



**TOWN OF AYDEN  
GOVERNING BOARD MEETING  
MINUTES**

**May 8, 2017**– 7:00 pm  
Ayden Town Hall – Second Floor Boardroom

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

A. Call to Order

Mayor Tripp called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

B. Roll Call

Present:

Mayor Tripp

Commissioners Davenport, Harris, Mewborn, Ross and Skinner

Absent:

None

Also Present:

Steven Harrell - Town Manager

Sarah Radcliff– Town Clerk

Scott Dixon- Associate Attorney

C. Welcome Visitors

Mayor Tripp welcomed everyone to the meeting.

D. Invocation

Mayor Tripp gave the invocation.

E. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Tripp led the Pledge of Allegiance.

F. Approval of the Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda.

Motion: Commissioner Harris

Second: Mayor Pro-tem Skinner

Discussion: None

Approved: 5-0

Motion passed unanimously.

## **II. PRESENTATIONS**

### **A. Random Acts of Kindness Award**

Since the recipient was not present, Mayor Tripp stated the board would wait to recognize them at the next board meeting.

### **B. Presentation of Stewardship Checks to Ayden Schools**

Cornelia Cox, Ayden Elementary, Jeff Theus, Ayden Middle School, and Chena Cayton, Ayden Grifton High School, were present to accept the funds. Each gave a brief description of what the funds would be used for at their schools.

## **III. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Michelle Atwater, 3938 Sunset Drive, Ayden, addressed the board. She stated she had a hard time figuring out the budget process but thought she had it right tonight. Ms. Atwater stated she appreciated the survey that was created to ask residents how they feel about the current state or what they thought could be better. She stated her concern was that she was not sure who we asked. She stated the language was not plain at all. She stated she had an excellent command of the English language and she read the paragraph twice to find out what you wanted to ask me. She stated when she started taking the survey she realized that probably half of the adult population who won't be able to understand what you are asking. She stated ages 14-18 didn't get asked anything. She said while she appreciated and applauded the effort, it seems like you are collecting opinions from the same group of people. She stated people who didn't understand the question wouldn't answer. She suggested creating another survey for the elderly and for those who may not have graduated high school.

Mr. Harrell stated the survey she was referring to was for the Economic Development Strategic Plan and was not about the budget. He stated it was sent out by Creative Consultants and he appreciated her comments and would speak to them about her concerns.

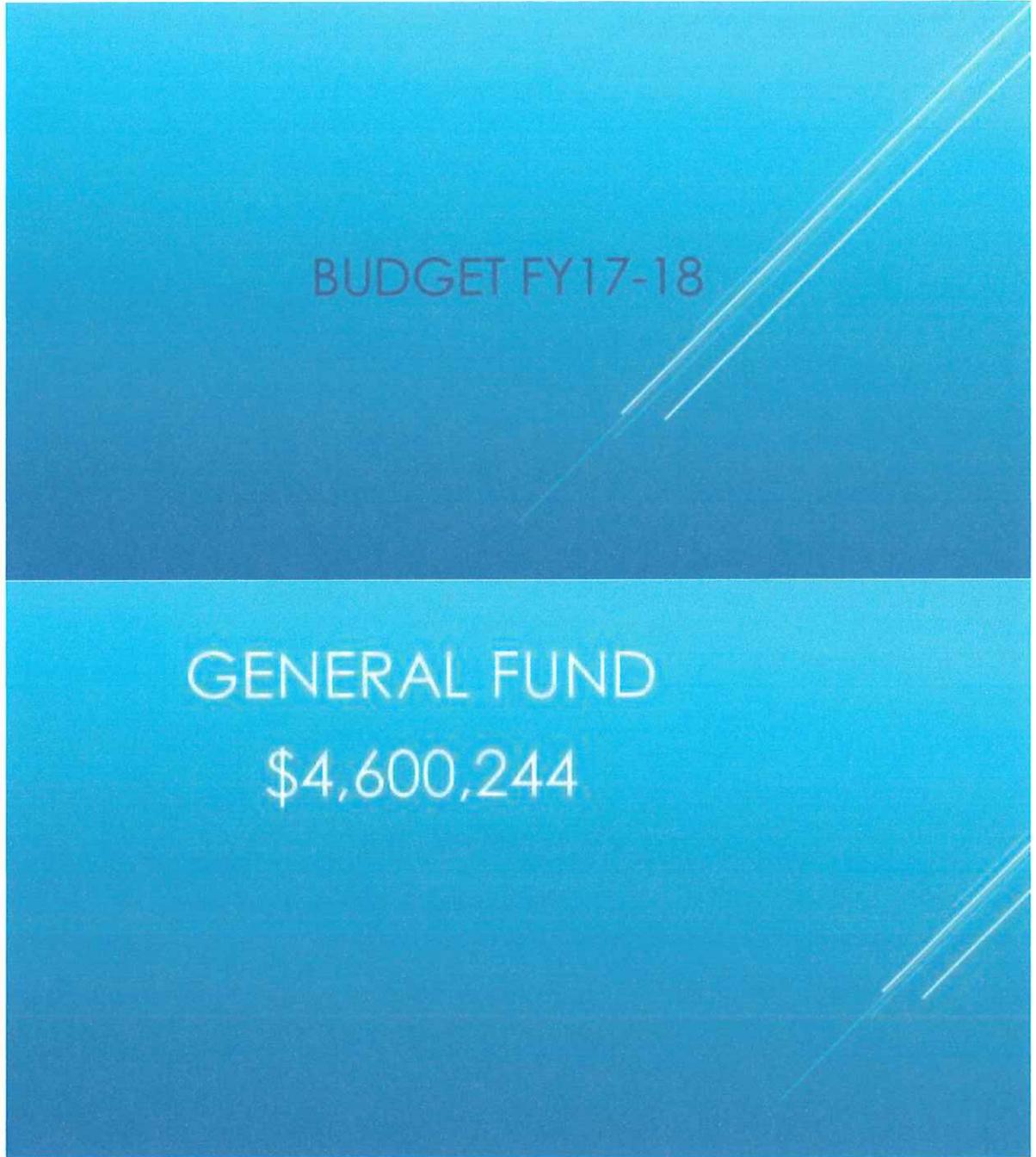
Commissioner Mewborn said the only thing we have to do in this town is take a look at the indicators. He said they speak for themselves. He stated he appreciated Ms. Atwater's comments. He said if we are ever going to move forward, the word inclusion and the act of inclusiveness should be at the forefront of everything we do.

