

**ELM CITY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2011
ELM CITY TOWN HALL
CONFERENCE ROOM**

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Mayor Grady Smith (hereinafter "Mayor Smith") called to order the regular meeting of the Elm City Board of Commissioners (hereinafter "Board") at 7:30 pm on November 15, 2011.

2. Roll Call

Mayor Smith conducted a roll call. The following were present:

Commissioner, Dale Childress (hereinafter "Comm. Childress")
Commissioner, Melvin Cooke (hereinafter "Comm. Cooke")
Commissioner, Lewis Crockett (hereinafter "Comm. Crockett")
Commissioner, Marsha Wells (hereinafter "Comm. Wells")
Commissioner, Gil Wheeler (hereinafter "Comm. Wheeler")
Town Administrator, Jonathan Russell (hereinafter "Admin. Russell")
Town Clerk, Dena Cordell

3. Approval of Minutes from Last Meeting

Mayor Smith gave the Board opportunity to review the proposed minutes from the October 11, 2011, meeting.

MOTION – Comm. Childress made motion to approve the Minutes of the October 11, 2011, Elm City Board of Commissioners Meeting; seconded by Comm. Wheeler. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

4. Greg Redman, CPA – Status of Audit

Greg Redman, with Gregory T. Redman CPA firm, gave a report on the audit that is currently taking place for the 2010/2011 fiscal year. Due to the inability to audit the books, it was suggested that the Town amend the contract with the state asking for a new deadline of January 20, 2012. Adjustments have been made in previous years, however, Mr. Redman feels that the problems need to be found and corrected. It is of his advice that we hire a CPA firm to correct the issues, due to his inability to do both the accounting and audit. He suggested the Town consider Andrew Harris, of Andrew Harris CPA firm, to correct the books. Andrew currently does work for the Town of Bethel, Princeville and others and charges a good rate.

MOTION – Comm. Childress made motion to amend the contract with a January 20, 2012 deadline; seconded by Comm. Crockett. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

5. **Admin. Russell's Report**

Admin. Russell reported to the Board, from the written report he submitted within the November 14, 2011 Agenda Packet. The following were actions taken by the Board as related to Admin. Russell's report:

- A. **Rural Water Leak Detection:** Admin. Russell has been in contact with the North Carolina Rural Water Association regarding additional technical assistance on the brown water situation in Town. An appointment is scheduled for the local NCRWA representative, Mike Hill, to come on Monday, November 21, 2011, for observance of possible leak detection and infiltration.
- B. **Inflow and Infiltration Update:** Following the October 11, 2011, Board meeting, a conference call was held with representatives from the Rural Center, USDS, AECOM, and the Town. The preliminary engineering report and environmental report have been approved. The December 30 deadline for the Rural Center funding has been extended to February 29, 2012, to match the deadline for USDA. It is projected that the project will be under contract for both funding sources by late January or early February 2012.

A survey crew has been surveying the existing lines for improvements, and should be completed within the following week.
- C. **Cleanwater Management Trust Fund Application:** The Town was notified on October 19, 2011, that the CWMFT application for the 2011 cycle had been denied. The Town was one of 160 applicants for the cycle with a total of \$157,000,000 being requested. Admin. Russell recommended that the Town transfer the application to the next billing cycle 2012, for the same proposed project.
- D. **Wilson County School Board Voluntary Annexation Decision:** The Wilson County School Board voted unanimously on October 17, 2011, to take all necessary steps to facilitate the voluntary annexation by the Town for both the Elm City Elementary School and remaining portion of the Elm City Middle School.
- E. **2011-2012 CDBG:** Admin. Russell has been in contact with David Harris regarding the upcoming grant cycle for CDBG. There have been major changes in the current requirements and format that may prove to be beneficial and work to the Town's advantage. The most recent CDBG grant has been closed out with the payment sent in August, to the NC Department of Commerce for the matching contribution.

F. **Rural Hope Grant Interest Letter:** Rural Hope is an initiative to bring health care facilities to rural areas within the state, and is funded by the NC Rural Economic Development Center and six other partners. The grant is used to support job growth and health care facilities throughout North Carolina. Admin. Russell recently sent out interest letters to property owners in the Town that currently own vacant buildings. Butch Matthews, owner of the property next to the Piggly Wiggly, and the owner of the laundry mat, have both expressed interest.

G. **NCDENR Emergency Solid Waste Management:** Admin. Russell recently spoke with Ben Barnes regarding the possibility of the Town designating a staging area for debris clean-up for any future natural disasters. Such require pre-approval from DENR, and in the event of an actual emergency, can be activated by a phone call. The property can only be used in the event of a storm.

MOTION – Comm. Crockett made motion that we look at properties for use as a staging area for Emergency Solid Waste; seconded by Comm. Cooke. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

H. **Upper Coastal Plain Grant Assistance:** Admin. Russell met with Joe Dooley and Dennis Patton on Monday, November 14, 2011, to discuss potential grant opportunities. The discussion focused on wastewater treatment expansion, train depot renovation, and water quality improvements. The Town being on the moratorium increases the odds of receiving funding.

I. **CSI Data Conversion:** A CSI technician was in the office on Monday, November 14, 2011, to begin the data conversion from Logics to CSI. It is planned to go live with the new software by January 1, 2012.

J. **Wireless Internet Update:** Admin. Russell spoke with representatives from Green Light about the possibility of providing internet service, making it available to the Town. The hardware expense to provide adequate service within the entire Town may not be cost effective. Admin. Russell will continue to look for additional sources for providing the service and will keep the Board updated.

