CITY OF LAURINBURG
COUNCIL MEETING
MAY 17, 2011
MUNICIPAL BUILDING
303 WEST CHURCH ST.
LAURINBURG, NC
7:00 P.M.

MINUTES

The City Council of the City of Laurinburg held its regular monthly meeting May 17, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. in the council room of the Municipal Building with the Honorable Matthew Block, Mayor, presiding. The following Councilmembers were present: Curtis B. Leak, Herbert M. Rainer, Jr., Kenton T. Spencer, and Joy Ellison. Councilmember Parker was absent.

Also present were: Edward F. Burchins, City Manager, Dolores A. Hammond, City Clerk, and Charles L. Hicks, Jr., Assistant City Attorney.

Mayor Block called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Councilmember Leak gave the invocation.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Councilmember Leak moved to adopt the agenda. Councilmember Spencer seconded the motion and it unanimously carried.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Block reviewed the items on the Consent Agenda:

Consent Agenda

a. Approve minutes from retreat of February 26, 2011, workshop of March 15, 2011
b. Set public hearing on the proposed 2011-2012 Fiscal Year Budget to be held June 21, 2011 in the upstairs council room of the Municipal Building located at 303 West Church Street
c. Approve Ordinance No. O-2011-08 which condemns property located at 1001 Anne Street
d. Authorize Mayor to sign agreement between the City of Laurinburg and the Scotland County Board of Elections to conduct the 2011 Municipal Elections
e. Set candidate filing fees at $25.00 for Mayor and Councilmembers for 2011 Municipal Election
f. Approve Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Laurinburg, the Town of Maxton, and the Laurinburg-Maxton Airport Commission for improvements to the runway at the Laurinburg-Maxton Airport and authorize Mayor and City Clerk to execute Memorandum of Understanding
g. Approve Ordinance No. O-2011-09 which amends the 2010-2011 Budget Appropriations Ordinance (Ordinance No. 2010-12) by transferring $500,000 from Electric Fund Balance (30-439900) to Non-Departmental (661-509800)
h. Approve contract for the lobbying of the Laurinburg-Maxton Airport runway with Marlowe & Company, LLC and authorize Mayor and City Clerk to execute contract

Councilmember Rainer moved for the approval of the Consent Agenda with Item H being pulled for discussion.

Councilmember Spencer commented on the minutes from the February 26, 2011 meeting and suggested they be amended to clarify the he's on the third page, paragraph seven to reflect "City Manager".

The previous motion having died for the lack of a second, Councilmember Spencer made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda with Item H being pulled for discussion during the City Manager report and with the previously stated revisions to the minutes of February 26, 2011. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Rainer, and passed upon the following vote:

Ayes: Rainer, Spencer, Leak, Ellison
Nays: None

Mayor Block commented that Councilmember Parker is not in attendance because he is attending the birth of his granddaughter.

CLOSEOUT THE 2008 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT FOR THE INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT ON CREEDLE AND MORRIS STREETS

Mayor Block explained that this public hearing is to hear citizen input on the closeout of the 2008 Community Development Block Grant for the infrastructure project on Creedle and Morris Streets.

Mayor Block explained that in accordance with the regulations of the North Carolina Department of Commerce, a closeout public hearing is required before a grant can be closed out by the State. This infrastructure project involved Creedle and Morris Streets sewer improvements. The City received $630,262.38 in 2008 CDBG funds, which represented 90% of the total project costs to replace sewer in the project area.

Mayor Block declared the public hearing open.

Mrs. Brandi Deese, Zoning Officer, informed Council that this project involved Creedle and Morris Street sewer improvements with the total project amount of $705,106.19 spent. She explained that the City's match was $74,843.81. She then explained that this block grant allowed for the replacement of failing clay sewer lines in the Lincoln Heights neighborhood. She stated that the project consisted of 1700 feet of 8-inch sewer main and 2250 feet of sewer outfall. She then stated that 25 dwellings were reconnected to sewer service where overflows, backups, and odors have been a major problem. She further explained that this project eliminated a major concern for the North Carolina Department of Environmental and Natural Resources and eliminated concerns with water quality.

There was no one present to speak for or against this project.

Mayor Block closed the public hearing.

There was no action required by Council.

THE EN-LIGHTENERS

Mayor Block stated that the En-lighteners is a support group for the visually impaired in Scotland County and would like to discuss the group to create greater awareness of the challenges facing the visually impaired in Scotland County. The group will not be asking for funds or services.

