

**CITY OF LAURINBURG
AGENDA WORKSHOP/RETREAT
JANUARY 9, 2012
W. CHARLES BARRETT ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
305 WEST CHURCH ST.
7:00 P.M.**

Minutes

The City Council of the City of Laurinburg held an agenda meeting/retreat on January 9, 2012, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. in the council room of the Municipal Building with the Honorable Thomas W. Parker, III, presiding. The following Councilmembers were present: Mary Jo Adams, Curtis B. Leak, Kenton Spencer and Andrew G. Williamson, Jr. Herbert M. Rainer, Jr. was the only member absent.

Also present were Edward F. Burchins, City Manager, Jennifer A. Tippett, City Clerk, and William P. Floyd, Jr., Assistant City Attorney.

Mayor Parker called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. Councilmember Spencer gave the invocation.

AGENDA

The City Manager reviewed the upcoming agenda for the January 17, 2012 regular meeting of City Council.

1. Resolution No. R-2012-02 honoring the Scotland High School Fighting Scots Football Team, the 2011 State 4A Champions
2. Consent Agenda
 - a) Minutes of the December 13, 2011 agenda workshop and retreat and the minutes of the December 20, 2011 regular meeting – provided they are ready

PUBLIC HEARINGS

3. Consider Ordinance No. O-2012-01 which rezones from Residential-6 and Residential-15 to Office/Institutional a 23 acre tract on Woodlawn
The City Manager explained that plans for this property are construction of a 99-bed nursing facility by Westminster Presbyterian Church and the facility will be operated by Century Care.

DELEGATION

4. Jo Ann Gentry, Interim Director, Laurinburg Maxton Airport (Item D)
Jo Ann Gentry will provide a report on activities at the Airport.

CITY MANAGER REPORTS

5. Consider Resolution No. R-2012-03 which amends Resolution No. R-2005-24, Procedures for Public Comment
Council decided to hold Public Comment at the beginning of the meeting instead of at the end.

6. Consider Resolution No. R-2012-04 adopting Language Access Plan
The Department of Commerce requires anyone seeking CDBG or any type of grant funds to adopt a Language Access Plan. There are several Spanish-speaking employees on staff.
7. Set public hearing for request for a Conditional Use Permit to operate a carnival at 900 US 401 Bypass from March 1, 2012 to March 11, 2012
This carnival has been held since 1995. Staff ensures the carnival complies with all State permits and that it is appropriately inspected.
8. Set public hearing for a request for a Conditional Use Permit for 64.78 acre tract of land off US 15-401 Bypass to operate a Solar Photovoltaic Array (Solar Farm)
Because the three-year time for beginning construction has lapsed, this conditional use permit must be requested again.
9. Consider Ordinance No. O-2012-02 amending the 2011-2012 Budget Appropriation Ordinance to extend sewer lines for the proposed Industrial Park
Greg Icard provided overview of proposed industrial park off US Highway 401. The City Manager explained that the City can supply water, sewer and electricity to the site. Budget amendment in the amount of \$26,000.00 for engineering services and materials to design sewer service to the property.
10. Consider Resolution No. R-2012-05 Adopting a Policy for Mutual Aid Assistance with Other Law Enforcement Agencies
The City has been working with other law enforcement agencies in the area and has used their officers and the other agencies would like to use the City's officers undercover. This resolution would allow the City to enter into mutual aid agreements with other agencies.
11. Consider Ordinance No. O-2012-03 amending Article II, Fire Prevention Code, Section 18-41 of the Code of Ordinances, City of Laurinburg
The City has a policy of upgrading its Fire Code consistent with the State Fire Code.

Upon question by Councilmember Spencer, the City Manager explained that staff would bring to the February meeting information regarding an ordinance change concerning the number of housing units allowed without a conditional use permit.

Councilmember Leak stated that the City should have staff involvement with the Chambers Green School Jam initiative.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Mayor Parker requested that if anything stands out in the Financial Report he would like the Finance Director to provide an explanation.

The Finance Director explained the following:

- Department 420, Administration, salary line item-percentage is at 58% because the retiring City Clerk had to be paid her vacation.

