

REGULAR BOARD MEETING of June 16, 1999, with Mayor Buck Trott and Commissioners Mike McCall, H. N. James, Ron Sanders, Amy Patterson, and Zeke Sossomon present.

Also present were Richard Betz, Lamar Nix, Kathleen Snyder, Kim LeWicki, Stuart Armor, Steve & Brenda Pierson, Eric Pierson, Mildred Johnson, Paul Schmitt, and Rosemary Fleming.

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 two items be added to New Business--a request from the American Legion concerning the Flag Protection Amendment, and a proposed Interlocal Agreement concerning the Highlands District Fire Tax--and that one item be deleted--contract for mowing at the Cemetery, which did not expire until December 31.

MOVED BY COMM. SOSSOMON, SECONDED BY COMM. SANDERS, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED.

III. Approval of Minutes.

The minutes of the June 2 Regular Board Meeting and the June 9 Special Board Meeting had been distributed by mail.

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

IV. Reports.

1. The Mayor commended the Fire Department on their response to the tragic fire the previous week, and extended his condolences to the family of the woman who had died in the fire.

The Mayor also commended Lamar Nix, the Town Water and Electric Departments, GTE, and Northland Cable for the excellent job on the completion of the Main Street Project. He noted that every parking space on Main Street was now available for parking. Re-surfacing of the street was scheduled for later this summer.

2. Each Board member received a copy of a letter the Town Administrator had written to Warren Cabe with a revised budget request for the Highlands Fire Department. Based on revaluation figures provided by Macon County Tax Supervisor Richard Lightner the previous week of \$548,127,100 for the Town and \$651,153,350 for the Township (outside of Town), he had requested a tax of 0.02 cents; based on the County's 96% collection rate, he estimated the tax would generate \$230,262 in revenues.

V. Old Business.

1. Each Board member received a tabulation prepared by the Clerk of nominations submitted by the Board for various Boards and Committees; the Clerk had also contacted each nominee and determined if they were willing to serve.

Comm. Sossomon noted that Allan James, currently an Alternate Member of the Zoning Board, had received the most nominations for Regular Member of that Board.

MOVED BY COMM. SOSSOMON, SECONDED BY COMM. MCCALL, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPOINT ALLAN JAMES AS A REGULAR MEMBER. His term will

expire July 1, 2002.

It was reported that James Tate, currently Chairman of the Planning Board, had expressed an interest in serving on the Zoning Board, but it was not clear whether he would accept an appointment as an Alternate Member of that Board. At the same time, Comm. Patterson said she understood Paul Schmitt, currently a Regular Member of the Zoning Board, would be willing to serve as an Alternate Member.

MOVED BY COMM. SOSSOMON, SECONDED BY COMM. PATTERSON, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPOINT PAUL SCHMITT AS AN ALTERNATE MEMBER OF THE ZONING BOARD, AND ALSO TO APPOINT JAMES TATE AS AN ALTERNATE MEMBER OF THE ZONING BOARD PROVIDED HE IS WILLING TO SERVE AS AN ALTERNATE. The terms of both members will expire July 1, 2002.

Comm. Patterson said she had recommended appointing Hank Ross, currently an Appearance Commission member, to the Planning Board; she thought he was well qualified, and also felt that it would be desirable to have the same members serve on the Appearance Commission and the Planning Board.

MOVED BY COMM. PATTERSON, SECONDED BY COMM. SOSSOMON, TO APPOINT HANK ROSS TO THE PLANNING BOARD. The motion failed to carry, with Comms. Patterson and Sossomon voting "aye" and Comms. James, McCall, and Sanders voting "nay."

MOVED BY COMM. JAMES, SECONDED BY COMM. SANDERS, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPOINT BROOKS BENNETT TO BOTH THE PLANNING BOARD AND THE APPEARANCE COMMISSION. His term will expire June 1, 2002.

