

**CITY OF LAURINBURG  
JUNE 20, 2011  
MUNICIPAL BUILDING  
303 WEST CHURCH ST.  
LAURINBURG, NC  
6:30 P.M.**

**Minutes**

The City Council of the City of Laurinburg reconvened its agenda workshop meeting held on June 13, 2011, and recessed until this date and time, June 16, 2011 and recessed until this date and time June 20, 2011 at 6:30 p.m., in the council room of the Municipal Building with the Honorable Matthew Block, Mayor, presiding. The following Councilmembers were present: Curtis B. Leak, and Thomas W. Parker III. Councilmember Kenton Spencer arrived at 6:55 p.m. Councilmember Rainer arrived at 7:29 p.m. Councilmember Joy Ellison was absent.

Mayor Block reconvened the meeting at 6:41 p.m.

***Rescue***

The City Manager explained that the rescue squad is a department that is funded jointly by the City and Scotland County.

He gave an overview of the proposed budget. It stated that the proposed budget for the rescue squad is down 29 percent. He explained that the decrease is due to a debt payoff for equipment.

There was no further discussion.

***Administration-Public Works***

Stacey McQuage, Public Utilities Director, provided an overview of the proposed budget for the administration department of public works. He explained that there is very little change from last year's budget.

***Streets and Highways***

Mr. McQuage gave an overview of the proposed budget for streets and highways.

Upon question by Mayor Block, Cindy Carpenter, Finance Officer, stated that the salary line item increase is due to projected overtime costs and inclement weather costs for the upcoming year.

Mr. McQuage also commented that some of the overtime costs are for mosquito spraying which happens after normal working hours.

A discussion ensued on the salary line item of the proposed budget. The City Manager stated that staff would revisit the overtime costs of the proposed budget.

Upon question by Mayor Block, Mrs. Carpenter stated that the increase for the utilities line item is for electricity cost for the new streetlights on Lauchwood Drive.

Upon further discussion, the City Manager stated that the utilities line item can be reduced by \$9,000.00

### ***Storm Drainage***

Mr. Stacey McQuage gave an overview of the Storm Drainage proposed budget. He stated that this department is shared by the Street and Highways Department. He explained that there is very little change in the overall proposed budget.

Upon question by Mayor Block, Mr. McQuage stated that the streets and highways and storm drainage departments share equipment and, therefore the costs are shared.

The City Manager stated that the shared costs are to identify the workload of each department.

*Councilmember Spencer arrived at 6:55 p.m.*

Mrs. Carpenter also stated that the separation of the two departments helps with the allocation of Powell Bill Funds from the State.

Councilmember Spencer stated that the estimate for overtime should be allocated on more of a conservative figure.

The Finance Officer stated that she would review the overtime costs and find ways to reduce the cost before the next meeting.

The City Manager stated that during the quarterly financial report, a report on overtime costs will be given.

### ***Fuel Facility***

Mrs. Carpenter provided an overview of the Fuel Facility portion of the proposed budget.

She stated that this proposed portion of the budget is shared by Scotland County. She explained that there is very little change in the proposed budget from last year's budget.

### ***Garage***

Stacey McQuage gave an overview of the garage portion of the proposed budget.

He explained that there is very little change in the proposed budget.

Upon question by Mayor Block, the Finance Officer stated the salary line item is incorrect. She explained that an employee was not included and the line item will need to be changed.

### ***Animal Control***

Stacey McQuage gave an overview of this portion of the proposed budget. He stated there is very little change in the department as it currently stands.

### ***Building Maintenance***

Stacey McQuage explained that this department was one time a stand along unit. He then explained that it is now shared with the water/sewer and electric departments and costs will be applied in each of those sectors instead of the Building Maintenance portion of the proposed budget.

### ***Non-Departmental***

The Finance Officer gave an overview of this portion of the proposed budget.

A discussion ensued on the Municipal Administration Course offered through the School of Government at Chapel Hill.

Mayor Block discussed the Community Access Channel and the poor quality of the broadcast.

The City Manager stated that he had me with Time Warner and discussed access channels that it provides per Time Warner's franchise agreement. He also explained that the monies paid to broadcast the governmental meetings are paid by the franchise fees paid by Time Warner.

The City Manager informed Council that he plans to have a meeting with the Community Access Committee in the next sixty days. He explained that he would contact the County Manager, discuss with City Council, and find out if the City, County, and St. Andrews would like to continue the partnership and committee approach or have staff work the details out and to come back with a policy or plan on how the channels are used. He stated the three channels included are a public access channel, an educational channel, and a government. There needs to be a discussion on whether to continue to broadcast the governmental meetings on the public access channel or to separate the two.

Mayor Block suggested that the Community Access Channel issue be discussed at the next City Council meeting.

There was a consensus among Councilmembers that the City Manager bring back information in the next sixty days regarding a plan for the Community Access Channel.

Mayor Block asked Council to consider its contribution to the Humane Society.

There was a consensus among Councilmembers that the City contributes the same funding as Scotland County contributes which is \$80,000.00.

*Councilmember Rainer arrived at 7:29 p.m.*

A discussion ensued regarding the Beautification line items of the Non-Departmental portion of the 2010-2011 budget. The Finance Officer explained that in two line items there is a total of \$25,000.00 budgeted. She also stated that these monies can be moved into the 2011-2012 proposed budget if Council chooses because the funds were not used in the current 2010-2011 budget.

