

**CITY OF LAURINBURG  
SPECIAL CITY/COUNTY JOINT MEETING  
MUNICIPAL BUILDING  
303 WEST CHURCH ST., LAURINBURG, NC  
NOVEMBER 8, 2007  
5:00 P.M.**

**Minutes**

The City Council of the City of Laurinburg held a special joint meeting on November 8, 2007 beginning at 5:00 p.m. to discuss the future and direction of the Laurinburg Scotland County Area Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) with respect to economic development and to award to the low bidder a contract for the Lauchwood Drive Utility Improvements project. Presiding was The Honorable Ann B. Slaughter.

The following Councilmembers were present: Amanda B. Faulk, Curtis B. Leak and Herbert M. Rainer, Jr. *Councilmember Thomas W. Parker, III arrived at 5:30 p.m.*

Those present from Scotland County were: Chairman J. D. Willis and Commissioners John T. Alford, Leon Butler, Guy McCook, Clarence McPhatter and Joyce McDow. Vice Chair Betty Blule Gholston was absent.

Also present were Craig F. Honeycutt, City Manager, and Dolores A. Hammond, City Clerk. Kevin Patterson, Interim County Manager/Finance Officer and Clerk to the Board of Scotland County Commissioners Ann W. Kurtzman.

Mayor Slaughter called the Laurinburg City Council meeting to order.

Mayor Slaughter stated that Council needs to consider awarding the contract to the low bidder for the Lauchwood Drive Utility Improvement Project and to authorize the Mayor to execute the appropriate documents.

The City Manager explained that the low bid was below the amount that was budgeted in the 2007-2008 budget.

Motion was made by Councilmember DeBerry, seconded by Councilmember Rainer, and unanimously carried to award the contract to the low bidder, McArthur Construction Company, in the amount of \$552,607.18 for the Lauchwood Drive Utility Improvements Projects and to authorize the Mayor to execute the appropriate documents.

**CHAMBER**

Mr. Harry Yeatman, 2008 Chairman-elect for the Chamber stated that the increased funding and focus on industrial recruitment is welcomed and supported by the Chamber. He then stated that the Chamber Board passed a resolution in support of the County and City's efforts to improve the local economy. He explained that the Chamber is requesting funding from both governing bodies (the City and the County) and explained the value that the Chamber not only brings to the membership, but the entire community.

He reviewed the collaborative efforts by the City, the County, and the Chamber and how these relationships have enhanced economic development. He stated that the Chamber acts as the visitor's center for the community.

He discussed and listed Chamber programs that benefit the community and its lengthy history of volunteerism among the 400 plus members.

Mr. Yeatman then distributed the Chamber's proposed 2008 budget and the Chamber's projected cash position as of January 1, 2008.

Chairman Willis stated that it was his understanding that the Chamber is asking for additional funds through June 30,

2008 as well as funding support for the remainder of the current year.

Mr. Yeatman stated that the Chamber is specifically asking for the funding for the remainder of the current year and is hoping that both governing bodies consider funding for the future as well.

He explained that the Chamber would like to maintain a staff of three to continue its community programs at the same level as it now does. He stated that, without additional funding and leaving the Chamber with a two-member staff, it would be difficult to maintain the programs at the same level.

He further stated that he would expect the Chamber to request less funding from the City and the County in the future, however, the funding level requested to get the Chamber through 2008 was critical during its transition.

He then explained that the \$54,000.00 appropriated by the City and County would see the Chamber through its budget year and that the \$80,000.00 in the Chamber's proposed 2008 budget would carry it through 2008.

A discussion ensued concerning the cash on hand for the Chamber and its ongoing operations.

Mr. Yeatman stated that money is already being spent for ongoing operations through the remainder of the year, and this is the time when very little revenue is coming in. He explained that the Chamber dues structure does not support a three-person staff with the current, ongoing activities.

Mr. Greg Wood, 2006 Chamber of Commerce Chairman, said projected available cash for the Chamber by January 1, 2008 is \$13,000.00. Mr. Wood further stated that \$80,000.000 would allow the Chamber to break even in 2008 with a three-person staff continuing the current activities.

Upon question by Chairman Willis, Mr. Yeatman explained that the Chamber does intend to make a presentation to both the Tourism Development Authority and the Laurinburg Downtown Revitalization Corporation for assistance.

Councilmember Leak expressed concern that the City would not see any return on the proposed spec building even though the City will pay interest in the amount of \$44,000.00 on a \$450,000.00 loan.

Upon question by Councilmember Leak, the City Manager stated that the City currently has money set aside that was previously committed to the Chamber. He then stated that the issue that Council has not discussed is the City's commitment to the County's economic development efforts (possibly through Scotland Development Corporation (SDC) and when it would start. He explained that Council would need to discuss the Memorandum of Understanding between the City and the County regarding the economic development and what commitment the City might make.

Councilmember Parker stated that he feels that the issue for City Council is that the City obligated itself to fund the Chamber for economic development, but the Chamber will on longer concentrate on economic development. He feels that the question before Council is how the City is going to help the Chamber and also help the County in its efforts through economic development.

Councilmember Faulk stated that, in her opinion, the money that the City would continue to give the Chamber would still be used for economic development. She stated that it would not be used for industrial recruitment but could be used for community wide beautification projects and programs that enhance and improve the quality of life of the community. She explained that her definition of economic development includes beautification projects and programs that enhance and improve the quality of life.

Mayor Slaughter asked that the Chamber to present a proposal on the Chamber's changes and the direction it would take.

Councilmember Rainer stated that he did not want to abandon the Chamber. He explained that he feels that Council should keep its \$17,000.00 commitment to the Chamber.

Councilmember Parker asked the Chamber to bring Council information on membership dues the City would pay as a 171-member organization.

Council asked that the information requested by them be provided at the next Council meeting.

RECESS

Motion was made by Councilmember DeBerry, seconded by Councilmember Rainer, and unanimously carried to recess the meeting until Tuesday, November 13, 2007 at 5:30 p.m. at the North Fire Station located at 501 North Main St. to discuss fire department needs.

The meeting was recessed at 6:25 p.m.

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Matthew Block, Mayor

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Dolores A. Hammond, City Clerk