

APPROVED MAY 22, 2018

**CITY OF LAURINBURG
SPECIAL MEETING/
CITIZEN INPUT SESSION
FEBRUARY 27, 2018
A. B. GIBSON BUILDING
322 S. MAIN ST.
LAURINBURG, NC
6:00 P.M.**

Minutes

The City Council of the City of Laurinburg held a special meeting/Citizen Input Session on February 27, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. in the board room of the A. B. Gibson Building located at 322 South Main St., Laurinburg, NC with the Honorable Matthew Block, MD, Mayor, presiding. The following Councilmembers were present: Mary Jo Adams, Mary Evans, James J. Garby, Jr. Curtis B. Leak, and Andrew G. Williamson, Jr.

Also present were Charles D. Nichols III, City Manager, and Jennifer A. Tippet, City Clerk. Leadership Team members present included: Robert Ellis, Treatment Plants Director; Harold Haywood, General Services Director; Stacey McQuage, Public Utilities Director; Jason Lighthall, Electric Services Director; Tim Pierce, GIS Administrator; Carrie H. Neal, Finance Director; Darwin Williams, Police Chief; Randy Gibson, Fire Chief; Michael Mandeville, Community Development Director; Betty Galloway, Human Resources/Risk Management Director; and Angela Taylor, Administrative Support Assistant.

Mayor Block called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

Councilmember Evans gave the invocation.

Mayor Block introduced Council and welcomed attendees.

The City Manager introduced the members of the Leadership Team.

REVIEW OF 2017 CITIZEN INPUT RESULTS

The City Manager explained that the City Clerk compiles the results from the Citizen Input Session each year to present to Council for review during the budget process. He added that this year, he would be presenting the input from last year with the items addressed which staff categorized according to topic. He gave a PowerPoint Presentation and reviewed the results of the 2017 Citizen Input Session as follows:

- Out of the 88 item listed, the City addressed 30 with items and action as shown on the following page:

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CITIZEN INPUT SESSION 2017	
<u>FOLLOW-UP/ACTION</u>	
CRIME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two additional police officers hired • Installed 10 Tsunami cameras • Gang Unit fully staffed • LEADS Online implemented • Currently awaiting results from Pay/Class Study to determine if wages are competitive for our area
APPEARANCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hired contractor to pick up litter in areas identified by City staff (40 hours per week) - 5740 lbs (2.87 tons) picked up thus far • Included funding in FY 18 budget for ongoing demolition/live burn program of condemned houses
CITY INFRASTRUCTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changed out street lights to LED lights which are brighter and more cost efficient • Added street lights on South Main Street • Engineering consultant conducted storm drainage study • In process of writing storm drainage policy • Pilot project with Skyrunner/ they are to start installing equipment 2/14/2018 • Started 2nd Electric Substation Project • Resurfacing project going out for bids in the next few weeks • Pedestrian improvements at US 401/West Blvd • Budgeted fencing at Water Plant • Cameras installed at Electric Switching Station/Water Treatment Plant/Waste water Treatment Plant/ Public Works
MARKETING/COMMUNICATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • REBRANDING effort (Website and Facebook) • Hired PIO/Downtown Manager • City has posted information on city's website/Facebook informing residents of the availability of mulch from the city's new yard waste processing program. Also sent information through the city's quarterly newsletter that goes out with the utility bills. Will increase efforts.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member of Downtown Associates Program and will be a Main Street City July 2018 - City receives guidance and will have more grant opportunities • Developed strategic plan and presenting contract to Council in Feb, 2018 for retail strategies/recruitment efforts • Under contract for development of conceptual plan to convert space behind walk-through into civic space/parking/greenscape
OTHER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees given 3% COLA, and funded pay and class study for FY 18 budget (currently underway) • Presenting accomplishments at Feb. 27, 2018 Public Input Session • New City Hall construction underway, scheduled to be completed Feb, 2019 • Construction of Fire substations underway, one on city property with city offering in-kind services • Currently awaiting results from Pay/Class Study to determine if wages are competitive for our area • Decoys installed on AT&T tower and other locations in town to scare off Turkey Vultures

The City Manager explained that every year the results are compiled and presented to Council for consideration during budget discussions. He added that next year, the City will follow-up on items that were addressed from this year.

SMALL GROUP BUDGET DISCUSSIONS AND PRIORITIZATION

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The City Manager explained that the process, as had been in previous years, would be for the attendees to break into small groups for brainstorming and then prioritization of items that they wanted Council to consider for budgeting.

The attendees broke into four (4) groups with a Leadership Team member assigned as the scribe for each group table. Following approximately 30 minutes of discussion, the results from each group were presented as follows:

GROUP ONE

RANK	ITEM
1	Research Boys/Girls Club for City
2	Utilities/price
3	Control gangs in City
4	Vacant “old” buildings
5	Litter/education/extend contract hours
6	Vacant – Basketball Goals - Rehab

GROUP TWO

RANK	ITEM
1	Better marketing of Christmas parade and festivities in December (Ex. Downtown area)
2	Hospitality services to new community members (Ex. Welcome Wagon/Volunteers) Newcomers Club
3	Better Angels Program (better unification)
4	District town hall meetings
5	Expanding of Beautification

GROUP THREE

RANK	ITEM
1	Enterprise Zones – Tax incentives for new businesses (i.e.) Rockingham) – expand/build on what we have
2	Need more staff for EMS (more EMT’s)
3	Facilities in city limits for giving children something to do – possible partnerships with school system – children mentoring programs
4	Need a YMCA in city limits – something more for kids to do
5	How do we increase volunteerism for youth programs – combine efforts with the use of vacant buildings such as schools
6	Homeless population – What kind of facility would we need to address this – services to offer?
7	Utility rates need to come down! This affects our retirement community status. Need to be creative!
8	How do we engage our community more?
9	Beautification issues – (i.e.) overgrown grass in right of ways and curbs – trash/litter along streets – need to address this more!

GROUP FOUR

RANK	ITEM
1	Lower utility rates
2	Lower crime
3	Need jobs
4	Need unity – come together
5	Landlord accountability
6	The elderly

Mayor Block explained that what he heard tonight was that there were no complaints about City services such as water, sewer, and electric, the core functions of a municipality. He added that it seemed that citizens were asking the City to take a more active role in improving the quality of life. He thanked the citizens for participating.

Councilmember Garby thanked attendees and explained that he looks forward to seeing the issues addressed.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Councilmember Williamson, seconded by Councilmember Evans, and unanimously carried to adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Matthew Block, MD, Mayor

Jennifer A. Tippett, City Clerk