

Town of Mount Olive  
April 6, 2026  
Regular Board Meeting  
Minutes

Mayor Jerome Newton called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M. Those in attendance per roll call were Mayor Pro-Tempore Delreese Simmons, Commissioner Vicky Darden, Commissioner CJ Weaver, Commissioner Harlie Carmichael, Commissioner Gena Knode, Town Attorney Carroll Turner, Interim Town Manager Glenn Holland and Town Clerk/Administrative Assistant Sherry Davis.

Mayor Jerome Newton called the meeting to order and delivered the invocation and Commissioner Harlie Carmichael led us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Jerome Newton read the Conflict-of-Interest Statement; there were no conflicts.

Mayor Jerome Newton requested a motion to approve the published agenda. Commissioner CJ Weaver made the motion to approve. Commissioner Vicky Darden seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Jerome Newton then requested a motion to approve the March 2, 2026, meeting minutes. Commissioner Harlie Carmichael made the motion to approve. Commissioner Vicky Darden seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Jerome Newton opened the public forum.

Ms. Doris Yates of 702 South Church Street, Mount Olive, NC 28365, 919-299-4000. She wanted to thank the town for fixing the roads of Morning Drive and South Church Street though it took two years. She stated Morning Drive was the worst. There is a house there that has a car up on jacks. It is her understanding they have a month to correct it once cited. She suggested the town make some money by towing and selling these vehicles. She urged everyone to take pride in their neighborhood. She prays the mayor and the board can get along and leave their bickering at home.

Commissioner Harlie Carmichael of 319 Franklin Street, Mount Olive, NC 28365, 330-256-6079. He stated he had been on the board for a total of six years. There are certain people who want to see us fail. This is the resurrection season, and we can't do it alone. We all need to work together; he who is free of sin cast the first stone.

Mrs. Linda Boykin of 600 East Main Street, Mount Olive, NC 28365, 919-922-9364. She wanted to thank Interim Town Manager Glenn Holland for what he achieved. He has made streetlight and street improvements. Everything he has done we see the results.

Mayor Jerome Newton closed the public forum.

Public Hearing to Consider Four-Year Staggered Terms.

Mayor Jerome Newton requested a motion to go into public hearing. Commissioner CJ Weaver made the motion. Commissioner Harlie Carmichael seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Town Attorney Carroll Turner advised up until fifteen years ago that the General Assembly was the only way to make this change. Now it allows each municipality the option to amend their own charter. We are the only municipality in Wayne County that still has two-year terms. The Town has served four-year terms in the past but requested to go back to two years. Some feel two years is too short and four years gives better opportunity. This will not change the term of office for anyone here until the November 2027 election. At the May 4, 2026, meeting the board can approve the vote with out the public vote or referendum. If a referendum is requested that would have to be approved through the State Board of Elections. A special election would have to be requested but not before seventy days.

Town Attorney Carroll Turner advised the 2027 Election will be as follows: the mayor and the two board members who receive the least number of votes will continue to serve a two-year term until the 2029 Election. The three board members with the highest number of votes will begin their four-year terms after the 2027 Election.

Mayor Jerome Newton advised the audience, he would like to hear their thoughts. Ms. Annette Kirby asked if we are suggesting having all districts vote for all commissioners rather than the current format. Is that being considered in any way and would that mean commissioners would no longer have a district? Town Attorney Carroll Turner responded, not at this time. Currently we have the residential district system, and commissioners would still maintain their districts. On election day citizens could vote for all candidates. The candidate for each district would still be required to live in that district.

Ms. Annette Kirby said she would not be for that system because your citizens rely on the board of elections from where they live. Ms. Doris Yates stated she agrees with Ms. Annette Kirby.

Mayor Jerome Newton reminded everyone we want to discuss the four-year staggered terms. Mr. Don Fairman asked if there was a referendum the last time the board went to four-year terms and why was everyone against the four-year terms? Town Attorney Carroll Turner replied, there was no provision for a referendum at that time because it went through the General Assembly. He stated the citizens didn't like not voting every two years.

