

**CITY OF LAURINBURG  
CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
FEBRUARY 18, 2020  
CITY HALL AND POLICE DEPARTMENT  
303 WEST CHURCH ST.  
7:00 p.m.**

**Minutes**

The City Council of the City of Laurinburg held its regular meeting on Tuesday, February 18, 2020 in the Council Chambers of the City Hall and Police Department at 7:00 p.m. with the Honorable James T. Willis, Mayor, presiding. The following Councilmembers were present: Mary Jo Adams, Mary Evans, James J. Garby, Jr., Donald Rainer, and Andrew G. Williamson, Jr.

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

Mayor Willis called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Councilmember Rainer gave the Invocation and then led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

**PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

Mr. Michael Edds, 1207 Blue Drive, discussed the flooding issue on Blue Drive.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Mayor Willis reviewed the Consent Agenda:

- A. Consider minutes of October 22, 2019 regular meeting; November 19, 2019 regular meeting; December 17, 2019 organizational meeting; and December 17, 2019 regular meeting

Councilmember Adams moved to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Garby, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Adams, Garby, Rainer, Evans, Williamson  
Nays: None

**DELEGATION**

## **TIS THE SEASON FOLLOW-UP – MRS. TERRY PARKER**

Mrs. Terry Parker of Tis the Season explained that Tis the Season was requesting the same level of funding as the previous year, \$7,500.00, in order to continue expanding the lights onto side streets and possibly down Church Street or further north on Main Street. Mr. Jason Lighthall, Electric Services Director will research the extension of lights because the City would need to install electric boxes for the lights.

Upon question by Mayor Willis, the City Manager explained that the Downtown Parking Project would be completed by the Christmas season.

Mrs. Parker explained that Tis the Season had ordered more trees in order to decorate the parking area.

Mrs. Parker explained that she had received verbal approval from the North Carolina Department of Transportation (DOT) to hang a large Christmas decoration across Main Street, similar to what was done in the 1960's or 1970's. She added that Tis the Season planned to purchase a decoration this year to place across Main Street. She has also talked with Senator Tom McInnis, and he told her that this type of request was the most frequent request received by DOT for Christmas.

Discussion ensued concerning the decorations and efforts of Tis the Season for the Christmas period.

Mrs. Parker explained that the other item she wished to ask of Council was for a waiver or permission to hang banners from the City's light poles in order to have a program called "Hometown Heroes" to recognize law enforcement, firefighters and military personnel. She suggested that law enforcement could be hung in one section, firefighters in another, and another section for military personnel.

The City Attorney explained that the City Code prohibits use of the City's poles except by utilities that rent space on the poles. He cited safety issues, maintaining uninterrupted power, and the potential for creating a sight issue. He added that if Council chose to grant a waiver or permission, then it would set a precedent such that any non-profit could request the same waiver or permission.

Further discussion ensued concerning the Hometown Heroes program. The City Attorney suggested that Council make a thoughtful review of this request after staff investigates to determine its feasibility.

It was consensus of Council for staff to investigate the program, provide ordinances from other municipalities that allow this program, and consider this matter at the March 17, 2020 meeting.

## **CITY MANAGER REPORTS**

**REQUEST FROM DOWNTOWN ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR \$10,000.00 TO BE ALLOCATED FROM THE DOWNTOWN FUND FOR PROMOTION EVENTS/ADVERTISING**

Mr. Jay Todd, Chair of the Downtown Advisory Committee, explained that \$10,000.00 be allocated from the Downtown Fund for promotion of events and advertising. He discussed the history of the Marketing Committee and the development of its plan. Currently the plan includes three (3) events – a summer celebration, something in the spring that is complimentary to Springfest, and something in the fall.

The City Manager explained that the Municipal Service District generates approximately \$21,000.00 in addition property tax revenue, the City matches that amount, and keeps that in the Downtown Fund. As of June 30, 2019, there was approximately \$100,000.00 in the fund.

Motion was made by Councilmember Adams, seconded by Councilmember Evans, and unanimously carried to allocated \$10,000.00 from the Downtown Fund for Promotion Events/Advertising.

