

**CITY OF LAURINBURG
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
FEBRUARY 16, 2016
MUNICIPAL BUILDING
303 WEST CHURCH ST.
7:00 p.m.**

Minutes

The City Council of the City of Laurinburg held its regular meeting on Tuesday, January 19, 2016 in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building at 7:00 p.m. with the Honorable Mary Jo Adams, Mayor Pro Tem, presiding. The following Councilmembers were present: Dolores A. Hammond, Curtis B. Leak, Andrew G. Williamson, Jr. and J.D. Willis. Absent was Mayor Matthew Block, MD.

Also present were Charles D. Nichols III, City Manager; Jennifer A. Tippett, City Clerk; and William P. Floyd, Jr., City Attorney.

Mayor Pro Tem Adams called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Councilmember Willis requested a moment of silence and he then led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Pro Tem Adams explained that at Council's retreat held on February 12, 2016, Mayor Matthew Block told her that he would not be present at this meeting.

Motion was made by Councilmember Willis, seconded by Councilmember Leak, and unanimously carried that due to the absence of the Mayor, Mayor Pro Tem shall have any and all of the powers of the Mayor regarding matters to come before Council on February 16, 2016.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Councilmember Willis moved to amend the agenda by removing Item 11, Appointment to Scotland County Economic Development Corporation Board of Directors, from the agenda until such time as the Mayor is present. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Williamson.

Following discussion, Councilmember Willis amended the motion to include that Mayor Pro Tem Adams serve as an interim member of the Scotland County Economic Development Board of Directors (EDC) until the vacancy on the EDC has been filled. Councilmember Williamson seconded the amended motion, and it carried unanimously.

Motion was made by Councilmember Hammond, seconded by Councilmember Williamson, and unanimously carried to approve the agenda as amended.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Mr. Michael Schmidt appeared before Council to express concern about the proposed city hall

and police station. He cited the cost of the proposed building and the possibility of higher taxes and utility costs as his primary concerns. He recommended that Council have a special meeting to hear citizen input on the matter.

Ms. Mary Evans appeared before Council and expressed concern about the crime rate, the need for programs and jobs for youth, the condition of downtown, dilapidated buildings in the City and the need for citizen input on the proposed new city hall and the possibility of Council raising taxes or utilities to pay for the proposed building.

Mr. Michael Edds appeared before Council and expressed concern about the following: the proposed new city hall and police department; high crime rate; gang activity; empty buildings downtown; high unemployment and the need for job training; and high taxes and utility rates. He also discussed the lack of a recreation center for youth to engage in constructive activities. He discussed the role of the Mayor as discussed in the Council retreat on February 12, 2016.

Ms. Wanda Bethea appeared before Council and expressed concern about the need to work with the younger generation and for Council to implement something to give the youth something to do.

Mr. Robert Currie appeared before Council and suggested that one of the many empty buildings in the community could be converted into something useful. He cited the former Abbott Building that could be used as a recreation center and for government functions except the police department which could remain in the current city hall.

Mr. James Ward of 12401 Huntington Drive appeared before Council and expressed opposition to the proposed new city hall. He also discussed recent increases in water and sewer rates and solid waste fees. He questioned where council meetings would be held during construction of a new facility.

Mr. Woody Pierce of 12740 Antler Circle appeared before Council and expressed concern about the patronage of businesses outside of the county instead of local businesses. He added that he did not believe that citizens in the City and County could pay higher taxes.

Mr. Joe Davis of 113 East Vance Street appeared before Council and explained that he had listened to the concerns expressed by citizens, and he challenged Council to make sure this is the correct season to build a new city hall and police station.

CONSENT AGENDA

The City Manager presented the Consent Agenda as follows:

- a) Consider minutes of December 16, 2015 special meeting; December 22, 2015 organizational meeting; December 22, 2015 regular meeting; and January 12, 2016 special meeting/work session
- b) Consider Resolution No. R-2016-01 Resolution of Intent to Reimburse for the New City Hall Project

- c) Consider setting public hearing on March 22, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. to consider a request for a conditional use permit to operate a carnival at 1681 S. Main Street
- d) Consider Approving the Releases, Discoveries and Adjustments to the 2015 Tax Levy

Councilmember Leak moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Councilmember Hammond seconded the motion, and it was approved by the following vote:

