

**CITY OF LAURINBURG
CITY COUNCIL MINI RETREAT
AND AGENDA WORKSHOP
SEPTEMBER 13, 2011
W. CHARLES BARRETT BUILDING
305 WEST CHURCH ST.
LAURINBURG, NC
6:00 P.M.**

Minutes

The City Council of the City of Laurinburg held a mini retreat and Agenda Workshop on September 13, 2011 at 6:00 p.m. in the conference room of the W. Charles Barrett Building located at 305 West Church St., Laurinburg, NC with the Honorable Matthew Block, Mayor, presiding. The following Councilmembers were present: Joy Ellison, Thomas W. Parker, III, and Kenton Spencer. Councilmember Curtis B. Leak arrived at 6:55 p.m., and Councilmember Herbert M. Rainer, Jr. arrived at 7:08 p.m.

Also present were Edward F. Burchins, City Manager, and Jennifer M. Tippet, Deputy City Clerk. Bob Bell, Human Resources/Risk Management Director was also present. The Assistant City Attorney, Charles L. Hicks, Jr., arrived at 6:55 p.m.

The invocation was given by Mayor Block. Mayor Block called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

The City Manager explained that he has been asked to go back to the minutes of the February Retreat and City/County Joint meeting in February and provide an update on what actions have been taken on issues discussed at those meetings.

Airport Funding for Runway Improvement

The City Manager explained that while the Airport Commission was in the process of putting together funding for resurfacing the runways, it asked the City and the Town of Maxton for \$500,000.00. Maxton had no available funds, and therefore any help that could be provided would have to come solely from the City. He added that he and the City Attorney worked with the Airport Commission's attorney and developed a contract to loan the Airport Commission up to \$500,000.00 to be amortized and repaid over four (4) years at 4% interest. He added that, to date, the Airport Commission has not requested any of the funds and that, because of an unexpected \$200,000.00 grant from the Golden Leaf Foundation, the Airport Commission will probably not need the entire amount.

City Transportation Needs Identified by Council

The City Manager discussed the following transportation issues:

- Pedestrian Bridge - The City Manager explained that the cost of the pedestrian bridge had increased from \$500,000.00 to \$1.4 million and would need to be added to the State Transportation Improvement Plan. He added that this project would not be funded for years.
- Turning Lane at Wal-Mart - The City Manager explained that the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) is considering a dedicated exit and acceleration lane going south on US 15-401 Bypass out of Wal-Mart near the gas station. He added that NCDOT is talking with the developer of Wal-Mart and out-parcels about donating some of the right-of-way.
- Signals at the intersection of West Blvd. and Turnpike Road - The City Manager explained that NCDOT denied this request.
- Crosswalk on US Highway 401 By-pass South at intersection of West Blvd. - The City Manager explained that NCDOT denied this request because of the width of the intersection as well as the absence of sidewalks.

Lumberton Internet Sweepstakes Policy

The City Manager explained that Councilmember Parker had requested Lumberton's Internet Sweepstakes policy, and it was sent to councilmembers on March 16, 2011. He added that the policy is similar to the policy adopted by the City. He further added that the City had collected almost \$145,000.00 from the licensing and per machine fees.

A discussion ensued concerning the number of internet sweepstakes businesses. The City Manager explained that there are 22 internet sweepstakes businesses in the City Limits, down from a high of 27, and that the remaining businesses are the larger establishments.

South Laurinburg Retail Special Tax District

The City Manager explained that at Council's request staff had developed a map of a proposed Retail Special Tax District. He further explained that the value of the district would be between \$18 million and \$20 million and would generate approximately \$300,000.00 to \$400,000.00 in taxes per year. He added that, since that time, Council had determined that, given the economy, it was not a good time to start such a tax district.

Annex Eligible Areas Into City Limits

The City Manager explained that Council had discussed annexing eligible areas into the City Limits but decided not to take any action. He further explained that the General Assembly had changed the annexation laws this year making involuntary annexation more difficult. He added that the annexation laws now provide for a veto process allowing owners of 60% of annexed parcel to reject annexation.

Revenue Stream Improvements

The City Manager discussed the following revenue stream improvements:

- Automated Meter Reading system purchased from Datamatic. The City Manager explained that the City has a guaranteed payback over a 5-year period and that when the system is paid off in five (5) years, the City should see a net gain of \$450,000.00 to \$500,000.00 per year. He added that the Local Government Commission (LGC) approved the City's request to borrow \$2.4 million to purchase this system. He further added that the project would be kicked off in approximately a week.
- Recycling - The City Manager explained that the Recycling Program generated about \$45,000.00 in avoided tipping fees over the last seven (7) months resulting in a 3.2 year payback on the rollout recycling carts. Upon question by Councilmember Spencer, the City Manager explained that staff is researching providing the rollout carts to all commercial customers and has begun to utilize the rollout carts with commercial some customers such as restaurants that have a high volume of recycling.
- Agreement with Clarity - The City Manager explained that the agreement with Clarity LLK will result in \$183,000.00 in revenue per year.