**CONSIDER CONTINUATION OF FAÇADE GRANT PROGRAM UNTIL DECEMBER 31, 2020**

The City Manager explained that the money for the Façade Grant Program comes from the Downtown Fund, and there is plenty of funds to support this. The proposal is to continue the Façade Grant Program until December 31, 2020.

Following discussion, motion was made by Councilmember Garby, seconded by Councilmember Williamson, and unanimously carried to continue the Façade Grant Program until December 31, 2020.

**UPDATE ON CONCERN ABOUT CEDAR GROVE CEMETERY**

The City Manager explained that Mr. Tim Pierce, Cemetery Supervisor, would follow-up on concerns expressed by a citizen about Cedar Grove Cemetery two (2) months ago.

Mr. Pierce explained that the City has three (3) cemeteries, and that all three (3) are maintained in the same manner. Over the last several years, staff has trimmed overgrown bushes and trees at Cedar Grove Cemetery, added lighting to try to stop some of the vandalism, and added grass in one (1) area to slow erosion. He discussed the weed control program for all cemeteries.

Councilmember Evans stated that the concern was from Mr. John Easterling who was concerned that Cedar Grove Cemetery was not comparable to the one on US 401 Bypass (Hillside Memorial Park). Mr. Easterling had discussed mud and dirt all around Cedar Grove Cemetery and that the pillars at the entrance needed to be maintained.

Mr. Pierce explained that one of the pillars is leaning and that once the graffiti is removed, it appears back the next day.

The City Manager explained that the City has the same issues in Old Hillside Cemetery as in Cedar Grove Cemetery, including overgrowth and erosion. He commended Mr. Pierce for the great improvements with all three (3) cemeteries.

Upon question by Councilmember Evans, the City Manager explained that the City has a Cemetery Perpetual Care Fund to take care major capital improvements for the cemeteries.

Further discussion ensued concerning maintenance of the cemeteries. Mr. Pierce explained that there are some areas at Cedar Grove that have concrete tablets covering the vault. The City cannot put dirt over the tablet and therefore, the ground is uneven at those graves.

**CONSIDER RESOLUTION DECLARING CERTAIN REAL PROPERTIES SUPRLUS AND AUTHORIZING DISPOSITION BY SCOTLAND COUNTY**

The City Manager requested that the real properties owned jointly by the City and Scotland County as a result of tax foreclosures be determined surplus property and the disposal by the County Manager by auction be approved.

Councilmember Adams moved to approve Resolution No. R-2020-01 declaring certain real properties surplus and authorizing disposition by Scotland County. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Williamson, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Adams, Williamson, Rainer, Evans, Garby  
 Nays: None  
 (Resolution No. R-2020-01 on file in city clerk office)

**CONSIDER RELEASES, DISCOVERIES AND ADJUSTMENTS TO TAX LEVY**

Ms. Diana Chavis, Tax Collector, explained that she was requesting Council approve the releases, discoveries and adjustments to the 2019 tax levy. Discoveries total \$111,891.15, releases total \$4,629.96, and adjustments total \$288.62.

Motion was made by Councilmember Evans, seconded by Councilmember Garby, and unanimously carried to accept the releases, discoveries and adjustment to taxes as shown below:

**DISCOVERIES**

NAME	PP/RE	VALUE	TAXES	REASON
AT&T COMMUNICATIONS	PP	\$354,913.00	\$1,419.65	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
AT&T MOBILITY LLC	PP	\$533,682.00	\$2,134.73	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
AMERICAN TOWER CORP	PP	\$88,658.00	\$354.63	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
AT&T TAX (BELLSOUTH)	PP	\$4,612,989.00	\$18,451.96	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
AUTIN COREY JAMES	PP	\$1,498.00	\$5.99	TRAILER
CELLCO PARTNERSHIP	PP	\$1,236,792.00	\$4,947.17	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
CENTURY LINK	PP	\$5,507,422.00	\$22,029.69	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
CROWN CASTLE USA	PP	\$112,285.00	\$449.14	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.