Darlene Pollard, 4202A Deer Meadow Court, Ayden, addressed the board. Ms. Pollard said the problem and the solution would get Ayden where we need to be. She stated she has examined herself and she is not the problem, but the solution. She said people don't want to come to meetings. She said it's a blame game and everyone needs to examine themselves.

## **IV. PUBLIC HEARING**

### **A. Recommended FYI 17/18 Budget**

Manager Harrell gave the following presentation on the FY 17-18 Budget.



PROPERTY TAXES = \$1,265,500  
TAX RATE AT \$0.54 PER \$100

#### REVENUE

• Local Option Sales Taxes	\$1,066,250
• Unrestricted Intergovernmental	\$ 453,500
• Restricted Intergovernmental	\$ 203,000
• Permits & Fees	\$ 9,500
• Sales & Services	\$ 425,000
• Investment Earnings	\$ 4,500
• Miscellaneous Revenues	\$ 195,000
• Other Finance Sources	\$ 977,994
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 4,600,244</b>

## ▶ EXPENDITURES

• Governing Board	\$ 225,717
• Administration	\$ 212,419
• Finance	\$ 113,008
• Central Garage	\$ 64,549
• Public Bldgs	\$ 163,928
• Police Dept.	\$1,513,175
• Fire Dept. - Town	\$ 168,421
• Public Works/Streets	\$ 796,832
• Powell Bill	\$ 150,000
• Sanitation	\$ 256,334
• Planning & Zoning	\$ 188,942
• Library	\$ 124,493
• Recreation	\$ 482,071
• Debt Service	\$ 140,355
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$4,600,244</b>

## ELECTRIC FUND

**\$12,035,955**

## REVENUE

• Sales and Services	\$11,527,800
<i>Purchased Power</i>	<i>\$8,108,781</i>
• Investment Earnings	\$ 15,170
• Misc. Revenues	\$ 21,000
• Other Finance Services	\$ 471,985 (fund balance)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$12,035,955</b>

## EXPENDITURES

• Electric Admin/Billing	\$ 425,168
• Electric Operations	\$11,026,549
• Debt Service	\$ 186,600
• Special Appropriations	\$ 397,638
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$12,035,955</b>

## WATER & SEWER FUND REVENUE

• Sales & Services	\$2,648,000
Water Charges	\$1,200,000
Sewer Charges	\$1,440,000
• Investment Earnings	\$ 5,330
• Other Financing Sources	\$ 741,034 (fund balance)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,394,364</b>

## EXPENDITURES

• Water/Sewer Operations	\$3,044,546
• Debt Service	\$ 319,818
• Special Appropriations	\$ 30,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,394,364</b>

## RURAL FIRE FUND

### Revenue

Restricted Intergov't	\$ 162,354
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### Expenditures

Operations	\$ 162,354
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 162,354</b>

LIBRARY TRUST FUND	
Revenues	\$ 400
Expenditures	\$ 400
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 400</b>

Mayor Tripp opened the public hearing. No one spoke. Mayor Tripp closed the public hearing.

**V. CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. Minutes from the February 13, 2017 and March 13, 2017 Meetings
- B. Resolution Awarding Firearm to Retired Police Officer
- C. Resolution Designating Robert C. Taylor, Jr. as Finance Officer for the Town of Ayden
- D. Resolution Approving a \$266,500 Rural Economic Development Grant Agreement for Stormwater Drainage Improvements and a Project Ordinance to be Adopted for the Receipt and Expenditure of Said Grant Dollars
- E. Resolution for Storm Collaboration

Motion to approve the items on the consent agenda.

Motion: Mayor Pro-tem Skinner

Second: Commissioner Mewborn

Discussion: None

Approved: 5-0

Motion passed unanimously.

**VI. ACTION ITEMS**

- A. Selection of Engineers for CDBG Infrastructure 2016 Sanitary Sewer Improvements

Manager Harrell presented to the board.

**Item Explanation**

Ayden has been awarded a Community Development Block Grant – Infrastructure (CDBG-I) in the amount of \$968,000 by the N.C. Dept. of Environmental Quality for construction of sanitary

sewer improvements (I&I remediation) to serve an area containing West Barwick Street, Roberta Drive, Joyner Street and Liberty Street. As a requirement of the grant, we issued request for proposals for both grant Administration and Engineering/Inspection Services, respectively.

