

REGULAR BOARD MEETING of February 16, 2000, with Mayor Buck Trott and Commissioners Amy Patterson, Zeke Sossomon, H. N. James, Mike Cavender, and Ron Sanders present.

Also present were Richard Betz, Lamar Nix, Maureen Lackey, Jerry Cook, Dennis Wilson, and Kim Lewicki.

I. Call to Order.

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

II. Approval of Agenda.

Copies of the agenda had been distributed by mail. The Clerk asked that one item be added to the agenda: report on unpaid ad valorem property taxes and setting of advertising date.

MOVED BY COMM. CAVENDER, SECONDED BY COMM. PATTERSON, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED.

III. Approval of Minutes.

The minutes of the February 2, 2000 Regular Board Meeting had been distributed by mail.

MOVED BY COMM. JAMES, SECONDED BY COMM. CAVENDER, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS DISTRIBUTED.

IV. Reports.

1. The Mayor reported that he had attended the last meeting of the County Commissioners; funding for non-profits had been discussed, and a resolution of support for the Upper Cullasaja Watershed Association had been adopted. As reported at the last meeting, a joint meeting had been scheduled for February 28 at 6:00 p.m. at the Western Sizzlin' Steak House in Franklin.

The Mayor also reported that the League of Municipalities would hold a Regional Meeting in Highlands on April 11 at 4:30 p.m.

2. Each Board member received a copy of the Police Chief's written report for the month. Chief Jerry Cook was present, and said that he was compiling his annual report, which he expected to present at the next meeting.

3. Town Administrator Richard Betz reported that he had asked Victor Lofquist, consulting engineer with W. K. Dickson Company, to prepare a preliminary report on what would be involved in expanding the capacity of the Wastewater Treatment Plant, as discussed at the previous meeting. He expected the report to be ready by the next meeting. He also reported that the newly-required Wastewater System Annual Report had been completed, and would be published in The Highlander and The Franklin Press.

Each Board member received a copy of a letter drafted by Town Attorney Bill Coward to the State Attorney General concerning the Bowery Road Escrow Agreement, as discussed at the previous meeting. Each Board member also received a copy of the brief prepared by Wiley Ellis, attorney for the Zoning Board, in the Episcopal Church Court of Appeals case.

The Town Administrator also reported that he had received a memorandum from the League of Municipalities Municipal Insurance Trust indicating that medical insurance rates might increase as much as 25% - 30% in the coming fiscal year.

V. Old Business.

1. Town Engineer Lamar Nix said that he had reviewed the drainage plan for Sherry Kremser's shopping center, as requested at the previous meeting. He said that the plan was the one originally submitted and accepted for the project and there was nothing wrong with it.

Sherry Kremser was present, and the Board discussed the plan with her. She said that she did not know if there was adequate room between her property line and the pavement of West Main Street, and she might not be able to put in diagonal parking as indicated; she wondered if parallel parking would be permitted. She also reiterated her request that the Town ask the D. O. T. to install the required drainage culvert in front of her property, which she understood from the D. O. T. could be paid for out of small urban funds. Comm. Patterson was concerned that, considering the expected length of time, the work could be accomplished before completion of the shopping center; it was pointed out that a Certificate of Compliance could only be issued upon completion of the drainage and installation of the sidewalk.

MOVED BY COMM. JAMES, SECONDED BY COMM. CAVENDER, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO ASK THE D. O. T. TO LOOK AT THE PROJECT.

The Board then discussed the sidewalk, which was required because it was on the Master Sidewalk Plan. Mr. Nix reported that there was a large quantity of brick left over from the Main Street project, enough material to complete the sidewalk.

MOVED BY COMM. CAVENDER, SECONDED BY COMM. SOSSOMON, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO DONATE THE BRICK TO MS. KREMSEK FOR THE SIDEWALK.

The Board asked Mr. Nix to provide specifications for the brick sidewalk to Ms. Kremser.