Mr. Charles Boyd, President of the En-lighteners, addressed Council to explain the support group. Mr. Boyd stated that in Scotland County there are not any activities for the visually impaired. He also expressed concern about the cumbersome sidewalks with tree roots pushing up sidewalks where the visually impaired try to walk. He then stated that the large oak trees impede walking along the streets. He then explained that the visually impaired citizens in Laurinburg and Scotland County want to be independent. Mr. Boyd concluded by stating that he is present to speak for the En-Lighteners in order to bring their concerns to Council and would appreciate any help that can be given to the group.

NAACP- MR. ROBERT MALLOY, PRESIDENT

Mr. Robert Malloy was not present.

LAURINBURG/MAXTON AIRPORT COMMISSION-2011-2012 PROPOSED BUDGET - JO ANN GENTRY, INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Mrs. Joanne Gentry, Interim Executive Director, recognized Ms. Ella Morris, Airport Commission member.

Mrs. Gentry explained that the Laurinburg/Maxton Airport Commission 2011-2012 budget was approved by the Airport Commission at a special meeting on May 12, 2011. She stated that the budget includes no cost of living increase for employees, a 1% increase in employer's contribution for employees' 401K, and a 5% increase in water and sewer rates.

Mrs. Gentry reported that the Laurinburg/Maxton Airport had one business to close and one industry that burned to the ground and the industry has decided not to rebuild.

She explained that the cost of operating a water and wastewater plant and the additional tests that the plants have to perform along with the increasing cost of chemicals is the reason for the increase in water and sewer rates.

Mrs. Gentry stated that the Airport Commission has been working very hard to get the grant money needed to rehab the pavement on the runway which will be a great asset to the local economy. She then stated that the NC Department of Transportation Division of Aviation has allocated $4,096,424.00 toward the runway project with a local match of $455,159.00. She explained that the Airport Commission is seeking an additional $1,003,000.00 from the Federal Government.

She concluded by thanking the City of Laurinburg for approving approximately $500,000.00 transfer from the City to the Laurinburg/Maxton Airport Commission for the local match for the runway rehab project.

Upon question by Councilmember Ellison, Mrs. Gentry stated that the line item included in the proposed Airport Commission budget is the repayment to the City of Laurinburg for its advance of $500,000.00 for the local match of grant funds.

Motion was made by Councilmember Spencer, seconded by Councilmember Rainer, and unanimously carried to approve the Laurinburg/Maxton Airport Commission 2011-2012 Proposed Budget.

LAURINBURG/SCOTLAND COUNTY AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE - DREW WILLIAMSON, PAST PRESIDENT

Mr. Drew Williamson, Immediate Past Vice-Chairman, thanked City Council for its contribution last year to the Laurinburg/Scotland County Area Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Williamson highlighted several programs recently completed and future programs that the Chamber has considered for the upcoming year.

He mentioned the Laurinburg After Five series, which is a large community event; the Academic Achievement Awards which are presented to students from grades 3-8; the litter sweep program for Laurinburg/Scotland County; the governmental affairs legislative breakfast; and the State of the City and County presentations. Mr. Williamson explained the purpose of all the Chamber's events is to raise community profile in order to create jobs and investment in the City of Laurinburg and Scotland County.

He stated that one of the new initiatives with workforce development is the prison re-entry program. Mr. Williamson then introduced Theresa Lamson, Chamber President.

Ms. Lamson explained that the Chamber is still working on the following: local food initiative by increasing awareness of local produce; a city/county map for the upcoming year; and increasing the use of the city and county's small businesses.

There was no action on this request at this time. Funding will be discussed during Council's budget workshops.

LAURINBURG/DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION CORPORATION (LDRC) - MARY ROBINSON – THIRD QUARTER REPORT

Mrs. Mary Robinson, LDRC Executive Director, provided Council with a quarterly report.

She explained that five new businesses have opened in the downtown area with two businesses closing.

She reported that one facade grant had been awarded and reimbursements have been made on two facade grants that had been approved. She also reported that the parking lot draft proposal had been completed and that the property owners are now reviewing the proposal. This proposal, if approved by the property owners, will allow maintenance and use of the parking lot on Railroad Street.

She stated that a survey had been conducted of the business owners downtown. Some of the results included that the majority of the businesses had been in the downtown area for ten years or more; were committed to staying in the downtown area; would like to see more outdoor concerts; and would like to see more seasonal events in the downtown area.

She concluded by stating that the fourth quarter focus will continue on the revolving loan fund and the purchase of 16 patriotic banners.

