

**CITY OF LAURINBURG  
SPECIAL MEETING  
APRIL 3, 2012  
MUNICIPAL BUILDING  
303 WEST CHURCH ST.  
6:30 P.M.**

**Minutes**

The City Council of the City of Laurinburg held a special meeting on April 3, 2012 at 6:30 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 (arrived at 6:54 p.m.), Herbert M. Rainer, Jr. (arrived at 6:35 p.m.), Kenton Spencer and Andrew G. Williamson, Jr.

Also present were Edward F. Burchins, City Manager; Jennifer A. Tippet, City Clerk; Cynthia B. Carpenter, Finance Director; Robert F. Bell, Jr., Human Resources/Risk Management Director; Kimothy Monroe, Police Captain; Robert Ellis, Treatment Plant Director; Ronald Pierce, Electric Utilities Director; Stacey McQuage, Public Utilities Director; Harold Haywood, General Services Director; Brandi C. Deese, Planning and Development Director; and Tim Pierce, GIS Administrator.

Mayor Parker called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Councilmember Williamson gave the invocation.

Mayor Parker explained that Council met the previous week to discuss the values and expectations Council wanted to see in the budget. He added that one of the main expectations discussed was to not increase taxes. He added that the last few budgets approved by Council did not have any consideration for employees except a bonus one (1) year and that it was his personal objective to try to do something for the employees provided the tax rate remains the same. He added that it was unfair to staff to make broad statements regarding the budget such as to reduce all budgets by 15%.

The City Manager explained that staff has been working on the budget and focusing on the base budget to present to Council. He added that he had sent a draft copy of a strategic plan to Council with broad goals. He then asked Mrs. Carpenter to provide a brief overview of the City's revenues and expenditures thus far in Fiscal Year 2011-2012.

The Finance Director discussed estimated revenue balances in the General Fund including property taxes and internet café fees.

Upon questions by Councilmember Spencer, Mrs. Carpenter explained that she thought that financially the City is where it should be at this point in the fiscal year. She added that there was nothing that was a major concern for her.

A discussion ensued concerning the Electric Fund and future anticipated rate increases in 2015. She explained that in 2010-2011 the City made money in the Electric Fund.

Upon question by Councilmember Spencer, the City Manager explained that the Automated Meter Reading System will be completed in July or August.

Mrs. Carpenter explained that the water meters were being installed first and that the contractor had begun to install the electric meters.

Upon question by Councilmember Spencer, Mr. Stacey McQuage explained that over 8,000 of the water meters had been installed thus far.

A discussion ensued regarding the possible revenue capture that may be experienced through the Automated Meter Reading System in Fiscal Year 2012-2013.

Mrs. Carpenter discussed the Water/Sewer Fund and explained in Wastewater Treatment there were some capital items that would not be completed this year and would be carried over into the next year.

Mrs. Carpenter then discussed the Solid Waste Fund.

Upon question by Councilmember Spencer, Mr. Harold Haywood explained that he had not heard from the County whether there would be any changes in tipping fees at the landfill. He added that the Landfill Costs had been decreased this year because the waste taken to the landfill had decreased because of an increase in recycling, commercial tonnage has decreased probably due to the economy, and that yard waste does not go the landfill.

Mrs. Carpenter explained that the Solid Waste Fees were increased last year and that if there is an increase in Tipping Fees from the County, the City would not have to pass any increase on to the citizens.

The City Manager stated that at the April agenda meeting, the Quarterly Financial Report would be presented to Council.

## **FY 2012-2013 BUDGET OVERVIEW**

### **Tax Department, Finance/Accounting, and Consumer Billing**

Mrs. Carpenter discussed the following:

#### **Tax Department**

Objective: To hire a qualified person to handle tax and revenue collection responsibilities.

Capital Needs: No capital needs expected but will need to continue travel for certifications in Tax Collections, Privilege Licenses and possible other revenue collection classes.

Finance/Accounting

Objective: To reduce the number of journal entries needed for audit. The goal is for accounting and the auditor to work together to meet the required deadline for audit and to have a clean audit.

