

**CITY OF LAURINBURG  
CITY COUNCIL  
ANNUAL PLANNING RETREAT  
MARCH 24, 2006  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
1:00 p.m.**

**Minutes**

The City Council of the City of Laurinburg reconvened its March 21, 2006 meeting on March 24, 2006 at 1:14 p.m. in the council room of the Municipal Building with the Honorable Ann B. Slaughter, Mayor, presiding. The following Councilmembers were present: Rembert DeBerry, Curtis B. Leak, and Thomas W. Parker. *Councilmember Lisa D. Griswold arrived at 1:21 p.m. Councilmember Herbert M. Rainer, Jr. arrived at 4:50 p.m.*

Also present were: Craig F. Honeycutt, City Manager, and Dolores A. Hammond, City Clerk.

Staff present were: Harold Smith, Public Works Director; Bill Riemer, Director of Administration and Development; Cindy Carpenter, Finance Director; Robert Malloy, Laurinburg Police Chief; Bob Bell, Human Resources Officer; Robert Ellis, Water Treatment Plants Director; Neil Smith, Scotland County Rescue Squad Commander; Stacey McQuage, Water/Sewer Street Superintendent; Harold Haywood, Fleet Maintenance & Sanitation Superintendent; Ronald Pierce, Electric Distribution Superintendent; and Diane Chavis, Customer Service Manager. David Laviner, Laurinburg City Firefighter arrived at 1:40 p.m.

Councilmember Parker gave the invocation.

### **TEN-YEAR PLAN**

The City Manager thanked everyone for attending the retreat. He also thanked staff for the work that they have put into the ten-year plan and also thanked Cindy Carpenter for compiling the information.

He stated that the citizen input meetings and the management team recommendations regarding the ten-year plan had been previously discussed at Council's mini-retreat but that he would be glad to review them again if Council so desired.

There was no further discussion on the citizen input meetings or management team recommendations.

The City Manager stated that there are a lot of factors that affect the ten-year plan. He explained that the City needs to be aware and mindful that Scotland County will not have a re-evaluation until 2011. He further explained that the City's growth will be fairly flat with respect to ad-valorem taxes for the next five years.

He explained that the City has had an increase of approximately 2% since 2003/2004 in ad-valorem taxes, and that the City has had a lot more transfers from its enterprise funds. He continued by stating that there have also been transfers from the General Fund to the Solid Waste Fund and from the Electric Fund to the General Fund. He explained that the City needs to be mindful of these transfers because the City's growth rate is so flat that it needs to make certain that it is not depleting fund balances. He then explained that there are things that should be looked at and that the first step is to look at the 06/07 fiscal year budget. He continued explaining that there is an expected increase of 9-11% increase in the City's health insurance; fuel is expected to rise; there are specific needs for large pieces of equipment especially in the fire department such as a platform truck; and that there are inflow and infiltration problems with the sewer system. The City Manager then explained that there have been a couple of violations with the sewer system and the situation is being worked on. He continued by stating that there are still overall problems with the system that need to be addressed.

He informed Council that when looking at the big picture that there has been good news in Laurinburg/Scotland

County. He stated that in 2006, the unemployment rate was 7.6% and that was the lowest since 1998/99 when it was 6.3% for the year. He further stated that there is interest in new residential construction in that there were four public hearings set at Council's last meeting for apartment complexes. He also informed Council that staff is looking at expanding the City's Broadband capabilities to make it a revenue generator that will help with the City's tax rate. He continued by stating that Cable TV had been discussed and that staff is exploring this issue. He further stated that the Old Hospital project will become a reality. He then informed Council that there had been a meeting with Diane Honeycutt, President of Richmond Community College, to talk about funding options for construction of RCC's new facility. He then stated that recently the City had purchased Pate's water system and, with that purchase, for the next year there would be a \$68,000.00 increase in the City's water revenue. He also explained that over the next four-five years there should be \$115,000.00-\$120,000.00 of new revenue from that purchase.

He then stated that the ten-year plan is only a planning tool and the assumption is that the tax rate will remain the same and that water/sewer fees as well as other fees charged by the City will remain the same. He concluded by stating that the information provided is from the City's audit and that the forecast indicates where the City may go in the future.

