

**CITY OF LAURINBURG
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
DECEMBER 13, 2011
MUNICIPAL BUILDING
303 WEST CHURCH ST.
LAURINBURG, NC
6:30 p.m.**

The City Council of the City of Laurinburg held its agenda workshop and retreat on December 13, 2011 at 6:30 p.m. in the council room of the Municipal Building with the Honorable Thomas W. Parker III, Mayor, presiding. The following Councilmembers were present: Curtis B. Leak, Herbert M. Rainer Jr., Kenton T. Spencer, Mary Jo Adams, and Andrew G. Williamson, Jr.

Also present were: Edward F. Burchins, City Manager, Dolores A. Hammond, City Clerk, and William P. Floyd, Jr., Assistant City Attorney.

Prior to the meeting being called to order, a dinner for the council members was held in the conference room of the Charles W. Barrett Administrative Building located at 305 West Church St. No business was discussed or conducted.

Mayor Parker called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m.

The invocation was given by Councilmember Rainer.

RETREAT ITEMS

Mayor Parker explained that he would like to move the Public Comment section from the end of the meeting to the beginning of the council meeting.

Following discussion, motion was made by Councilmember Spencer, seconded by Councilmember Rainer, and unanimously carried to move the 30 minute Public Comment Section of the regular council meetings from the end of the meeting to the beginning of the regular council meeting.

At 7:00 p.m., Mayor Parker, explained that the agenda workshop would begin at this time.

He recognized several members and the leaders of Boy Scout Troop 420. He advised them to stay in Boy Scouts and attain the Eagle Scout Award.

AGENDA REVIEW

The City Manager reviewed the agenda for the December 20, 2011 council meeting.

- 1) Approval of Agenda
- 2) Recognition of retiring employees, Dee Hammond (26 years) and Bill Peele (31 years)
- 3) Employee Service Recognitions
The City Manager explained that the Employee Christmas Party would not be held this year so employees would receive service recognitions at the council meeting instead.
- 4) Approve minutes from the October 16, 2011 regular meeting; November 15, 2011 Agenda Workshop; November 22, 2011 organizational meeting; and November 22, 2011 regular meeting

PUBLIC HEARINGS

- 5) Closeout the 2009 Community Development Block Grant Infrastructure Project 09-C-2015
The City Manager explained this grant was for extension of sewer line and construction of a sidewalk along West Boulevard to Scottish Glen Phase II.
- 6) Consider Ordinance No. O-2011-21 rezoning from Residential-15 to General Business Conditional Use District property located at 907 S. Main St. to operate a bakery
A discussion ensued concerning the difference between a Conditional Use District rezoning and a Conditional Use Permit.

DELEGATION

- 7) Representative for Laurinburg/Maxton Airport Commission- Request for approval of Resolution No. R-2011-19 authorizing Mayor and City Clerk to execute easement to Piedmont Natural Gas Company, Inc. for the amount of \$3,000.00, and approval of Resolution No. R-2011-20 authorizing Mayor and City Clerk to execute easement to Piedmont Natural Gas Company, Inc. for the amount of \$75,000.00
The Assistant City Attorney explained that the vast majority of the money from these leases will be paid to the City of Laurinburg in repayment of the money the City loaned the Airport for the runway project.
The City Manager explained that Piedmont Natural Gas is constructing a major transmission line to Wilmington. He added that the Assistant City Attorney has reviewed the easements.

CITY MANAGER REPORTS

- 8) Consider setting date for public hearing January 17, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. in the upstairs council room of the Municipal Building located at 303 West Church Street to hear a request to rezone a 23-acre tract of land on Woodlawn Street from Residential-6 and Residential-15 to Office/Institutional
- 9) Annual Firefighters Certification
- 10) Consider Ordinance No. O-2011-22 condemning the property located at 606 E. Covington St. and directing the Building Inspector to demolish the dwelling
A discussion ensued concerning the budget for demolition. Upon question by Councilmember Rainer, the City Manager stated that the estimated cost of demolition is \$8,500.00. The property is owned by Barry Hallam and Barbara A. Bostic.
- 11) Consider Ordinance No. O-2011-23 condemning the property located at 255

Dickson St. and directing the Building Inspector to demolish the dwelling
*The City Manager explained that the estimated cost of demolition is \$4,500.00.
The property is owned by Frank H. McDuffie, Jr. and Frances M. Foster.*

- 12) Consider Resolution No. R-2011-21 approving the City of Laurinburg Facebook Policy

APPOINTMENTS

- 13) Laurinburg Board of Adjustment
David Ellison and Iris Hamilton are up for reappointment as members and Joyce Jewell is up for reappointment as alternate member.
- 14) Fireman's Relief Fund
- 15) Lumber River Council of Governments
Mayor Parker explained that Councilmember is the alternate member. He is going to relinquish his seat and Councilmember Adams will become the alternate member.

