

BUDGET HEARING and SPECIAL BOARD MEETING of June 30, 1999, with Mayor Buck Trott and Commissioners H. N. James, Mike McCall, Ron Sanders, Zeke Sossomon, and Amy Patterson present.

Also present were Richard Betz, Lamar Nix, Kathleen Snyder, Kim LeWicki, Pam Smith, Virginia Fleming, and Rosemary Fleming.

A. Budget Hearing.

The Mayor called the Budget Hearing to order at 7:00 p.m., and stated that this was the time and place to receive comments from the public on the FY 99-00 Budget, as presented on May 19, 1999; notice had appeared in The Highlander newspaper pursuant to law.

Pam Smith was present from the Macon County Humane Society to speak to that organization's request for \$5,000 in funding. She stated that 30% of the animals served by the Humane Society originated in the Highlands area, a total of approximately 800 animals at a cost on average of \$65/animal, or over \$50,000 in expenses. She said that the Town of Franklin was providing \$15,000 in funding, and Macon County was providing \$20,000.

There were no further comments from the public on the proposed budget, and the Mayor declared the hearing closed at 7:05 p.m.

B. Special Board Meeting.

I. The Mayor called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

II. The Clerk asked that two items be added to the agenda as distributed: a report from the Town Administrator, and an additional personnel matter.

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

III. Reports.

The Town Administrator reported that an informal bid of \$2,145 had been received from APAC for replacing asphalt curbing in front of the Episcopal Church. Public Services Administrator Lamar Nix also reported that he would like to pave a section in front of the new Warehouse building, probably not exceeding \$1000; he said that it appeared the leveling on the rest of the paving APAC was currently doing would be less than expected.

MOVED BY COMM. SANDERS, SECONDED BY COMM. PATTERSON, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE THE ADDITIONAL PAVING.

The Town Administrator also reported that he had received a letter dated June 24, informing the Town that landfill fees would be increased to \$59/ton effective July 1. He added that no response had been received from Harold Corbin pursuant to his recent letter, copies of which had been provided to the Board.

The Town Administrator and Public Services Administrator also discussed a sewage backup problem at the Town Hall which had occurred the previous day; a backflow valve had been installed in an attempt to prevent further problems, and the only damage had been to carpet, which was covered by insurance. Comm. James suggested that the Town consider replacing the sewer line in Fourth Street between Main and Pine Street, either as a budget item for the coming fiscal year or as an item in the Capital Improvement Program for the following year; Mr. Nix was asked to obtain an estimate.

The Town Administrator also reported that Richard Melvin, attorney for the defendants in the Town v. Edwards et. al. case, had informed him that he would be appealing the recent Macon County Superior Court ruling in the Town's favor.

IV. Business.

1. The Board then discussed several items relating to the FY 99-00 budget, as follows:

MOVED BY COMM. SOSSOMON, SECONDED BY COMM. JAMES, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE A 2% COST OF LIVING ALLOWANCE FOR ALL EMPLOYEES, IN ADDITION TO MERIT AND LONGEVITY INCREASES TO BE APPROVED LATER IN THE MEETING IN CLOSED SESSION.

MOVED BY COMM. SANDERS, SECONDED BY COMM. SOSSOMON, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE UNIFORMS FOR PUBLIC SERVICES EMPLOYEES. The Public Services Administrator was asked to meet with the Department Heads, then make a decision on the color.

The Board discussed the request from Macon County Humane Society. Comm. Patterson asked why the Town was being asked to provide more than County residents outside of Town were; she pointed out that it was a County service. MOVED BY COMM. PATTERSON, SECONDED BY COMM. SOSSOMON, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE A DONATION OF \$2000 TO THE MACON COUNTY HUMANE SOCIETY.

MOVED BY COMM. SANDERS, SECONDED BY COMM. PATTERSON, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE A DONATION OF \$12,000 TO THE HUDSON LIBRARY.

The Board discussed at some length the 0.175 tax rate proposed by the Finance Officer, in view of the revaluation and property values which were still being adjusted. Comm. James suggested a 0.18 tax rate. Comm. McCall also reminded the Board that an increase of 0.03 had been approved in FY 96-97 specifically for the Main Street Project, and had been in effect ever since. Comm. James felt that the 0.03 needed to be in the budget for continuing street expenses, including Maple Street and possible improvements to Fifth Street, Poplar Street, and 4½ Street, which he felt the Board might want to consider adding to the Capital Improvement Program in the future. He also felt that these funds would be needed for legal expenses for the appeal of the Edwards et. al. case involving those streets, and he commented that Richard Melvin had cost the Town a lot of money. The Board also discussed vehicles and equipment at some length, including the merits of a 4-wheel-drive vehicle for the meter reader; Comm. Patterson felt a 4-wheel-drive truck was unnecessary, while Comms. McCall and Sanders disagreed.

2. MOVED BY COMM. JAMES, SECONDED BY COMM. PATTERSON, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO ADOPT AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE BUDGET OF THE TOWN OF HIGHLANDS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR JULY 1, 1998 THROUGH JUNE 30, 1999. A copy is attached hereto and made a permanent part of this record.

3. MOVED BY COMM. JAMES, SECONDED BY COMM. SOSSOMON, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO ADOPT THE TOWN OF HIGHLANDS BUDGET ORDINANCE FOR THE FISCAL YEAR JULY 1, 1999 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2000, WITH AN AD VALOREM TAX RATE OF 0.18 PER \$100.00 VALUATION. A copy is attached hereto and made a permanent part of this record.

