

Minutes  
Special Called Meeting  
Aberdeen Board of Commissioners

May 14, 2009  
Thursday, 5:30 p.m.

Aberdeen Town Hall  
Aberdeen, North Carolina

The Aberdeen Town Board met on Thursday, May 14, 2009 at 5:30 p.m. for a Special Called Meeting for a Budget Work Session. Members present were Mayor Elizabeth B. Mofield and Commissioners Robbie Farrell, Pat Ann McMurray, Donna Shannon, Jim Thomas and Walter Wright. Others in attendance were Town Manager Bill Zell, Town Clerk Regina Rosy, and Finance Officer Beth Wentland.

Manager Zell stated he moved \$1500 from Parks & Recreation to maintenance for the AA Building. He took \$500 from each of the three lines in athletics to cover the \$1500 expense for the AA Building. Mayor Mofield expressed concern over pulling the whole \$1500 from Parks & Recreation. She stated she would like to see more money in the Parks & Recreation budget, not less. She stated the Parks & Recreation Department is an excellent marketing tool to draw people to Aberdeen.

Commissioner McMurray stated the Police Department has \$900 budgeted for employee functions. Commissioner McMurray stated Administration has \$4000 for employee functions. Commissioner McMurray wanted some clarification on what the expenses would be for these line items. Manager Zell stated the \$900 for the Police Department is used for an annual Christmas party for the Aberdeen Police Department employees and spouses. Manager Zell stated Police Chief Mike Connor usually takes his staff to Beefeaters for their dinner. Manager Zell stated the \$4000 in Administration is used for the Safety & Healthy Day for all Town employees and also for the Annual Christmas Party for all Town employees and their spouses.

Mayor Mofield stated she really believes the Aberdeen Police Department should do their holiday Christmas party somewhere in Aberdeen rather than going to Beefeaters in Southern Pines. Mayor Mofield suggested the Postmaster's House and then have the food catered in. Commissioner Thomas suggested Hampton Inn. Manager Zell stated it would not be a problem to keep the money in Aberdeen for this event.

Commissioner Shannon stated she would like to see Manager Zell look into bulk rates for advertising space for the newspaper. Manager Zell stated he would investigate bulk rates and see what kind of money the Town could save.

Mayor Mofield stated Tommy Cruce, with Communities in Schools, has requested a donation from the Town. Mayor Mofield stated he is looking for someone to buy 10 tickets at \$250 each to go to the Education Ball. Communities in Schools would receive all of the proceeds from the event to support their programs. Manager Zell stated the State of NC has pulled back some of their funding from Communities in Schools and now they are in need of some additional funding. The Board questioned if some money could be pulled from this year's budget to give to Communities in Schools. Manager Zell stated money could be pulled from fund balance if the Board so desired. The Board agreed to donate \$250 to Communities in Schools.

Commissioner McMurray stated the average property insurance rate is \$350 per building. Commissioner McMurray asked if this was the best possible rate. Manager Zell stated Travelers Insurance gets us the best price possible.

Commissioner Farrell questioned why the utilities for the Public Works facility was increasing for this upcoming year. Manager Zell stated he budgeted for projected increased utility rates for the upcoming year.

Commissioner Farrell questioned the police patrol fuel budget – he questioned why the Manager recommendation and the Dept. Head recommendation did not match. Manager Zell stated \$50,000 was budgeted for fuel for police patrol due to budget cuts in order to balance the budget. Manager Zell stated he does not take anything from a department's operating budget without the department head understanding the decrease. Manager Zell pointed out that \$65,900 was spent in 2007/2008 due to high fuel costs, but fuel costs have now come back down.

Mayor Mofield stated she was concerned why the Parks & Recreation budget was cut so much when she would like to see more programs. Manager Zell stated Town services are police, fire, streets, and water/sewer. He stated in lean times, recreation is a luxury. Commissioner Wright stated he agreed with Manager Zell. Mayor Mofield stated Parks & Recreation is a marketing tool and she believes we need more programs. Commissioner Wright stated when there is plenty of money, then it is okay to spend lots of money on recreation. Mayor Mofield stated there is an excellent Parks & Recreation Director for the Town of Aberdeen and she believes Manager Zell is making a mistake by cutting the Parks & Recreation budget. Commissioner Shannon agreed with Mayor Mofield about the Parks & Recreation Director Leigh Baggs – she stated Leigh has presented some great ideas for additional programs such as movies in the park. Commissioner Shannon wanted to ensure that Parks & Recreation Director Leigh Baggs has the funding she needs to do the programs for the community. Commissioner McMurray stated Parks & Recreation Director Leigh Baggs has already began a movie program for children with the current funding. Mayor Mofield stated she wants Leigh Baggs to expand her programming, not decrease her programming. Mayor Mofield stated what brings people to an area is the quality of recreational programs, not sewer service. Manager Zell stated he budgeted more than enough money for Parks & Recreation programs, based on spending from previous years.

Mayor Mofield stated she is hoping once we go to one day a week trash pick-up, there will be more manpower to beautify the area. Mayor Mofield stated she would like to see the Appearance & Beautification Commission draft a letter to all property owners on US Highway 1 to clean their right of way on their property. Commissioner Thomas thought that may be a dangerous situation. Commissioner Wright stated the Town could use the street sweeper and have a police officer go with the street sweeper to allow for public safety.

Commissioner Farrell wanted to know why Powell Bill money for \$20,000 for a bridge was budgeted. Manager Zell stated NCDOT comes in and inspects our bridges and tells us what we need to do to maintain the bridge.