A discussion ensued concerning Richmond Community College and its proposed new facility to be constructed at the old hospital site once the demolition of the old hospital has taken place. RCC has a couple of facilities that they currently use and the use of the facilities is being discussed.

He then provided information page by page regarding the Financial Trend Analysis for the City of Laurinburg.

There being no further discussion on the financial trend analysis, at 2:01 p.m. Council decided to break and then resumed the meeting at 2:12 p.m.

## **TEN-YEAR FORECAST**

The City Manager reviewed the projected revenues for all funds and explained that the figures are based on the current tax rate of .38 cents per \$100.00 valuation.

He stated that, for comparison, last year's budget was 29.7 million dollars with the previous year being 31.2 million dollars. He stated that there have been transfers from the general fund and electric fund of about 3.6 million dollars this year. He then stated that without any transfers that the projection for the upcoming budget could be 26.6 million dollars.

Upon question by Councilmember Leak, Bill Riemer stated that the Bridge Creek improvement project should be completed in this budget year.

Following discussion concerning the projections of revenues, the City Manager stated that the sales tax is flat and that is something that Council may need to look at addressing. He reiterated that the projected revenues are based on current figures.

## **GENERAL FUND**

### ***Police Department***

Laurinburg Police Chief Malloy explained that the \$200,000.00 monies proposed in the 2006-2007 budget year will be shifted to a different year. He informed Council that the money was put in to renovate the police department with the thought that the department would have the whole area of the municipal building because of the relocation of the other departments in the 2006-2007 fiscal year. He explained that it does not appear that this relocation will happen in the upcoming fiscal year; therefore, the proposed renovation for the police department will not take place in the upcoming year.

He stated that the Department of Justice has provided the department with night vision equipment and through a

number of grants the police department has purchased two heat seeking devices He concluded by stating that the proposed CAD system for the police department would be a benefit to the City in working with the GIS system.

### ***Fire Department***

Harold Smith, Interim Fire Chief, started out by explaining that the ten staff positions listed in the Ten-Year plan is not ten additional positions, but rather is one position to be filled by utilizing ten different people. He explained that there is a list of people that can be called on to fill the one position. He then explained that the reason for the position is that, because of the recent change in the personnel policy necessary to comply with the Fair Labor Standards Act, there is no clarity in the effect those changes will have on the payroll that was approved by Council for the fire department. He further explained that if there is a sufficient increase in overtime, then the overtime will be handled by utilizing the position where it is needed. He then stated that additional personnel will only be used as necessary.

Mr. Smith then explained that there was an engine scheduled to be purchased about three years ago which has not as yet been purchased. He then explained that this engine would replace a 1985 Ford that the fire department currently owns. He stated that the idea is not to replace the engine alone but to replace it with a platform truck which would serve as a three-part piece of equipment. He then stated that an engine would cost about \$250,000.00. He then explained that a platform truck, if purchased new, would cost anywhere from \$650,000.00-\$800,000.00. He further explained that an option of a refurbished truck has been considered at a cost of about \$550,000.00. He also explained that consideration is being given to financing the purchase over a period of time.

Mr. Smith provided a brief history of the Fire Department and what equipment it owns.

He then explained the need for a 100-foot aerial platform truck. He stated that it would serve not only the City of Laurinburg but also Scotland County. He then stated that there are several industries in the County that could benefit by having a platform truck in Scotland County. He explained that first and foremost is the rescue of civilians and firefighters. He explained there are places that cannot be served safely because of the height of the buildings. He stated that a building above 30 feet is not accessible with the fire trucks currently owned. He informed Council that there are 57 buildings in the City's fire district that are three stories or 35 feet tall or greater. He then explained the need to have access to large square footage buildings and excessively tall buildings. He further explained that being able to access larger square footage buildings and excessively tall buildings means being better able to provide water over greater distances. The platform truck would help because it would provide the height to accurately provide the water needed. He also explained that the platform truck, according to the ISO (Insurance Services Office) rating, would be classified as three different trucks: an engine, an equipment truck, and a ladder truck.

