

Town of Mount Olive
December 15, 2025
Special Called Board
Meeting Minutes

Mayor Jerome Newton called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. Those in attendance per roll call were Mayor Pro-Tempore Delreese Simmons, Commissioner C.J. Weaver, Commissioner Vicky Darden, Commissioner Harlie Carmichael, Commissioner Gena Knode, Town Attorney Carroll Turner and Town Clerk/Administrative Assistant Sherry Davis.

Mayor Jerome Newton delivered the invocation and Commissioner C.J. Weaver led us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Jerome Newton stated Interim Town Manager Glenn Holland was unable to be here tonight due to recent surgery.

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

Mayor Jerome Newton requested a motion to approve the published agenda. Mayor Pro-Tempore Delreese Simmons to add for discussion to authorize Interim Town Manager Glenn Holland the authority to purchase commercial water meters. Commissioner Harlie Carmichael made the motion to approve the amended agenda. Commissioner Vicky Darden seconded, and the motion passed 5-0 and Non-Action item 12-52 was added.

Mayor Jerome Newton then discussed Action Memo – 12-50 - Consider Approval of a Reduction in the Current Eight Percent Increase of Water Bill Rates. Mayor Jerome Newton advised we are not here today to reduce the rates but to discuss a standard rate because of the fluctuations in water bills. The purpose is to have a standard rate in place until the new water meters are installed. Commissioner Gena Knod wanted to know at what point did we decide it was okay to average and at what point did her current water meter stop working? She asked if the meter reader is still on payroll and how can she vote if she doesn't know the answers to these questions. She commented to Mayor Jerome Newton that he has been here for two years. Mayor Jerome Newton advised that they were not going where this comment was leading. Mayor Pro-Tempore Delreese Simmons stated this was before Mayor Jerome Newton was here. Commissioner Gena Knod said she is not sure, but someone has been around for the last twelve months. Mayor Pro-Tempore Delreese Simmons responded, you are attacking. Commissioner C.J. Weaver asked if he could have the floor. He stated you have a question on the floor and instead of guessing and spitting, he would like to make a motion to table this item. Commissioner Gena Knod seconded the motion. Mayor Pro-Tempore Delreese Simmons commented these meters are not coming anytime soon and now they are requesting a forty-five-day extension. Commissioner C.J. Weaver stated there is a motion on the floor, and it has been seconded. Mayor Jerome Newton requested a vote. The motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Jerome Newton said he spoke with McGill Engineer David Honeycutt regarding the extension and told him that was not in our vocabulary. The remaining meters are in Texas to be programmed, and the rest are in Greenville, North Carolina. He also spoke with Vanguard Utilities, and they advised him to speak with David Honeycutt.

Mayor Jerome Newton then discussed Action Memo – 12-51 - Consider Approval of a Reduction in the Current Seven Point Five Percent Property Tax Rates. Commissioner Harlie Carmichael wanted to know why we don't table this item since Action Memo 12-50 was tabled. Mayor Jerome Newton stated he spoke with Ms. Canada with the Local Government Commission. Mayor Pro-Tempore Delreese Simmons said we can't reduce the taxes in December, we have to wait until July 1, 2026. Mayor Jerome Newton explained the town did not offset the taxes due to the county's reevaluation like some towns did. We need to discuss this because we have spoken to citizens and the hardship it has created.

Commissioner Delreese Simmons suggested setting up a meeting. Mayor Jerome Newton advised if five commissioners meet then it is considered a public meeting. He suggested meeting with two commissioners at the time to review the rates. Or he could also include two citizens at a time to show good faith.

Town Attorney Carroll Turner commented that a budget is a balance between revenues and expenses. This is not legal advice, just common sense. Most municipalities reduced but we did not. He suggested reviewing this during the budget process with Interim Town Manager Glenn and staff. At that point we will either have to cut expenses or find additional revenues.

Commissioner C.J. Weaver said he has read about the tax neutral rate, and he likes the idea of a public forum. Commissioner Harlie Carmichael wanted to inform senior citizens with an income of less than twenty-six thousand dollars per year that they can apply with homestead relief to have their taxes reduced. Mayor Jerome Newton said there is nothing we can do at this time and requested a motion to table this item until further notice. Commissioner Vicky Darden made the motion to table. Commissioner Harlie Carmichael seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Jerome Newton then discussed Non-Action Item 12-52 – Discussion Authorizing Interim Town Manager Glenn Holland to Purchase Commercial Water Meters. Mayor Pro-Tempore Delreese Simmons stated we lose more revenue from the commercial water meters than with the residential. Just five commercial water meters can bring in enough to purchase additional meters. This would bring in additional revenue. Some commercial customers only pay two hundred dollars per month, and one has a valve they can open and close. Mayor Jerome Newton thanked Mayor Pro-Tempore Delreese Simmons and stated he was unaware of this. We will have to increase the commercial bills. Residential is currently around sixty dollars with no one there. This needs to be corrected right away. He feels if we are doing average for residential, we should do the same for commercial.

Commissioner C.J. Weaver commented to ask Interim Town Manager Glenn Holland how many commercial meters are needed and how much they cost. Mayor Pro-Tempore Delreese Simmons thinks we could have installed the meters ourselves without having them engineered. Commissioner

C.J. Weaver said Mayor Jerome Newton advised there are multiple meters at some businesses. Commissioner Gena Knode asked if these meters are averaged, old or all of the above. Mayor Pro-Tempore Delreese Simmons stated we lose six figures every year and there has been no cut-off fees over a year. Two people are no longer here but still no cut-off fees. He said Interim Town Manager Glenn Holland set this system up to average it out in good faith because he thought it would help. Mayor Jerome Newton advised the difficulty in averages is University of Mount Olive students vary and some houses have more people than prior averages. We have a lot to look at. Bring them to the floor and then discuss. We need inventories of commercial meters. This is why advisory boards are good. He asked if there were any other comments. Commissioner Gena Knode thinks Interim Town Manager Glenn Holland has done a great job over the past eight months, but we need to find the best Town Manager we can get and a Chief Financial Officer. She said her water bill for two people was two hundred and forty dollars. Mayor Pro-Tempore Delreese Simmons stated he has people calling him about their water bill. He advised them to pay the average bill just to catch up. Interim Town Manager Glenn Holland has helped some of these people by putting them on a payment plan. Commissioner Vicky Darden asked about the old driver's license office, how do we do that. She was advised that it was a separate issue.

With there being no further business, Mayor Jerome Newton requested a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Vicky Darden made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner C.J. Weaver seconded, and the motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jerome Newton
Mayor

Sherry Davis
Administrative Assistant/Town Clerk