Ayes: Leak, Hammond, Willis, Adams, Williamson

Nays: None

DELEGATIONS

Ms. Aku Oyata-Festival and Street Closing

Ms. Aku Oyata appeared before Council and thanked Council for passing the resolution for the Laurinburg-Tema Sister City Project in the prior year. She explained that she was seeking Council's support and endorsement for Tema Fest, a festival that will be operated under the auspices of the African-American Cultural Association of Scotland County (AACCS). She further explained that the festival will be held Labor Day weekend, September 3 and 4, 2016. She further added that the festival will focus on African American culture, literature, history and other activities. She added that the mission of the festival is three-fold: 1) Market the City of Laurinburg; 2) Have a positive economic impact on downtown; and 3) Enhance the pride of citizens. She requested street closures as follows: Atkinson Street from West Church Street to Roper Street; Cronly Street from Main Street to Everett Street; and Fairley Street from Main Street to Everett Street between the hours of 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on September 3, 2016 and from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on September 4, 2016. She further added that the space was needed to accommodate all of the festival goers and vendors. She further explained that the committee would be happy to meet quarterly with Council to provide updates on progress made for the festival.

Upon question by Councilmember Leak, Mr. Terrence Williams explained that the committee would be meeting with the Police Chief, the Sheriff and with the Highway Patrol for security. He added that the committee would include the cost for off-duty officers in its budget once those costs are determined.

Upon question by Councilmember Hammond, Mr. Williams explained that the committee had been planning the festival since December and needed a response from Council as soon as possible to complete plans. He added that if there were any questions or additional information required, to please let Ms. Oyata or himself know.

Councilmember Hammond explained that Council had just received the proposal and she wanted to read the proposal before taking action. She suggested that a decision could be provided at the March 22, 2016 meeting.

Councilmember Leak suggested that Ms. Oyata and Mr. Williams should come to the March 15, 2016 special meeting/work session also.

There was no action taken on this request.

Mr. Robert Macy-Update on Scotland County Reentry Council

Mr. Robert Macy, Chairman of the Scotland County Reentry Council, provided an update on the purpose and activities of the Reentry Council. He invited Council to attend the second annual Community Awareness Day being held on March 18, 2016 at the National Guard Armory from 9:00 a.m. to noon. He explained that the Community Awareness Day is a chance for citizens to become familiar with resources available to assist families and those reentering society after incarceration.

At 7:47 p.m., Mayor Pro Tem Adams recessed the meeting for a short break.

The meeting resumed at 7:52 p.m.

Creech & Associates-Complete Schematic Design Submittal on Proposed New City Hall and Police Station

Mr. David Creech of Creech & Associates explained that he and his associates were pleased to update Council and citizens on the preliminary design for the proposed new city hall and police station.

Mr. Brent Green presented a PowerPoint and discussed the design layout as amended by concerns expressed previously by Council concerning Customer Service Department drive-thru and parking. Highlights of the presentation were as follows:

- Preserve 50 foot buffer from the street.
- Preserve major existing trees.
- Police parking is separated from other parking and is located on the southwest corner of the property.
- There are 89 parking spaces in the general parking area and 18 secured spaces, for a total of 107 which exceeds requirements of the Unified Development Ordinance and preserves the park area at the rear of the property.
- Dumpster relocated.
- The layout allows for stacking of 15 vehicles for the drive-thru.
- Investigated parallel parking on Everett Street and determined it was not necessary.
- During construction the existing municipal building would be occupied and used. Only the personnel in the Barrett Building would have to be relocated.
- With relocation of police parking, the interior floor plan flipped to provide staff entrance separate from secure police areas.
- The interior space will be reexamined and vetted with each department to ensure that adequate space is provided.
- The first floor includes a lobby, police functions and customer services.
- The second floor includes lobby, council chambers, conference room and the remainder of departmental functions.

- The proposed city hall and police station is approximately 22,000 square feet in size.
- Council reviewed three (3) elevation options and overwhelmingly preferred Option A which is federalist style with one main door and windows on each side of the door.
- No flat roofing. Roofs will be low slope fully

Upon question by Councilmember Leak, Mr. Green explained that a 20-30 foot buffer would be maintained between the residence located on the west side and the apartment complex on the southwest side.

