

**CITY OF LAURINBURG
SPECIAL JOINT MEETING
JULY 8, 2015
SMALL BUSINESS INNOVATION CENTER
16800 US HWY 401 NORTH
5:30 p.m.**

MINUTES

The City Council of the City of Laurinburg held a special joint meeting with the Scotland County Board of Commissioners on July 8, 2015 at 5:30 p.m. at the Small Business Innovation Center located at 16800 US Hwy 401 North. This was a joint meeting with the Scotland County Board of Commissioners with the honorable Thomas W. Parker III, Mayor, presiding. The following Councilmembers were present: Mary Jo Adams, Dolores A. Hammond, Curtis B. Leak, Andrew G. Williamson, Jr. and J.D. Willis.

Also present were: Charles D. Nichols III, City Manager, and Jennifer A. Tippet, City Clerk.

Present from the Scotland County Board of Commissioners were: Chairman Guy McCook; Commissioners Whit Gibson, Carol McCall, Betty Blue Gholston and Bob Davis. Also present were County Manager Kevin Patterson, County Attorney Ed Johnston and Lori Parks, Research Analyst/Safety Coordinator.

Mayor Parker called the special meeting of the Laurinburg City Council to order at 5:32 p.m. The Invocation was given by Councilmember Leak.

Chairman McCook called the Commissioners meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion was made by Councilmember Willis, seconded by Councilmember Hammond, and unanimously carried to approve the agenda as presented.

DISCUSSION OF DIRECTION OF SCOTLAND COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (SCEDC)

Mayor Parker explained that the purpose of the meeting is because of concerns regarding the Scotland County Economic Development Corporation (SCEDC), the vacant Economic Development Director position, and the City's role in economic development. He also discussed communication issues and the need to share information.

Councilmember Willis expressed concern that the by-laws of SCEDC were not being followed particularly with regard to the role of the County and the County Manager in managing the Economic Development Director.

Chairman McCook explained that there had been no changes in the by-laws of the SCEDC. He added that it was a partnership between the City and the County. He further added that the Economic Development Director reports to the SCEDC board, is the president of and runs the corporation, and has some legal fiduciary responsibilities. He explained that the Economic Development Director position was set up to be a County employee who reports to the County Manager.

Councilmember Willis explained that when the SCEDC was set up, there was a dotted line to the County Manager and the SCEDC Board conducted the hiring, firing and granting of any bonus.

Discussion ensued concerning the bonus granted to the former Economic Development Director. Chairman McCook explained that the SCEDC Board should have been informed of the \$10,000.00 bonus given to the former Economic Development Director.

Further discussion ensued concerning the Economic Development Director position and the bonus given to the former Economic Development Director.

Councilmember Williamson discussed the City being more proactive in growing the City. He explained that while there had been some dissatisfaction with the SCEDC, he felt there was genuine effort shown.

Mayor Parker explained that he felt that the City may need to do some marketing on its own and become more active in the SCEDC. He added that there is great cooperation among members on the SCEDC.

Chairman McCook explained that he would like the City and the county be more proactive and work together more. He also explained that if the by-laws do not fully address issues that need to be addressed, then a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) could be developed as a supplement to the by-laws.

Discussion ensued concerning a MOU or a revision of the bylaws. Mayor Parker suggested that City Council review the by-laws and provide suggestions to the City Manager.

Councilmember Hammond explained that the by-laws were outdated as they were completed in 2008.

Councilmember Adams explained that she had several concerns about the EDC as follows:

- Fiasco with the Abbott Building.
- Progress moving forward to hire the Economic Development Director.

Commissioner McCall explained that if an Economic Development Director had been hired last year, there probably wouldn't be a meeting occurring at this time.

Councilmember Willis expressed concern that the City Council was not well informed of what was happening with the SCEDC.

Further discussion ensued concerning communication between the SCEDC and City Council.

Discussion ensued concerning the sale of the Abbott building and the role of the former Economic Development Director's role in that incident.

Discussion ensued concerning the hiring process and previous interviews for the Economic Development Director position. Chairman McCook explained that because the first round of interviews were not successful, a decision was made to look at applicants who did not have economic development experience; however, no good candidate was discovered. He added that the plan is to

leave the posting of the position open for a period of time in order to get a reasonable number of applicants.

Discussion ensued concerning the job description for the Economic Development Director.

Chairman McCook explained that there is a need for better communication and understanding of expectations. He suggested that the annual SCEDC meeting be held jointly with the County Commissioners and City Council.

Chairman McCook provided an update on the former water/wastewater treatment plant at WestPoint Stevens Plant, which Cascades will transfer to the County, and on the option to purchase a 50-acre tract of land at the Laurinburg-Maxton Airport for a future industrial site.

Discussion ensued concerning the board of the SCEDC being elected officials. Councilmember Williamson suggested involving other parties in the SCEDC such as successful business people in the community.

Chairman McCook explained that it had been discussed at the May SCEDC meeting to bring in the representatives from the Laurinburg-Scotland County Area Chamber of Commerce, Laurinburg/Maxton Airport Commission and the Scotland County Tourism Development Authority.

Following further discussion, Chairman McCook explained that the by-laws should be reviewed and an Economic Development Director hired before bringing in other groups. He added that the SCEDC will schedule a meeting and invite potential stakeholders to receive input and to discuss the direction of economic development.

Upon question by Councilmember Adams, Chairman McCook explained that there is a budget for the SCEDC; however, the FY 15-16 budget had not been adopted yet. He added that the by-laws, strategic plan and financial statements will be provided to the County Commissioners and City Council.

Discussion ensued concerning the buffer for FCC. The County Manager explained that there is a landscape design and until the water system was completed, trees were not planted; however, they would be planted in the fall.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Councilmember Hammond, seconded by Councilmember Leak, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 6:48 p.m.

Thomas W. Parker III, Mayor

Jennifer A. Tippet, City Clerk