Proposals for both the Administration Services and Engineering/Inspection Services were received from McDavid Associates of Farmville and Adams Company of Warsaw, respectively. Copies of each firm's proposals are enclosed.

**Staff Comments**

After review of the respective firms' proposals, staff recommends selection of McDavid Associates for both Administration and Engineering/Inspection Services of our Town's 2016 CDBG-I \$968,000 Sanitary Sewer Improvements Grant.

**Action Requested**

By motion, adopt resolution selecting McDavid Associates.

Motion to adopt the resolution selecting McDavid Associates.

Motion: Commissioner Harris

Second: Mayor Pro-tem Skinner

Discussion: None

Approved: 5-0

Motion passed unanimously.

- B. Approval to Move Ahead with Food Commercialization Center Economic Development EDA Grant Application

Manager Harrell presented to the board.

**Item Explanation**

In August, 2017, the Town Board received a presentation by Dr. David Green regarding the status of the Food Commercialization Center (FCC) Project and approved moving ahead with the completion of a pro forma business plan to determine whether or not such a center would be self-sustaining after 3 years of operation. As the Board recalls, on the recommendation of the Board's appointed FCC Planning Committee, Dr. Ann Wilkinson, of Organic Farms, was hired to complete the Business Plan.

**Staff Comments**

Attached the Board will find Dr. Wilkinson's completed Business Plan dated April 19, 2017 and said plan indicates that in the third year of operation the FCC will be self-sustaining. At this time, the FCC Planning Committee continues to solicit partners in matching funding for the construction of the FCC. A report of this funding progress will be made at the Board's meeting on May 8<sup>th</sup>. As the Business Plan does indeed show the FCC can be self-sustaining after 3 years, it is recommended that the Town continue to solicit partners in the FCC and submit the EDA grant, with a targeted submission date in June or July.

**Action Requested**

Approve Town of Ayden continuing process of submitting EDA funding grant for the FCC.

Motion to continue process of submitting EDA funding grant for the FCC.

Motion: Commissioner Davenport

Second: Commissioner Mewborn

Discussion: None

Approved: 5-0

Motion passed unanimously.

C. Sign Height Regulation Discussion

Manager Harrell presented to the board.

**Item Explanation**

Currently Section 10-5 (D) of the Town of Ayden Zoning Ordinance states that freestanding signs for non-residential uses cannot exceed four (4) feet in height above ground level.

A zoning compliance certificate was issued to Zion Chapel on September 12, 2016. The certificate authorized the installation of a twenty (20) square foot ground mounted sign and specified that the sign could not be higher than four (4) feet as required by the Ordinance.

Since the time of installation, concerns have arisen from Zion Chapel that the sign is too low and does not provide the visibility they are looking for.

**Staff Comments**

This is being brought to the Town Board's attention for discussion as to whether or not it might wish to initiate a zoning amendment to raise the maximum sign height to five (5) feet, which is the preferable height that the church wanted. The reason for the current height restriction at four (4) feet is being researched in Town records by the Planning Department and will be available for discussion at the Town Board's meeting.

**Action Requested**

Town Board's directions.

Commissioner Harris asked if staff had found anything as to why it was four feet. Planning Director, Stephen Smith, said he had not found anything specifically at this time. Commissioner Harris asked if that was a common height among other towns. Mr. Smith stated it varied from place to place and they are continuing to reach out to other municipalities to see what their requirements are. Commissioner Mewborn asked when he thought they would have all the information they will need. Mr. Smith said it depended on what the board wanted. He said if the board wants it to come back to them first they could bring it back at the next meeting and then go from there. Manager Harrell said they could go ahead and send it to the Planning Board and have them make a recommendation to the board. Mayor Tripp said that would expedite it.

Motion to send to the Planning Board for a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners.

Motion: Commissioner Mewborn

Second: Commissioner Harris

Discussion: None

Approved: 5-0  
Motion passed unanimously.

D. Adoption of and Ordinance to amend the Town of Ayden FY 16/17 Budget Ordinance

Finance Director, Rob Taylor, presented to the board.

**Item Explanation**

**General Fund Amendment**

The current budget ordinance did not include costs associated with the cleanup and damages from Hurricane Matthew. The Town incurred cleanup cost in the amount of \$66,482 and has requested reimbursement from FEMA for these costs. The Town also incurred damages to public buildings in the amount of \$43,000 which has been reimbursed by the Town's insurance companies. The amendment will properly recognize the proceeds from FEMA and insurance as well as increase the Repairs Expenditure budget line so the required repairs can be made.

The Town has Donations/Fees for the King of BBQ Festival. It is estimated the Town will generate \$31,000 in Revenue from the event. The amendment will properly appropriate these revenues as well as provide additional budget for expenditures.

**Electric Fund Amendment**

The current budget ordinance for the Electric Operating Fund (EOF) included the projected debt payment on a new truck, but did not reflect the capital outlay to purchase the truck in the amount of \$199,300. Consistent with the adopted budget, the Town will be financing this vehicle, but the funds from the financing must also be budgeted.

The Electric Department incurred damages to equipment from Hurricane Matthew. The proceeds from insurance reimbursement of \$33,500 need to be budgeted and associated expenditure line must be increased to cover the costs of repairs.

