

# **REGULAR BOARD MEETING OF April 1, 2009**

Present: Mayor Don Mullen, Vice Mayor Amy Patterson, Commissioners John Dotson, Hank Ross, Dennis DeWolf and Larry Rogers

Staff Present: Town Manager, Jim Fatland, Zoning Administrator Joe Cooley, Town Engineer/Public Services Administrator Lamar Nix, Police Chief Bill Harrell and Recreation Director Selwyn Chalker.

## **Call the Order**

Mayor Mullen called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

## **Approve Agenda**

The Mayor asked if there are any additions or deletions to the agenda.

## **Approve Minutes**

The Minutes of March 18, 2009 Regular Town Board Meeting were approved by the Town Board subject to corrections of the middle initials of Commissioners John Dotson and Hank Ross, and subject to the addition of the following in paragraph 5(B)2 to include “contract with Duke Energy”.

The Minutes of March 25, 2009 Special Town Board Meeting were approved by the Town Board subject to the following typographical errors: 2(B) line 2, ...has been recommended to the Town...; paragraph C, line 5, ...which the Town Board is considering to....; and 3, line 1, ... Mayor Don Mullen asked to approve...

## **Public Comments**

Town of Highlands residents Pat Taylor and Helene Siegel addressed their concerns to the Town Board regarding the necessity of a designated area for dogs to run supervised and for the Town Board to consider establishing a dog park or other area that would be dog friendly. Mayor Mullen advised that the Town Board would take the same under advisement.

## **Reports**

### **Mayor**

Mayor Mullen suggested that the Town Board change its meeting schedule starting in May, 2009 to meet once a month on the second Wednesday of each month. The next meeting will be held on April 15, 2009. The May meeting will take place on May 13, 2009.

Commissioner Dennis DeWolf stated that the Town Board should give it a try. Amy Patterson raised her concerns that if the agenda was too long it might take time to go through it if there was only one meeting a month. Another concern raised would be that the public may not want to wait a month to appear before the Town Board. Joe Cooley, Zoning Administrator, addressed the Town Board regarding setting up a calendar which would show when all committees meet and cut off dates for submission so items can then be brought before the Town Board in a timely manner. Joe Cooley further advised that he would bring the calendar before the Town Board at a later date for approval.

Larry Rogers moved to approve the Town Board meeting to once a month and seconded by Hank Ross. The same was unanimously approved.

## **Committees**

### **Finance Committee**

Jim Fatland advised that the treasury report will be finalized in time for the May 13, 2009 regular Town Board meeting. Reviews are currently underway of medical providers and will have recommendation at the April 15, 2009 meeting.

Mr. Fatland advised the Board that April 1, 2009 was the deadline for the non-profits and he supplied to Commissioners Hank Ross and Amy Patterson with complete applications in conjunction with the budgetary process.

### **Recreation Committee**

Recreation Director Selwyn Chalker appeared before the Town Board.

### **Advisory Committee to the Scholarship Endowment Fund**

The Town Board moved to appoint a new advisory committee to plan for the scholarship tournament set for August 17, 2009. Last year tournament arrangements were handled by Cullasaja Club however, it appeared that things were being done at the last minute. Dennis DeWolf advised the Board that numerous members of the community has requested their willingness to participate on the committee. Amy Patterson inquired if appointments to the committee would be an annual appointment and was so advised. Mayor Mullen stated that it is critical to have many involved.

Dennis DeWolf moved to approve the formation of an advisory committee for the tournament and Larry Rogers seconded. Mayor Mullen advised the Board that he and Dennis DeWolf would meet with the committee to explain the procedures and expectation of the committee to have a successful tournament.

Alan Marsh addressed the Board with regards to the Junk Ordinance Abandoned Mobile Homes. They are reviewing the Jackson County Ordinance for reference and will continue to report to the Board.

Hank Ross discussed with the Town Board the TDC (Tourism Development Commission) that met to discuss new procedures imposed by the County for disbursement of the funds that may be used for any kind of tourism and development.

### **Town Manger**

Jim Fatland advised the Town Board that the necessary permits and easements for the Mirror Lake Sewer Project had been received and that the grant application was submitted on time. The Town of Highlands could receive \$1.5 million in a grant and \$1.5 million in an interest free loan to cover the costs of the project which is \$3.8 million.

The Annual Spring Clean Up is set for the week of May 26, 2009.