Ms. Mary Taylor thinks if the board goes to four-year terms then it should be placed on the ballot. Mr. Sam Diedrich with Goldsboro News Argus stated he did a story a few months ago and Commissioner Gena Messer Knode said there was a consensus to go to four-year terms. He asked who was the first person to bring it up? Commissioner CJ Weaver responded he doesn't think there was one person and that everyone already had this in their mind.

Ms. Tatetia Robinson thinks the people should make this decision not the board. If they are doing a good job they will be re-elected.

Mrs. Pernell Brickney does not agree with four-year terms.

Mrs. Linda Boykin stated with two-year terms the newly elected officials are just learning but at the same time, if you are doing a good job you will be re-elected.

Ms. Sam Jones advised it should stay as it is with two-year terms. Mr. Don Fairman asked Mayor Jerome Newton if he could request a show of hands.

Mayor Jerome Newton asked for a show of hands from people in favor of four-year terms. No one in the audience raised their hand. Everyone in the audience raised their hand to continue with two-year terms. There were approximately 50 people attending.

Mr. Ryan Fields thinks the question was who wishes for a referendum. Mayor Jerome Newton asked Town Attorney Carroll Turner how we do a referendum. Town Attorney Carroll Turner commented based on the show of hands, a referendum would fail. Mayor Jerome Newton wanted to know if there is anything that states the board can't choose to move forward with four-year staggered terms. Town Attorney Carroll Turner replied, no but even if the board approves the registered voters have thirty days to request one.

Ms. Tatetia Robinson commented four years is a long time to suffer with someone you are dissatisfied with.

Mayor Jerome Newton requested a motion to come out of public hearing. Commissioner CJ Weaver made the motion. Commissioner Vicky Darden seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Jerome Newton then discussed Action Memo - 03-35 – Consider the Matter of the Deed Transfer to Carver High School Alumni and Friends. Mayor Pro-Tempore Delreese Simmons asked Mayor Jerome Newton to recuse himself. Mayor Jerome Newton responded that he has contacted the North Carolina League of Municipalities and was advised he doesn't have a vote so there is no financial gain or conflict of interest. Mayor Pro-Tempore Delreese Simmons made a motion requesting Mayor Jerome Newton to recuse himself. Commissioner Harlie Carmichael seconded. Mayor Jerome Newton asked how one board of commissioner can decide that one organization but not the other is in violation of open meetings laws. He commented why was it voted on before the next meeting and why for one and not the other. Why is one commissioner so adamant about a deed, what do you stand to gain. Our most important obstacle right now is the moratorium.

Commissioner CJ Weaver advised in 2023 that all three deeds were signed over. At the February 2026 meeting the board of commissioners instructed Town Attorney Carroll Turner to work something out with ADLA, Inc.'s attorney but nothing was said about Carver High School Alumni and Friends, Inc. Mayor Jerome Newton explained ADLA, Inc had their attorney present and Mr. Bass was unable to speak because they said she was speaking for both organizations. Town Attorney Carroll Turner advised he was instructed by the board of commissioners to contact ADLA, Inc's attorney, to work something out. They discussed the new deed's reversionary clause possibly being reworded and adding a new clause. He emailed ADLA Inc's attorney and Mr. Danny King. He also sent an email to the board of commissioners and the mayor to review the draft and advise if it could be recorded. He received three separate responses but was unclear about what to do so he did nothing. One and a half weeks later Mr. Jamal Bass, Vice President of the National Chapter of Carver High School Alumni and Friends came to his office and asked to pick up the deed for Carver. One week after that Mr. Bass came back to his office asking for the deed again. Town Attorney Carroll Turner instructed him that he did not have a deed prepared as he had not been advised to. Mr. Jamal Bass stated he would contact Mayor Jerome Newton.

Mayor Jerome Newton requested a deed and Town Attorney Carroll Turner under the impression it had been approved by the board of commissioners presented the deed to Mayor Jerome Newton the following morning. Mayor Jerome Newton signed the deed and presented it to the Town Clerk for her to sign. After all the signatures were acquired, Town Attorney Carroll Turner filed the deed.