**Staff Comments**

See explanation above.

**Action Requested**

Adopt the enclosed ordinance (#5) to amend the Town of Ayden FY16/17 Annual Budget.

Motion to approve Ordinance 16-17-21.

Motion: Mayor Pro-tem Skinner

Second: Commissioner Harris

Discussion: None

Approved: 5-0

Motion passed unanimously.

E. Purchase a Play Structure (Tot A Lot) for JJ Brown Park

Manager Harrell presented to the board.

**Item Explanation**

The current play structure at JJ Brown Park is over 20 years old and is in deteriorating condition. It is possible, in the current budget year, to perform an internal budget revision, which would allow funds to be transferred to Capital Outlay in order to purchase the Game Time Atlas from Cunningham Recreation for \$10,240.31 plus \$4,000 for installation cost.

The Recreation Capital Outlay funding for the current fiscal year was \$52,000: \$25,000 for 15 Passenger Van, \$7,000 for Toro Mower and \$20,000 for Restrooms at Veterans' Park (to be matched with any possible grant opportunities – which did not materialize). The van's adopted estimated budget costs of \$25,000 was \$4,448 under the actual cost of \$29,448, with NCDMV fees was \$30,337. Utilities for Recreation was well under budgeted in the adopted budget and \$6,000 needed to be transferred from Capital Outlay to help cover this. Current Capital Outlay balance is \$8,663. We propose to move \$5,000 from Misc., \$1,100 from Grant Appropriations and \$1,000 from Theater Work to add to the \$8,663 to cover costs of new playground equipment.

**Staff Comments**

The Arts and Recreation commission reviewed three similar play structures from reputable manufacturers; Barrs Recreation, Cunningham Recreation, and Carolina Parks and Play. The Arts and Recreation commission unanimously voted for Game Time Atlas from Cunningham Recreation because it has more play features available in its design.

**Action Requested**

Staff recommends that the Governing Board concur with the Arts & Recreation Commission to purchase the Game Time Atlas from Cunningham Recreation for \$10,240.31 plus \$4,000 for installation costs through the utilization of an internal budget revision.

Manager Harrell stated he had the authority to approve this purchase; however, since the Board had not authorized the purchase of the item and it is greater than \$10,000, he felt it should be brought to the Board for consideration.

Commissioner Davenport: I don't have a question, but I do have a comment. Through the years we have spent a fortune on them because every year it's almost demolished. Haven't we spent about \$13,000 or more on that park every year?

Manager Harrell called on Tommy Duncan, Arts & Recreation Director, to address the Board.

Mr. Duncan: Let me make sure I'm understanding the question correctly. You're saying we spend about \$13,000 a year on JJ Brown?

Commissioner Davenport: Uh huh.

Manager Harrell: For destruction.

Mr. Duncan: No ma'am. We've only, since I've been here, I want to say we have spent about \$3,000 on some springy rocky chairs that we put in and the picnic shelter was about \$7,200 or \$7,500, then some paint and mulch and stuff. So I would say in the seven years that I've been here we might have spent a grand total of \$13,000 on the playground.

Manager Harrell: And how long have you been here, Tommy?

Mr. Duncan: About 7 years now.

Commissioner Mewborn: I appreciate you clarifying that.

Mr. Duncan: Does that answer the question?

Mayor Tripp: Any other questions? Commissioner Mewborn, you had a comment?

Commissioner Mewborn: Yeah I got a comment. You know, it's sad. It's really sad. It seems as though any time we try to get anything for our children, impoverished kids, in this town, there's always some negative flow. That's not good, you know. I thought we had moved beyond that, apparently we haven't. And that's why I'm sitting up here talking about it, because it's time for it to stop. I guess you all can look up here on this board and see that I'm the only one up here that looks like me, and I try to respect everybody. I was brought up that way. You know, but sometimes remarks are made, and I know I could tell immediately that some of ya'll sitting out there don't appreciate them at all. We had one made in another meeting about the housing that is supposed to go near the school if everything goes well, and out of the blue something about Section 8 comes up. You know what, I'm really sick of this kind of stuff. It's sad. It's disrespectful, not just to me, but everybody in this town down, up from our seniors, all the way down to our children. It's time for this stuff to stop. If I've got to sit up here and make negative comments like that about my fellow race I really don't need to be sitting up here. And if that applies for me, it applies for everybody else that's sitting up here. It's a shame and a disgrace. This is 2017. Some of you guys out there might can't feel what I feel because you haven't had the experiences that I've had and the experiences that the people I serve have; but I've really had my fill of these negative comments when it comes down to the impoverished people of this town. The next time I respond to it, it won't be in a nice way like this. I've had it.

Commissioner Davenport: Ivory...

Commissioner Mewborn: I've had it. It's disrespectful. You see a lot of...and not just me. My fellow brothers that sit out here, and sisters, that don't look like me, it's disrespectful to them, Mary Alice.

Commissioner Davenport: It's not about race.

Commissioner Mewborn: You could've fooled me.

Mayor Tripp: Let's let her talk. Commissioner Davenport.

Commissioner Mewborn: Well it is about race.

Mayor Tripp: Okay, Commissioner Mewborn.

Commissioner Mewborn: I get tired of this crap.

Commissioner Davenport: We have had this problem for years and the government even recommended that we don't put metal stuff in federal housing on playgrounds, but it is not about black and white. It's about...

