

REGULAR BOARD MEETING of May 16, 2001, with Mayor Buck Trott and Commissioners Zeke Sossomon, Amy Patterson, H. N. James, Ron Sanders, and Mike Cavender present.

Also present were Richard Betz, Lamar Nix, Maureen Lackey, Kim Lewicki, Thomas Craig, Eric Pierson, Morris Williams, and Ninian Bond.

I. Call to Order.

The Mayor called the Regular Board 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 the following items be added:

- Extension of West Shore Lake Sequoyah Sewer Project contract.
- Request to close Town street.
- Review salaries in Closed Session.

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

III. Approval of Minutes.

Copies of the minutes of the May 2 Regular 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 reported that he would be attending Town Hall Day on May 23 in Raleigh.

2. The Town Administrator reported that funds from the "NC-106 Property Owners" had been received and deposited in an escrow account, the agreement on the sewer project had been executed, and the Notice to Proceed had been issued to the contractor. He also reported that a final decision on health insurance rates would be made by the League of Municipalities on May 17; he would schedule a meeting with the Finance Committee to discuss health insurance proposals when the information had been received.

An e-mail message had been received from Harold Saylor, Public Water Supply Section Regional Engineer, clarifying that existing docks on Lake Sequoyah would be "grandfathered" but could not be expanded, as discussed at the previous meeting. The Town Administrator had drafted a proposed amendment of the Lake Ordinance accordingly and sent it to Mr. Saylor and the Town Attorney for review, but had not yet received a reply. Several Board members felt that the amendment should include a limitation or prohibition of certain types of material used, such as pressure-treated wood; the Town Administrator agreed to review this with Mr. Saylor and revise the amendment accordingly, and place it on the agenda of the June 6 meeting.

Each Board member was provided a copy of a letter the Mayor had received dated May 9 informing the Town of the nomination of the Bowery Road Historic District to the National Register and inviting comments from the Town, as well as a copy of a letter written by the Town Attorney on October 3, 2000, concerning the effect such a nomination would have on condemnation of property along the Road. The Board agreed to place this on the agenda of the June 6 meeting.

The Town Administrator also reported that he had been discussing consolidated collection and billing of taxes with Macon County, as

approved in concept at the previous meeting. He had also discussed tax consolidation with the Tax Assessor of Jackson County; Jackson County already collects taxes for Dillsboro, Webster, and Forest Hills, but not Sylva. He said he had received a verbal commitment to collect taxes for the portion in Highlands for 1.5%.

MOVED BY COMM. JAMES, SECONDED BY COMM. CAVENDER, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE CONSOLIDATED TAX COLLECTING AND BILLING WITH JACKSON COUNTY IN CONCEPT.

#### V. Old Business.

1. The Board considered on second reading an Ordinance extending the construction schedule for Highlands Cable Group an additional two years; first reading had been approved at the May 2 meeting.

MOVED BY COMM. CAVENDER, SECONDED BY COMM. SANDERS, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE SAID ORDINANCE ON SECOND READING.  
A copy is attached hereto and made a permanent part of this record.

2. Each Board member had submitted to the Town Administrator, for tabulation and discussion at the June 6 meeting, nominations for appointments to the Zoning Board, Planning Board/Appearance Commission, ABC Board, Scholarship Committee, Advisory Committee for Scholarship Endowment Fund, and Cemetery Committee. Comm. James said that he felt Bill Coward, rather than Orville Coward Jr., should sit on the Scholarship Committee.

#### VI. New Business.

1. MOVED BY COMM. JAMES, SECONDED BY COMM. CAVENDER, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO SCHEDULE A SPECIAL BOARD MEETING FOR MAY 30 AT 7:00 P.M. TO PRESENT THE BUDGET.

2. Town Engineer Lamar Nix reported that he had received a written request for extension of time on the West Shore Lake Sequoyah Sewer Project contract from Larry Rogers Construction for an additional 42 days; the contract was scheduled to be complete today. As reported in earlier meetings, manufacturers had failed to deliver pump station components on time, and Mr. Nix recommended approving the contract time extension.

MOVED BY COMM. JAMES, SECONDED BY COMM. SOSSOMON, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE AN EXTENSION OF TIME OF 42 DAYS FOR THE WEST SHORE LAKE SEQUOYAH SEWER PROJECT.

3. A request had been received for closing Pine Street on June 27 from 6:30 until 10:30 for a "hoedown" street dance, but it was not known which organization it had been received from; the Town Administrator agreed to bring this information to the next meeting.

4. In a preliminary budget work session, the Town Administrator reviewed in detail the elements of the FY 01-02 budget to be presented on May 30, as discussed with the Finance Committee on May 15. The following was discussed:

- Budget requests from the Highlands Historical Society (\$15,000), the Hudson Library (\$12,000), and the Peggy Crosby Center (\$20,000).
- Bowery Road Water Project (\$942,475, of which \$466,175 had been appropriated but not yet spent in the current year).
- Wastewater Treatment Plant Expansion, Phase II (\$160,000-195,000); according to the consulting engineer, the application process was on track pursuant to the 44-month schedule originally outlined.
- An Electric Department Service Truck (\$80,000) and Street Department Backhoe (\$65,000), both in the Capital Improvement Program

(CIP); a police department car (\$20,000), moved ahead one year in the CIP.