It was consensus of Council to move the following items to the Consent Agenda: Items, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12.

A discussion ensued concerning membership on the Scotland County Economic Development Corporation Board. Councilmember Spencer expressed concern that a member should have expertise to serve on the Board.

RETREAT ITEMS

Mayor Parker explained that his ideas for the retreat topics are based on training he received regarding best practices for governing boards. He then discussed his desire that council vote on matters that will require an expenditure of money if the item was not previously budgeted or if an individual councilmember's request causes staff to spend more than 30 minutes researching the request.

It was consensus of Council that Council vote on any matters that require an expenditure of money if the item was not previously budgeted or if an individual councilmember's request causes staff to spend more than 30 minutes researching the request.

A discussion ensued concerning the procedure for placing items on the agenda.

A discussion ensued concerning the procedures for calling for special meetings.

The City Clerk stated that she failed to put the resolution for the Scotland High School football team on the proposed agenda.

Mayor Parker stated that he wanted to recognize the football team for its contribution to the community. He added that he would contact Coach Williams to ensure he and possible some of the players and coaches accompany him to the council meeting.

Mayor Parker explained that he would like to discuss council members championing projects and the involvement of staff in the projects. A lengthy discussion ensued

concerning council's responsibilities such as setting policy, hiring the manager, passing ordinances, but not involved in the running of the City.

Councilmember Spencer explained that he and Mayor Parker have a philosophically different approach to government. He further explained that a project such as the Farmers Market was a new project that staff had never done, and it required a development process whereby it will eventually be handed off to staff to run. He added that his motto is to serve and lead. He further added that Council should allow its members the freedom to lead and create policy, and, further, to create policy that restricts such may prevent Council from doing more and better things for the citizens.

A lengthy discussion ensued concerning the City of Laurinburg Youth Council and staff involvement.

Councilmember Rainer explained that anytime a budget item is involved, the Finance Officer is involved, and therefore a staff person is involved.

Further discussion ensued concerning the Youth Council.

Councilmember Leak stated the he had assisted Councilmember Spencer with the Farmers Market and had offered his assistance with the Youth Council. He added that since the other two (2) advisors to the Youth Council are no longer working with the school system, Council members should ask Mr. Spencer if he needs assistance.

Councilmember Rainer questioned the necessity of having staff involved. He explained that Council wants someone involved that wants to give of his or her time and effort rather than assign a staff person who may not want to participate in the activity.

A discussion ensued about the Youth Council's attendance at the North Carolina League of Cities conference in Raleigh.

Mayor Parker explained that he felt a staff member should be involved with the Youth Council. He cited continuity and consistency as reasons for involving staff.

Councilmember Spencer stated that Ms. Jonnerlyn Johnson was still involved with the Youth Council as an advisor, and that Pastor Gibson tries to attend as many meetings as possible. He added that he involves the City Manager by making requests through him. He further added that because he has a budget he is even more responsible as he is not going to spend any taxpayers' money that is not appropriated properly.

A discussion ensued concerning membership in the Youth Council.

Councilmember Spencer then discussed activities of the Youth Council including development of the Sanford Building for Youth Council meetings. He described another project the Youth Council whereby youth can borrow equipment from the Morgan Recreation Complex. Other projects cited included plans for a spring clean-up at homes

and yards of the elderly and a scholarship program. He added that the Youth Council is working on a report to Council on the state of youth in the community.

A discussion ensued concerning the retreat agenda. Mayor Parker explained that Councilmembers Adams and Williamson needed to be brought up to speed on the Farmers Market and the Youth Council.

A discussion then ensued concerning the City Manager's and staff's involvement in the Farmers Market.

Councilmember Spencer explained that the City Manager would be attending a meeting with the Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation to conduct a final review of the grant funding for the Farmers Market. He added that projects such as the Farmers Market happen because Council gave him the support to conduct the project.

Councilmember Adams explained that as a new councilmember, it did not make sense for a councilmember to be in charge of a budget.

Further discussion ensued concerning the Youth Council budget and its approval by Council.

Upon question by Councilmember Adams, Councilmember Spencer stated that his contact at Scotland High School is the principal, Beth Ammons.