SPRINGSTED, INC. – PAY AND CLASSIFICATION PLAN – MR. JOHN ANZIVINOR – CONSIDER APPROVING MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

Mayor Block explained that this request is to consider approving a Memorandum of Agreement between the City of Laurinburg and the North Carolina League of Municipalities for the completion of a review of the City's Pay and Classification Plan , and to authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to execute the Memorandum of Agreement.

The North Carolina League of Municipalities contracts with Springsted Incorporated to conduct personnel studies. Mr. John Anzivino, Senior Vice President of Springsted Incorporated, will discuss the proposed personnel study and answer any questions posed by Council. The cost of the proposed study is $15,640.00 plus project expenses up to $3,225.000 for a maximum of $18,865.00.

Mr. John Anzivino, Senior Vice President of Springsted Incorporated, gave an overview of Springsted Incorporated.

Mr. Anzivino stated that this study will take approximately 135 days to complete.

He then stated that the current pay and classification plan will be reviewed by his staff. He stated that employees will be interviewed in order to gather a full understanding of their job duties. He stated that they will also look at the City's benefit package.

Mr. Anzivino then discussed Springsted's process to complete the study. There will be interviews with the City Manager, Human Resource Officer and department heads to determine if there are any known issues and to determine how the organization is structured. Springsted staff will meet with employees to explain the process of the study.

Upon a brief discussion, Councilmember Leak motioned to authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to execute the Memorandum of Agreement between the City of Laurinburg and Springsted Incorporated. Councilmember Ellison seconded the motion and it carried with Councilmember Rainer casting the only dissenting vote.

Mayor Block called for a recess at 8:16 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 8:20 p.m.

RESEARCH ON UNLICENSED MOTOR VEHICLES/EXCESS VEHICLES

The City Manager explained that staff had been directed to research information on unlicensed motor vehicles and the number of excess vehicles located on properties.

Mrs. Brandi Deese reported that she had researched Scotland County's Junk Vehicle Ordinance and how it compares with the City's. She stated that the County's ordinance is the same as the City of Laurinburg's which is based on North Carolina General Statute 153A-132 which defines a junk motor vehicle. She stated that she had contacted the County's junk vehicle enforcement officer and found that the County's enforcement is complaint driven.

Mrs. Deese reported that Scotland County indicated that it receives one to two complaints a year whereas the City receives more complaints during the week than the County does in a year.

Upon question by Mayor Block, Mrs. Deese explained that the majority of the complaints are concerning vehicles that have been parked on the property where grass has grown up, tires are flat, and the vehicle has become an eyesore to the community.

Mrs. Deese stated that she had researched other community ordinances and that there are a number of different ways to draft an amendment to the City's ordinance.

Upon question by Mayor Block, Mrs. Deese stated that it is a tough decision for Council because if Council chooses to amend the ordinance and make more stringent requirements it will affect everyone.

She commented that there are a few instances where residences in the City that have 7-12 vehicles that are not utilized on a regular basis being stored in front, side and rear yards. The large number of vehicles has generated several complaints, and these properties have become a nuisance to their neighborhood.

Upon further discussion, there was a motion by Councilmember Spencer, seconded by Councilmember Rainer and unanimously carried to table this request until the next Council agenda workshop.

DISCUSSION OF THE SPELLER AND SANFORD BUILDINGS

The City Manager stated that there has been an ongoing discussion regarding the Speller and Sanford Buildings. He explained there had been discussion with Scotland County about co-locating services in the Speller Building. He then stated that it is his recommendation not to participate in the proposed project. He then explained that he felt it was not a good idea to have staff spread out in different locations. The convenience of the present location is conducive to meeting our citizen's needs.

The City Manager stated that he would like to look at the infrastructure of the present Municipal Building in order to consider upgrading the facility.

Bill Peele, City Zoning Officer, explained that an inspection of the Sanford Building had been conducted and that there is no structural defect in the building. He stated that there are some cosmetic and superficial interior repairs that need to be made. Mr. Peele concluded by stating that the fire inspector and building inspector found that if the use of the building stayed the same it would not take a lot of money to put the building back in use, but if the use changes there could be substantial costs.

Councilmember Spencer stated that he would like the City of Laurinburg Youth Council to be allowed to locate in the Sanford Building once a decision is made about the building.

Councilmember Rainer commented that since there is interest in the Sanford Building, the City should not accept the building unless it is committed to making it 100 per cent usable. He stated that he feels that the renovation estimate should be part of the budget process.

Upon further discussion, it was consensus among Councilmembers to reject the use of the Speller Building and accept the Sanford Building.