- Recreation Department pickup truck or van, to be considered next year; also a new mower for the Recreation Park (\$9,000), to be ordered this year but paid for out of next year's budget, playground equipment (\$10,000), and re-lining the pool (\$10,000).

The Recreation Committee agreed to discuss use of the van and other Recreation Department budget requests.

- Replacement of water pump stations at Sassafras and Satulah (\$60,000 each).

- Budget request to the Chamber of Commerce as in previous years for 50% funding of the public restroom maintenance.

- Budget request to Jackson County for a contribution for fire protection; the Town Administrator agreed to discuss this with the Fire Department.

- Replacement of the funds for Recreation Park capital expense (\$51,000) through use of contingency funds and amendment of budget, and renewal of the \$100,000 CD as a capital reserve.

- Comm. Cavender had asked that \$10,000 be budgeted for landscaping along Spring Street, Main Street, and Maple Street.

- Comm. Cavender had also asked that funds be budgeted for completion of Bowery Road project if a compromise is approved. Comm. James felt no amount could be budgeted this year, but perhaps it could be placed in the Capital Improvement Program in a future year.

- Preliminary estimates indicated that there would be no need for a tax increase, nor for an increase in water, sewer, electric, or sanitation rates.

- A cost of living allowance of 4.0% was recommended.

- A request for an Administrative Assistant for the Zoning Administrator (\$20,000), pursuant to a memo received from Maureen Lackey on May 1. The Town Administrator said that he did not recommend approving the position because in his opinion there was not enough of a workload to justify an additional employee.

5. Maureen Lackey was present and reported that she had posted notices at Western Carolina University and interviewed two prospective student interns, one of which would be willing to work under her supervision for 10 weeks at no cost to the Town beginning May 30. The intern would do clerical work, such as purging files, which would permit her to get out of the office two days per week.

Comm. James asked her what she would be doing on those two days, and she explained that it would be field work. The Mayor asked if the intern would be covered under the Town's liability insurance; Ms. Lackey replied that she thought Western Carolina University would cover insurance. Morris Williams was present and spoke in favor of the request. Comm. Sossomon indicated that if there was no cost to the Town he did not object.

MOVED BY COMM. CAVENDER, SECONDED BY COMM. SANDERS, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE THE INTERN, CONTINGENT ON CHECKING ON INSURANCE COVERAGE AND COORDINATING IT THROUGH THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR.

6. MOVED BY COMM. CAVENDER, SECONDED BY COMM. PATTERSON, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO GO INTO CLOSED SESSION PURSUANT TO G. S. §143-318(A)(6) TO REVIEW APPLICATIONS FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TO REVIEW SALARIES, AND PURSUANT TO G. S. §143-318(A)(1) TO REVIEW AND APPROVE SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS. All present left the room except the Clerk and the Public Services Administrator.

A. The Board reviewed applications for Billing Clerk with the Town Administrator; he recommended employing Gail Reese at the starting salary of 10-1.

- B. The Public Services Administrator recommended promoting James Ramey to Lead Meter Reader at a salary of 9-8 (\$21,739); he is currently 8-8.
- C. The Public Services Administrator recommended employing Mike Burrell part-time in the Street Department at an hourly rate of 12-12 (\$13.38/hour), at no more than 1000 hours per year. The Board discussed possible liability issues resulting from knowledge of Mr. Burrell's recent health problems.
- D. The Board reviewed the recommendations of the Scholarship Committee pursuant to its letter dated May 10, awarding \$35,250 in scholarships to 56 students.
- E. The Board reviewed in detail a written report from the Town Administrator on salary recommendations for the upcoming fiscal year for all employees.

MOVED BY COMM. SOSSOMON, SECONDED BY COMM. JAMES, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO GO INTO OPEN SESSION.

7. MOVED BY COMM. PATTERSON, SECONDED BY COMM. SOSSOMON, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO EMPLOY GAIL REESE AS BILLING CLERK AT AN ANNUAL SALARY OF 10-1 (\$19,214).

8. MOVED BY COMM. SANDERS, SECONDED BY COMM. PATTERSON, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO PROMOTE JAMES RAMEY TO THE POSITION OF LEAD METER READER AT AN ANNUAL SALARY OF 9-8 (\$21,739).

9. MOVED BY COMM. SANDERS, SECONDED BY COMM. PATTERSON, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO EMPLOY MIKE BURRELL ON A PART-TIME BASIS, NOT TO EXCEED 1000 HOURS PER YEAR, AT AN HOURLY RATE OF \$13.38, CONTINGENT ON DISCUSSING POSSIBLE LIABILITY RESULTING FROM KNOWLEDGE OF MR. BURRELL'S RECENT HEALTH PROBLEMS WITH THE TOWN ATTORNEY.

10. MOVED BY COMM. SANDERS, SECONDED BY COMM. CAVENDER, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE.

VII. MOVED BY COMM. JAMES, SECONDED 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 9:00 p.m.

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Richard Betz, Town Clerk