

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

March 5, 2012

MINUTES

9:00 a.m.

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

Board Members Present: Mayor Pro Tem Napoleon Hogans
Alderman James Christian
Alderman Richard Higgins
Alderman James O'Garra
Alderwoman Fredricka Sutherland

Others Present:

Tommy Burns, Town Manager	Allen Coats, Finance Director
Paul Hoover, Public Works Director	Troy McDuffie, Police Chief
T.J. McLamb, Fire Chief	Ken Metcalf, Recreation Director
Tina West, HR Director	Rhonda Webb, Town Clerk

2. Invocation

Mayor Pro Tem Hogans gave the invocation.

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Rey led the meeting in the pledge of allegiance.

4. New Business

a. Overview of Day and Schedule of Events

Mr. Burns gave an overview of the day's events.

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

b. Goal Setting and Priorities for Upcoming Year

Mr. Burns gave an overview of possible programs for the upcoming year. They included Leadership Spring Lake, Coordinating with School System for the STEM Program, Outreach/Advocacy such as the Intern Program where we mentor school age children and college students and Workforce Development. Mr. Burns would like to combine the Outreach and Workforce Programs to mentor more people and help educate them. Mayor Rey wants to capture real life events, like a police officer bending down to talk with a child, on our web site and out in the public to get the message out that the Town is friendly and caring. He would like each school to have a picture of one of our officers interacting with the youth of the community. FTCC is instituting a program to capture military personnel who are leaving military service and working to retrain them to enter the civilian workforce. Spring Lake would like to try to get Mae Rudd Williams as an incubation location to help facilitate this. We want to have these types of economic incentives to keep people in Spring Lake.

Initiatives to Implement and Brainstorming Ideas

- Picture in each school, town hall and community center of our police officers interacting with the youth of the community.
- Formats for Leadership Spring Lake Program
- Second Chance Program
This program would eliminate the box on the initial application that asks if you have been convicted of a felony. If the person gets far enough along in the process there will be the opportunity to explain what happened and possibly hire a good worker that just make a mistake. We want to break the cycle. The Human Resource Department will develop standards and a guideline policy. We would like to be the first municipality to implement this program and make it a success. Mayor Pro Tem Hogans stated that there must be stringent training of people who will determine employment of people who were convicted of violent felonies.
- Develop Capital Improvement Plan for the Town.
- Develop procedure for dealing with homeless people and educate people on what the procedure is. The Town may be able to partner with a local church to provide help when this service is needed. Mr. Burns suggested that Officer Bronson be the contact person to coordinate this and spread the word at the community watch meetings.
- The Town should consider converting to hybrid/economical vehicles for Town use.
- Cell phones for significant staff members.
- Green Initiatives (Sustainable Sandhills has a green certified program).
- Town's Telephone System
- Animal control position and tethering dog's policy.
- Code enforcement on trash, grass and sign ordinances.
- Recycling

The theme of the budget is "Hold the Line." There are no major cuts in people or services. We need to look closely at effectiveness and efficiency of services.

(A copy of the PowerPoint Presentation is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes – see attachment two.)

c. Growth Planning, Utilities and Infrastructure, Operations and Personnel

Mr. Hoover gave a presentation on street paving. He had J. Thomas Engineering, Inc. provide the Town with an assessment of the street system in Spring Lake. He showed the Board examples of roadway issues around Town. When the roads were built there were no standards. The Town now has standards that must be met when laying roadway. He stated that the life expectancy of a residential street should be at least 20 years. Mr. Hoover compared the price of asphalt in 2004 which was \$42 per ton and in 2012 it is \$78.75 per ton. That equates to an 81% increase. From April 2011 to January 2012 there was a 9% increase. He explained additional costs included in fixing the very poor, poor and fair streets like raising manhole covers and valve boxes, traffic control and administrative costs. The very poor, poor and fair streets are 14 miles of roadway that require immediate attention. Stormwater funds can be used to help offset costs of rolled curbing. The total estimated cost is \$1,659,399. Once we get the worst streets fixed, paving must be done each year to keep the streets that are ok now from becoming in poor condition.

d. Lunch

The meeting was put on hold to allow the Board to take a lunch break at 11:45 p.m. The meeting continued at 12:46 p.m.

Mr. Hoover continued his presentation. He gave the Board options for paying for the paving. They include a bond which will delay paying for approximately two years or a loan which would allow paving within approximately nine months. An estimated seven year loan payment on \$1,868,526 would equate to 6.3 cent property tax increase. This cost does not include interest on the loan. Another option is to have property owners on each side of the streets that need repair pay 1/3 of the costs and the Town would pay the final 1/3 of the costs. The Board agreed this was not a viable option.

Mayor Rey suggested a public input meeting to allow citizens the opportunity to voice their opinion on the proposed tax increase that would be necessary to bring the streets up to standard. Alderman Higgins stated that the fourth alternative is to look at everything else the Town does and curtail other things to find the money.