K. **TAG Grant Update:** Admin. Russell met with representatives from McGill and Associates. The project has been transferred to the Pinehurst office. Admin. Russell has met with the gentleman that is to be in charge of the project and feels that he is competent and up to speed on where the Town currently is. He feels confident that they will be able to continue to evaluate the options for having the moratorium lifted, as well as looking into potential funding sources.

L. **RBEG Sidewalk Update:** The contract drawings have been submitted and the bid documents are being drawn up at this time. It is estimated that the Town should be able to begin in the first part of 2012.

- M. **Additions to Report:** A meeting is scheduled with Steve Scruggs, Envirolink, and Town representatives on Thursday, December 1st to complete an eleven month warranty inspection on the wastewater treatment plant to be sure everything is operating correctly.

6. **Invoices**

Admin. Russell presented Mayor Smith and the Board with the monthly Town invoices in the agenda packet. An addition to the invoices included the Toisnot Fire Department tax distribution of \$5,331.14.

MOTION – Comm. Cooke made motion to pay bills; seconded by Comm. Childress. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

7. **Comments from Public Floor**

The following public comments were made by the citizens of Elm City. If citizens gave personal introduction prior to making public comments, their proper names have been included in the meeting record. If personal introduction was not made, proper names have not been included in the record.

Many Town citizens were present at the meeting to voice their concerns over the brown water issue that continues in their area of Town.

Wesley Doles, of Gray Street, mentioned that he's dealt with the brown water issue for nearly 10 years. He installed a filter at his home, but has to change the filter every two weeks. The brown water seeps through the filter.

Louie Weaver, of Cobb Drive, brought samples of water from different faucets of her home. She also brought a picture for the Board to view.

Carolyn Amerson, of Nash Street, was present and mentioned her concern of bathing her child when the water is brown. She also mentioned that it seems to be worse after it rains.

Mike Myers, with Envirolink, was present at the meeting. He had been canvassing the area where the brown water occurs. He seems to think that the area where brown water is an issue is larger than what the Town had previously thought. Mike brought a piece of pipe from the area close by that had a leak. Many pipes carrying water to the homes are galvanized. Minerals attach to the galvanized pipe, as seen by the pipe Mike had at the meeting. When the Town flushes lines, the mineral deposits detach and send red tinted water to the homes. The red tint tells Mike that it is iron deposits. The overall solution to the brown water would be to change all of the galvanized pipes.

The streets that seem to deal with the brown water are: Gray Street, Cobb Drive, Pine Street, Leo Drive, Nash Street, Lynnhaven Drive, Staton Drive, and Land Street.

Mayor Smith assured the citizens that the Town will try to get grant funding to and work to have some idea on which way to proceed to take care of the brown water. In the meantime, Mike requested that all citizens be sure to contact the Town office when issues with brown water arise.

Bill Whitman, of The BQ Grill Store, came regarding a parcel of property that is annexed into the Town limits. The property has not had service from the Town in 20 year. He would like the Town to consider de-annexation of the property. He is interested in building and expanding his current business, and feels he is unfairly paying taxes to the Town, due to the service not being available to him. If the Town turns down the de-annexation, it is possible that he will have to move his business.

Mayor Smith assured Mr. Whitman that the Board would review the request. Admin. Russell requested that Mr. Whitman contact him either the first or second week of January.

Thelma Young would like to see the park closed and locked at 5:30, since it gets dark early.

Mike Pry, of Land Street, is concerned over the tree that is hanging over the road that fell during Hurricane Irene. The tree is suspended nearly 12 feet in the air, and would like the Town to help remove it. Admin. Russell is familiar with the issue and has contacted Progress Energy several times to lower the lines and take care of the tree. Each time, Progress stated that when the tree fell, they would be sure to place the lines back. Admin. Russell felt that it could be the property owner's responsibility to take the tree down.

Wayne Baker, of W. Wilson Street, assured Town citizens that Envirolink had done well in helping him in the past. He also mentioned concern regarding the price of water and sewer, as it seems to be no new businesses coming in to the Town.

8. Concerns of the Commissioners

Comm. Wells would like to see the Town have food available during the upcoming Christmas Parade on Sunday, December 11th. The Historic Commission may be able to collect funds from this event as a fund raiser.

Much discussion was rendered about where the Town was in relation to the tax foreclosures and condemnation of properties. Comm. Crockett would like a report of activity regarding the previously chosen properties. Comm. Wheeler would like to see a monthly update as to where the Town stands on each property.

Comm. Wells expressed concern over the need for the Town to have more than one person learn the new billing program. It was mentioned that Admin. Russell would be available to learn the program as well. It was also suggested that any Board member interested, could come to any of the training sessions as well.

Admin. Russell reported that the Historic Commission would like to appoint Willie Ruffin's wife to fill the vacant position.

MOTION – Comm. Cooke made motion that the wife of Willie Ruffin be placed in the vacant position on the Historic Commission; seconded by Comm. Crockett. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

Comm. Wheeler would like to see small signs attached to poles showing where the Historic District begins.

9. Adjournment

Mayor Smith adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:44 pm, November 15, 2011, upon motion of Board.

MOTION – Motion was made to adjourn by Comm. Childress; seconded by Comm. Crockett. Motion was passed by unanimous vote.

Minutes submitted by: Dena H. Cordell, Town Clerk