Mr. Smith informed Council that the fire department has passed its inspection from ISO and has maintained the current rating. He explained that the department had been informed that it barely kept its rating, not because of the department, but because of the water system. He explained by stating that the department is on the border line and that the department is also on the border line with the number of fire hydrants. He explained that south of town there are 126 fire hydrants and that, if six more are added South of Laurinburg, according to ISO; another fire station would be needed in that area.

Upon question by Councilmember DeBerry, the City Manager stated that there he intends to have a discussion with County representatives concerning sharing some of the costs for the platform truck.

Mr. Smith continued by stating that if aggressive annexation is to take place especially around the south end of town, there will need to be an additional fire station. He also stated that if the fire station is added, there will also be a need for additional personnel and that these proposed figures are included in the ten-year plan. He then stated that another engine is included in the fiscal year 2011-2012 because of the possibility of an annexation.

Following further discussion, Councilmember Leak suggested that if the purchase of the platform truck is approved during discussions of the budget that local institutions should be given an opportunity to bid.

Upon question by Councilmember Parker, David Laviner, Firefighter, stated that there would be a forty minute arrival

time for the closet ladder truck to respond to this area.

Mr. Smith informed Council that the grant that was applied for last year for the platform truck was not awarded to the City. He concluded by stating that his biggest concern is not the ISO rating, but rather the ability to save lives in a situation where a three/four-story building is in jeopardy.

### ***Human Resources/Safety***

Bob Bell, Human Resources/Safety Officer, stated that there is no new programming for the department. He stated that he had talked with the City Clerk concerning imaging software and would like to share in the costs if the proposed software is purchased in the future.

### ***Rescue Squad***

Neil Smith, Rescue Squad Commander, stated that the proposed new programming for the department is the reimbursement for rescue volunteers at \$6.00 per call. He explained that the rescue squad is funded by the City and the County. He then explained that because of the price of gas the volunteers are having a difficult time trying to respond to calls without any type of reimbursement from the City or the County. This reimbursement would help offset costs that the volunteers would have in responding to calls throughout the County.

He stated that the on-duty firefighter helps the rescue squad by driving the rescue truck to calls that rescue responds to. He explained that, depending on the direction of the fire department, in the future the firefighter may not be able to continue this procedure and that he would like Council to be aware that there may be changes in the procedure. Mr. Smith stated that he will forward a letter to Council outlining proposed options.

### ***Governing Board***

Dolores Hammond, City Clerk, explained that proposed new programming in the Ten-Year Plan consists of new imaging software in year 2007-2008 and computers for Council in year 2008-2009 in order to provide agendas in a paperless format. She explained that the imaging software will allow minutes, documents, and all records that need to be kept for long periods of time to be scanned into an electronic format. This will also allow easier retrieval of minutes and records that are requested by citizens and staff. She stated that in discussing this system with the Human Services Director that he had indicated that it would be a great help in scanning documents that his department must keep. This would also help alleviate space concerns by eliminating file cabinets, etc. She also stated that a figure of \$4,500.00 was quoted and that was based on one user for the software. She then stated that with the addition of up to four users the price would increase to around \$15,000.00. She then explained the reason for considering the software in budget year 2007-2008 is so that more information can be acquired so as to make certain that this is the best direction in which to proceed.

She then explained that in budget year 2008-2009 computers for Councilmembers and the City Attorney have been proposed in order to provide agenda packets in a paperless format. This will also be researched more regarding costs and the best way to proceed as well as to make certain that the computers will work with the City's computer system. She concluded by stating that if this is a direction in which Council would like to proceed that it be kept in the Ten-Year Plan for further consideration.

## **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

### ***Administration, Planning and Cemetery***

Bill Riemer, Director of Administration and Development, stated that most of what is included in the proposed Ten-Year Plan has been proposed for the last two/three years. He explained that some of the items proposed are a GIS server; storm water enforcement personnel which the City will need to hire to comply with a mandate for storm water in budget year 2007-2008; and the expansion of Hillside Memorial Park along with a proposed road on the north side of the cemetery.