CSX TRANSPORTATION	PP	\$803,699.00	\$3,214.80	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
DUKE ENERGY	PP	\$3,198,430.00	\$12,793.72	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
DUKENET COMMUNICATIONS	PP	\$605,999.00	\$2,424.00	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
DUNN JOHNNY	PP	\$918.00	\$3.67	TRAILER
EVERETTE LARRY	PP	\$500.00	\$2.00	TRAILER
FAMILY 1ST STOP	PP	\$8,215.00	\$32.86	UNLISTED NEW BUSINESS
FRC, LLC	PP	\$67,152.00	\$268.61	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
GARRY ROBERSON	PP	\$9,126.00	\$36.50	TRAILER
GREYHOUND LINES INC	PP	\$24,694.00	\$98.78	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
HAIR ETC	PP	\$3,186.00	\$12.74	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
HENRY MCLAURIN	RE	\$255,410.00	\$1,032.51	TRAILER
HOGAN THOMAS	RE	\$93,110.00	\$374.44	TRAILER
LBG & SOUTHERN RR	PP	\$370,260.00	\$1,481.04	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
LUCAS JOEL DEAN	PP	\$650.00	\$2.60	TRAILER
LUMBEE RIVER	PP	\$135,751.00	\$543.00	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
MCI COMMUNICATION	PP	\$1,286.00	\$5.14	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
MCLAURIN MONDREY	PP	\$583.00	\$2.33	TRAILER
NC ELECTRIC MEMBERSHIP	PP	\$1,348.00	\$5.39	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
NORTON MICHAEL	PP	\$124,385.00	\$497.54	TRAILER
PIEDMONT NATURAL GAS	PP	\$3,465,147.00	\$13,860.59	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
RISLEY RHONDA	RE	\$74,720.00	\$298.88	NEW LISTING
ROBERT ALLEN	RE	\$136,138.00	\$544.55	NEW LISTING
SC COMMUNICATIONS	PP	\$23,177.00	\$92.71	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
SPOK INC	PP	\$1,840.00	\$7.36	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
SPRINT WIRELESS	PP	\$32,184.00	\$128.74	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
STRATA HOLDING	PP	\$2,602,358.00	\$10,409.43	ADDED TO SCROLL
STRATA HOLDING	PP	\$2,535,188.00	\$10,140.75	ADDED TO SCROLL
TMOBILE	PP	\$183,759.00	\$735.04	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
TIME WARNER	PP	\$221,155.00	\$884.62	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
TWC DIGITAL	PP	\$434,988.00	\$1,739.95	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
TYSON ROBERT	PP	\$526.00	\$2.10	TRAILER
WILLIAM JAMES	RE	\$105,450.00	\$421.80	NEW LISTING

**RELEASES**

NAME	PP/RE	VALUE	TAXES	REASON
ABBIE JEAN COY	RE	\$22,180.00	\$88.72	FORECLOSURE/COUNTY OWN
AMERICAN PREFERRED	PP	\$1,898.00	\$7.59	BUSINESS CLOSED