CITY MANAGER REPORTS

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Mr. Teddy Warner, Community Development Director, presented a PowerPoint presentation to provide updates on the following:

- Art Garden Update
 - 10 sculptures ready to be painted and 5 more completed by end of semester.
 - Sidewalk plan developed.
 - Community can be involved by donating materials for the students to use in their sculptures.
- Scotland High School Fruit Orchard
 - Planting will be done on Earth Day, April 22nd.
 - Students and faculty are involved.
- Greenspace Update
 - Preliminary plans have been submitted by McGill Associates.
 - Additional planning being done by Community Development Staff for our 2016-2017 budget discussions.
 - Staff will recommend most cost effective plan in budget discussions with City Council.
- Retail Development Project
 - Plans include retail development on Scotland Crossings Road on City owned land.
 - Community Development Department has partnered with McGill Associates for costs to run sewer to the property and preliminary analysis has been done for sewer options and costs.
 - Additional planning being done by Community Development and Public Works Staff for our 2016-2017 budget discussions.
 - Staff will recommend most cost effective plan during budget discussions.

The City Manager explained that McGill Associates discovered that the sewer line could be extended along Scotland Crossing Drive instead of connecting sewer from behind the property. He added that this route will be much less expensive and can be done in-house.

CONSIDER RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING ASSISTANCE FROM CITY OF LUMBERTON ELECTRIC DEPARTMENT

The City Manager explained that this resolution recognizes the assistance received from the City of Lumberton electric crews during the ice storm. He added that he had personally thanked the City Manager and Electric Director, and that he recommended approval of the resolution.

Councilmember Williamson moved to approve Resolution No. R-2016-02 Recognizing Assistance from the City of Lumberton's Electric Department. Councilmember Willis seconded the motion, and it was approved by the following vote:

Ayes: Williamson, Willis, Adams, Leak, Hammond

Nays: None

(Resolution No. R-2016-02 on file in City Clerk's office)

DISCUSSION OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND CONTRIBUTION TO SCOTLAND COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

The City Manager explained that this item was on the agenda at the request of a Councilmember.

Councilmember Willis explained that at the January meeting, Council discussed the City's contribution to the Scotland County Economic Development Corporation (EDC) and the fact that the EDC had been without a Director for a year and a half.

Councilmember Willis moved to reallocate \$20,000.00 of the FY 2015-2016 EDC funds to the Community Development Department for projects inside the City limits and for downtown revitalization projects. He added that this does not mean that the City is pulling out of the EDC and this will be discussed during FY 2016-2017 budget discussions.

The motion was seconded by Councilmember Williamson.

Councilmember Leak expressed concern that the EDC is a partnership between the City and Scotland County (County). He explained that he believed that if the City is going to be a partner, then it should provide all of the \$32,000.00 funding to the EDC. He added that the EDC still meets and projects are also in progress even without a Director. He further added that the EDC is seeking a Director.

Upon question by Councilmember Hammond, the City Attorney explained that there was nothing in the EDC by-laws concerning the financial contribution requirement.

Councilmember Williamson explained that Councilmembers have expressed frustration with the partnership in that it is not working as well for the City as was hoped. He added that Councilmember Willis' motion involved only \$20,000.00 one-time contribution withholding. He further added that citizens expect the City Council to do more towards economic development than be a member of the EDC and for City Council to be proactive to draw investment and jobs into the community. He further explained that he believes the major purpose of the EDC is to recruit industry; however, Council has recognized that there are forms of economic development which Council and staff are attempting to do. He added that if the

County has concerns about this action, then it is a good time to revisit what Council is doing to grow the City.

Councilmember Leak expressed concern about withholding \$20,000.00 from the EDC. He explained that the EDC is effective.

Councilmember Willis explained that when the EDC was begun, the County set aside \$500,000.00 to be used for economic development and incentives to help lure industries into the County. He added that the County budgeted to pay for the salary of the EDC Director. He further added that when the County asked the City to partner with the County, the County said that retail development would be stressed. He discussed the economic development summit held several months ago with different stakeholders in the community, it was decided at that time that the County and the EDC were not the only entities in the community responsible for economic development. He added that it was decided that the County would focus heavily on industrial recruitment. He further stated that he commented that the City should focus on retail recruitment.