He also explained that included in the Ten-Year Plan is a public relation and grants person. This position was included some years ago and then eliminated. He then explained that during discussions with staff that succession has been discussed because a majority of the department heads is reaching retirement age. He stated that, with the exception of himself, there is no one with knowledge of grant writing employed by the City at this time and that it is a good time to consider looking at employing someone as a full time grant writer with the public relations aspect a plus in the position. The City has been very fortunate in obtaining grants for funding of different projects.

Councilmember Leak asked about the partnership with the County concerning the consolidation of the GIS systems.

Mr. Riemer stated that the City Manager is working with the County Manager on the payment side of the project and the technical side is still being worked on by staff.

The City Manager stated that the technical side is a little slower because of the different computer systems between the City and the County and trying to get the information from both entities in the same format.

## **PUBLIC WORKS**

### ***Streets and Highways/Storm Drainage***

Stacey McQuage, Water/Sewer Street Superintendent, stated that it has been several years since the City has paved any dirt roads. He explained that the largest expense in paving dirt roads is the storm drainage. He then stated that the question is "Does Council want to continue paving dirt roads?"

Harold Smith stated that the proposed figures included in the Ten-Year Plan cover the paving all the dirt roads except Deluca Street. He stated that the paving of Deluca Street has been discussed previously and that installation of storm drainage itself will cost over \$450,000.00.

Councilmember DeBerry stated that Deluca Street had previously been approved by Council to be improved and that later, upon learning the cost estimate of installing storm drainage, it was decided by Council during last year's budget session not to improve the street. He expressed concern that nothing has been done to improve this street and inquired what the City could do to improve the street without the expense of the storm drainage.

Harold Smith stated that crusher run gravel could be put on the street and that would make it better but would not be a permanent solution.

Bill Riemer informed Council that if crusher run gravel is put on the street, during times of rain, there would be water standing on the sides of the street. He then stated, without the proper storm drainage being installed, whatever the City did could result in adverse consequences.

Following a lengthy discussion concerning improving Deluca Street, with consideration being given to closing the street or buying property on the street, there was consensus that staff investigate further ways to improve the street that would not be as costly as the storm drainage estimate of \$450,000.00.

The City Manager stated the Ten-Year Plan contains a list of funding alternatives and options for the General Fund. He listed them as follows:

1. Removing the increase for an additional Fire Station because of the uncertainty of annexation south of town. Removing personnel associated with new Fire Station.
2. Transfer \$300,000.00 from the Electric Fund each year.
3. Research grant for upgrade to Police Department (\$200,000.00)

4. Increase tax rate .05 cents.
5. Research grants for upgrading Cemetery
6. Removing facilities upgrade of \$1,500,000.00 until we research the "old hospital".
7. Remove the new position for Public Relations.
8. Ask Scotland County to increase our Fire District rate from .02 to .05 cents and revise distribution methods.
9. Pursue additional annexation for year 2006-2007.

Following a discussion on the proposed funding alternatives and options, the following Councilmembers shared their opinions:

Councilmember Griswold stated that the only alternatives she did not agree with were the increase in taxes by .05 cents and the removal of the new position for Public Relations.

Councilmember Parker agreed with all alternatives except the increase in taxes by .05 cents, the removal of the new position for Public Relations, and pursuing additional annexation.

Councilmember Leak agreed with all alternative funding options except the increase in taxes by .05 cents and the removal of the new position for Public Relations. Councilmember Leak then stated he realizes that the City cannot continue operating at a tax rate of .38 cents and that a common ground of increase needs to be pursued instead of the proposed .05 cents.

Councilmember DeBerry stated that he was comfortable with all alternative funding except the increase in the tax rate.

Following further discussion, Councilmembers clarified that they would consider other proposals that staff may deem necessary when preparing the proposed F/Y 2006-2007 budget.

The City Manager stated that if Council is agreeable, regarding the fire district rate, he would like to ask the County to increase the fire district rate and to revise the distribution of funds.

There was a consensus among Councilmembers that the City Manager have a discussion with the County regarding the fire district rate.

Mayor Slaughter called for a break at 4:00 p.m. and the meeting then resumed at 4:08 p.m.