- Department 410, Governing Body-there are several one-time expenses such as dues to the League of Municipalities that have been paid.
- Department 564, Fueling Facility-the cost of fuel has caused this item to be a little out of line. She explained that all fuel is purchased by the City for the City and the County. She added that at the end of each month, the County is billed for its share.
- Department 660, Non-Departmental-Several expenses such as Chamber of Commerce, Laurinburg Downtown, Workers' Comp, and health insurance for retirees.

Upon question by Mayor Parker, the Finance Director explained that there were no line items that concerned her.

Upon question by Councilmember Leak, the Finance Director explained that until the individual hired to work Animal Control received his certification, his salary was not charged to Animal Control. She added that the officer has received his certification and his salary will be charged to Animal Control beginning with the next pay period.

The City Manager explained that Councilmember Spencer requested that Council consider participating in the National League of Cities Drug Prescription Card program.

Councilmember Spencer discussed the National League of Cities Drug Prescription Card program.

Mayor Parker advised the City Manager to put the National League of Cities Drug Prescription Card program on the agenda for Council's vote.

ITEMS FOR JOINT MEETING WITH COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Mayor Parker explained that the joint meeting is to build bridges between the City and the County. He added that the County is in a difficult budget situation.

Tax Consolidation

Mayor Parker explained that the tax consolidation is for the County to collect City taxes.

The City Manager explained that in the past a lot of research had been gathered in 2004, 2006 and 2009. He suggested that the information contained in the reports from those years be updated and develop a detailed plan that would evaluate the impacts.

Upon questions by Mayor Parker, the Finance Director explained that the agreement discussed previously with the County included a scalable collection fee. She added that the agreement the County has with the Town of Wagram includes the following fee scale:

- Collection of 96.75% of outstanding taxes, the fee due the County would be ½% of the ad valorem taxes

- Collection of 96.75% but less than 97.5% of outstanding taxes, the fee due the County would be 1%
- Collection of 97.5% or more of outstanding taxes, the fee due the County would be 1.5%

Councilmember Leak expressed concern that the tax collector's job includes duties other than collective property taxes.

The Finance Director explained that the tax collector is also responsible for enforcement and monitoring internet cafes and all business licenses, lot cutting collection, debt set-off, and gross receipts for rentals.

A discussion ensued concerning the history of discussions regarding consolidation of tax collection.

Mayor Parker explained that he requested that tax collection consolidation be considered again. He added that he felt the City could save about one-half cent on the tax rate.

A discussion ensued concerning the cost of taking payments by credit card.

Councilmember Spencer expressed concern that Council determine if the purpose in consolidating is to create a system that maximizes returns and provides efficient service for customers or if it is to cut costs. He stated that based on the figures presented, the City operates with more efficiency than the County on tax collections.

Councilmember Williamson explained that he would like to hear more information about tax consolidation and the pros and cons.

Upon question by Councilmember Adams, the Finance Director explained that the City has not had a Tax Collector since October.

The Finance Director explained that because the City and County use two (2) different systems, a decision will need to be made whether the delinquent taxes would be transferred to the County or kept by the City.

A discussion ensued concerning the tax collection rates for the City and the County. The Finance Director explained that if a citizen owed the County 2007 taxes but was current on City taxes and if tax consolidation is approved, by law, any payments must be applied to the oldest tax bill.

A discussion ensued concerning payment of taxes by credit cards. The Finance Director stated that she would get information regarding credit card usage and the fees paid by the City.

Information Technology (IT)

The City Manager explained that the City has been working with a private company through the first half of the current fiscal year on Information Technology (IT). He added that he and the County Manager had discussed consolidating City and County IT functions. He added that he recommended that the City continue using a private company for IT. He further explained that the County could also consider contacting with a private company. He added that that the City and County could experience some savings as well as obtaining better negotiations with vendors if consolidation occurs.

Following a brief discussion, it was consensus of Council to discuss consolidation of IT with the County.

Highway 74 Lighting Project

The City Manager explained that the County, after being asked, indicated that it was willing to consider participating in the Highway 74 Lighting Project. He added that because of legal restrictions, he was not sure if the County could participate in this project.