DISCUSSION OF INSTALLATION OF WATER LINES AT TWO (2) PARKS FOR WATER FOUNTAINS AND DEVELOP COST ESTIMATE FOR INSTALLATION OF FENCE AT MARKET PARK

The City Manager stated that at Council's work session there was discussion about installing water fountains at two parks (Washington Park and Lincoln Park) and a discussion about a fence at Market Park.

He stated that he has had a discussion with Mrs. Shannon Newton, Scotland County Parks and Recreation Director. He then stated that there is a water line within five feet of where the proposed water fountains would be connected.

The City Manager stated that more discussion will need to be had about the proposed fence at Market Park.

He then reported that he and the County Manager are having discussions on how the City and County can work together to help each other out on something that might allow this project to begin. He then explained that he and the County Manager have discussed having the City and County to work together on in-kind projects up to a certain dollar amount. The City Manager stated that the County Manager would discuss this with the Scotland County Commissioners.

Councilmember Spencer explained his thoughts on the installation of water fountains to the park. He stated, with youth using the park facilities and especially during the hot summer months, there should be some basic way to provide water.

A discussion ensued on the needs of Market Park, Washington Park, and Lincoln Park.

Mayor Block stated that the parks are under the control of Scotland County Parks and Recreation and that if an issue is brought before City Council the concern should be given to the County for their review. He then stated that if the County Parks and Recreation Department finds a need for City in-kind services a proposal should be made to City Council.

Upon further discussion, Councilmember Rainer motioned to give the City Manager permission to work with Scotland County Parks and Recreation to come up with a proposal to install water fountains and to let the City know what it can do to help and the cost to the City.

Councilmember Spencer seconded the motion and it carried with Councilmember Leak casting the only dissenting vote.

Councilmember Leak explained that the fence at Market Park is needed to ensure the safety of citizens using the park.

CONSIDER PURCHASE, LICENSE AND MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT WITH DATAMATIC, LTD

The City Manager explained that the City has over 4,000 Fireflies which are devices that are put on water meters so the meters can be read more efficiently and effectively. He stated that the original Fireflies did not work for a number of reasons with one being the interference from wireless frequencies. The Fireflies have not been utilized and constitute an investment of over $400,000.00. He informed Council that this project had been rebid with Datamatic, LTD being the low bidder. This project contained conditions on which the City needed to recoup its losses and still Datamatic, LTD. was the low bidder

The City Manager explained that the favorable review of the proposed project by the team of City employees who originally reviewed the matter and with favorable review by additional team members, Stacey McQuage, Marcus Smith, Ronald Pierce and Cindy Carpenter, all with assistance from ElectriCities, gives him the confidence to recommend that the City approve the contract and move forward with the project upon approval of the contract by the City's attorney, Charles L. Hicks, Jr.

He stated that staff recommends that the City of Laurinburg accept the automated meter reading bid from Datamatic, LTD. in the amount of $2,451,226.45 with financing over a five year period at a 2.19% interest rate and authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to execute said agreement. A yearly maintenance fee of $18,897.40 will be billed separately. He stated that this recommendation includes the recommendation that the approval be made contingent upon the Assistant City Attorney approving the final wording of the agreement.

Councilmember Rainer expressed his concern about the cost of the project.

A discussion ensued on the history of the purchase of the Fireflies and the cost of the proposed /firefly contract.

Upon question by Councilmember Ellison, Mr. Rich Sanders, of Datamatic, LTD., stated that the original $400,000.00 invested by the City was for a small portion of the City's proposed system (more specifically 5,000 pieces not 15,000 pieces and not a drive-by system). This proposal is for a fixed system to control the assets of the City's business. He also stated that interest rates at this time are low and that as part of the proposed contract Datamatic is refunding back the money for the original purchase as well as giving another credit of $166,000.00 and is providing interest free financing for the first three years.

Motion was made by Councilmember Spencer that the City of Laurinburg award the automated meter reading bid from Datamatic, LTD. in the amount of $2,451,226.45 with financing over a five-period at a 2.19% interest rate and that the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized to execute said agreement pending final review and revisions by the Assistant City Attorney

The motion died due to lack of a second.

Councilmember Spencer motioned to table the project until the next work session.

The motion died due to lack of a second.

Councilmember Rainer motioned to not accept the purchase, license and maintenance agreement with Datamatic, LTD. Councilmember Leak seconded the motion with Councilmember Spencer casting the only dissenting vote.