## **ELECTRIC FUND**

### ***Electric Operations/Fiber Optics/One-Half Consumer Billing***

Ronald Pierce, Electric Distribution Superintendent, stated the \$400,000.00 that is proposed in the Ten-Year Plan is to renovate the substation on West Boulevard. He stated that presently the substation is a six-circuit station using only four circuits. He explained that the previous plan was to add the two empty bays and then divide the system where there would be better load balance on the system and to minimize usage time. He then explained that the reason this has not been aggressively pursued is that there has been discussion as to whether to install SS6 gas breakers or to use oil breakers which are already installed. The station is 30 years old and the equipment 30 years old and we would like the future equipment to last equally as long.

Diane Chavis, Customer Service Manager, explained that the proposed new programming for Consumer Billing deals

with meter interface (automatic meter reading). Because it is so costly, the plan is to install 1,000 sensors every year until every citizen is on automatic meter reading instead of trying to complete it in one year. She then explained that she has included software in the 2009-2010 fiscal year in order to accommodate any upgrades required for the automatic meter reading.

Upon question by Councilmember Parker, Ms. Chavis explained that the City had received ten meter reading devices at no charge and these meters have been installed. She concluded by stating that this is the beginning of changing to automatic meter reading for the City.

## **WATER/SEWER FUND**

### ***Water Treatment***

Robert Ellis, Water and Wastewater Treatment Plants Director, explained that the City needs to be aggressive in adding additional wells. He explained that ten of the City's wells have been in operation for twenty years or better. He stated that the oldest well being used is from 1962. He then explained that last year Well #6 (located behind the Water Treatment Plant) had to be relined, that the repair cost was roughly \$30,000.00 and that the yield was decreased by about 650 gallons per minute to 400 gallons per minutes. The proposed well and land acquisition figure is because the well drillers informed staff that, due to the cost of repairing older wells, it would be better to go out and secure as many new sites as possible.

### ***Wastewater Treatment Plant***

The Wastewater Treatment Plant lab will need to be expanded by adding additional lab equipment for in-house testing.

Upon question by Councilmember Leak concerning an above ground reservoir, Mr. Ellis replied that he had contacted the City's engineering firm and he is expecting a letter stating the permitting process and estimated costs of installing a reservoir. The engineer shared that another community had started a similar project about ten years ago and that they have yet to pump any water out of the impoundment.

### ***Customer Services***

Diane Chavis explained that in customer service the proposed new programming is meter interface (automatic meter reading) for water. These meters cost more than the electric meters. She concluded by stating there is also software in FY 2009-2010 for any upgrades to the automatic meter reading devices.

### ***Water Department***

Stacey McQuage stated that all the prices proposed in the Ten-Year Plan to install water lines are a lot lower than they otherwise would have been because the water department will install the lines and the only cost will be for materials.

The City Manager explained the list of funding alternatives/options for the water/sewer fund which is as follows:

1. Research grants for possible capital needs for future programming.
2. Look at financing for the larger projects.

He stated that the water/sewer bond will be paid off in 2015.

## **SOLID WASTE FUND**

Harold Haywood, Fleet Maintenance & Sanitation Superintendent, stated that there is no proposed new programming for the solid waste fund. He stated that the curbside program is going well. He then stated that it was a smooth transition from backyard pick up. He also stated that the department was able to decrease the number of trucks to

provide residential garbage collection from three to two trucks. He explained that staff was reduced from six to four employees that provide residential garbage collection and that staff is now down two employees, from twenty-five to twenty-three, as planned. He concluded by stating that there are about 3% of residents that still receive backyard collection service and that there are approximately 33 businesses that have extra carts.

Upon question by Councilmember Leak, the City Manager stated that he had talked with the County Manager and that the County is not sure if tipping fee costs will increase by \$2.00 as previously planned. He stated that the City will project the \$2.00 increase in the upcoming proposed budget until he hears differently from the County.

Councilmember Griswold asked if the City could save money by changing the recycling program to an every other week pick up.

Mr. Smith stated that it may save a little money, but that he does not have any figures available at this time.