AT&T (BELLSOUTH)	PP	\$45,299.00	\$181.20	NCDOR NEW VALUE
BARNES MOTOR PARTS	PP	\$15,684.00	\$62.74	LISTED IN WRONG NAME
BECKMAN COULTER INC	PP	\$19,117.00	\$76.47	WRONG VALUE
BERNICE COVINGTON	RE	\$3,470.00	\$13.88	FORECLOSURE/COUNTY OWN
CAMPBELL TONY	RE	\$5,220.00	\$20.88	FORECLOSURE/COUNTY OWN
CANON FINANCIAL	PP	\$5,170.00	\$20.70	LISTED WRONG EQUIPMENT
DANNYS SMALL ENGINE	PP	\$19,763.00	\$79.05	BUSINESS CLOSED
DORSEY ANNETTE	RE	\$16,000.00	\$64.00	FC/ CITY AND COUNTY OWN
DORSEY EMILY	RE	\$16,000.00	\$64.00	FC/ CITY AND COUNTY OWN
ELNORA CREW ESTATE	RE	\$2,370.00	\$9.48	FORECLOSURE/COUNTY OWN
FIRST BANK #29	PP	\$4,300.00	\$173.91	WRONG VALUE
FIRST CITISEND BANK	PP	\$76,341.00	\$305.36	LISTED WRONG EQUIPMENT
GENE BROWN	RE	\$960.00	\$3.84	FC/ CITY AND COUNTY OWN
GREENE CLEO	RE	\$5,977.00	\$239.10	BOAT TAKEN OFF
LINDA MCALISTER	RE	\$6,410.00	\$25.64	FC/ CITY AND COUNTY OWN
MOSER MAXINE	RE	\$51,100.00	\$204.02	ELDERLY EXCLUSION
NEWPORT DALE	RE	\$196,470.00	\$785.88	PER COUNTY DEFFERRED
SCOTLAND HISTORIC	RE	\$770.00	\$3.08	EXEMPT
SIMPSON GERALDINE	PP	\$2,000.00	\$8.00	DOUBLE LISTING
ST JOHNS CHURCH	RE	\$603,210.00	\$2,412.84	EXEMPT
US NATIONAL BANK	PP	\$17,050.00	\$68.20	LISTED WRONG EQUIPMENT

**ADJUSTMENTS**

NAME	PP/RE	VALUE	TAXES	REASON
A&L MCCORMICK	RE	\$187.00	-\$74.92	ENTRY ERROR
GIBSON EUGENE	RE	\$45,000.00	\$180.00	ADDED VALUE
JOHNNIE MAY MASON	RE	\$5,580.00	\$22.32	ADDED VALUE
WILLIAM MOSER	RE	\$40,305.00	\$161.22	ELDERLY EXEMPTION

**AUTHORIZE TAX COLLECTOR TO ADVERTISE TAX LIENS THE WEEK OF MARCH 9-13, 2020**

Ms. Diana Chavis explained that as of today, the unpaid taxes are \$279,811.48 for 2019. She requested Council's permission to advertise the tax lines the week of March 9-13, 2020.

Motion was made by Councilmember Williamson, seconded by Councilmember Garby, and unanimously carried to authorize the Tax Collector to advertise tax liens the week of March 9-13, 2020.

## **APPOINTMENT**

### **SCOTLAND COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD**

Councilmember Williamson submitted his resignation from the Scotland County Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.

Motion was made by Councilmember Williamson, seconded by Councilmember Evans, and unanimously carried to appoint Councilmember Donald Rainer to the Scotland County Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.

## **COMMENTS FROM MAYOR AND/OR COUNCILMEMBERS**

Councilmember Adams invited Council and Mayor to attend the Lumber River Council of Governments (COG) Annual Advance. She and Councilmember Evans are attending.

Councilmember Evans explained that Mr. John Easterling is a lobbyist in Raleigh, and she believed it would be very helpful for the City to have a lobbyist in Raleigh to ask for funds on the City's behalf.

Councilmember Adams explained that the North Carolina League of Municipalities (NCLM) lobbies on behalf of every municipality in the state.

The City Manager explained that he, the County Manager, and Mr. Mark Ward had met with Mr. Easterling. Since the City has the NCLM, and the County has the Association of County Commissioners who lobby for municipalities and counties, it was not felt that Mr. Easterling's services were needed at this time.

A discussion ensued concerning the Town Hall Days that were held previously by the NCLM. The City Manager explained that the NCLM no longer has Town Hall Days where municipal representatives would go to Raleigh and meet one on one with representatives. The NCLM has a dinner once a year.

Councilmember Rainer explained that in one of his recent classes, he met with a lobbyist from the NCLM who offered to come to Laurinburg to meet with Council to determine the City's needs.

The City Manager explained that the NCLM has strategic planning to determine what the municipalities' priorities, and one of those is no more unfunded mandates.

## **ADJOURN**

Motion was made by Councilmember Rainer, seconded by Councilmember Evans, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

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James T. Willis, Mayor

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Jennifer A. Tippett, City Clerk