Capital Needs: To install additional shelves in our record retention room to make storage more efficient in obtaining old records when needed. We anticipate this cost to be approximately \$1,500.

Consumer Billing (Water/Electric)

Objective: To become more familiar with the new Automatic Meter Reading System. To increase travel and cross training for Session Planning needs for nine employees.

Capital Needs: To update and change out computers at an approximate cost of \$3,000. To increase travel for Succession Planning purposes to \$1,000.

City Manager

Mr. Burchins discussed the following:

**Goal:** Establish processes to effectively community with City Council and all City Employees

**Objective:** Market City activities and programs more effectively

**Objective:** Continue working effectively with Staff, City Boards, and other entities as requested by City Council to implement priorities and action plan

**Objective:** Continue to see that citizen concerns which Councilmembers tell the City Manager about are handled in the best manner possible and report back to the Councilmembers and the citizen on how the matter has been handled

**Objective:** Continue to be fair in regard to City policies and procedures. Everyone should be required to abide by the policies

**Objective:** Keep Council informed on City Financial and Budget Materials and provide quarterly reports on Council generated tasks and projects as well as major Department projects

**Objective:** On a quarterly basis provide Council with up-to-date Organization Chart

**Objective:** Continue to make every effort to diversify our organization

Councilmember Leak requested an organizational chart.

### City Clerk

The City Clerk discussed the following:

**Goal:**

- Complete implementation of Laserfiche System  
**Objective:** Create Electronic Records Policy for Council consideration and adoption  
**Objective:** Prepare and submit to NC Department of Archives and History forms for permission to scan records  
**Objective:** Train employees to use Laserfiche System by the end of FY 2012-2013  
**Objective:** Begin process of scanning older documents (minutes, resolutions & ordinances) into the Laserfiche System to provide easier search option for all departments (Note: This will be accomplished over several years as time permits.)

**Goal:**

- To complete minutes from current meeting before the next regular scheduled Council meeting, dependent upon number of meetings in a month. Ensure that the minutes are an accurate record of meetings.

**Goal:**

- Manage the City's website to efficiently and effectively provide important and up-to-date information to our residents

**Goal:**

- Work closely with the City Manager to ensure the Mayor's and Council's needs are addressed in a timely manner

**Goal:**

- Be open and honest with the Mayor, Council and the public

### Police Department

A discussion ensued concerning Police Chief John Evan's absence from the meeting and that Captain Kimothy Monroe was representing the Police Department.

Mayor Parker stated that earlier he had informed Council, the City Manager and the Department Heads that for Council to arbitrarily give a figure that the budget should be cut was, in his opinion, not a fair charge to the City Manager and Department Heads. He added that he would like for the budget process to be non-adversarial because Council, the City Manager and the Department Heads are a team and needs to work together for the betterment of the citizens of Laurinburg.

Captain Monroe discussed the following:

- Reduce Calls for Service by 10 Percent in One Year. Captain Monroe briefly discussed several methods for addressing areas of specific concern such as focusing on drug-related issues, continuation of the Neighborhood Improvement Team, targeting and arresting known criminals with outstanding warrants, developing a crime map for high crime areas. He also discussed approaches and strategies, action implementation and monitoring the actions taken to accomplish this goal.
- Provide a Safe and Secure Community. Captain Monroe discussed focus on quality of life, the school liaison officers, analyzing crime trends and strategies to ensure Laurinburg is a safe and secure community.
- Efficient Infrastructure. Captain Monroe explained that a Space Utilization Study would be conducted.

Upon question by Councilmember Spencer, the City Manager explained that the Space Utilization Study was included in the current year's budget, but since it would not begin until possibly August, the funds would be carried over to FY 2012-2013.

Further discussion ensued concerning the Space Utilization Study for the Municipal Building (Police Department, Accounting/Finance, Human Resources and Customer Service) and possible grant funding or other sources of funding for renovation/construction.

Discussion then resumed concerning the Police Department FY 2012-2013 Budget. Captain Monroe explained that the Police Department was requesting five (5) new police cars to replace those with over 100,000 miles and requiring more maintenance. He added that equipment for the new vehicles would also need to be purchased.