Human Resources Projects

The City Manager explained that the Employee Survey requested by Council had been completed and that the results are being analyzed. He added that hopefully this year progress will be made in dealing with issues brought up in the survey. He further added that employee evaluations have been completed for all employees.

The City Manager then discussed the Pay and Classification Plan. He explained that the salary information is being gathered for comparables. He added that based on the suggestion of Councilmember Parker, Richmond County has been added to the list for comparison and that Fayetteville Public Works Commission and City of Fayetteville have been removed from the list because they are too large for comparison purposes.

The City Manager stated that the organizational chart had been completed.

Website

The City Manager stated that the new website is complete and data shows that almost 50,000 page views occur each month. He added that currently the City does not have a website policy. He further added that one will be presented to Council in October.

Planning and Community Development Staffing Changes

The City Manager explained that Bill Peele is retiring at the end of December and that Brandi Deese has been in training to become Department Head upon his retirement.

A discussion ensued about the position being advertised. The City Manager explained that the City will hire a new Planner and a part-time Code Enforcement Officer. He

added that there were a lot of retired people and contractors who could potentially be interested in the Code Enforcement position. He further added that the impact would be monitored.

Councilmember Parker suggested that the full-time position become a Public Information Officer/Grant Writer position.

The City Manager stated that he would discuss the position with Bill Peele and Brandi Deese and then report back to Council.

Fire Department

The City Manager explained that at one time the City had one (1) firefighter trained to conduct inspections and that there were some buildings in the City that had not been inspected in many years. He added that now the City has four (4) full-time firefighters that are trained and have permits to conduct fire inspections. He further added that fire inspection activity will be tracked and a report on the number of fire inspections completed per day per inspector will be prepared. He also discussed fire management training for the two (2) Fire Captains to possibly allow promotion from within in the future. He concluded by stating that the new fire engine (pumper) had been purchased with delivery expected in November.

Upon question by Councilmember Spencer, the City Manager explained that volunteer recruiting is going well as the department now has the first African-American volunteer firefighters who are helping the department recruit others.

Employee Suggestion Boxes

The City Manager explained that to-date there have been 15 suggestions received in the Employee Suggestion Boxes, with three (3) of the suggestions being reviewed as suggestions to either save money or improve customer service. He added that the other 12 suggestions dealt with improving pay and benefits.

Enhance Street Lighting

The City Manager stated that he and the Electric Superintendent have driven around town to look at street lighting. He explained that there are a number of street lights that are obscured by tree limbs which need to be trimmed, that there are some areas in town that are very dark, and that there are some areas in town that do not have street lights. He added that Council has discussed creating a greater density of lighting throughout the City and that this would involve a combination of limb trimming, taking lights from the major and minor thoroughfares to utilize in under-lit areas, and purchasing new lights for the thoroughfares. He also discussed testing more energy-efficient lights to determine their effectiveness. He added that a representative from the Tourism Development Authority (TDA) would be present at the next Council meeting to discuss the request for lighting at the major interchanges.

At this time Councilmember Parker explained he would like to see all of the 15 suggestions that had been placed in the Employee Suggestion Boxes. The City Manager stated he would present the suggestions to Council at the next meeting.

Mayor Block stated that he would like to see the suggestions also. He also discussed setting timelines for actions such as developing a plan to bring the fire inspections up-to-date.

Following discussion, the City Manager explained that he would assist the Fire Chief in developing a plan for bringing the fire inspections up-to-date, and the plan would be presented at the next agenda meeting.

A discussion ensued about setting a time for a presentation of a proposal for enhancing residential street lighting standards. Councilmember Parker explained that since street lighting was a budget item, perhaps January or February would be a good deadline.

Further discussions ensued concerning residential street lighting. Councilmember Ellison stated that it was important for Council to consider residential street lighting along with commercial street lighting. She added that there were many residential areas in the City that were not lighted and were not safe for residents.

Further discussion ensued about residential street lighting and the need to develop a street lighting policy. The City Manager explained that staff would develop a policy and in the meantime would begin trimming limbs in the areas where street lights are obscured.

Entrance Signs

The City Manager explained that the Beautification Committee had looked at different examples of more decorative entrance signs but did not make a recommendation prior to the end of the fiscal year. He added that Council decided not to carry-over \$5,000.00 in the budget allocated for new entrance signs. He further added that the City's sign shop can make metal signs.

Upon question by Councilmember Spencer, the City Manager explained that some of the current City entrance signs are lighted; however, the lights are on the ground and are constantly being broken by vandals. He added that staff had taken one light and mounted it on a pole at the sign.