It was noted that the appointment of James Tate as an Alternate Member of the Zoning Board, if he was willing to serve, would leave a vacancy on both the Planning Board and the Appearance Commission.

MOVED BY COMM. SANDERSON, SECONDED BY COMM. MCCALL, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPOINT REV. CARL LINDQUIST TO BOTH THE PLANNING BOARD AND THE APPEARANCE COMMISSION TO FILL THE UNEXPIRED TERM OF JAMES TATE, IF MR. TATE AGREES TO SERVE AS AN ALTERNATE MEMBER OF THE ZONING BOARD. If appointed, his term will expire June 1, 2000.

MOVED BY COMM. SOSSOMON, SECONDED BY COMM. JAMES, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO RE-APPOINT DAVID WILKES TO THE ABC BOARD. His term will expire August 17, 2002.

MOVED BY COMM. SANDERS, SECONDED BY COMM. PATTERSON, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO RE-APPOINT BUD POTTS TO THE SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE. His term will expire July 1, 2002.

It was reported that Liz View, Chair of the Advisory Committee for the Scholarship Endowment Fund, had recommended appointing Karin Potts and Irene Sanchez to that Committee, and re-appointing Wistar Gary. Three terms expired this month, and in addition Melinda James, whose term expired in 2001, had resigned.

MOVED BY COMM. JAMES, SECONDED BY COMM. SOSSOMON, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO RE-APPOINT LIZ VIEW AND WISTAR GARY, AND TO APPOINT KARIN POTTS AND IRENE SANCHEZ TO THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE. The terms of Ms. View, Ms. Potts, and Ms. Sanchez will expire June 1, 2002; the term of Wistar Gary, will expire June 1, 2001.

VI. New Business.

1. Pursuant to second advertisement, formal bids were received for an addition to the Fire Department building. Only one bid had been received, from Schmitt Building Contractors Inc. The bid was opened and read by the Mayor: \$308,805.

It was pointed out that the estimated cost of the construction, pursuant to the budget submitted to the County, was \$200,000.

MOVED BY COMM. SOSSOMON, SECONDED BY COMM. SANDERS, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO REJECT THE BID AND TO TABLE THE MATTER PENDING RE-EVALUATION OF THE SCOPE OF THE PROJECT.

2. A proposal of \$3980 had been received for renewal of the annual preventative maintenance agreement for the Highlands Civic Center from Building Management and Controls Inc., the same amount as last year. Comms. James and Sossomon asked about the advantage of the service agreement; the Clerk explained that the agreement had been renewed for a number of years on the recommendation of Recreation Director Selwyn Chalker. It was agreed that Mr. Chalker should be requested to obtain proposals from other companies.

3. A proposal had been received from Darlene & Paul Rondel, formerly of Smoky Mountain Property Care & Cleaning, for renewal of the annual contract for cleaning of the public restrooms. It was noted that some of the details of the contract were not clear, and the Clerk said that it was more abbreviated than the previous contract; he offered to discuss the contract and have it amended to clearly enumerate responsibilities.

MOVED BY COMM. SOSSOMON, SECONDED BY COMM. PATTERSON, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE THE CONTRACT

4. A proposal had been received from Western Carolina Communications for the annual contract for service of Town communications equipment; the Clerk explained that the increase from \$93/month to \$116/month was based on additional equipment. The Clerk and Public Services Administrator both recommended renewing the contact.

MOVED BY COMM. SANDERS, SECONDED BY COMM. SOSSOMON, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO RENEW THE CONTRACT.

5. Informal bids had been received earlier in the day for the annual fuel contract through June 30, 2000; the Clerk and Public Services Administrator had opened and tabulated the bids. The low bid on all types of fuel was from D & J Express Mart.

MOVED BY COMM. PATTERSON, SECONDED BY COMM. SANDERS, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO AWARD THE ANNUAL FUEL CONTRACT TO D & J EXPRESS MART.

