

**Minutes
Work Session**

Aberdeen Town Board

February 8, 2016 Robert N. Page Municipal Building
Monday, 6:00 p.m. Aberdeen, North Carolina

The Aberdeen Town Board met Monday, February 8, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. for the Work Session. Members present were Mayor Robert A. Farrell, Mayor Pro-tem Jim Thomas, and Commissioners Buck Mims, Ken Byrd, and Elease Goodwin. Commissioner Joe Dannelley was not in attendance for the meeting. Staff members in attendance were Planner Kathy Blake, Planning Director Pam Graham, Police Chief Tim Wenzel, and Town Manager Bill Zell. Bryan Bowles, Andy Honeycutt, Lauren Brown, Roger Sauls, Reporter for The Pilot Laura Douglas, Bonnie McPeake, and Tim Marcham were also in attendance for the meeting.

1. Automated Metering Infrastructure (AMI) Presentation.

Manager Zell stated Town staff has been working towards automated metering infrastructure for several years now.

Andy Honeycutt stated he has a long history with this community. He had a consulting firm for several years, and just recently has started up his new company called MeterSys. Mr. Honeycutt stated the company is focused on financial, operational, and customer service enhancements for public water, gas, and electric utilities. Mr. Honeycutt stated his company provides full program management support from feasibility to customer service improvements and includes DBFOM options. Mr. Honeycutt reviewed all of the key partners and stakeholders that he works with.

Commissioner Mims clarified if Mr. Honeycutt's business is a middle man between the Town and the hardware for the program. Mr. Honeycutt stated his company is an implementation and management service company, and operates as a consultant.

Mr. Honeycutt reviewed an overview of AMR/AMI technologies. Mr. Honeycutt stated AMR is a drive-by/walk-by system that has limited analytics, reactive customer service and static flexibility. Mr. Honeycutt stated the AMI system is a fixed network, and provides data on an hourly basis. Mr. Honeycutt stated the

AMI system provides advanced analytics, proactive customer service, and scalable flexibility.

Mr. Honeycutt stated the benefit to the customers is that the Town gets an accurate read on the meters with real-time analytics. Mr. Honeycutt explained the program elements of the MeterSys Smart Program Meter. Mr. Honeycutt stated the AMR system is trending downward in new sales, and the AMI system is trending upwards.

Mr. Honeycutt stated the goals for the future of smart metering are to:

- Stabilize and resolve software issues involving utility billing
- Shift to monthly billing
- Eliminate manual meter reading
- Focus resources on water distribution and sewer collection responsibilities
- Improve asset management
- Use enhanced monitoring capabilities to reduce water loss
- Reduce manual utility billing processes
- Leverage technologies for innovative customer service

Mr. Honeycutt stated between April and August of 2015, he coordinated and executed a utility billing stabilization plan, completed a field inventory data collection, and developed program goals. Between July and December of 2015, he identified system design options, obtained vendor pricing, and determined service levels. In January of 2016, he identified the overall utility goals and objectives, provided AMI Solutions Design recommendations, provided financial analysis and results, and developed program phasing and a timeline plan.

Mr. Honeycutt reviewed the service benefits of the recommended system, and also reviewed the program goals.

Mayor Farrell asked if this program would replace all 4,000 meters currently installed in Aberdeen. Manager Zell stated that is correct, and it would all be included in the cost of this project. Commissioner Byrd stated he did not see any

dollar figures for this project in the agenda packet. Mr. Honeycutt stated he does have figures that will be shared with the Board at a later time, this evening was about introducing his company and the recommended product.

Commissioner Byrd wanted confirmation that the system will not interfere with cellular antennas already in place on the water tanks. Mr. Honeycutt stated the system engineers could provide some additional clarification on that subject, and he will make sure that information is included in the follow-up. Mr. Honeycutt stated this design build is being projected for 15-20 years, and he wants to make sure it is installed and implemented correctly.

Commissioner Byrd asked what the next steps are. Manager Zell stated the next step would be to have the Town Attorney review the service agreement for this project. Mayor Farrell stated the entire Board is going to need to discuss this issue and the money involved.