Councilmember Rainer expressed concern regarding the unsolved murders. He stated that he would like to see substantial effort made to reduce the number of unsolved murders.

Captain Monroe explained that the Police Department has been working very hard to resolve the unsolved murders. He added that the Department is working closely with the State Bureau of Investigation (SBI) and that a lie detector test would be conducted on a suspect in one (1) of the cases.

Upon question by Councilmember Rainer, the City Manager explained that staff would provide the number of unsolved murders since 15-20 years.

### **Fire Department**

The City Manager discussed the following:

- Purchase of new pumper truck in current year

- When the ladder truck is paid off, a new pumper will need to be purchased by the City or the County
- Increased number of Fire Inspectors from one (1) to four (4).
- In 2011 made 131 inspections. Goal for FY 2012-2013 is to conduct between 300 and 400 inspections.
- Capital needs for FY 2012-2013 include a thermal camera and a fire hose washer and dryer.

Upon question by Councilmember Leak, the City Manager explained that the Fireman's Relief Fund is solid.

### **Planning and Development**

Mrs. Brandi Deese discussed the following:

#### **Highlights & Accomplishments**

- We have started to become more proactive on substandard housing by seeing that 2 houses were repaired and 7 have been demolished in 2012 so far
- Department Head graduated from Public Executive Leadership Academy at the School of Government and became a Dedman Fellow.

#### **Major Objectives**

- Become more proactive in enforcement measures specifically with substandard housing, junk vehicles and excess debris.
- Ensure severely dilapidated housing located on main thoroughfares are repaired or demolished this year.
- Continue to train new staff to learn Unified Development Ordinance and Enforcement Procedures and attend appropriate School of Government courses.

The City Manager explained that staff is researching a Community Development Block Grant for the Glen Acres and Newtown neighborhoods.

#### **Major Capital Improvements**

- No major capital improvements this year due to new staffing but will consider a comprehensive update of the Unified Development Ordinance in the 2013-2014 budget year.

### **Cemetery & Grounds Maintenance**

#### **Highlights & Accomplishments**

- Remake of the James Lot including proper irrigation (See attached Photos).
- Upgrade Landscaping in raised beds at Cemetery (See attached Photos).
- Remake of the Barrett Building Landscaping (Will complete before end of this budget).
- Tree City USA Designation.

### Major Objectives

- Continue to increase our level of service and provide a higher level of maintenance for City property and City Cemeteries.
- Obtain Urban and Community Forestry Grant from the North Carolina Forestry Service which will allow us to gain a tree inventory, maintenance plan and further educate staff.
- Become proactive in maintaining and removing large aging right-of-way trees (Increased budget by \$20,000).

### Major Capital Improvements

- Cemetery Expansion (Will be seeking Council's Direction during budget process)
- Begin Phase II of Cemetery update and upgrade (including repairs, remove dead trees/shrubs/landscaping & add citizen directory).
- Possibly make additional improvements/upgrades to Downtown area (Redo Planters?)

Upon question by Councilmember Leak, the City Manager explained that Laurinburg Downtown Revitalization Corporation (LDRC) would probably be asked to pay for replacement of the planters.

A discussion ensued concerning the amount spent with the contractor, Chances Tree Service. Mrs. Deese explained that the Grounds Maintenance Department had spent \$40,000.00 thus far with Chances Tree Service.

Mr. Ronald Pierce stated that he had \$60,000.00 in the Electric Department budget for Chances for trimming along electric lines.

Mrs. Carpenter stated that \$120,000.00 was included in the 2012-2013 budget for the tree contractor.

### **Human Resources**

Mr. Bob Bell discussed the following:

- Objective: To review Personnel Policy, update, make necessary changes and present to Council for approval.
- Objective: Administer new pay plan if adopted by City Council during budget process
- Objective: Update/Upgrade Evaluation System. Develop a Supervisory Employee Evaluation Training Program for the City for FY 2012-2013 to be implemented with a new/automated Employee Evaluation System

### **Risk Management**

- Objective: Continue to reduce the number of incidents and costs, as well as strive for no lost time injuries.
- Objective: Continue to monitor and reduce liability expenses.