6. Comm. James had asked that the Board discuss solid waste fees at this meeting. The Town Administrator reminded the Board that, pursuant to Board action on February 5, 1999, he had written to the County Board of Commissioners in care of the County Manager on February 11 and again on May 7, requesting that the excessive portion of the landfill fees--reduced from \$60/ton to \$45/ton earlier in the year--be refunded to the Town "as far back as legally possible." He had received no official reply to the request, but County Manager Sam Greenwood had told him that he did not feel the Board was going to act on the request; he had explained that the difference in landfill fees had included contract hauling charges from Highlands to the landfill. The Board also discussed an article in the June 4 issue of The Franklin Press which had reported that the Town of Franklin had been paying an average of \$13.43 per ton.

The Board agreed for the Town Administrator to write directly to Harold Corbin, Chairman of the County Commissioners, requesting a reply to the request, as well as an explanation of the discrepancy in landfill fees between Highlands and Franklin. Comm. James felt either a credit or a refund of the fees would be acceptable, and he also suggested a meeting with the County Board to discuss this issue as well as the tax revaluation.

7. A concurring Ordinance had been received from the Department of Transportation, setting the speed limit on SR-1604 Bowery Road at 20 mph, as requested by the Board some time ago.

MOVED BY COMM. JAMES, SECONDED BY COMM. SANDERS, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO ADOPT A CONCURRING ORDINANCE SETTING THE SPEED LIMIT ON

BOWERY ROAD AT 20 MPH.

8. A letter dated June 7 had been received by the Mayor from the American Legion, requesting the Board to adopt a resolution in support of a proposed Flag Protection Amendment. Mayor Trott said that he personally supported the amendment; he said he had fought under the flag in the past. Comm. Patterson said she did not know if it was this Board's place to act on the request; she felt it was an individual decision, and therefore opposed it. No action was taken by the Board.

9. The Clerk had received a proposed Interlocal Agreement concerning the Highlands Fire District tax the previous day, prepared by the County Attorney, and he distributed copies to the Board. Comm. Sossomon said he was not certain the Board needed to enter into such an agreement, and Comm. James agreed. The Board agreed by consensus to take the agreement under advisement, and also to ask Town Attorney Bill Coward to review it.

10. In a budget work session, the Board then discussed at some length issues relating to the FY 99-00 budget, including the following: Cost of Living Allowance for all employees (2% recommended, 2.35% average recommended by other municipalities); specific budget requests from Hudson Library (\$12,000) and the Macon County Humane Society (\$2,000); uniforms for Public Services employees, estimated at \$8900; the major capital projects approved by the Finance Committee, consisting of the Lake Sequoyah Sewer Project, the Bowery Water Project Phase II, and Maple Street Improvements; discussion of the proposed tax rate of 17.5 cents and the fire district tax of 0.02 cents; approval of various vehicles and equipment identified in the Budget Message; and the Finance Officer's recommendation of no increases in Electric, Water, Sewer, and Solid Waste fees.

11. MOVED BY COMM. SANDERS, SECONDED BY COMM. MCCALL, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO GO INTO CLOSED SESSION TO DISCUSS INDIVIDUAL SALARIES PURSUANT TO G. S. § 143-318.11(a)(6). All those present left the meeting room except the Town Administrator and the Public Services Administrator.

The Board continued its review of individual salaries for the coming year, as agreed at the June 9 Special Board Meeting.

After considerable discussion, the Town Administrator and Public Services Administrator were asked to leave the meeting room in order to discuss their salaries, and they did so at approximately 9:15 p.m.

MOVED AND CARRIED TO GO INTO OPEN SESSION.

The Board agreed to finalize decisions on salaries and the cost of living increase at the June 30 Special Board Meeting.

IV. The Board agreed by consensus to adjourn.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was declared adjourned by the Mayor at approximately 10:00 p.m.

Richard Betz, Town Clerk