A discussion ensued about the variety of signage at thoroughfares and the necessity of having nice consistent signs that would be a type of branding. Councilmember Ellison expressed a desire for the signs to be consistent with economic development plans and with the tourism effort in the community in order to best present a community vision.

Further discussion ensued concerning the wooden signs at entrances to and exits from Maxton as well as the signs in Bennettsville.

Following further discussion, it was consensus of Council for the Beautification Committee to work on a sign design along with a cost estimate to present to Council.

Downtown Summit

The City Manager explained that last year a meeting was held with the North Carolina Main Street Program Director, the Laurinburg/Scotland County Area Chamber of Commerce, representatives from Laurinburg Downtown Revitalization Corporation (LDRC) and Council to discuss options for improving downtown. He added that a meeting was scheduled to receive feedback from the downtown property owners; however, due to lack of quorum of Council, the meeting was cancelled. He further added that the head of LDRC would be at the next Council meeting to report on LDRC's vision and goals for the next year. He explained that part of the money had been released to LDRC and that the remainder would be held pending the LDRC report.

Pole Attachment Agreement

The City Manager discussed the status of the pole attachment agreement discussions with AT&T and Time Warner. He explained that the last pole attachment agreement with AT&T was signed in 1939, with AT&T paying the City \$1.00 per pole when AT&T's equipment is located on the City's pole, and the City paying \$1.00 to AT&T per pole when the City's equipment is located on AT&T's pole. He added that the City has no pole attachment agreement with Time Warner, and thus far Time Warner has not been cooperative in discussions. He further added that AT&T has almost 900 poles in the City and Time Warner has no poles. It is estimated that AT&T and Time Warner have a presence on about 4,000 of the 8,000 City poles.

The City Manager explained that the inventory that is being conducted is to understand better what equipment the City has on poles, to make sure the poles are in proper condition, to number the poles, and to determine what other utilities are located on poles. He added that when the inventory is completed the City will have invested about \$80,000.00. Further discussion ensued concerning the pole inventory being conducted as well as the inventory conducted by Osmosis. The City Manager explained that the study conducted by Osmosis was not usable because the inventory was three feet off from where the poles and equipment are located.

Following further discussion about the pole inventory, the City Manager stated that he would have Ronald Pierce at next month's agenda workshop to explain the pole inventory.

Joint Use of Speller Building

The City Manager explained that the County had decided not to pursue utilizing the Speller Building as a revenue collection center.

Consolidated Water with Scotland County

The City Manager explained that recently discussions were held concerning the West Point water and sewer plants. He asked Council if it would like to hear a presentation from the engineer who presented a report to the Scotland County Board of Commissioners.

A lengthy discussion ensued concerning the involvement of Scotland County with Moore County for the purchase of the West Point plants. Councilmember Parker explained that he had spoken with the Moore County Commission Chairman who assured him that Moore County would not enter into any talks with Scotland County without the City being involved. Councilmember Parker provided a brief history of discussions concerning the West Point water and sewer plants.

Following discussion, it was consensus of Council for the engineer who presented a report to the County Commissioners and Mr. Jim Perry from the Lumber River Council of Governments to be present at the next council meeting to discuss the West Point water and sewer plants.

E911 Center

The City Manager explained that a joint E911 Center is still approximately 2 years out. He added that Chief Evans and the Director of Emergency Management Services are discussing the operation of the center. He explained that the proposal is for the City to move its personnel and equipment to the Operations Center while the County would supply the building. He further explained that the Fire Department would need to continue dispatching fire calls. He added that when a workable solution has been reached, the recommendation will be made to Council.

Following a brief discussion, the City Manager explained that other communities will be contacted to see how their centers' responsibilities are divided.

At 7:25 p.m., Mayor Block called for a 5 minute recess and then to resume the meeting for the agenda workshop.

The meeting resumed at 7:31 p.m.

AGENDA WORK SESSION

Mayor Block explained that the agenda for the September 20, 2011 meeting would be discussed.

- 1) Approval of Agenda
- 2) Consent Agenda
 - a. Approve minutes from the June 16, 2011 budget workshop; the June 20, 2011 budget workshop; and the June 21, 2011 regular meeting

DELEGATION

- 3) Presentation to Betty Cooper, retired employee
- 4) Jim Willis, LDRC President
The City Manager explained that Jim Willis will make a presentation on LDRC's visions and goals.
- 5) Scott Redinger, North Carolina Indian Housing Authority Presentation
Brandi Deese explained that Mr. Redinger will be asking the City to partner with his company on a block grant to develop a 15-unit subsidized housing development on the corner of Atkinson Street and Homer Street. A discussion ensued concerning submission of the site plan for staff and Council review.
- 6) YEA (Young Entrepreneurs Academy) - Mrs. Toni Blount
Councilmember Spencer explained that the YEA program is an initiative of the Kauffman Foundation that the Chamber is offering in partnership with the school system. He explained the program and that he would like Council to consider funding a scholarship or scholarships for youth since the cost of the program is \$295.00. A lengthy discussion ensued concerning potential funding and the need for a funding policy.

