, Commissioner Jones seconded. Vote caried 4-0.

Bobbie Jones 11/21/2022
Bobbie Jones, Mayor Date

Jessica Rudd 11-21-2022
Jessica Rudd, Clerk Date