Upon question by Councilmember Rainer, Mr. Bell explained that the last OSHA inspection which was a courtesy visit was approximately two (2) to three (3) years ago. He added that there were some improvements that had to be made such as emergency showers and eyewash stations in the Water/Wastewater Plant and chaining around the pit area in the garage.

Councilmember Rainer requested a copy of the official report.

Upon question by Councilmember Spencer, Mr. Bell explained that for the last five (5) years he provides a list to department heads of employees who are eligible to retire so that the department heads can plan for any vacancies. He added that the Management Team met and conducted a desktop exercise determining what would happen in the event of an emergency situation with key personnel.

Mayor Parker stated that he had spoken with the Mayor of Salisbury regarding a Succession Plan. He was told that Salisbury which has 450 employees does not have a Succession Plan.

Councilmember Leak stated that he would like to see a written Succession Plan. He expressed concern about filling vacancies from the outside rather than from inside the organization.

Further discussion ensued concerning succession planning and values of the organization. The City Manager explained that the City was partnering with the Chamber and several private businesses for the New Generations Grant which will allow five (5) interns to be hired, and Richmond Community College will provide the training for the interns. He added that the age group involved is between 16 and 30.

Upon question by Councilmember Adams, Mrs. Deese explained that she had trained for a year and a half (1 ½) with Mr. Bill Peele prior to his retirement to assume his position.

### GIS

Mr. Tim Pierce, GIS Administrator, discussed the following:

- **Budget Needs**
  - Work within same budget numbers as 2011-2012
  - Slight increases in automotive supplies due to gas prices
  - Increase in phone budget – added cell service
  
- **Capital Needs**
  - Replace six (6) year old computer tower. The older computer will be used by the Planning Department.

- ***Goals/Projects***

Within this budget, look at using a host for GIS Website

1. Security reasons
2. Server usage/prolong service of existing server
3. Offsite storage of data

ESRI software would be reduced and Withers and Ravenel web software would not have to be used. Therefore, the Contracted Service budget would be increased and there would be a slight deduction for the total cost of them hosting the City's website.

Electric system inventory

Cemetery expansion

Mr. Pierce added that the tree inventory will be added to the GIS system, and he is looking for additional ways to implement GIS in other departments. He further added that the cemetery records are now on the public GIS site so that individuals can research burials.

Upon question by Councilmember Williamson, Mr. Ronald Pierce explained that the consultant anticipates that the Pole Attachment Agreement with Time Warner should be ready by July 1, 2012.

A discussion ensued concerning storage for the GIS server.

### **Public Utilities**

Mr. McQuage discussed the following:

#### *Streets and Storm Drainage*

- Increased Utilities Cost to cover the cost of new lights on streets and the Highway 74 Interchange Project.
- Increased cost of materials due to high cost of asphalt
- Equipment Replacement includes a truck, backhoe and a small mower to trim right-of-ways
- Included \$100,000 for street resurfacing

The City Manager explained that drainage issues will be looked at closely, such as the area on Lauchwood Drive Councilmember Rainer had mentioned at a prior meeting. He added that GIS will be utilized to identify low-lying areas to determine drainage issues in those areas.

Mr. McQuage explained that earlier in the day, crews had destroyed nine (9) beaver dams and cleaned up trash at the ditch on Lauchwood Drive.

#### *Garage*

- Equipment Replacement includes a fork lift.
- Need additional floor space in the shop. Will make shop more efficient and allow quicker turnaround on equipment repairs.

Councilmember Leak explained that he would prefer the money allotted for garage expansion be used for street resurfacing since the City has some dirt streets.

Upon question by Councilmember Adams, Mr. McQuage explained that six (6) years ago a study of the City's streets was conducted to rate the streets on need for resurfacing. He added that the study is getting outdated and a new study will need to be conducted soon.

Upon question by Councilmember Spencer, the City Manager explained that materials other than asphalt could be used for pathways and bike lanes.

