

**CITY OF LAURINBURG  
COUNCIL MEETING  
JUNE 9, 2010  
MUNICIPAL BUILDING  
303 WEST CHURCH ST.  
LAURINBURG, NC  
6:30 P.M.**

**Minutes**

The City Council of the City of Laurinburg reconvened its regular meeting held on May 18, 2010, recessed on that date until May 25, 2010, reconvened and recessed on that date until May 26, 2010, reconvened and recessed on that date until June 1, 2010, reconvened and recessed on that date until June 4, 2010, and reconvened and recessed on that date until this date and time, June 9, 2010 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, Kenton Spencer, Herbert M. Rainer, Jr., Davian LaJoyce "Joy" Ellison, and Thomas W. Parker, III. Councilmember Spencer arrived at 6:39 p.m.

**NON-DEPARTMENTAL**

The City Manager stated that the non-departmental budget expenditures are \$598,649.00 which is an increase over last year's budget. He explained that unemployment compensation was moved from the Personnel Department to Non-departmental. There is funding for the following entities: Chamber of Commerce; Scotland County Economic Development Commission; Scotland County Humane Society; Beautification Committee; Youth Council; and Scotland County Recreation Department. Funds are also included for employee bonuses.

The City Manager stated that the Humane Society has requested an increase in their funding.

Councilmember Leak motioned to fund the Humane Society \$80,000.00 for the fiscal year 2010-2011. Councilmember Rainer seconded the motion and it passed by the following vote:

Ayes: Rainer, Spencer, Parker, Leak, Ellison

Nays: None

Upon question by Mayor Block, Cindy Carpenter, Finance Department, explained that the Humane Society handles all the City's animal concerns from the City's Animal Control Officer as well as from the citizens of Laurinburg. His concern is that Laurinburg residents are contributing twice to the Humane Society because of County taxes.

A discussion ensued and it was determined that it was beneficial for the City to contribute to the Humane Society instead of having its own facility.

Councilmember Parker asked that the City Manager inquire of the Humane Society whether they request funding from Wagram and Gibson.

Councilmember Leak requested that, in the future, Humane Society representatives appear before Council at its May meeting to present their proposed budget.

Mrs. Carpenter provided information on unemployment compensation and how it is distributed to each department.

Bob Bell, Human Resources Officer, also explained that, because of personnel confidentiality, he could not discuss why the unemployment compensation increased.

Councilmember Parker stated that he would like to see the net difference in last year's unemployment compensation and the 2010-2011 proposed budget.

A discussion ensued regarding reserving funds in order to offset the worker's compensation line item.

Mrs. Carpenter continued by explaining each line item in the non-departmental proposed budget.

The City Manager explained that, since the Beautification Director resigned, Stacey McQuage has been meeting with the Beautification Committee. He explained that the Committee is active and has a number of ideas to improve the appearance of the City.

He then explained that this is an advisory board to City Council and that in the future he will ask them to appear before Council in May to make any requests for the upcoming budget year.

He stated that there are several areas of concern one of which is Lauchwood Drive - improving the lighting along that area. He plans to ask Scotland Healthcare System to participate in funding new light poles. He stated that the estimated expense of the light poles will be \$20,000.00. He also stated that there needs to be landscaping at the new roundabout at the intersection of Lauchwood Drive and John's Road.

The City Manager explained that conduit had been placed underneath the road into the roundabout for electric lines and water lines. The water lines will irrigate the roundabout for low-level plantings.

He also explained that there have been discussions about designating the area along Lauchwood Drive as a medical district and defining this area as a unique area. He stated that in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century plan that the hospital and St. Andrews College are listed as amenities to bring people into the community.

He stated that there are funds in the Beautification line item to take care of North Main from the Railroad track back to the By-pass (e.g. decorating medians as other medians are in the downtown area). Another area is on South Main Street where Subs N Cream is located and back to the bridge (consider planting low growing vegetation).

He then explained that the Welcome to Laurinburg entrance signs are different types and the thought process is to make all signs identical. He stated that the City could make the signs depending on the type chosen.

A discussion ensued on funding the Beautification Committee's proposed projects and the proposed \$75,000.00 in the budget. The City Manager stated that he would compile a list of the proposed projects.

Following discussion, the City Manager stated that he will bring back to Council a list of changes to the proposed budget and a breakdown of where the monies are allocated.

Councilmember Leak suggested that instead of the \$75,000.00 for beautification that \$5,000.00 be allocated to the Beautification Committee.

There was consensus that \$5,000.00 be included in the proposed 2010-2011 budget for the Beautification Committee.

Councilmember Spencer suggested that all organizations that the City funds be required to come before Council and give a mid-year report on how monies have been disbursed.

The City Manager stated that he would inform those organizations to appear before Council during the April and May meetings to present their proposed budgets.

Councilmember Rainer suggested that the organizations appear before Council on a quarterly schedule to inform how monies have been disbursed and the plans for the next quarter. The City Manager stated that he would inform the organizations that they need to do so.