CITY MANAGER REPORTS

- 7) Consider Ordinance No. O-2011-14 amending Chapter 40 Utilities, Article III (Water System) and Article V (Electrical System) of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Laurinburg
The City Manager explained that this ordinance corrects some items in the current ordinance and also formalizes policy regarding cut-offs during extreme temperatures. A lengthy discussion ensued concerning disconnects, and the City Manager stated that Council would be provided more data.
- 8) Consider setting public hearing to be held October 18, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. in the upstairs council room of the Municipal Building for an amendment to the City of Laurinburg Sign Ordinance
Brandi Deese explained that TRICOR, the developer of the Wal-Mart Shopping Center, is requesting additional sign allowance for shopping centers and major retail developments. She added that Council will set the public hearing for the request. Upon question by Councilmember Leak, Mrs. Deese explained that the request would increase the sign allowance from 1 square foot of signage per linear foot of frontage to 1.5 square foot per linear foot of frontage and allow businesses with two or more surfaces of exposure to be allowed 1.5 square feet of sign area for each linear foot of frontage for the primary sign and 1.0 square foot of sign area for each linear foot of sign area for each linear foot frontage for the secondary sign.
- 9) Consider Resolution No. R-2011-09 which authorizes the adoption of updates to the Fair Housing Plan and other adopted plans.
The City Manager explained that it is necessary to update the City's Fair Housing Plan and other plans to apply for CDBG funds.
- 10) Consider Resolution No. R-2011-10 Authorizing Planning Grant Application to the NC Rural Economic Development Center for the City of Laurinburg Bridge Creek Outfall & Basin Evaluation and Preliminary Engineering Report
The City Manager explained that this is a planning grant that Brandi Deese has discovered to conduct preliminary engineering in the Bridge Creek Outfall area where the City has experienced problems. He added that the grant is a dollar for dollar grant of \$80,000 and it had been discussed during budget workshops. He further added that this preliminary engineering grant will allow the City to apply for Clean Water Grants and that this project will probably cost between \$700,000 and \$800,000. Upon question by Councilmember Leak, the City Manager stated that the matching funds for the preliminary engineering grant had been set aside in the non-departmental line item in the 2011-2012 budget.

- 11) Consider piggy-back bid for front loading refuse truck
- 12) Consider piggy-back bid for automated side loading refuse truck
Harold Haywood explained that two refuse trucks, a side loader for residential collection and a front-loader for commercial collection, were included in the budget. He further explained that Carolina Environmental Systems has offered to sell to the City the same trucks it sold to the City of Asheboro in October or November of last year at the same or more favorable pricing. He added that \$440,000 was budgeted and that the 2 trucks will be financed over 8 years for a total of \$434,442. Upon question by Councilmember Leak, Mr. Haywood explained that the front loader was a more critical need and that the side loader would be used for recycling. He also added that one position would be eliminated through attrition.
- 13) Consider changing agenda workshop date to Wednesday, October 12, 2011
The City Manager stated that there was a political forum scheduled on October 11, the scheduled night for the agenda workshop, and that Council may want to change the date for the agenda workshop to October 12 to avoid the conflict.
- 14) Bob Bell - Trees/tree limbs falling during storms
The City Manager explained that he would like Bob Bell to appear before Council to provide information to Council and citizens on the the City's response when a City tree or limb from a City tree falls on citizens' property. Councilmember Rainer requested cost estimates for purchasing equipment and training for City staff to do the tree trimming/takedowns instead of contracting them out. The City Manager stated that he would provide that information in November.

APPOINTMENTS

- 15) LDRC Appointment - City Manager's position
- 16) Crime and Drug Committee
The City Manager explained that 6 applications had been received by the City Clerk.
- 17) Appoint voting delegate and alternate voting delegate for the North Carolina League of Municipalities Business Meeting at the conference to be held in October.

OFFER OF SLAUGHTER PROPERTY

Mrs. Deese explained that Attorney Bill Moser, on behalf of the Ann Slaughter family, has offered to the City for purchase three properties on Biggs Street. She added that staff feels that, although it is a generous offer, the property would better serve the County or LDRC for additional parking.

Following discussion, it was consensus of Council that the City is not interested in purchasing the Slaughter properties.

ADJOURN

Motion was made by Councilmember Parker, seconded by Councilmember Spencer, and unanimously carried to adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Matthew Block, Mayor

Dolores A. Hammond, City Clerk