Mayor Pro Tem Adams discussed the infrastructure expenditures by the City at the Industrial Park. She added that she feels that the City is a partner with the County on economic development. She further added that since there has been no EDC Director for almost two (2) years, she agreed with Councilmember Willis that \$20,000.00 of the City's EDC contribution should be withheld.

Councilmember Leak explained that the Industrial Park is the City's, not the County's. He added that the EDC is interviewing for a Director the following week. He further added that the City needs to work with the County.

Following further discussion, Mayor Pro Tem Adams suggested that the \$20,000.00 be put into Contingency so that if needed, the money is available, and if a Director hired, Council could revisit this matter.

Following further discussion, Councilmember Hammond moved to amend the motion to park the \$20,000.00 in Contingency, and if the EDC needs the funds, the County can submit a request.

Mayor Pro Tem Adams seconded the amendment to the previous motion.

Councilmember Williamson explained that Councilmember Hammond and Mayor Pro Tem Adams have discussed expanding the membership of the EDC, and based upon their recommendations, Council has proposed amended by-laws. He added that since there had been no action taken on the amended by-laws by the County, perhaps this might be the opportune time to determine the next steps for the EDC.

Councilmember Leak explained that Councilmember Hammond and Mayor Pro Tem Adams are not members of the EDC Board. He added that the amended by-laws are being reviewed by the County's attorney.

The City Manager explained that the proposed amended by-laws add four (4) ex-officio members to the EDC - the Laurinburg-Maxton Airport Commission Director, the Laurinburg/Scotland County Area Chamber of Commerce Director, the Workforce Development Solutions Manager, and a representative from Richmond Community.

Mayor Pro Tem Adams explained that the proposed amended by-laws have not been adopted and the by-laws are currently with the County attorney and have been for several months.

Mayor Pro Tem Adams called for a vote on the amended motion, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Hammond, Adams, Willis and Williamson

Nays: Leak

The City Manager clarified that Council wanted staff to pay the County \$12,000.00 of the \$32,000.00 invoiced by the County for the EDC.

Councilmember Leak suggested that the City Manager contact the County Manager and the Chairman of the EDC to inform them of Council's action.

Mayor Pro Tem Adams suggested that this would also be a good time to request a meeting with the County Commissioners.

Councilmember Willis moved to authorize the City Manager to pay \$12,000.00 to Scotland County for its contribution to the EDC. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Williamson, and the vote was 4-1 with Councilmember Leak casting the dissenting vote.

AUTHORIZE THE TAX COLLECTOR TO ADVERTISE TAX LIENS THE WEEK OF MARCH 7-11, 2016

Ms. Diana Chavis, Tax Collector, explained that according to North Carolina General Statute 105-369a, the municipal tax collector must report to the governing board the total of unpaid taxes for the current fiscal year that are liens on real property. She added that as of today the outstanding taxes owed is \$261,798.40. She requested that Council authorize her to advertise tax liens the week of March 7-11, 2016.

Upon question by Councilmember Willis, Ms. Chavis explained that she had contacted everyone on the list by letter and had made phone calls to businesses and accounts owing a lot of money.

Motion was made by Councilmember Hammond, seconded by Councilmember Willis, and unanimously carried to authorize the Tax Collector to advertise tax liens the week of March 7-11, 2016.

APPOINTMENTS

LUMBER RIVER COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Councilmember Leak moved to postpone this appointment until such time as the Mayor is present. Councilmember Williamson seconded the motion.

Following discussion, the motion and second were withdrawn.

Following further discussion, motion was made by Councilmember Williamson, seconded by Councilmember Willis, and unanimously carried to appoint Mary Jo Adams to the Lumber River Council of Governments Board of Directors.

Motion was made by Councilmember Leak, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Adams, and unanimously carried to appoint Dolores A. Hammond as the Alternate member to the Lumber River Council of Governments Board of Directors.

LAURINBURG/SCOTLAND COUNTY AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Mayor Pro Tem recognized Mr. Chris English, Executive Director of the Laurinburg/Scotland County Area Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. English explained that the first airing of "On the Road with Cecil" would be tomorrow, February 17, 2016 at noon. He added that the series will promote Laurinburg and Scotland County.

COMMENTS FROM MAYOR AND/OR COUNCILMEMBERS

There were no comments made.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Councilmember Willis, seconded by Councilmember Hammond, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:56 p.m.

Matthew Block, MD, Mayor

Jennifer A. Tippet, City Clerk