Commissioner Harlie Carmichael wanted to know why everyone is trying to make the mayor look bad. Commissioner CJ Weaver responded if he looks bad it's because he did something bad. We are legally required to ask him questions in an open meeting. Town Clerk Sherry Davis reminded everyone there was a motion on the floor with a second. Mayor Jerome Newton requested a vote regarding the motion that he recuse himself. The vote was 3-2 as follows and was not approved. Mayor Pro-Tempore Delreese Simmons voted yes, Commissioner Harlie Carmichael voted yes, Commissioner CJ Weaver voted no, Commissioner Vicky Darden voted no and Commissioner Gena Knode voted no.

Still on Action Memo – 03-35– Consider the Matter of the Deed Transfer to Carver High School Alumni and Friends. The board of commissioners is requesting the Carver Deed be returned to the Town and filed properly with no appearance of conflict of interest. Mayor Jerome Newton requested a motion. Commissioner Gena Knode made the motion. Commissioner CJ Weaver seconded and the motion passed 3-2 with Mayor Pro-Tempore Delreese Simmons voting yes and Commissioner Vicky Darden and Harlie Carmichael voting no.

Mayor Jerome Newton commented that Carver is on the south side and we should support it. Mayor Pro-Tempore Delreese Simmons responded, he was the one who fought to get Carver that deed. Mrs. Pernell Brickney asked then why take it away. Mayor Pro-Tempore Delreese Simmons explained there are things you don't know about and Mayor Jerome Newton is the president of Carver Alumni High School & Friends Association, Inc. He should have let Mayor Pro-Tempore Delreese Simmons sign it. He said who represents the south side? Mayor Pro-Tempore Delreese Simmons, Commissioner Harlie Carmichael and Commissioner Vicky Darden, not the mayor. He is just trying to make sure the deed is done the right way.

Mayor Jerome Newton then discussed Action-Memo - 03-36 – Consider Approval of Revising Office Hours Allowed for the Mayor from Monday-Friday 8:30 A.M. to 12:00 P.M. to Monday-Friday 8:00 A.M to 12:00 P.M. & 1:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M. Commissioner Harlie Carmichael made a motion to approve. Commissioner Vicky Darden seconded. Commissioner CJ Weaver asked Mayor Jerome Newton, upon your first election to office not the most recent election, did you view a personnel file in Town Hall and was it sealed. Also, is the file still on the Town Hall Complex. Mayor Jerome Newton responded, he does not recall and he is not saying anything else. Mayor Jerome Newton requesting a vote on Action-Memo 03-36 with a motion and a second on the floor. Commissioner Harlie Carmichael and Commissioner Vicky Darden voted yes. Mayor Pro-Tempore Delreese Simmons, Commissioner CJ Weaver and Commissioner Gena Knode voted no, and the motion failed to pass 3-2.

Mayor Jerome Newton then discussed Action-Memo – 03-37 - Consider Reducing Water Bill Late Fees from ten dollars to five dollars effective July 1, 2026. Commissioner Harlie Carmichael made a motion to approve. Commissioner Vicky Darden seconded. Mayor Pro-Tempore Delreese Simmons voted yes. Commissioner CJ Weaver and Commissioner Gena Knode voted no. The motion passed 3-2.

Mayor Jerome Newton then discussed Action-Memo – 03-38 - Consider Reducing Water Bill Reconnect from one hundred dollars to fifty dollars effective July 1, 2026. Commissioner Vicky Darden made a motion to approve. Commissioner Harlie Carmichael seconded. Mayor Pro-Tempore Delreese Simmons voted yes. Commissioner CJ Weaver and Commissioner Gena Knode voted no. The motion passed 3-2.

Mayor Jerome Newton then discussed 03-39 – Consider Approval of the Town Attorney Contract. Commissioner CJ Weaver made the motion to approve. Commissioner Gena Knode seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Jerome Newton then discussed 03-40 – Consider Approval of Recommendation for Award Regarding Demolition Contract & Modular Home Contract for the 2023 CDBG-NR Project. Mr. David Harris Grant Administrator advised AK Grading was the low bidder for the demolition work at 501 Steele Street coming in at \$9,950.00. He stated Eagles Homes was the low bidder for the modular replacement coming in at \$186,856.00. Commissioner CJ Weaver made the motion to approve. Commissioner Vicky Darden seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Jerome Newton then discussed 03-41– Consider Approval of Town Manager Contract. Commissioner CJ Weaver made the motion to approve. Commissioner Gena Knode seconded and the motion passed 5-0. Town Clerk Sherry Davis swore in Mr. Octavius Murphy who will officially start on Monday, April 20, 2026.