The City Manager explained that there is a \$35,000.00 loan repayment to the electric fund from the General Fund. He then explained that Council has the authority to discontinue that payment. He stated that the recommendation is to discontinue making the loan payment and divert the money to helping build up the City's reserves in the General Fund. This repayment is for funds used for the purchase of the roll-out carts and the demolition of the old hospital.

There was a consensus among Councilmembers to discontinue the loan repayment to the electric fund.

The City Manager then suggested that City employees receive a one time bonus of \$600.00. This is in lieu of any cost of living increase or merit raise. Employees have not received any increase in wages in the last two years.

A discussion ensued on employee bonuses and the disbursement schedule.

Motion was made by Councilmember Rainer, seconded by Councilmember Leak to allocate a \$600.00 bonus to each employee with a disbursement date of July 1, 2010. The motion passed by the following vote:

Ayes: Rainer, Spencer, Parker, Leak, Ellison

Nays: None

The City Manager continued to discuss the 2010-2011 proposed budget.

The City Manager stated that there is \$10,000.00 proposed for a new program that the Scotland County School System, Scotland County, and the City are trying to develop called the Open Gym Program. He explained that this will allow a gym to be open in Laurinburg (Johnson Middle School) as well as one in Wagram. It will provide year-round indoor recreational opportunities for various age groups. The program is being developed by Scotland County Parks and Recreation.

Upon question by Councilmember Parker, the City Manager explained that the City will participate in a portion of the cleanup at Johnson Middle School.

There was discussion regarding the \$10,000.00 that was allocated in the 2009-2010 budget for recreation. Mrs. Carpenter stated that that funding would need to be re-budgeted for the 2010-2011 proposed budget. There was consensus to re-budget the \$10,000.00. There was also consensus among Councilmembers to allocate an additional \$10,000.00 for recreation contingent on Scotland County participating.

Mayor Block recessed the meeting at 8:17 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 8:28 p.m.

Mrs. Carpenter presented the remaining non-departmental items for the Electric Fund and the Water-Sewer Fund.

## **STORYTELLING ART CENTER OF THE SOUTHEAST**

Mayor Block stated that he would like to discuss the request of \$7,500.00 from the Storytelling Art Center of the Southeast. He explained that traditionally the City had gotten away from funding non profit organizations. He then explained that if Council decided to fund this request it would be on solid ground since no other non profit has made a request to the City. He stated it would be arbitrary and unfair to fund this one particular non-profit organization without it being a change in direction from Council.

He stated that his recommendation is that as a Council and a City, we want to encourage entities such as this to bring economic development and cultural and social benefits to the City. He then stated that part of economic development of the City is to help entities such as the Storytelling Art Center who are established and creditable and successful.

He also suggested that Council consider in the upcoming year setting aside a certain amount of money to fund various non-profits or other entities such as the Literacy Council or Kuumba Festival and that Council establish an independent Board that would listen to requests. Requesting groups would have to submit a written request by a certain date and could be heard by an independent board with the board's recommendation given to Council.

He stated that Council identified as a goal at their retreat to be more involved with economic development. He explained that there is the Scotland County Economic Development Committee but that this would be more along the lines of helping with Economic Development within the City of Laurinburg.

He then stated that he felt that \$7,500.00 is a little expensive based on the amount of money given the Chamber for all it does. He explained that something in the range of \$5,000.00 would be acceptable.

Councilmember Rainer commented on Mrs. Schmidt's letter to Council which included a comment on the number of people who are brought downtown as a result of the storytelling center. Councilmember Rainer stated the City donates money to downtown improvements and the City also donates money to Scotland County for economic development. He feels that this would be double donations for the same purpose. He also stated that the entities that the City is already donating to should consider providing some assistance to this particular agency.

A discussion ensued on the Storytelling Arts Center for the Southeast and funding for non-profit organizations.

There was no decision at this time regarding non-profit organizations.

Mayor Block stated that it is the time of year for the City Manager's evaluation and that he would like to discuss the same in closed session at the next agenda meeting which will be June 15, 2010.

The City Manager informed Council that Dr. J. Michael Rush of Phoenix Development Group has requested to appear before Council at its June 15, 2010 agenda workshop to discuss the Newtown Project.

Councilmember Leak reminded Council that the agenda workshop is to discuss items that are to be considered for the regular meeting. He stated that if this group would like to appear before Council, they should come during a regularly scheduled meeting.

Following discussion, Councilmember Leak motioned that Dr. Rush and the Phoenix Development Group appear before Council at a regularly scheduled meeting in July, August, or September. Councilmember Rainer seconded the motion and it passed by the following vote:

Ayes: Leak, Ellison, Rainer, Spencer, Parker

Nays: None

**ADJOURNMENT**

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:59 p.m.

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Matthew Block, Mayor

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Dolores A. Hammond, City Clerk