There was consensus among Councilmembers that staff research the costs of restructuring the recycling program to an every other week pick up.

The City Manager stated the funding alternative/options for the Solid Waste Fund which is as follows:

1. If the county would reconsider the landfill proposal, the deduction in tipping fees would result in a positive impact for the City.
2. The shortfall of this fund will continue to be subsidized from other funds.

## **OLD HOSPITAL**

The City Manager stated that there had been previous discussion regarding the old hospital and asked if there needed to be further discussions.

Councilmember Parker stated that the City Manager should contact Richmond Community College, preferably Diane Honeycutt, President of RCC, to find out exactly what RCC's intentions are regarding the buildings located in the downtown area.

Bill Riemer stated that the discussion regarding the buildings should take place after the bids for the demolition of the old hospital have been let. He then stated that he anticipated bids being received and let by the end of April.

The City Manager explained that a tour of the RCC buildings has been scheduled to determine if the buildings will meet the needs of the City.

## **BROADBAND ISSUES**

Harold Smith explained that unless a used tower can be located, there will not be an additional tower to accommodate the proposed broadband service. He further explained that Lumber River Electric will continue to pursue the acquisition of a tower. He stated that there is an agreement that is ready to go to the attorney for review regarding the offering of broadband service to residents. He then stated that the proposed rate to residents will be \$24.99 per month for broadband service.

## **NORTH CAROLINA GOVERNOR'S SAFETY GRANT**

Chief Robert Malloy explained that there are two situations that exist in this program. He explained that the grant provides two officers and equipment being funded for a four-year period with a certain percentage being paid by the City. He stated that if the two officers were hired that after the four-year period the City would have to incur all the costs for the two officers. The equipment would be paid for. He stated that the other proposal includes only the purchase of the equipment. The City would be required to pay a certain percentage. He concluded by stating he wanted Council to have this information so that he could have direction as to which way to proceed.

Following a brief discussion, Councilmembers Griswold, Leak, and DeBerry concurred that the grant should be submitted for the officers and the equipment. Councilmember Parker stated that he would look at it.

## **BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH**

The City Manager stated that he had received a response from Bethlehem Baptist Church regarding the property located on Stewartville Road. The Church's letter indicated that it was aware that Council could not donate land to them and that they were willing to purchase ten acres.

He stated that, if Council is interested in selling the land to the Church, the Church will have to have a survey and incur the costs of that survey.

*(Councilmember Rainer arrived)*

Following discussion regarding other possible development on the property, utilities located on the property and the subdivision of the property, Council instructed the City Manager to send a letter to the Church stating that the City is not interested in selling the property.

## **DOOR TO DOOR PERMITS (ITINERANT MERCHANT)**

Councilmember Parker stated that he feels that this issue deals more with itinerant merchants than door to door sales. He then stated that the concern and the problem he has with this issue is that, without obtaining a permit, dealers are going door to door; that the customer is being taken advantage of; and that people are misled about what is being sold to them. He continued by stating that he does not have a problem with vendors selling items legally. He then stated that Laurinburg gets no sales tax from these types of sales and feels that there should be a way to correct this problem. He then stated that he had talked with a number of businesses in town and that most of them feel that it is unattractive to the City to see these type activities on the streets.

Bill Riemer stated that the Itinerant Merchant Ordinance is what the City uses to try and discourage door to door sales. The ordinance requires a person to get permission from a property owner to locate on specific property, to obtain a permit from the City and to provide a \$1,000.00 bond. He continued by stating that there is something in the City Code which prohibits this carte blanche approach in terms of soliciting door to door. He stated that there are certain legal issues regarding enforcement of such ordinances. He explained that the City's ordinance prohibits all sales including sales of periodicals. He then explained that there is an article from the Institute of Government that goes into great detail about the courts upholding decisions dealing with door to door sales. The conclusion in the article suggests that our ordinance may not pass constitutional scrutiny. He then explained that if a permit is not acquired from the City, the only way the City knows that someone is selling products without a permit is if someone complains. He stated that, if that occurs, the City will try and contact the vendor and inform them of the requirements and procedures. He then explained that the Police Department also investigates these merchants and that, if they cannot produce a permit, the Police Department then suggests that the person discontinue the activity until a permit is obtained. He stated that anyone selling home grown fruits and vegetables is exempt from the requirements.