The Assistant City Attorney reminded Council that if the issue of the meter reading devices is not dead and Council wants some other type of negotiation for the proposal, because the bid that is before Council will expire by the end of the month, if the issue is brought up at the next Council meeting, the process will have to begin again and re-bidding will need to take place.

APPOINTMENTS

City of Laurinburg Beautification Committee

Mayor Block explained that Council should consider appointments or re-appointments to the Laurinburg Beautification Committee. He stated that the terms of all members of the Laurinburg Beautification Committee have expired. All members have expressed interest in continuing to serve. Committee members shall be appointed by the Council, each to serve 2-year terms renewable without limitations to the number of consecutive terms. He stated that the following members are currently serving on the committee:

Ron Riggins, representing the TDA
Will Collins, representing Scotland High School Honor Society
Sandy Skamperle, representing the Scotland County Board of Realtors
Drew Williamson, representing the Laurinburg/Scotland County Area Chamber of Commerce
Lynn Mabry, member at large
Mary Jo Adams, representing District Two
Kenny Bethea, representing District One
Terry Gallman, representing LDRC

Councilmember Leak motioned, seconded by Councilmember Ellison, and unanimously carried to reappoint the current members to the Laurinburg Beautification Committee.

Laurinburg Housing Authority

Mayor Block stated that the Laurinburg Housing Authority appointment needs no action from Council. He then stated that Mr. John Clark has resigned from the Board of Commissioners of the Laurinburg Housing Authority. This is a Mayoral appointment and he is appointing Wilbur "Chip" Shytle to serve the unexpired five (5) year term ending on June 30, 2013.

COMMENTS FROM MAYOR AND/OR COUNCILMEMBERS

Councilmember Leak stated that this weekend Scotland High School will be conducting its graduation and Council congratulates the 2011 graduates of Scotland High School and other area high schools and Colleges.

Councilmember Rainer stated that the Storytelling Art Center is promoting an art event that features local talent and encourages everyone to attend.

Councilmember Spencer stated that at Council's workshop session they had discussed the traffic study for Turnpike Road.

The City Manager stated that he had contacted Raleigh to find out what the cost would be to conduct a traffic study and is waiting for a reply. He informed Council that if the City requests the study that the cost will be incurred by the City.

Councilmember Ellison stated that during the Council Agenda Workshop there was a discussion about placing recycling bins in public places and parks to encourage citizens to recycle. She then stated that she would like Council to discuss the idea of further exploring the placement of recycling bins in public places and parks.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Brain Gainey, 802 South King St., appeared before Council to comment on any ordinance relating to limiting the number of unused or untagged cars on a given property. He stated that the current ordinance is not enough to address the problems in his neighborhood. He explained that there is rubbish mounting to about seven feet high and two-three feet deep on certain properties in the neighborhood. He also explained that there are approximately seven cars in a particular location, and therefore, he feels that the location is not in compliance with City Code.

Mr. Gainey is requesting that Council have staff strictly enforce the current ordinances and that Council consider amending the ordinance in order to address the concerns more stringently.

APPROVE CONTRACT FOR THE LOBBYING OF THE LAURINBURG/MAXTON AIRPORT RUNWAY WITH MARLOWE & COMPANY, LLC AND AUTHORIZE MAYOR AND CITY CLERK TO EXECUTE CONTRACT WITH MARLOWE & COMPANY, LLC

Mayor Block explained that Item H was pulled from the consent agenda. Item H deals with the lobbying contract for the Laurinburg/Maxton Airport runway with Marlowe & Company.

Councilmember Rainer asked for clarity about what Marlowe & Company is providing for the City.

The City Manager stated that they have been instrumental is lobbying for funding from Congress for the repairing and resurfacing of the Laurinburg/Maxton Airport runway.

It was also explained that the contract total is $24,000.00 to be divided between the City of Laurinburg, Scotland County, the Town of Maxton, and the Laurinburg/Maxton Airport Commission at $6,000.00 per entity.

Upon further discussion, Councilmember Spencer motioned to approve the contract between the City of Laurinburg and Marlowe & Company, LLC and to authorize the Mayor to execute contract for lobbying services for the Laurinburg/Maxton Airport. Councilmember Rainer seconded the motion and it unanimously carried.

EMPLOYEE SURVEY

Councilmember Ellison stated that she would like to make certain that the results of the City of Laurinburg Employee Survey will be distributed to the representatives from Springsted Incorporated during the process of the pay and classification plan review.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Councilmember Rainer, seconded by Councilmember Spencer, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting

The meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Matthew Block, Mayor	Dolores A. Hammond, City Clerk