Mayor Jerome Newton then discussed 03-42 - Consider Approval of Harlie Carmichael and Gena Knode to Replace Tommy Brown and Barbara Konegay on the Fire Department's Firefighter Relief Fund Board. Commissioner CJ Weaver made the motion to approve. Commissioner Vicky Darden seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Jerome Newton then discussed 03-43 - Consider Approval of Purchase of a Standby Generator for the Fire Station in the Amount of \$68,744.00. Commissioner Gena Knode commented that this money is already in the budget. This was confirmed. Commissioner CJ Weaver made the motion to approve. Commissioner Harlie Carmichael seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Jerome Newton then discussed 03-44 – Consider Approval of Proclamation in Support of the North Carolina Pickle Festival. Commissioner Vicky Darden made the motion to approve. Commissioner CJ Weaver seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Jerome Newton then discussed 03-45 - Consider Approval of the Cancellation of a Deed of Trust on the House Located at 106 Kelly Street. Town Attorney Carroll Turner advised this deed of trust was filed thirty-four years ago under the rehabilitation program. The deed of trust was valid for six years and as long been expired. He is certain this was resolved and the current owner wants to sell the property. However, someone from the town will have to sign in order to do this. Town Attorney Carroll Turner needs the board's consent to cancel the deed of trust. Commissioner Gena Knode made a motion to approve. Commissioner CJ Weaver seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

#### **Town Manager's Report:**

#### **SEWER COLLECTIONS PROJECT**

Ralph Hodge Construction has completed sewer line repairs in the following areas Nelson Street from Oliver to South Johnson Street, East Main Street Between Elmore and Beems Street, the corner of Elmore Street to Cobb Street & South Johnson Street between East John Street to East James Street from East College to East James Street

**SEWER COLLECTIONS**

We are continuously getting CCTV footage of the sewer mains and storm drains to cut down on infiltration in the collection system. We have begun some of the point repair work that must be completed by July 31,2026. We expect to begin the remaining projects soon. Affected areas include Henderson and Breazeale Ave, South Breazeale Avenue by Carver Cultural Center, Tillman Street, and Dudley Street.

**Water Meter Replacement**

**For the safety of Vanguard Utilities staff and citizens, please do not enter the work area during meter installations. Please stay within twenty feet of the perimeter.**

The water meter change out project should be completed by the end of April 2026.

**WATER DISTRIBUTION**

For the month of March there have been a total of thirty-five water leaks, mostly due to new meters being installed and an aging water system with galvanized steel pipe. There were approximately six sewer backups as well. We called in an outside contractor for the service calls. The two-inch water main replacement on Elmore has been installed, and all customers have been connected to the new PVC line and the old, galvanized line abandoned.

The next project for a galvanized two-inch water main replacement will be behind the apartments Smith Chapel Road will also be replaced from Bert Martin Road to Crest Drive. A total of around 1,000 feet will be replaced in these areas.

When water leaks are reported they must be repaired due to the severity of the leak. These cause delayed response time to smaller leaks.

**WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANT**

Bowen Construction has begun the installation of sand filters and wet wells. The Town is trying to add installation of a new headworks replacement of a pump station for clarifier one. This must be approved by the state then the contractor. This will determine if the contractor has time to complete the extra work to meet the October 2026 deadline. If the additional work is approved, the Town will be eligible for extra funding.

**STREET LIGHT INSTALLATION**

East Main Street, East Maple Street — East Nelson Street, South Johnson Street, West Williamson Street and Elmore Street near the Intersection of Silver.

**STREET REPAIRS & DITCH WORK**

The Town has begun cleaning ditches in these areas, Nellie Street, Morning Drive, County Road and Franklin Street.