Riemer stated that if a business has a sign located on its premises that says "no soliciting", then that can be enforceable.

Councilmember Parker stated once again that he has no problem with anyone that is selling legally with a City of Laurinburg permit. He then stated that there should be some way to make them pay sales tax. He concluded by stating that he just wanted to make everyone aware of his opinion.

Chief Malloy stated that the Police Department checks to make certain that anyone parked in a certain location that is conducting sales of any kind has a permit to do so. He concluded by stating that if they do not have a permit and are asked to leave, they generally leave.

## **COUNCILMEMBER SALARY**

Councilmember Leak stated that he would like Council to consider an increase in salary for Councilmembers. He explained that the present salary has been in effect for a number of years and feels that an increase should be considered. He also stated that he feels that an increase in salary may entice good quality people to run for office in future elections. He then stated that campaigns are expensive when candidates do run for public office.

Councilmember Griswold stated that she appreciates what Councilmember Leak stated but that she feels that if anyone running for public office, at this local level, is running because of what the pay is, he/she is not running for the right reason. She then stated that she is not interested in a raise now or in the future.

Councilmember Parker stated that he concurs with Councilmember Griswold's statement and that he serves at his leisure and considers this as a volunteer position. He then suggested that, even though he agrees with not increasing the salary and is not comfortable talking about Councilmember increases, if any discussion regarding salary is considered, consideration should be given to indexing it to inflation so that future increases are automatic once a standard is set.

Councilmember DeBerry stated that he has not had enough time to study information regarding Councilmembers salaries in the region and would like to take some time to review those figures.

Councilmember Rainer stated that he would not mind having automatic increases. He explained that if automatic increases are implemented that this issue would not have to be voted on periodically. He concluded by stating that he would like it to be consistent each year.

Councilmember DeBerry stated that, upon reviewing some of the information provided, the average salary of most cities is twice the amount that each Councilmember currently receives. He stated that he could agree with automatic increases tied to inflation each year.

Following discussion, there was a consensus that this matter should be brought up at the next Council meeting to discuss and to consider for vote.

## **NORTHSIDE SQUARE SHOPPING CENTER**

Councilmember DeBerry stated that he had received numerous complaints concerning the lighting at the entrance of Northside Square Shopping Center. He stated that it would be of public interest if the City could install an additional lighting at the shopping center.

The City Manager stated that following discussion with the public works director there will be an additional light installed near the entrance to the shopping center.

## **OTHER**

### ***Reflectors on US 401 North***

Councilmember Rainer stated that the reflectors on Highway 401 North have not been replaced by the North Carolina Department of Transportation. He then asked that the City Manager contact DOT and ask that reflectors be replaced from Business 401 North starting at the intersection of US 401/501 Business and continuing onto US 401 By-Pass.

### ***US 401 BY-PASS & PLAZA ROAD***

Councilmember Parker expressed concern over the lane markings at US 401 near the Lowes Store.

Following a brief discussion regarding the signalization at US 401 By-Pass and Plaza Road, Mr. Riemer was instructed to find out if the lanes are properly marked at this intersection.

## **LAURINBURG POLICE CHIEF CONCERNS**

Chief Malloy expressed his concern about Management Team members being able to resolve issues that may involve elected officials. He stated that if an employee or supervisor has an issue with their co-workers that they have a way to resolve their concern. He explained that if a Management Team member has an issue with an elected official that there is no way to resolve the issue and would like to know Council's position on how to deal with an issue that may involve an elected official.

Following a lengthy discussion, there was consensus among Councilmembers that the City Manager check with other municipalities, the North Carolina League of Municipalities, the School of Government, and with the City's attorney to see if there are rules of conduct or any other policies regarding elected officials. The results of that inquiry should then be brought back to Council for review.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion was made by Councilmember DeBerry, seconded by Councilmember Griswold, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

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Ann B. Slaughter, Mayor

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Dolores A. Hammond, City Clerk