

**CITY OF LAURINBURG
SPECIAL JOINT MEETING
MAY 14, 2009
COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF THE MUNICIPAL CHAMBERS
303 WEST CHURCH ST.
LAURINBURG, NC
7:00 P.M.**

MINUTES

The City Council of the City of Laurinburg held a joint meeting with the Scotland County Board of Commissioners on May 14, 2009, in the council chambers of the Municipal Building located at 303 West Church Street with the Honorable Matthew Block, Mayor, presiding. The following Council Members were present: Rembert DeBerry, Amanda B. Faulk, Curtis B. Leak, Thomas W. Parker, III., and Herbert M. Rainer, Jr. Also present were: Dolores A. Hammond, Interim City Manager, Jennifer Tippet, Deputy City Clerk and Cynthia B. Carpenter, Finance Director.

Those present from the Scotland County Board of Commissioners were: Chairman J. D. Willis, John Alford, Bob Davis, Betty Blue Gholston and Joyce McDow. Also present were Kevin Patterson, County Manager and Ann W. Kurtzman, Clerk to the Board.

Mayor Block called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

Councilmember DeBerry gave the invocation.

CONSOLIDATION ISSUES

Mayor Block explained that the main purpose of the meeting is to discuss issues of possible consolidation.

Tax Collection

The Interim City Manager explained that in May 2004 the former City Manager, Joe Huffman, a County Commissioner and staff from the City and the County spent a great deal of time determining the advantages and disadvantages of consolidation of tax collection. An inter-local tax collection agreement was drawn up, but ultimately it was decided that consolidation of tax collection was not a good idea at that time.

The County Manager explained that neither the City nor the County would gain from the consolidation. He added that the real advantage would be for citizens to only have one (1) place to pay taxes.

A discussion ensued concerning the method of distributing the taxes collected including back taxes. The County Manager explained that the 2004 agreement does not include provisions for the County collecting the back taxes for the City. He added that the County and City's tax databases are different. He further added that in order for the County to collect the back City taxes, the City Tax Collector would need to input City back tax data in the County's system.

Following further discussion, it was consensus of Council for the Interim City Manager to work with the County Manager and County Tax Administrator to review the 2004 agreement and procedures for collecting back taxes. Once these issues have been addressed, the agreement can be presented to both boards.

Planning and Zoning

The County Manager explained that the County eliminated its Planning and Zoning Department in 2004 and the job responsibilities were given to the County Engineer. He added that consolidation would entail the City Planning staff collecting fees for planning and zoning in the County. He further added that in order to consolidate the two (2)

Planning Boards, a local act by the State legislature would be necessary, or the two (2) Planning Boards could remain separate. He further explained that any planning and zoning matter outside the Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction area would be referred to the County Commissioners.

Upon question by Mayor Block, the County Manager explained that there would be no advantage to the City if Planning and Zoning were consolidated.

A discussion ensued concerning involving the City's Planning and Zoning staff in the discussion concerning consolidation of Planning and Zoning.

Animal Control

Councilmember Rainer asked if the County would take over animal control from the City.

The Interim City Manager explained that currently, after 5:00 p.m., on weekends and holidays the County Animal Control takes over animal control issues in the City.

Following discussion, it was consensus for City and County staff to look at the most efficient way to handle animal control including possible consolidation.

Law Enforcement

Mayor Block explained that some investigation into consolidating law enforcement has occurred in the past, and he suggested a committee be appointed to investigate possible consolidation. He explained that City residents are concerned about paying for a Sheriff and a Police Department when the Sheriff does not patrol within City limits.

Councilmember Parker suggested that a reciprocal agreement should be developed for the Police Department to patrol areas south of Barnes Bridge Road. He added that if a Sheriff's Deputy was in the north side of the County and received a call to the south side, it was not logical for the Deputy to have to travel all the way through the City.

Chairman Willis explained that the possibility of creating a police commission to patrol the entire county would need to be studied, and all municipalities would need to be included.

Following discussion, it was consensus of Council for Mayor Block to meet with Chairman Willis, Commissioner Davis and the Mayors of Gibson, East Laurinburg and Wagram to discuss consolidation of officer patrols.

Cooperative Agreements

The County Manager explained that while the County and City provide different services, there are some departments that assist one another on a regular basis. He requested that both boards consider passing a memorandum of agreement or mutual aid agreement to better define mutual assistance regarding use of labor and equipment.

Chairman Willis requested that the County Manager prepare an agreement for both boards to consider.

GIS

Upon question by Councilmember Parker, the County Manager explained that the County pays for a GIS server license and for individual access licenses. He added that last year the County paid approximately \$20,000.00 for a GIS server and licensing and also approximately \$25,000.00 for aerial photography.

There was no action taken on this matter.

Construction and Demolition (C&D) Tipping Fees

Mayor Block explained that the City would like to aggressively demolish unsafe structures but the cost of Construction and Demolition (C&D) tipping fees are approximately 40-50% of the cost of demolition. He requested that the County look at the C&D tipping fees.

The County Manager explained that the current fee of \$37.00 per ton is a break-even rate for the County landfill. He added that this year, due to the economic situation, intake is down and therefore revenue will be down at the landfill.

Chairman Willis directed the County Manager to work with the County Engineer to determine the lowest possible C&D rate for the City. He added that the County must be consistent in what it charges all municipalities for C&D tipping fees and also must allow the landfill to be self-sustaining.

Parks and Recreation

Mayor Block explained that there is a need for an indoor recreation facility in the City with basketball courts, a walking track and activity rooms similar to the one being built in Wagram. He added that last year the City and County looked into the open gym concept, but this was cost-prohibitive. He further added that he would like for the City and County to further explore an indoor recreation facility centrally located near the downtown area similar to the Wagram facility. He explained that he would like to form a committee to move forward with determining the needs and wants of the community for such a facility.

Councilmember Parker explained that perhaps intermediate steps could be taken to figure out how to use school gyms without much cost until an indoor facility is constructed.

Commissioner Alford explained that opening one (1) gym for a short time period would only serve a very limited population.

A discussion ensued about the possibility of getting churches involved in an open gym concept.

Chairman Willis suggested that the City and County governing boards look at development of a recreation complex centrally located in Laurinburg and decide if that would be a top priority.

Councilmember Leak discussed the condition the infields of Lincoln and Washington Parks, which are covered with grass.

Councilmember Rainer stated that he believed that some parks are better maintained than others, and he believes the parks should be maintained in the same manner.

Chairman Willis suggested that the County give the parks within the City limits back to Laurinburg if there are concerns about their condition.

Chairman Willis stated that the County would look at Washington and Lincoln Parks to ensure they are not grassed over.

The County Manager stated that he and Parks and Recreation Director Shannon Newton would review all parks with clay infields.

Mayor Block stated that the City would organize a committee to study the feasibility of an in-town centrally located recreation complex.

Councilmember Leak expressed concern for safety at Market Park. He stated that the County should erect a fence at the back side of Market Park.

The County Manager stated that, based on community input meetings held at Market Park, citizens were satisfied if the County cleaned out the back side of Market Park instead of installing a fence at the back of Market Park.

Human Resources

Councilmember Rainer asked if City and County Personnel Departments could be consolidated.

The County Manager explained that the County's hiring and employment structure involves a number of different hiring authorities and methods for calculating pay. He said half of the County personnel are governed by State policies and two different authorities. He added that employee training activities for the City and County could possibly be coordinated.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Matthew Block, Mayor

Dolores A. Hammond, City Clerk