

Town of Spring Lake
Board of Aldermen Special Meeting
Municipal Building
300 Ruth Street
Spring Lake, NC 28390

March 13, 2015

MINUTES

6 p.m.

The Spring Lake Board of Aldermen held a special meeting in the Grady Howard Conference Room of the Municipal Complex with Mayor Chris V. Rey presiding.

Board Members Present: Mayor Pro Tem James O'Garra
Alderman James Christian
Alderwoman Densie Lucas
Alderwoman Fredricka Sutherland

Alderman Richard Higgins was absent.

Others Present:

Ken Metcalf, Town Manager
Troy McDuffie, Police Chief

Rosa Henegan, Human Resource Officer
Rhonda Webb, Town Clerk

1. Call Meeting to Order

Mayor Rey called the meeting to order.

(A copy of the special meeting notice is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes – see attachment one.)

a. Briefing Board on Policy Findings and Recommendations

Mayor Rey opened the floor for brief public comments.

Ms. Rita Perry, 1019 Karen Circle, stated the citizens have a right to know that it is not the Town's policies that caused the misuse of the PCards and that the misappropriation of taxpayer dollars is a direct result of the lack of enforcement, no accountability and a reflection of the Town's leadership. She quoted the Town's website reminding the Board that they are held directly responsible and accountable to ensure that the Town responds to the public needs and addresses those needs in the most efficient manner possible. She further stated it is a sad day for taxpaying citizens when the individuals elected to ensure fiscal responsibility maintain the status quo and "leave the fox in charge of the sheep."

Mr. Metcalf advised the Town received a public records request which revealed some policy violations. He apologized to the citizens and Board for himself and the employees. He stated there has been a lack of oversight in the PCard program. He promised we will fix all issues and violations that are brought to light.

Some of the items discovered are that the Town needs a uniform policy including safety boots. The gift and/or flower policy will be followed to the letter. All violators of Town policies will be dealt with swiftly and immediately, starting with management and we will do a better job of educating employees on policies and what is acceptable. Mr. Metcalf stated this is a promise.

Mayor Rey clarified for the attendees what has happened to date. He thanked Ms. Perry for her request and what it brought to light. He advised this meeting was called to allow the Board to receive information from the Town Manager on the issues. It is the Manager who has to develop the policies and enforce the policies. Mayor Rey expects feedback to the Board on findings and updates/changes. He wants the community to know that the Board does not approve of any misuse of Town funds.

Alderwoman Sutherland thanked the Mayor, Manager and Ms. Perry for this information. She stated that if she had received the correct information during budget time there is no way she would have increased the taxes. She further stated that she brought concerns regarding the misuse of Town purchase cards to Mr. Metcalf in December and he assured her that he would address her concerns and that never happened.

Alderman Christian echoed Alderwoman Sutherland's statements. He also expressed concern that only Ms. Henegan and Chief McDuffie are the only Department Heads in attendance tonight. He stated he is disgusted that Town staff has so many benefits and still has an entitlement mentality. He also called for an outside audit of our books. He does not want to see retaliation on employees who may speak out.

Mayor Pro Tem O'Garra stated this is going to be another learning experience. All we need to do is look at what we have here and move forward.

Mayor Rey assured the citizens that the process will be transparent. The Board is responsible for three individuals: Manager, Clerk and Attorney. The Manager is responsible for all other employees. He does not want Board Members to get wrapped up in personnel issues and wants them to stay in their lanes and allow the Manager to work through a process to rectify this issue. He hopes the Town will have trust in the entire Board, not just individuals, but the entire Board.

b. Closed Session, G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3) – Attorney-Client Privilege

c. Closed Session, G.S. 143-318.11(a)(6) - Personnel

Action: The Board approved a motion to go into Closed Session pursuant to G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3) and G.S. 143-318.11(a)(6).

Motion by: Alderman Christian

Second by: Mayor Pro Tem O'Garra

Vote: Unanimous

Ms. Henegan was invited to the Closed Session.

Action: The Board approved a motion to go back into open session at 8:16 p.m.

Motion by: Alderman Christian

Second by: Mayor Pro Tem O'Garra

Vote: Unanimous

Mayor Rey announced that the Board's consensus is to commission an independent audit of this issue and that the current Interim Finance Director will be removed and another Interim Finance Director will be sought immediately. Currently there is one applicant. He further stated this is a process and we cannot immediately remove the current Interim Finance Director without a proper process. The Town Manager will meet with entire staff on Monday and new processes will be put in place. The Town Manager and Department Heads will determine who will need to use PCards going forward and progress and updates will be provided to Board.

9. Adjournment

Action: There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

Motion: Mayor Pro Tem O'Garra

Second by: Alderwoman Sutherland

Vote: Unanimous



Rhonda D. Webb

Rhonda D. Webb, MMC
Town Clerk

ATTEST:

Chris V. Rey
Mayor