#### *Distribution and Collection*

- Equipment Replacement includes a truck and a valve inserting tool to be used downtown

#### *Cross Connection*

- Equipment Replacement includes a truck

#### **General Services**

Mr. Harold Haywood discussed the following:

#### *Building Maintenance*

- Improve the appearance, especially areas of high public traffic
- Replace a heat pump at the Barrett Building. All four need to be replaced and they will be replaced one a year.
- Space Needs Study

#### *Public Works Administration*

- Upgrade the two-way radio system as required by FCC regulations to convert to a narrow band frequency by January 2013

Following a brief discussion, Mr. Haywood explained that he would evaluate whether it would be less expensive for the City to utilize cell phones instead of a two-way radio system.

- Convert work order program to include the fleet work order system to provide better vehicle cost tracking and parts inventory information. Combine inventory

of Water, Sewer, Electric and Streets into the Munis financial package to improve the audit processes

- Improve inventory control system by centralizing part of the procurement and warehouse control processes

A discussion ensued concerning inventory requirements.

#### *Fueling Facility*

- Provide adequate fuel supply at the best possible cost to the City and County fleet.

#### *Building Maintenance – Public Works*

- Maintain and improve the appearance of the current Public Works buildings and facilities
- Replace ice machine, heat pump in the break room and a floor buffer
- Renovate the break room, restrooms and conference room

#### *Sanitation*

- Continue to provide high quality of solid waste services in cost-effective manner
- Replace automated side loader (to be financed)
- Increase efficiency of Recycling Program by increasing participation through aggressive education and enforcement activities. Applied for grant to install RFID tag reader on recycling truck to allow collection of statistical data from collection routes.

Upon question by Councilmember Leak, Mrs. Carpenter stated that she would provide a breakdown of indebtedness.

#### *Electrical Services*

Mr. Ronald Pierce discussed the following:

- \$450,000 to continue residential street lighting upgrade, street lighting upgrade on South Main Street from Tucker to Lauchwood
- Replaced large pad mount transformers and materials for line construction poles, hardware and pole mounted transformers
- Replacement of 1996 line foreman utility body pickup
- Upgrade SCADA system and change provider to eliminate the annual service contract cost and provide backup for both Electric and Water systems.
- Increase Equipment line item due to increased cost of meters for the Automated Meter Reading System

At 8:15 p.m. Councilmember Rainer left the meeting.

### **Fiber Optics**

The City Manager explained that MCNC, a non-profit organization, is running a fiber line from Charlotte to Wilmington. He further added that the demand for wireless broadband has increased such that many states are curtailing the use of broadband because the demand cannot be met. The City's electric engineering consultant, McGavran Engineering, will study whether the City can tap into MCNC's fiber system by preparing a business plan.

Mr. Ronald Pierce explained that the City would be a dark fiber provider to allow commercial customers to connect to MCNC's system. He added that the City's system currently has 96 strand fiber outside the City and 36 strand fiber inside the City.

### **WATER PRODUCTION AND TREATMENT**

Mr. Robert Ellis discussed the following:

#### **Major Goals and Capital Needs**

- Complete Raw Water Hydraulic Modeling with Willis Engineering
  - This will help determine the number of supply wells needed to provide adequate water to our citizens for years to come
  - Identify hydraulic issue if the City and Laurinburg-Maxton Airport merge water systems
- Identify and correct the high turbidity issues with Filter #3

### **WASTEWATER TREATMENT**

Mr. Robert Ellis discussed the following:

#### **Major Goals and Capital Needs**

- Complete wastewater flow analysis at the Bridge Creek interceptor to eliminate sewer overflows at Bridge Creek Pump Station
- Develop option to solve overflow problems
- Begin design of selected option
- Identify financial options
  - Grants
  - Borrowing (installment purchase)
  - Bonds

The City Manager thanked Council for their questions during the presentation.

Following a brief discussion, it was consensus of Council for the budget to be prepared for Council's review. The City Manager stated that the budget would be presented to Council in May.

**ADJOURNMENT**

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:49 p.m.

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Thomas W. Parker, III, Mayor

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Jennifer A. Tippett, City Clerk