Manager Zell stated the Board needed to discuss water and sewer rates. Mayor Mofield stated she would like to keep the base rate at \$4.00 for water and \$4.00 for sewer. Manager Zell stated the base fee pays for infrastructure. Manager Zell stated there is no fee for availability if sewer runs in front of someone's house. Commissioner Farrell questioned if the

base fee could be charged on tax bills rather than water bills so it could be tax deductible for citizens. Mayor Mofield stated that could be done with garbage pick-up fees, but not water/sewer fees due to it being different funds. Manager Zell stated the Board needs to look at what tiers the Board likes and then go from there. Manager Zell stated the average household uses 3,000-5,000 gallons of water each month. Commissioner Wright stated if you have children, it could be much higher around 10,000 gallons. Commissioner Wright stated he really likes Option 4-A that Manager Zell has come up with. Mayor Mofield stated she wishes the base rate could stay the same. Commissioner Shannon agreed with that. Manager Zell stated we're only talking about a \$2 increase six times a year if the base rate increases to \$5 for water and \$5 for sewer. He stated this extra revenue is needed in order to pay for the increased fees for the County. Commissioner Wright stated Martin & McGill recommended we go up 10% for water rates and 20% for sewer rates for this upcoming fiscal year. Commissioner Wright stated Martin & McGill also recommended a 15% price increase again next year, and 15% again the next year. Manager Zell stated meter readings are done 15 days before billing. He stated the April 16 - June 15 cycle would be billed July 1, 2009. Manager Zell stated the Board needs to decide when this cost increase would take effect. Commissioner Shannon stated she doesn't think it is right to change the prices in the middle of a usage period. She felt we should start it June 16 - August 15 for the September 1, 2009 billing so that residents have notice of the price increase. Commissioner McMurray wanted to know how many alerts the citizens would get before this price increase goes into effect. Manager Zell stated the only notice mailed out would be with the July 1<sup>st</sup> billing and we would list on the Town website and TV station as well. Commissioner Wright wanted the Board to decide on Option 4-A. A motion was made by Commissioner Shannon, seconded by Commissioner Wright, to approve Option 4-A effective for the September 1, 2009 billing period for the June 16 - August 15 usage period. Motion unanimously carried.

Manager Zell passed around a possible sign to use in front of the new parking lot. Commissioner Shannon stated Kee's moving trucks are parked right beside the building. Commissioner Shannon stated this was supposed to be a parking lot for customers to use, not businesses. She stated the parking lot looks very tacky. She stated she would like to see more trees and shrubbery. She stated there is no shade for the parking lot. She stated she couldn't believe the Town had built a parking lot with no landscaping.

Manager Zell wanted to clarify with the Board that \$10,000 has been budgeted for Malcolm Blue for the new budget year. Manager Zell stated he thought we needed a list of items this money will pay for. Commissioner McMurray stated she would have this information for the Board next week.

Manager Zell stated he has learned that the surge protector at the Parks & Recreation Building is under warranty, and it will be replaced for free. Manager Zell stated he is not sure that will fix the problem though. Manager Zell stated Vision Technologies has quoted the Town \$10,700 to fix the grounding problem for the building. Mayor Mofield stated the grounding should have been encompassed in the building contract – and she felt like this should be addressed by the building contractor. Mayor Mofield wanted to know if a local electrical contractor could visit the building and take a look at the situation before moving forward.

Manager Zell stated Parks & Recreation Director Leigh Baggs was able to get the price for the chair rail for the building dropped from \$10,000 to \$6,000. Commissioner McMurray wanted to be sure the chair rail would still be the same quality chair rail. Commissioner Wright

stated the chair rail would be for the hallway and the offices. It's already located in the large room. Commissioner McMurray requested Leigh Baggs to send the estimate details to the Board by e-mail.

Manager Zell stated Leigh Baggs had come up with a cost of \$24,812 good thru June 1, 2009 for Berkeley Park for equipment, wood chips and installation. Commissioner Shannon did not want wood chips because mosquitoes grow in them. Manager Zell stated he thought this playground was a little large. Commissioner Shannon stated she thought the Berkeley area needed a playground for the children. Commissioner Thomas stated he was fine with \$25,000 for playground and \$75,000 for a roof at Ray's Mill Pond. Manager Zell stated a budget needs to be established for this Ray's Mill Pond budget. The Board agreed the chair rail is a good deal. Commissioner Farrell stated the Town needs more details before making a decision on the chair rail. Mayor Mofield stated we have a meeting Monday night and a decision could be made then about the chair rail after more details are received. Also, Commissioner McMurray recommended a smaller choice for the playground be come up with for Monday night's meeting.

Mayor Mofield asked if it would be okay for her to call Elease Goodwin to have the Appearance and Beautification Commission look at a landscape plan for the new parking lot. Commissioner Shannon stated she is sick when she looks at the parking lot. She stated there should have been more trees and shrubbery in the parking lot to allow for some shade. Mayor Mofield stated she needs a chance to go take a look at the parking lot. Mayor Mofield requested that this item be discussed again Monday night.

Commissioner Wright mentioned to the Board that Dave Thomas now owns the property across from Thomas Tire and Planning Director Liles is going to get a landscape plan from him. Commissioner Farrell wanted the Planning Staff to check on the sign at Thomas Tire to see what the height is.

With no further items for discussion or review, a motion was made by Commissioner Wright, seconded by Commissioner Shannon, to adjourn the Special Called Meeting. Motion unanimously carried.

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Regina M. Rosy, Town Clerk

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Elizabeth B. Mofield, Mayor

Minutes were completed in  
Draft form on May 15, 2009

Minutes were adopted  
June 8, 2009