Mr. Honeycutt stated the current base rate fee for Aberdeen's customers is \$12.00/bimonthly. Mr. Honeycutt stated that fee is in line with neighboring communities – except the fact that Aberdeen's billing cycle is bi-monthly which reduces the base fee in half. Mr. Honeycutt stated there is an opportunity to increase the base fee to be more in line with neighboring communities, and create additional revenue.

Commissioner Mims asked how many employees are employed by MeterSys. Mr. Honeycutt stated there are 4 employees that work for the company. Lauren Brown stated there is also a lot of information available on the MeterSys website.

2. Aberdeen Representation on the Triangle Area Rural Planning Organization (TARPO).

Mayor Pro-tem Thomas stated he would be willing to serve on TARPO for 1 year. The Board members agreed to appoint Mayor Pro-tem Thomas to serve on TARPO for 1 year. Mayor Pro-tem Thomas left the meeting at the end of this item, because his hearing aid quit working and he could no longer hear.

3. Discussion of the Town's Sign Regulations.

Director Graham stated staff has recognized a need for a general discussion with the Board on whether portions of the Town's current sign regulations are

adequately addressing the need for business exposure and the Town's interest in aesthetics and reducing visual clutter.

Director Graham listed the items that might be addressed in the proposed amendments:

- Off-premise sign restrictions that currently provide limited visibility for businesses that are not on primary thoroughfares;
- Clarification of the restrictions on signage that "are illuminated by or contain lights that flash, blink or move";
- A need for new definitions, including "Advertising Flags";
- A potential need for revised definitions, including "Sign";
- Compatibility and design language that does not accommodate branded logos;
- Dimensional and distance from right-of-way requirements
- Supreme Court decision related to sign content.

Director Graham began by reviewing the off-premise sign restrictions and displayed some images of the signage at the Hampton Inn near Starbucks, which is an existing off-premise sign and it does not meet our current regulations. Director Graham stated therefore the sign is treated as a non-conforming sign, which means if any changes are made to the sign then it has to be brought into compliance. Commissioner Mims asked what changed in 2011 that made the sign non-conforming. Director Graham stated in 2011 the UDO was approved, but there were sign restrictions prior to the UDO being adopted.

Director Graham stated staff has been talking with Bonnie McPeake about this issue for quite some time. Director Graham stated currently the only way to bring it into compliance is for the sign to be moved on site. Commissioner Mims stated the UDO has to be changed. Mayor Farrell stated the challenge is balancing everything out, and allowing businesses signage, but also not turning Aberdeen into a Bragg Blvd. Commissioner Mims stated the sign ordinance was just reviewed recently in Moore County, and it took months to review.

Bonnie McPeake stated the site for the Hampton Inn was chosen among 3 potential sites for the hotel. Ms. McPeake stated all she wants to do is change the panels on the sign, so that it says Hampton Inn by Hilton, which is being requested by corporate. Director Graham stated off-premise signs are no longer legal, and since this is an off-premise sign, there is no way to bring it into compliance without changing the UDO. Manager Zell suggested grandfathering in all existing signs. Ms. McPeake asked if a special exception can be made for her case. Mayor Farrell stated that would be a slippery slope because when an exception is made for one, then it is asked for by others. Director Graham stated the proper way to handle this would be to consider text amendments.

Ms. McPeake suggested using new-found revenue from the property taxes for the Marriott hotel (approximately \$50,000) and use that money directly towards the downtown area. The Board members thanked Ms. McPeake for coming to the meeting and addressing her concerns.

Director Graham then moved to the next proposed amendment and reviewed the restrictions on signage that "are illuminated by or contain lights that flash, blink or move". Mayor Farrell stated he does not want to see flashing lights on signs.

Director Graham asked for feedback on the "advertising flags". Commissioner Mims stated he would recommend reviewing each of these proposed amendments in more detail at future Work Sessions at the end of the meeting.

Director Graham discussed the design language that does not accommodate branded logos, and the way it currently reads, only 2 colors can be used in the branded logos. Director Graham stated she could understand these restrictions in a strip shopping mall perhaps, but other than that it might be too restrictive.

Director Graham discussed the next proposed amendment regarding dimensional and distance from right-of-way requirements.