(A copy of the PowerPoint Presentation is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes – see attachment three.)

e. Discussion of Finance/Budget, Billing, Collection, Water Accountability Updates, Overview of Budget Process and Projections, Budget Calendar

Mr. Coats gave the Board an overview of the water billing process for a typical month. The Board discussed the process in depth and gained a better understanding of the billing timeline and process.

Mr. Coats provided the Board with historical data on gallons of water lost. In 2009 the gallons lost was 34.49% and year to date in 2012 the percentage is 23.54%. Part of the decrease is due to better reporting, being proactive with leaks and being proactive with meter replacement. Mr. Burns stated that the average system loss is between 10% and 15%. We are still working on decreasing the lost gallons percentage.

There was discussion about the days on a billing cycle. The scenario of a household being billed for 41 days and used 5000 gallons in one month and billed for 20 days and 2000 gallons in the next month. The household paid a premium in the first month and the second month the household paid the flat rate and only used 2000 gallons. Mr. Coats stated that taking the flat rate out of the equation would eliminate this problem and going to a tiered system would discourage waste. Mr. Coats stated that he is not proposing to do this it is just a possible solution to keep the scenario given from happening.

Mr. Coats advised the Board that the automated meter reading system grant was not approved in the grant cycle. He is hopeful that we will be approved in a future grant cycle. This initiative would help with the lost gallons and would take the human error out of the equation. All new meters that are being installed can be converted to the automated system.

Mr. Coats discussed preliminary budget issues. Revenues are projected to be the same as the current year or less. Economic growth is flat and there are concerns about the State budget

impact. Expenditures are expected to increase due to additional staffing increases in public safety and fuel price increases. Mayor Pro Tem Hogans inquired about considering energy efficient vehicles to conserve costs. Mr. Coats advised that the costs are paid up front to save in the long run. Something like this initiative would need to be incorporated in a capital plan.

Mr. Coats explained the FYE 2013 budget calendar.

Mr. Burns stated again that the course of action for the upcoming year is to hold the line. There is not much that can change in the FYE 2013 budget. It was discussed that if we are going to make an investment in spending additional dollars it should be in someone to go out on a regular basis trying to increase the Town's tax base.

There was a discussion about the portion of the hotel tax that goes to the County and how we need to have someone to advocate for the Town to get a larger portion. It was discussed that if the EDC is going to serve that purpose we need to set standards and guidance that they need to follow on behalf of the Town. Additionally, we need to sort through the conflicts that currently exist.

Discussion included how to use and build fund balance. We must keep a close monitor on ourselves. Fund balance should be used for one-time purchases.

(A copy of the PowerPoint is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes – see attachment four.)

f. Hazard Mitigation Briefing, Emergency Operations Plan Update

Mr. Burns briefed the Board on Emergency Management Preparedness, Hazard Mitigation and Disaster Response. He stated that he likes to review this information yearly to keep it fresh in the Board's mind. He assured the Board that Town staff is well trained and conducts pre-event planning to ensure that the Town is as protected as possible.

(A copy of the PowerPoint is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes – see attachment five.)

g. Policy and Procedure Questions and Comments, General Discussion, Departmental Updates (if needed), Code of Ethics Briefing

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Chief McLamb advised the Board there is a County website that allows citizens to sign up for notifications concerning severe weather. It was requested that the Fire Chief provide information about emergency kits that Alderwoman Sutherland had heard about. It was clarified that Spring Lake Middle School is the official shelter for Spring Lake. The Town needs to use social media more effectively. Mayor Rey requested that we contact the companies who have electronic billboards and inquire if we could use them in extreme emergency situations.

Mr. Burns reviewed the Town responsibilities and who is responsible for what during a disaster.

Mayor Rey read a portion of President Clinton's speech that was given when he signed the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993. He quoted "...chart a course for every endeavor that we take the people's money for, see how well we are progressing, tell the public how we are doing, stop the things that don't work, and never stop improving the things that we think are worth investing in." Mayor Rey stated that the Board has done a tremendous job of coming together for the betterment of Spring Lake. He stated that the Board working together is how we will get things done. He challenged the Board to always look forward, shake off some of the things that we have been known for in the past, and embrace what we are given and make something good out of it. The decisions this Board makes today will affect a Board 10 years from now. He encouraged the Board to always look to the future and stated that he recognizes the work they put into the Town.

The meeting was then opened up for comments from Board members. Each Board member made parting comments. A request was made to add back the comment section at the regular meetings. A request was made to investigate the recycling contract. A request was made to try to solve the problem of children playing in the streets.

h. Wrap-Up and Set Date for First Budget Workshop

The Board's consensus was to hold the first budget workshop on April 23, 2012 at 5:00 p.m.

5. Adjournment.

Action: There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 4:25 p.m.

Motion: Alderman Higgins

Second by: Alderman O'Garra

Vote: Unanimous

Rhonda D. Webb

Rhonda D. Webb, MMC
Town Clerk

ATTEST:

Chris V. Rey

Chris V. Rey
Mayor