4. The Town Administrator reported that, pursuant to the June 16 meeting, the Town Attorney had been asked to review the proposed Interlocal Agreement concerning the Highlands Fire District tax. Bill Coward had proposed several changes to the agreement, copies of which were distributed to each Board member for consideration at the July 7th Board meeting; he had also discovered that the General Statutes required the Town to adopt a resolution agreeing to be included in the proposed County Fire District, and he had prepared a resolution to that effect.

The Board also discussed the portion of Jackson County now served by the Highlands Fire Department; although residents in that area had supported the Fire Department with charitable donations over the years, the Town did not receive any revenue from Jackson County. The Town Administrator reported that he had been trying

unsuccessfully for several days to contact the Jackson County Manager to discuss the new funding arrangement for the Fire District. Comm. James felt that if Jackson County had been collecting a service fee from those residents and was not returning any to the Highlands Fire Department, they might be in violation of the General Statutes. The Board agreed for the Clerk and the Fire Chief to write a letter to the Jackson County Manager explaining the situation and requesting funding for the Highlands Fire Department.

MOVED BY COMM. SOSSOMON, SECONDED BY COMM. PATTERSON, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO ADOPT THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION.

**RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
OF THE TOWN OF HIGHLANDS
AGREEING TO INCLUSION OF TERRITORY WITHIN THE TOWN OF HIGHLANDS
IN THE HIGHLANDS FIRE SERVICE DISTRICT
AS ESTABLISHED BY THE MACON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
ON JUNE 14, 1999**

WHEREAS, on June 14, 1999, the Board of Commissioners for the County of Macon passed a Resolution pursuant to G. S. 153A-300 et. seq. establishing fire service districts within Macon County; and

WHEREAS, the Highlands district includes territory lying within the corporate limits of the Town of Highlands; and

WHEREAS, G. S. 153A-302 requires that the governing body of a city agree by resolution to the inclusion of any territory lying within the corporate limits of a city in a service district; and

WHEREAS, the County of Macon and the Town of Highlands are engaged in negotiations concerning the details of an Interlocal Agreement concerning the provision of fire protection services within the proposed Highlands district;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,

1. The Board of Commissioners for the Town of Highlands hereby agrees to the inclusion of territory lying within the corporate limits of the Town of Highlands in the Highlands fire service district as defined by the Resolution of the Macon County Board of Commissioners of June 14, 1999, subject to the execution of an Interlocal Agreement under G. S. 160A-460 et. seq.

2. The Board of Commissioners for the Town of Highlands shall continue the present discussions with the Board of Commissioners for Macon County concerning the Interlocal Agreement.

3. This Resolution is adopted this 30th day of June, 1999, effective July 1, 1999, provided, however, that if an Interlocal Agreement cannot be agreed upon, the Town Board may rescind this Resolution, retroactive to June 30, 1999.

The Town of Highlands

Allen L. Trott, Mayor

(TOWN SEAL)

ATTEST:

Richard Betz, Town Clerk

5. MOVED BY COMM. SANDERS, SECONDED BY COMM. SOSSOMON, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO GO INTO CLOSED SESSION TO DISCUSS INDIVIDUAL SALARIES, AS WELL AS AN ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL MATTER, PURSUANT TO

G. S. § 143-318.11(a)(6), AND THE PROPOSED AC-QUISITION OF REAL PROPERTY PURSUANT TO G. S. § 143-318.11(a)(5). All those present left the meeting room except the Town Administrator and Public Services Administrator.

- A. The Public Services Administrator reported that Dale Walker had submitted his resignation as meter reader. He then left the meeting room.
- B. The Board discussed individual salaries with the Town Administrator.
- C. The Board discussed the possible acquisition of three different parcels of real property.

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

6. The Board agreed by consensus to advertize for the meter reader position.

7. The Board agreed by consensus to the following salary increases, in addition to the 2% Cost of Living Allowance approved earlier in the meeting, as discussed at the June 16 Board meeting and in the Closed Session earlier in the meeting:

<u>No.</u>	<u>Employee</u>	<u>Salary Grade-Step</u>
102	Geraldine Crowe	14-12
103	Richard Betz	Half-way between 25-6 & 25-7
107	Connie Sparacino	11-5
108	Lamar Nix	24-8
111	Lisa Wilson	9-4
201	Jerry Cook	21-4
203	James McCall	15-3
206	R. L. Forrester	11-6
209	Clifford Ammons	11-5
221	Dwayne Thomas	11-3
224	Chad Stone	11-2
303	Wade Wilson	15-6
403	Roy Henry	9-3
406	Eugene Ramey	15-2
409	Lee Reddish	9-3
504	James Coffey	9-2
505	John Smith	5-11
507	Larry Holt	10-2
619	David Webb	13-3
621	Matt Shuler	10-3
622	Darren Worley	10-2
623	Steven Bryson	10-2
801	Mike Houston	14-15
802	Howard Brown	13-4

In addition, it was agreed that the following employees are eligible for one-step increases when their probationary periods have elapsed: Kathleen Snyder to 17-2 on November 3, Gary Dalton to 11-2 on October 8, and Maxine Ramey to 5-2 on August 25.

The Board also agreed that, should Wade Wilson and Jimmy Mull become certified as "A" operators at the Water Treatment Plant, they are eligible for automatic two-step increases, to 15-8 and 14-3 respectively.

V. There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was declared adjourned by the Mayor at approximately 9:00 p.m.

Richard Betz, Town Clerk