Commissioner Mewborn: Well you need to stop making it about black and white Mary Alice.

Mayor Tripp: Let Commissioner Davenport finish.

Commissioner Mewborn: I get tired of this, this is crazy. It's really crazy.

Mayor Tripp: Commissioner Mewborn, please. Commissioner Davenport...

Commissioner Davenport: Well, I know that we spend money. I even heard Gloria Dixon talk about the one in South Ayden and I don't go down there to check it out to see if it's been torn up because when you've got a pile of children they're going to tear it up whether it be in the little park or the big park or federal housing or wherever, because that's what children do, but it is not a racist thing in Ayden, because I've been here all of my life and I have a lot of friends here and I intend to keep them. It's not going to be about my color or theirs.

Mayor Tripp: Okay...

Commissioner Mewborn: Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Tripp: Yes, Commissioner Mewborn.

Commissioner Mewborn: You know, I get tired of these disparaging comments, and to be quite honest with you, usually they come from you, Mary Alice, and that's not good. That's not good. You put Ayden in a bad light. You say these negative things and then all of a sudden you say it's not black and white. If it's not then why did you continue to make these type of comments? I mean, why?

Mayor Tripp: I think that's another conversation. She has her opinion and you have your opinion, and we appreciate both of them.

Commissioner Mewborn: It's a racist opinion. She's giving a racist opinion, Steve.

Mayor Tripp: That is your opinion and she has her opinion and we need to respect that. We know a while ago we talked about being inclusive...

Commissioner Mewborn: Wait a minute, what she said isn't inclusive, Steve.

Mayor Tripp: Inclusive means everybody has a different...

Commissioner Mewborn: I know what inclusive means. I know what exclusive means.

Mayor Tripp: And that is being exclusive, when you start saying somebody has comments not agreeable to yours.

Commissioner Mewborn: Steve, have you stooped that low?

Mayor Tripp: No...

Commissioner Mewborn: As long as I've been knowing you, have you stooped that low?

Mayor Tripp: Commissioner, I'm just trying to explain to you my viewpoint and if you don't agree to it...

Commissioner Mewborn: Yours is just like Mrs. Davenport's...

Mayor Tripp: You're not going to label me.

Commissioner Mewborn: You're already labeled.

Mayor Tripp: You're not going to label me, Commissioner.

Commissioner Mewborn: (inaudible) of those kind of comments that's wrong, wrong, wrong. Anywhere, any time of the day.

Mayor Tripp: You're not going to make a conclusion about my comments. You're not going to do it.

Commissioner Mewborn: Steve, you made the comments yourself. You're defending that stuff.

Mayor Tripp: No, I'm trying to help you understand.

Commissioner Mewborn: You can't help me understand...

Mayor Tripp: That's obvious.

(At this time there was some back and forth comment where both Mayor Tripp and Commissioner Mewborn were speaking at the same time)

Commissioner Mewborn: You need to run that game on somebody else, Steve. You need to stop, it makes the Town of Ayden look bad. We had Mr. Tommy come up and explain the whole thing, the truth of the whole thing.

Mayor Tripp: I think we understand it Commissioner. Any other discussion?

Commissioner Mewborn: Well, you know what? I'll tell you what. It's wrong and for you to try to cover it and say its right, but it's not the first time you did something like that.

Mayor Tripp: Commissioner, I do not agree with you. Your opinion is your opinion.

Commissioner Mewborn: The manager, Steve, you heard what he said. This woman's going to sit up here and say that things are torn up, they destroy it, come on man.

Mayor Tripp: If I recall, Commissioner, and you can correct me, previously we had basketball goals out there...

Commissioner Mewborn: Go ahead.

Mayor Tripp: ...and why did we change and put children's playground stuff out there?

Commissioner Mewborn: You tell me.

Mayor Tripp: No, you tell me because it was your idea. I think the minutes would show it. We can go back and look at the minutes. Let's do that. Let's go back and look at the minutes...

Commissioner Mewborn: Wait a minute...

Mayor Tripp: Let's go back and look in the minutes...

Commissioner Mewborn: We had some problems around there. We have gun violence around there now.

Mayor Tripp: We'll let the manager pull the minutes up and it will be in black and white.

Commissioner Mewborn: Pull them up. I'll defend them every way that can be defended.

Mayor Tripp: Then we'll see why we changed the basketball courts to where we were.

Commissioner Mewborn: For you to defend that woman Steve, you...

Mayor Pro-tem: I call time and let's move forward.

Mayor Tripp: I agree, we're going to move forward.

Mayor Pro-tem: I make a motion that we approve, it's in the budget for the recreation, to approve the structure at JJ Brown Park.

Commissioner Harris: Second.

Mayor Tripp: Motion made and seconded. Any discussion? I do have a conversation on this, too.

Commissioner Mewborn: Well you can have a conversation on it.

Mayor Tripp: Tommy, can you come up here please? I want to ask a question.

Commissioner Mewborn: Man, this is ridiculous. I don't believe you, Steve. You should know better.

Mayor Tripp: The Veterans Park, what did we do with that playground equipment that was on that park when we replaced it?

Mr. Duncan: We put it on GOVDEALS and auctioned it off.

Mayor Tripp: And who bought it?

Mr. Duncan: A place out of Louisiana.