**COMMUNITY INFORMATIONAL MEETING**

Mount Olive Interim Town Manager Glenn Holland and Caroline Bari, Project Manager with the North Carolina Division of Water Infrastructure will be conducting a Non-Action Community Informational Meeting on Mount Olive's Special Order of Consent and Flow Moratorium at 10:00 AM and 6:30 PM on Tuesday, April 14, 2026, in the Board Meeting Room located at 114 East James Street, Mount Olive, NC. This meeting is for public information only and no official action will be taken. Citizens are encouraged to attend.

**Mayor & Commissioner Reports**

Commissioner Vicky Darden

- She thanked everyone for coming. She stated commissioners have people calling them at 3:00 A.M.
- She wished this board would put all the energy they use for fussing into working together.
- She advised Mayor Jerome Newton he was doing a good job. Sometimes it's hard to get through the storm.

Commissioner CJ Weaver

- He stated the UMO Ag Fest normally has about 2500 students show up and this year there was more than that and they had people from other states.

- He encouraged people to come to the Community Informational Meeting regarding the Special Order of Consent on April 14, 2026.
- He thanked Mayor Pro-Tempore Delreese Simmons for getting ADLA, Inc. and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes together.
- He reminded everyone that the North Carolina Pickle Festival is coming up soon.
- He welcomed Town Manager Octavius Murphy and said he was looking forward to his ninety-day plan.
- He enjoyed the Black History Parade.

Commissioner Gena Knode

- She wished everyone a happy and belated Easter.
- She updated everyone on the audit advising it will be turned in late.
- She advised the citizens that she understands the majority of them are opposed to four-year terms.
- She stated there is still a problem with trash pick up and recently there was a serious sewer back up.
- She attended a course last week.

Commissioner Harlie Carmichael

- He stated the Parks & Recreation Department has several programs for seniors such as monthly games, bingo & Zumba.
- He read the Fire Department and Public Works Reports and they work hard.
- He said the Ethics Training taught him closed session information cannot be shared.

Mayor Pro-Tempore Delreese Simmons

- He thanked everyone for coming out.
- He stated he did not like what was said in here. He asked ADLA, Inc. & the Fellowship of Christian Athletes to work together. They have a great contract because of him.
- He asked if everyone had noticed the work on the south side specifically district two. Of course, he fights because he loves his district and all the other districts. He and Commissioner Vicky Darden are the ones who have been fighting not the mayor.
- He thanked Interim Town Manager Glenn Holland for the ditch work and stated it is helping with the flooding.
- He commented that nobody ever said they wanted to take the deed away from Carver. He and Commissioner Vicky Darden fought in 2023 to get them the deed. He just wants the reversionary clause back and the mayor should not have signed.
- He said the mayor threatened to shoot him. The mayor tells people that he wants to be the mayor. He fought to get Mayor Jerome Newton in that seat.
- He will keep fighting for District Two.

Mayor Jerome Newton

- He said he is sorry if he offended anyone. We didn't have a plan and now we do. He asked Town Attorney Carroll Turner if the town lost any money or property. Town Attorney Carroll Turner responded no not that he is aware of. Except if Carver ceases to exist the property will revert to another 501 (c) (3) or the Town.
- He thanked everyone for coming. One town, one community and one Mount Olive. The key is how do we moved forward. If we continue on this current path, we stand the risk of the state coming in. We are a small town on a large radar. He does not want to see us taken over by the state. People are moving away and students are not coming back.
- He stated citizens have a voice. We are a council/manager form of government, so the mayor is basically ceremonial and presides over the meetings. He is appealing to everyone to work together and move forward.
- He congratulated our new Town Manager Octavius Murphy.

Mayor Jerome Newton advised he was going to allow Mr. Jamal Bass to speak. Mr. Jamal Bass said Carver wants to repair the buildings and keep the legacy alive. We need that deed signed ASAP to receive funding. We only have 30 days. Mayor Pro-Tempore Delreese Simmons asked if Carver was still partnering with ADLA, Inc. because he heard they were not. Mr. Jamal Bass replied you will be contacted in the morning. Mr. Jamal Bass stated his contact number is 910-977-2729.

Our next regular board meeting is Monday, May 4, 2026, at 6:00 P.M.

With there being no further business, Commissioner Vicky Darden made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner CJ Weaver seconded, and the motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Jerome Newton  
Mayor

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Sherry Davis  
Administrative Assistant/Town Clerk