The City Manager explained that part of the \$25,000.00 was to be used to beautify the area between the railroad tracks are on North Main St. and where Aberdeen Road begins. He then explained that there were problems with the right-of-way being narrow but staff was able to find a plant that would utilize the space provided.

A discussion ensued on sidewalk installation along Aberdeen Road.

The City Manager explained that the North Carolina Department of Transportation (DOT) stated that in order to install sidewalks that are on state maintained roads that curb and gutter would be required.

Councilmember Rainer stated that he would prefer that the funds be used for sidewalk installation instead of tree planting.

There was a consensus among Councilmembers that the \$25,000.00 be allocated to contingency until information from DOT regarding sidewalk installation can be researched.

Mayor Block stated that the next discussion would concern the downtown improvements line item.

The Finance Officer stated that part of the funds is collected through the special tax district and the City of historically given \$42,500.00 for downtown improvements.

The City Manager stated that he is a member of the Laurinburg Downtown Revitalization Corporation (LDRC) and that there has been a change in leadership on the Board. He explained that until some type of plan is brought before Council or a need for certain

infrastructure improvements that Council considers allocating the portion of funding that the City provides is put into contingency. He stated that the special tax district funds be expended to LDRC upon their request.

The City Manager further explained that a presentation be made by LDRC if and when they need funding from the City.

Councilmember Parker stated that the City Manager should draft and send a letter to LDRC explaining the new process for the Corporation receiving City funding.

Upon question by Councilmember Spencer, the City Manager stated that LDRC has no director, no plan, and no direction at this point and once they present a plan to Council, Council should consider funding.

A discussion ensued by Council regarding LDRC and its independence from the City of Laurinburg.

There was a consensus among Councilmembers that the special tax district monies be allocated to LDRC and that the City's portion that funds LDRC be allocated to contingency and to release the funds upon a plan presented to Council. The special tax district funds are approximately \$18,000.00.

The City Manager explained that the contribution to the solid waste fund has always tried to run on a self-sustaining basis. He informed Council that Scotland County will raise its tipping fees for the next budget year.

The Finance Officer stated that Scotland County increased its tipping fees in the last fiscal year and the City absorbed the cost. She explained that the City cannot absorb the cost with an increase in solid waste fees or subsidized through the General Fund.

A discussion ensued on options for the increase in tipping fees imposed by Scotland County.

There was a consensus among Councilmembers that staff come back with a generalized increase on commercial and residential rates and removes the \$80,000.00 subsidy from the General Fund.

The City Manager stated that upon recalculating the Youth Council line item he would like to increase the requested amount from \$5,000.00 to \$7,500.00. He explained that he failed to include the summer program that was implemented in last year's budget which would increase the amount requested.

A discussion ensued on the requested increase.

There was consensus among Councilmembers to increase the Youth Council line item to \$7,500.00.

The City Manager explained that a request has been made by the Scotland County Parks and Recreation to install a fence at Market Park, a water fountain and sewer line, and a short section of sidewalk. The amount of money allocated for this line item is \$20,000.00.

Upon discussion, Councilmember Rainer suggested that the sidewalk request should be allocated to the Beautification line item.

Upon question by Councilmember Rainer, Stacey McQuage stated that the County has the water fountain and is requesting that the City install it.

A discussion ensued regarding in kind services.

There was consensus among Councilmember to allocate \$20,000.00 to the Recreation Scotland County line item.

The Finance Officer stated that since the proposed budget had been compiled that the City has received a \$3,000.00 (*revised at the September 20, 2011 to reflect \$5,000.00*) grant from Blue Cross Blue Shield for the City's Farmer's Market. She explained that the monies will be allocated in revenues with the offsetting expense line item included in the Non-Departmental portion of the proposed budget.

Councilmember Rainer stated he would like Council to consider an emergency fund for the safety of employees' families in the event of a major storm or hurricane. He further stated that he would like someone to touch base with the Community College to allow the City to use the Purcell Building for a shelter for the families of the City's employees that would need to work during a major hurricane.

### ***Contingency***

The City Manager stated that this portion of the proposed budget is where any excess revenues over expenditures and monies that Council has allocated to that fund for review at a later date.

Councilmember Rainer requested that a copy of the budget amendments made during the current fiscal year at the next meeting.

A discussion ensued on continuing budget discussions.

There was consensus among Councilmembers that budget discussions will continue following the regular council meeting to be held June 21, 2011.

The City Manager requested that Council review the Electric Fund because the Electrical Director needed to be out of town the next day.

***Electric Fund***

Mr. Ronald Pierce, Electrical Director, gave an overview on the Electric Fund. He reported that there is very little change in the Electric Fund from last year's budget.

A discussion ensued on the Lauchwood Drive lighting project.

The City Manager stated that the City still needs to collect the Scotland Healthcare System's portion of the lighting expense.

A lengthy discussion ensued on the number and size of the trees in the City and how they interfere with the street lighting.

Mr. Pierce stated that the Electric Department is researching upgrading the lighting of the street lights.

The City Manager stated that he will discuss with Mr. Pierce and Mr. McQuage to come up with a plan to trim the trees in order that more lighting will be visible.

Councilmember Spencer congratulated the Electric Department on receiving a safety award from ElectriCities once again which indicates that the City's Electric Department has been accident free for a number of years.

**ADJOURNMENT**

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

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Matthew Block, Mayor

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Dolores A. Hammond, City Clerk