Upon question by Councilmember Adams, the City Manager stated that the City is using the first floor of the Sanford Building for storage of records and equipment. He added that he felt it was appropriate for the Youth Council to use space on the second floor.

Further discussion ensued concerning the use of the Sanford Building by the Youth Council. Mayor Parker explained that by utilizing the Sanford Building, there is a budget implication because of the use of electricity and water; therefore, the use of the Sanford Building by the Youth Council should have been presented to Council for consideration.

Councilmember Williamson explained that he needed to be aware of the different projects such as the Youth Council and the Farmers Market so that he can respond to inquiries by citizens.

Councilmember Spencer stated that when council members attend meetings, there should be a report to Council.

Mayor Parker stated that he proposed that council members should not travel at the City's expense within the calendar year of a pending election.

A lengthy discussion ensued concerning council and staff travel.

Councilmember Adams explained that traveling within the calendar of a pending

election/reelection could be a perception issue. She suggested using the end of the filing period as the cut-off time to travel for a councilmember who is up for reelection.

Councilmember Leak suggested that Council consider this item during the budget process.

At 8:40 p.m. Mayor Parker called for a five (5) minute recess.

The meeting resumed at 8:45 p.m.

The City Manager reviewed the major projects as follows:

- Laserfiche. Completed and in use.
- Pay and Classification Plan. Getting dates when consultants can meet with Council
- Succession Plan/Emergency Personnel Replacement Plan. Being edited and will be presented to Council in January.
- Space Needs Analysis. Look at rearranging space or adding space to the Municipal Building. Has not begun yet.
- Roof at Barrett Building. Repairs completed.
- Maintenance on Barrett Building and City Hall grounds. Work has begun to make the grounds more presentable.
- Cemetery. Opening up new section of cemetery. Surveying and laying out spaces. Once complete, staff will present map to Council.
- Communications upgrade in Police Department. Ongoing. Upgrades all radios in cars and walkie-talkies, mobile radios and repeater system. Paid for by the Governor's Highway Safety Program. Replacing the dispatch center equipment with new equipment budgeted by Council. Had to fix network and switches. Should be completed in February.
- Ordering three (3) new police cars which will be available in March.
- New fire truck is built and is in Charleston, SC undergoing final inspection. Delivery expected in about two (2) weeks.
- Street Resurfacing. Allocated \$130,000.00 for street resurfacing projects.
- Improvements to parking area at Public Works.
- Purchased new equipment for cleaning ditches.
- Purchased a utility truck and retrofitting equipment in garage.
- Conducting inventory of surplus vehicles and researching scrap metal opportunities.
- Making repairs to canteen area at Public Works. Replacing roof and painting interior.
- New telephone system in Customer Service which will allow us to call customers with delinquent accounts with recorded message. System will also allow the use of credit cards to pay utility bills.
- Automated Meter Reading System-About 50% completed. Almost all electric meters installed. Installed approximately 3,000 water meters. Hope to go live in February. Customer Services is making necessary adjustments to

billing system and working on redesigning routes.

- Major substation upgrades to main substation. Replacing breakers will help with power loss in the system.
- Looking at construction of two (2) new wells. One well is contaminated near South Fire Station due to spill from a dry cleaning business. Spill has flowed underground into our well. Picked up minute levels of tetracholorethylene in our water system. Levels are not enough to harm anyone, but the well was shut down. Now having two (2) new wells engineered.
- Water tank on McColl Road to be painted. Cost approximately \$125,000.00. Investigated outside and drained tank to look at inside. Found pitting on inside which may require repainting the interior.
- Other equipment purchases in Water-Sewer Department.
- Major upgrade to Bridge Creek Pump Station. Received several Notices of Violation from heavy rains causing overflows. Looking at splitting coverage area in half and constructing new pump station.
- New regulations for land application of sludge. Conducting research project at Airport and at Wastewater Plant with McGill and Associates (Engineers).
- Repairs at Water Plant include aeration basin. Contractor is on site working on this project. Close to completion.
- Purchasing another automated side loader to be used for recycling. Expect delivery in the next week to 10 days.