Supreme court ruling related to sign content – Director Graham stated right now our language is not in compliance so the Town Attorney will draft language that is compliant.

Commissioner Mims stated he would like to see the first proposed amendment expedited since it is an issue for Ms. McPeake currently, and the hotel

will be opened in a month. Director Graham stated she will do everything she can do expedite it. Commissioner Byrd stated he also understands that Ms. McPeake placed lettering for the hotel on the back of the hotel so it could be seen from Best Buy. Director Graham stated she is doing all she can to accommodate Ms. McPeake.

4. Contiguous Voluntary Annexation #49-016 for property located at 131 Michael Lane.

a. Accept petition for annexation.

A motion was made by Commissioner Mims, seconded by Commissioner Byrd, to accept the petition for annexation. Motion unanimously carried 3-0.

b. Accept Clerk's Certificate of Sufficiency.

A motion was made by Commissioner Mims, seconded by Commissioner Goodwin, to accept the Clerk's Certificate of Sufficiency. Motion unanimously carried 3-0.

c. Resolution Fixing the Date of Public Hearing on the Annexation with the Public Hearing to be held on February 22, 2016.

A motion was made by Commissioner Goodwin, seconded by Commissioner Mims, to approve the Resolution Fixing the Date of Public Hearing on the Annexation with the Public Hearing to be held on February 22, 2016. Motion unanimously carried 3-0.

5. Mid-Year Budget Amendments.

Manager Zell stated these are the budget amendments that were on the agenda at the last meeting. Manager Zell stated he has spoken with Commissioner Mims, and he does not know of any other questions. Commissioner Byrd asked where the money comes from for these budget amendments. Manager Zell stated the money would come from Fund Balance, but at the end of the year there could be additional revenues that would offset these figures. Manager Zell stated these dollars for the budget amendments have already been spent, and these budget amendments have to be approved whether that be now, or at the end of the fiscal year. Mayor Farrell questioned the \$15,000 for the feasibility study for the sports complex. Manager Zell stated last January the Town asked Pat Corso for an invoice for the fee, and an invoice was not received until the current fiscal year. A motion

was made by Commissioner Mims, seconded by Commissioner Byrd, to approve the budget amendments. Motion unanimously carried 3-0.

6. Budget Calendar.

Manager Zell reviewed the budget calendar for the upcoming months. Manager Zell stated the budget retreat is planned for Friday, March 11th from 8:30 a.m. until all business is finished. Commissioner Mims asked if the Finance Officer can show visuals for each line item for how much it will increase/decrease those line items for the proposed budget.

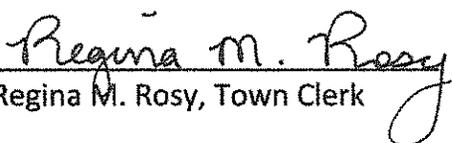
7. Other Business.

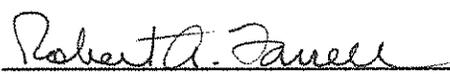
a. Golf Cart Discussion.

Manager Zell stated Commissioner Dannelley was asked by a citizen about using golf carts on Town streets. Chief Wenzel stated he provided a memo to the Board members with his professional opinion. Chief Wenzel stated there were 552 accidents responded to in 2015, and he believes that number would definitely go up if golf carts were allowed on Town streets. Chief Wenzel stated enforcement by staff would increase due to making sure golf cart drivers are licensed, equipment is street legal, etc. Commissioner Byrd stated the Town streets do not have the proper shoulders on the roads to provide for traveling golf carts. Mayor Farrell stated it appears the consensus of the Board is to leave the golf cart ordinance as it is written. A motion was made by Commissioner Byrd, seconded by Commissioner Goodwin, to leave ordinance as is applying only to Legacy Lakes, and not to any other portions of the Town. Motion unanimously carried 3-0.

8. Adjournment.

A motion was made by Commissioner Mims, seconded by Commissioner Goodwin, to adjourn the Work Session. Motion unanimously carried 3-0.


Regina M. Rosy, Town Clerk


Robert A. Farrell, Mayor

Minutes were completed in
Draft form on February 9, 2016

Minutes were approved
on February 22, 2016