### **Consent Agenda**

- a. Public Services Department
- b. Police Department
- c. Parks & Recreation Department
- d. Planning & Zoning Department
- e. Monthly Calendar
- f. Spring Clean Up

As there was no discussion necessary regarding the Consent Agenda, Amy Patterson moved to approve and seconded by Hank Ross. The Consent Agenda was unanimously approved.

### **Macon County Economic Development**

The Macon County Board of Commissioners has approved a contract to hire an Economic Development Director at a salary of \$40,000.00. The Macon County Board agreed to fund 2/3 of the proposed salary and requested that the Towns of Franklin and Highlands fund the remaining 1/3 of the salary. The Franklin Town Board approved up to \$7,000.00 to fund a portion of the salary. The consultant would develop business and marketing plans for the County, which would include Franklin and Highlands.

This matter has been reviewed with the Macon County Manager Jack Horton, Franklin Town Manager Sam Greenwood and Highlands Chamber Executive Director Bob Kieltyka and all are in support of the item. Hank Ross advised that the expenditure of \$7,000.00 to help fund the salary and would be a one-time commitment. Hank Ross further advised that the approval would be contingent upon a meeting with County Manager Jack Horton to discuss the benefits for Highlands. Amy Patterson raised a concern what would prevent the Town of Highlands funding the salary of any personnel hired and was informed that it would be a one-time commitment.

Hank Ross moved to approve the expenditure of \$7,000.00 towards the salary of the Director/Consultant contingent upon meeting with County Manager Jack Horton and Larry

Rogers seconded. The contribution of \$7,000.00 toward the Macon County Economic Development Consultant Salary was unanimously approved.

### **Duke Energy Agreement: Proposed Electric Rate Increase**

The Town Board held a Special Meeting on March 25, 2009 to discuss the update of contract negotiations, proposed rate increases, establishment of a rate stabilization fund and Renewal Energy Portfolio Standard (REPS). No action was taken at the Special Meeting of March 25, 2009 and it was requested that it be placed on the agenda for the April 1, 2009 regularly scheduled meeting. It has been recommended to the Town Board to consider a 10% rate increase effective May 1, 2009, which increase would be reflected in the May 25th billing cycle. The rate increase is in advance of the proposed contract date of March 1, 2010 with Duke Energy. It should be noted that the proposed wholesale rate increase by Duke Energy will be 16%. By implementing a rate increase now, the funds will be used to develop a Rate Stabilization Fund, which will help with the planned increases.

Amy Patterson moved to approve the rate increase of 10% to commence May 1, 2009 and to permit Duke Energy to handle the renewable energy portfolio. The same was seconded by Larry Rogers and was unanimously approved by the Town Board.

### **Proposed FY10 Highlands Fire Department Budget**

Bob Houston of the Highlands Fire Department presented the Board the department's budget for approval. It was explained to the Board that the increase would include the hiring of a full time employee and funds towards the lease-purchase of a ladder truck. Funds would also be used to expand the vehicle bay area to accommodate a ladder truck. The Board was advised that the department currently has two part-time employees. A ladder truck would be beneficial to the Town in the help of fighting fires, especially on Main Street where the only way to fight a fire would be from above. Mr. Houston advised that the ladder truck could reach approximately four stories.

Amy Patterson moved to approve the proposed FY10 Highlands Fire Department Budget and was seconded by Dennis DeWolf. The Board unanimously approved the FY10 Highlands Fire Department Budget.

### **Community Building Operations Management**

The Town of Highlands and the Rotary Club of Highlands entered into a lease on January 1, 2007. Recently the Highlands Town Board has decided to hold its meetings at the Community Building. The Town Park and Recreation staff currently schedule use of the Community Building and also at the Recreation Center. It has been recommended that the operations and management of the Community Building be placed under the supervision of the Parks & Recreation Department.

Jim Fatland recommended that the Town of Highlands assume operations on July 1, 2009, that the current lease with the Rotary Club be terminated and enter into negotiations for a long term lease with the Rotary Club.

Recreation Director Selwyn Chalker advised the Town Board that the cleaning person they currently use at the recreation park would be used at the Community Building. It was also brought to the Board's attention that controlling both the recreation and community buildings would give greater flexibility to scheduling.

Dennis DeWolf moved to approve that the Community Building Operations Management and was seconded by Amy Patterson.

Adjourn – Amy Patterson moved to adjourn at 8:05 p.m.

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James R. Fatland  
Town Clerk

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Jane J. Capman  
Recording Secretary

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Don Mullen  
Mayor