The City Manager explained that the above-listed projects were budgeted. He then reported on the following:

- Technology-Whether hiring personnel, contracting with private company or merge with County Information Technology (IT) Department. Operating well under budget in IT. Will stay with privatization for another month to research potential for merging with County IT.
- Tree trimming options-Report coming to Council that Mr. Rainer requested.
- Street Light Upgrade-Completed pilot project. Analyzing effectiveness and budgetary impact.
- Fences at Market Park and North Fire Station-Completed.
- Pole Attachment Agreement-Inventory of poles is complete. Draft agreements under review by the City Attorney.
- Budget-Working on making the budget easier to review. Budget process will start much earlier than prior years. Start in mid-January and have budget to Council earlier than last year.

Councilmember Leak suggested that when a budget update is performed, Council needs to have a copy. He stated he would like the Finance Director at the agenda work sessions and the Council meetings.

Mayor Parker then asked each council member what projects they would like to be considered.

Councilmember Rainer suggested that the City Manager research whether the Police Department needs full-size cars.

Councilmember Leak stated that he wanted the 2011-2012 budget cut 15%.

Councilmember Rainer stated that he would like to see 70% of the projects on the current list that do not require a lot of expenditure completed.

Councilmember Adams stated she would like to see the City complete items that are already in progress such as the Highway 74 Lighting Project and replacement of trees.

Councilmember Williamson stated that he was impressed with Council's revision of tree planting such as on the south part of town and that he would like to see tree planting continue in as many areas as possible particularly in the heavily traveled areas of the City. He added that he felt the Highway 74 Lighting Project is a good project. He further added that the City should continue to support the downtown area.

Councilmember Spencer presented the following items for consideration:

- Participation in the National League of Cities Prescription Drug Card Program.
- Renovate the playground behind City Hall and develop a dog park to include a memorial or dedication to police dogs.
- Develop partnerships on the north side of town to create pathways that tie in with beautification. Create urban trails.
- Create a city center or an outdoor amphitheatre.
- Participate in North Carolina Rural Center Grant employing young people as part of the succession plan. He added that the filing period for this grant is in February, 2012.

Councilmember Rainer suggested looking at consolidation with a serious intent.

Mayor Parker stated that he and the City Manager had an informal meeting with County representatives talking about consolidation of Tax Collection, Information Technology, Planning and Zoning, GIS, Water Systems and potentially law enforcement trading of coverage areas.

The City Manager explained that these items would be discussed at the joint meeting with the Scotland County Board of Commissioners on January 12, 2012.

Mayor Parker requested Council set timeline for the City Manager.

Councilmember Rainer stated that he wanted a report on the use of smaller police cars by budget time.

Councilmember Leak stated that he would like consideration of cutting the budget by

15% to be discussed during the budget preparation.

Councilmember Adams stated that Council needs to make a decision soon regarding the Highway 74 Lighting Project soon.

Councilmember Spencer explained that Council needs to consider payment options for the Highway 74 Lighting Project.

The City Manager explained that he had developed a plan for paying for the Highway 74 Lighting Project through an installment purchase agreement. He added that Council is waiting on a decision regarding Scotland County's participation in the Project. He further added that once the County decided, staff was going to seek further direction from Council.

Upon question by Councilmember Williamson, the City Manager explained that should the County not participate in the Highway 74 Lighting Project and the Tourism Development Administration (TDA) contributes, the City would pick up the difference between the cost of the Project and the contributions by the TDA and DOT. He added that Council would need to decide how to finance the capital cost and the ongoing electric costs. He further added that he would present a report to Council on various financing options.

Councilmember Williamson explained that he would like for the Beautification Committee to continue as it did last year and that this could be considered during budget preparation.

Mayor Parker stated that his intent is for the Beautification Committee to be an advisory board.

Councilmember Spencer explained that he would like to move forward on application to the North Carolina Rural Center for the grant to employ youth since the application deadline is February, 2012.

Following discussion, it was consensus of council to pursue application to the North Carolina Rural Center for a grant to employ youth.

The City Manager stated that he would provide Council with a copy of the Project Inventory List each month so that Council is aware of the status of projects.

Councilmember Adams discussed the Mayor and Council purchasing a greeting card on WLNC Radio.

Councilmember Adams expressed concern about councilmembers using cell phones during meetings.

The City Clerk explained that the School of Government had information concerning cell

phone usage during governing board meetings and that she would provide that information to Council for review.

Further discussion ensued concerning cell phone usage during meetings.

Mayor Parker explained that as Mayor he would like the council to conduct meetings with high standards of behavior.

Mayor Parker then discussed the need to revise the City's ordinance concerning the timing of the organizational meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Councilmember Spencer, seconded by Councilmember Williamson, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Thomas W. Parker III, Mayor

Jennifer A. Tippett, City Clerk