Mayor Tripp: How much did they pay for it?

Mr. Duncan: I think \$1,500 for all of it.

Mayor Tripp: And what were they going to use it for?

Mr. Duncan: They were going to try to recondition it. It won't worth reconditioning but they were going to try it. But they were supposed to send me pictures of it if they did it and they never sent me pictures, so I don't think they did anything with it.

Mayor Tripp: Some of those apparatus, could we not use them somewhere else?

Mr. Duncan: That was at Veterans?

Mayor Tripp: Yeah, could we have cherry picked it?

Mr. Duncan: No, I wouldn't have. I would have been scared of it. I've talked with some other manufacturer's and some other people, and really and truly when equipment gets beyond 15 years, we really don't even want to put it on GOVDEALS to sell it because it could come back and bite us in the...

Mayor Tripp: So that was 15 years old?

Mr. Duncan: Yeah. All our equipment was 15 years old until we started replacing it. District Park is new, Veterans is new and now JJ will be new, so we'll be good. This board here will probably be long gone and we'll be with another board before we start voting on putting new equipment in all our playgrounds, and I'll be retired hopefully by then.

Mayor Tripp: And I will too.

Commissioner Mewborn: I have a question for the mayor, and I need to be clear on this. What are you suggesting in asking him, are you suggesting to put some used equipment down there?

Mayor Tripp: Commissioner Mewborn...

Commissioner Mewborn: I'm asking you a question.

Mayor Tripp: To answer your question, I had a conversation with Mr. Harrell, the manager, before that equipment was put down there, could we utilize that equipment somewhere else, so it's not a conversation I have not had.

Commissioner Mewborn: Like where, that's what I'm asking you.

Mayor Tripp: Wherever the town could put it. District Park, it don't make no difference where you put it. We could've put it at the Community Center. I hate to see something that's valued

at \$10,000 be sold for \$1,500 and then we turn around and buy something else to put at the Community Center or District Park or wherever you want to put it. It has nothing to do with that conclusion, that is not the conclusion I had. It's a question I asked the Town Manager previously and had not asked in public, so I asked in public.

Mayor Pro-tem: You've got a motion.

Attorney Dixon: We have a motion and second.

Mayor Tripp: Let's vote on the motion. All in favor say "I". (several I's were heard). Opposed? (no one responded). Motion passed.

## **VII. INFORMATION**

### **A. Staff Departmental Reports**

Manager Harrell stated he had an item he wanted to point out from his manager's report. He stated there was overhead lighting at the football fields as well as at the tennis courts. He said citizens could purchase a key to the tennis courts for \$10 to turn on the lights. He said someone had inquired about being able to use the lights at District Park when playing soccer at night. He said what they have with the tennis courts is a not a switch, but a dial that you turn with a timer on it so it goes off when the timer quits. He said the lights are bigger and more expensive at the football fields so he didn't know if that would work out there. He said he was looking into it and would bring something back to the board. Mayor Tripp said in the past people who live in the neighborhood had complained about the lights being on when no one was there.

Mayor Tripp asked if the Finance Staff Report was actual and not accrual. Mr. Taylor stated yes. Mayor Tripp asked if he would do the accrual when he does the end of year and for the audit. Mr. Taylor stated that was correct. Mayor tripped asked if he had any projections as to how we might end the fiscal year. Mr. Taylor stated he did not have good numbers on that right now.

Commissioner Mewborn asked Mr. Duncan if the equipment being purchased for JJ Brown Park was new. Mr. Duncan stated it was brand new.

## **VIII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Commissioner Harris thanked staff for all their hard work. He said this was an exciting time with the BBQ Festival coming and schools are almost out, and the Splash Park opens up in about two or three weeks so it's an exciting time to be in Ayden.

Commissioner Mewborn: Everybody out here is an adult; we don't have any children out here tonight.

Commissioner Harris: There was one.

Commissioner Mewborn: There's one? (Someone from audience said "He's asleep"). The fact of the matter is everybody is adult enough to know right from wrong and I'm going to leave it just like that. There's been a lot of things that's been done wrong on this board; ya'll can see that, ya'll hear that. I'm on a move to see what can be done to have this language stopped because

it's disrespectful. I'm going to do what I need to do. I'll talk to some people that will come in and by law, make people talk to people like they should be talked to. When you offend the least of our children or seniors in this town, it doesn't matter to me; anybody will tell you that about Ivory Mewborn. I'm going to take a stand. I don't like the language. That's language that you used Mrs. Davenport that was used way back in the fifties and sixties and stuff. We don't, in this day and time; we don't talk to people like that. It's wrong and I don't know how I can get you to see that it's wrong when you say disparaging things like that.

Commissioner Davenport: Ivory, we might as well get this out right now. Just give me a minute.

Commissioner Mewborn: Go ahead.

Commissioner Davenport: I've never been any nicer to anybody than I have to you. I helped you just as much as I could when you came to this board. I treat you just like you were white or black or navy blue or whatever...

Commissioner Mewborn: There you go again.

Commissioner Davenport: I have never mistreated you...

Commissioner Mewborn: Yes you have. Yes, you have, and I can tell you how. The situation with our Town Manager. You want to get it out, let's get it out. When we took a vote, and the mayor didn't vote like you and I would've voted, you briefly stopped communicating with him; but when I didn't vote like you wanted me to vote, you just stopped, which means nothing to me. I've thrown it up to Heaven and walked out from under it. What I'm saying now, currently, you're still, and evidently you can't see what you're doing, you say bad things, Mary Alice. You don't have to do that.