Mayor Parker explained that he had discussed this issue with the Chairman of the County Commissioners, Bob Davis, and requested some type of participation from the County.

Councilmember Leak expressed concern about the cost of the project and the level of participation by the Tourism Development Board (TDA).

Mayor Parker explained that he viewed the lighting project as making the area safer and more inviting as well as saving jobs in the establishments in the proposed areas to be lit.

A discussion ensued concerning financing options and the cost of the project. The City Manager explained that the electrical costs would be less than projected. He added that the City could pay for the utility costs from the General Fund and the capital expenses from the Electric Fund.

Councilmember Williamson explained that this project should be viewed as an economic development issue. He added that the project should be a collaborative effort between the City, the County, the TDA and the State.

A discussion ensued concerning tax increment financing and the determination of benefitted parties if the Lighting Project is completed.

Councilmember Adams explained that the presentation by Corey Hughes of the TDA discussed that the lighting project would be an economic development tool and provide a gateway into the City.

Mayor Parker explained that he had told County Chairperson Bob Davis that the City Council wanted some type of participation from the County in the Highway 74 Lighting Project.

A discussion ensued about Highway 74 lighting in Richmond County and in Whiteville. Councilmember Leak expressed concern about the lowered tax rate from 2010-2011 and the increase in expenditures.

Mayor Parker suggested that the City Manager look at the budget for 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 to determine how the Highway 74 Lighting Project would impact those budgets.

Law Enforcement

Mayor Parker explained that he would like to discuss trading of law enforcement coverage areas with the County. He added that the City wraps around East Laurinburg which does not have a police force. He further added that he was proposing that the City provide law enforcement coverage of Scotch Meadows and the Sheriff's Department provide law enforcement coverage of the part of the City that is beyond East Laurinburg.

Following discussion, Mayor Parker stated that he would strike this topic from the agenda for the joint meeting with the County Commissioners.

Water

Mayor Parker explained that he wanted to discuss consolidation of the City and County water systems, and then include Laurinburg-Maxton Airport along with other partners in a consortium to purchase the WestPoint water and sewer plants. He added that there is a possibility of selling water to Moore County, Maxton, Red Springs, and other entities that cannot afford the infrastructure. He added that if Campbell Soup Company needs sewer service, the consortium would be able to provide that service.

A lengthy discussion ensued concerning the Water Agreement with the County, the County Water Districts and the benefits of acquiring the WestPoint Stevens Plants and forming a water consortium.

A discussion ensued concerning the Water Agreement with the County and the need to make it more equitable for the City. The City Manager explained that the Water Agreement with the County is automatically renewable every five (5) years, and would be very difficult to change.

Planning, Zoning and Code Enforcement

The City Manager explained that he did not feel the City should consider consolidating Planning, Zoning and Code Enforcement with the County. He added that the County would like for the City to take over all the Planning, Zoning and Code Enforcement.

A discussion then ensued concerning the priority of consolidation topics. It was consensus of Council for the order to be as follows:

1. Information Technology
2. Planning, Zoning, Code Enforcement and mapping
3. Tax Collection
4. Water
5. Highway 74 Lighting Project

MEMORIAL FOR CHUCK HICKS

A discussion ensued concerning possible memorials for Chuck Hicks. The City Manager explained that the Planning Officer and the Landscape staff had a proposal that would be presented at the next work session.

There was no decision made concerning a memorial for Chuck Hicks.

OTHER

Councilmember Adams expressed concern about the lack of a pedestrian crosswalk at Scotland High School and a sidewalk along W. Church Street extending to the high school.

The City Manager explained that staff would investigate options for a crosswalk and sidewalk.

RECESS

Motion was made by Councilmember Spencer, seconded by Councilmember Leak, and unanimously carried to recess the meeting until Wednesday, January 11, 2012 at 12:00 p.m. in the lobby of the Laurinburg-Maxton Airport Commission located at 16701 Airport Road, Maxton, NC.

The meeting recessed at 9:05 p.m.

Thomas W. Parker, III, Mayor

Jennifer A. Tippet, City Clerk