VI. New Business.

1. The following informal bids had been received on a Dodge 1500 or Dodge Dakota, or equivalent, 4 X 4 pickup truck, and were publicly opened:

- Edwards Auto Sales Company: Ford F-150.....\$21,300
Ford Ranger.....17,400
- Matthews Motors: Ford F-150.....18,492
Ford Ranger.....16,205
- Tabor Chrysler-Dodge-Plymouth Dodge 1500.....18,926
Dodge Dakota.....16,236
- Jim Brown Chrysler-Plymouth Dodge 1500.....18,864
Dodge Dakota.....16,134

MOVED BY COMM. JAMES, SECONDED BY COMM. PATTERSON, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO AWARD THE BID TO THE LOW BIDDER, JIM BROWN, FOR THE DODGE DAKOTA.

2. Pursuant to G. S. §105-369(a), the Tax Collector submitted a written report on total unpaid taxes that are liens on real property.

MOVED BY COMM. PATTERSON, SECONDED BY COMM. SOSSOMON, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO ADVERTISE AD VALOREM TAXES ON THE FIRST TUESDAY IN JUNE (JUNE 6) 2000.

3. Dennis Wilson was present representing the Highlands Chamber of Commerce, and he commented on the powerful tool that the Chamber's web site had become, attracting 40,000 visits each month. The Board then discussed the internet, and the proposed extension of the

moratorium on an "internet tax." The Mayor reported that the League of Municipalities was opposed to two bills in Congress that would extend the moratorium. They joined the National League of Cities in asking municipal officials to write their representatives and senators about this issue, opposing the erosion of sales tax revenues and the competitive disadvantage to local "Main Street" merchants. The Board discussed the issue at some length.

MOVED BY COMM. CAVENDER, SECONDED BY COMM. JAMES, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO SEND A LETTER IN SUPPORT OF THE LEAGUE'S POSITION TO SENATORS EDWARDS AND HELMS AND TO CONGRESSMAN TAYLOR.

4. MOVED BY COMM. CAVENDER, SECONDED BY COMM. PATTERSON, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO GO INTO CLOSED SESSION TO REVIEW APPLICATIONS FOR EMPLOYMENT IN THE SANITATION DEPARTMENT AND POLICE DEPARTMENT, AND TO DISCUSS A PERSONNEL MATTER IN THE TRIMMING DEPARTMENT, PURSUANT TO G.S. §143-318.11(A)(6). All present left the room except the Clerk, the Public Services Administrator, and the Police Chief.

- A. Police Chief Jerry Cook reported that he had received two applications for police officer; he recommended employing Police Auxiliary Officer C. D. Jenkins as a full-time Patrol Officer.
- B. Public Services Administrator Lamar Nix reviewed applications for the Sanitation Department with the Board.
- C. The Public Services Administrator notified the Board that David Webb had been terminated in accordance with the Personnel Policy.

MOVED BY COMM. PATTERSON, SECONDED BY COMM. SANDERS, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO GO INTO OPEN SESSION.

5. MOVED BY COMM. SANDERS, SECONDED BY COMM. CAVENDER, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO EMPLOY C. D. JENKINS AS A FULL-TIME PATROL OFFICER AT THE BEGINNING SALARY, GRADE 11, STEP 1 (\$19,411).

MOVED BY COMM. PATTERSON, SECONDED BY COMM. SOSSOMON, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO CONFIRM THE TERMINATION OF DAVID WEBB.

The Board also authorized re-advertizing for the position in the Sanitation Department, and advertizing for the position in the Trimming Department.

6. Comm. James said that he felt the Street Committee ought to meet and discuss establishing a policy on brick sidewalks, limiting them to a defined area downtown. He also asked if the Recreation Department was still equipped to clear sidewalks of snow as they had done in the past. He also asked that snow be cleared on Main Street by pushing it toward the center of the street rather than toward the curbs.

VII. MOVED BY COMM. CAVENDER, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO ADJOURN.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was declared adjourned by the Mayor at 8:30 p.m.

Richard Betz, Town Clerk