Commissioner Davenport: Why don't you just print it in the paper and let everybody read it.

Commissioner Mewborn: Wait a minute....

Commissioner Davenport: No, I'm through.

Commissioner Mewborn: You've never been fair to me if you want to know the truth. When you and Gray Matthis, when I was up here and you and Gray Matthis, when I asked you about fixing the park out at Juanita Street, I was talking to Mr. Matthis about that. Both of ya'll told me it would never happen because somebody destroyed it years ago. I'm saying those people have moved on and the kids need a right to grow.

Commissioner Davenport: The children were hurt on the equipment, Ivory; and the government recommended...

Commissioner Mewborn: Mary Alice, you don't want us to have anything in this town and I am aware of that. And for you, Mayor Tripp, to support that type of spirit, and you call yourself a Christian man, man you're going...

Mayor Tripp: We're going to move on. We need to move on.

Commissioner Mewborn: I'm ashamed of you, Steve, as long as I've been knowing you man. I'm really ashamed of you.

Mayor Tripp: We're moving on.

Commissioner Mewborn: You might as well have been born in the thirties man.

Mayor Tripp: Commissioner Ross?

Commissioner Ross: I'd like to thank everybody for coming and also to ditto what Commissioner Harris said. All the department heads, all the police officers, the finance officer, everyone- I appreciate all that you do for the town. All the mother's out there, Happy Mother's Day early.

Commissioner Mewborn: Mr. Manager, could I make one remark to Mrs. Sarah please?

Manager Harrell: I guess so.

Commissioner Mewborn: Mrs. Radcliff, I'm not trying to rush you or anything, but I would like the minutes from tonight's meeting as soon as you can possibly get them. I'm not trying to rush you, but as soon as you can get them to me, please do get them to me. I'm not going to put up with this stuff. I'll let some professional people look at this and let them make a decision what's happening up here on this board.

Mayor Tripp: Commissioner Harris?

Commissioner Harris: I've already gone, but Happy Mother's Day, I forgot that.

Mayor Tripp: Somebody go next.

Mayor Pro-tem: Everybody has gone except for me.

Mayor Tripp: Mayor Pro-tem?

Mayor Pro-tem: Couple things I've got- on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street if we could try to get all the potholes. And everybody needs to understand, that is not a Town street, that is a State-owned street. The Town of Ayden cannot do things on it, it has to be done by the State, but if we could call the State and get the potholes fixed. And down to the Masonic Lodge, that dip is getting worse. Can we do something at least on it? I got a couple of complaints on it today about its just getting worse every day. That's it. Thank everybody for coming. Hope the mother's, all ladies, have a great Mother's Day because you might not be a mom but you set examples for other people and children so I consider every woman a mom in some way, form or fashion.

Attorney Dixon: At this time we'll move to closed session pursuant....

Mayor Tripp: Whoa, whoa, whoa. I have comments.

Attorney Dixon: Sorry. I apologize.

Mayor Tripp: Thank you, attorney. I agree we need to get through and go home but there are two things I want to do. One, the website, the minutes need to be included; I don't know when was the last time it's been updated. I've been on this board since 1993 and this is the first conversation like this I have heard from a commissioner. I am very taken back, and I will say I value his comments, I'm not discounting it, it's important to him and everyone on this board I do value and I do respect tremendously. There is one thing I will say is that you will not agree with me all the time and I don't want you to agree with me all the time. Diversity is a disagreement but we can disagree in a way that brings it to a state that we need to be appreciative of, and that is one of being a gentleman or a lady.

Commissioner Mewborn: Man, I'm not, look, let that stuff go, I'm not going to sit here and...

Mayor Tripp: Commissioner you had your words. (Commissioner Mewborn continues talking). You are out of order.

Commissioner Mewborn: Yeah, and I've got some more.

Mayor Tripp: You are out of order.

Commissioner Mewborn: You violate me like....

Mayor Tripp: You are out of order.

Commissioner Mewborn: You are out of order.

Mayor Tripp: Mr. Manager, what should we do?

Commissioner Mewborn: Do what you got to do, that's what I'm going to do.

Mayor Tripp: I want to make comments.

Manager Harrell: You are the mayor and you have the ability to gavel and make the comments that you want to make. That would be Robert's Rules of Order.

Mayor Tripp: Thank you, sir. Again, this is not the board's perspective, this is my perspective. This is what I look at and I am not representing the board making these comments. I'm representing myself and know the many years of experience I've had and I will say that this board has been very progressive in lots of matters. I would say that we've not done anything perfect, but I think we've done a lot of things that have been good for this town since 1993 until the present. We have taken some steps backwards and we have taken some steps forward and usually our commissioners understand that we should move as a team and I think we have done that very well. If you look in regards to the children and etcetera, I would say to you, I would say benchmarks. I like to benchmark. Compare us to any board in regards to how we treat our children on this board here and equally throughout the whole town. We just recently tonight gave \$9,000 away to our schools. There is no municipality that I know of in this county or in this state that does that. You look at our budget, we run a tight filled budget, but we do it for all the children and inclusive children that are not residents of this town. Kids that go to that school, she talked about kids that come from Greenville and other parts of the county. We do not exclude them. You look at our Recreation Programs and I give credit to Tommy Duncan and the

Recreation Committee, this board and the manager. It is one that has been very inclusive to the point where we offer scholarships. I contribute personally and I know others on this board have contributed personally also. Just recently we had conversations about finding a place, an auditorium, for people to come to and we tried to find a solution and people made contributions accordingly. We try to stay in the framework that we need to be but we also step outside. The activities at the school system and what we do here in the Recreation Department is heads over heel. I think the investment we made at District Park is a huge investment and I think the investment we made at the Veterans' Park is a huge investment, and also JJ Brown. I think there is nothing being slighted at all in regards to that. We have transformed those parks to make them better parks. I'll tell you that all three parks, the first park, the District Park, was not in existence when I came in in 1993; but you go back and look at 1993 at the other two parks and compare it to where it is this year right now and how we have progressed, and I say compare it. I say go back to 1993 and go paint back what the town looked like and look at what it looks like now, go look at it and tell me where's it at. Look at children, look at programs, that's progression. I'm all for progression. I think the people of Ayden know my heart. I think they know me so much that they have re-elected me several times over and I don't take it for granted. I am very inclusive of all people as much as I can, and I try to be fair. I don't try to treat people unfair. I work hard at it; I take it very seriously. My Christianity I take very seriously, too, but there's only one person I've got to worry about that, and I'm good with that. Anyone else can make that decision. I've been blessed in very ways and I give a lot to this community just like each one of this board does, not taking away from no one here. I think this board is inclusive, I think this board tries to be the best we can be. You know, sometimes we get it right and sometimes we get it wrong, but I intend we go in the right direction to get it right. I don't want to exclude anyone from comments, their feelings are important to them just like mine is important to me. You as the citizens of Ayden have to make that determination. You know what I've done, you've seen where I walked. I'm not perfect and I think you've seen each one of us do whatever we can to make the Town better in Ayden. With that said, I think Ayden is at a good point, a good spot. Can we make it better? Absolutely. If we could not make it better, I wouldn't be here. If it was robotic on cruise control, none of us would need to be here. We need to have a conversation that we need to have that we can move this town forward. Not everyone is going to agree with me, some people will valiantly disagree. That is okay with me, but when we walk out that door we're going to be friends and I'll do my best to do that. So that is my perspective of Ayden. If you go back to 1993 and look and compare it to where we are now and go back to 2003 when I was first elected mayor, and go back and look where it's at to now. If you look at where we've been the last year and compare it where we are today, it's been a lot of work done and there will be a lot of work more to be done. We are very fortunate to have a staff member to give the time and energy and they promote Ayden in a very positive way and I'm very pleased with that, with the manager and his efforts. James tonight just came back from a very tough situation. When I left my area, we didn't have no water and guess where I found James at? He was in a freaking hole. When I got there, there was water probably four feet deep and I said to the guys, how are you going to fix it? And the water was rushing out of the hole and the pipe was probably about this big (showed with his hands) and rushing all in the hole and the hole was filled with water. They had a suction thing suctioning it out but as fast as it was suctioning out, the water was maintaining level. I said how are you going to get in there. He said we're going to get in there and fix it. I said you're going to get wet. He said yes, we're going to get wet, and they got wet. They put rock in, found a safe base and they repaired it in a special way. That's what we need to hang our hats on, people like James and the manager and those people that does a good job. That's what we need to be proud of. I think that is what the

children are proud of. I think that's where we need to be. Those are my remarks. Mr. Attorney, you may now go into closed session.

## IX. CLOSED SESSION

- A. Pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318-11 (a) (5) To establish, or to instruct the public body's staff or negotiating agents concerning the position to be taken by or on behalf of the public body in negotiating (i) the price and other material terms of a contract or proposed contract for the acquisition of real property by purchase, option, exchange, or lease; or (ii) the amount of compensation and other material terms of an employment contract or proposed employment contract.

Motion to go into closed session at 8:26pm.

Motion: Commissioner Harris

Second: Commissioner Ross

Discussion: None

Approved: 5-0

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to return to open session at 8:31pm.

Motion: Commissioner Harris

Second: Mayor Pro-tem Skinner

Discussion: None

Approved: 5-0

Motion passed unanimously.

Manager Harrell stated the Town Board would be taking action to accept the donation of the old Worthington Five and Dime building.

Motion to accept the donation of the old Worthington Five and Dime Building from the owner to the Town of Ayden.

Motion: Mayor Pro-tem Skinner

Second: Commissioner Harris

Discussion: None

Approved: 5-0

Motion passed unanimously.

## X.ADJOURNMENT

Having completed the business before them, Mayor Tripp announced that without objection the Governing Board would stand adjourned at 8:33p.m.

**Certification**

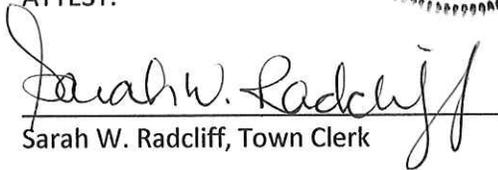
Minutes from the May 8, 2017 meeting were adopted and certified this 10<sup>th</sup> day of July 2017 in Ayden, North Carolina.



AYDEN, NORTH CAROLINA

  
Stephen W. Tripp, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
Sarah W. Radcliff, Town Clerk