



**TOWN OF AYDEN
GOVERNING BOARD MEETING
MINUTES**

November 5, 2014 – 12:00 pm (Special Called Meeting)
Ayden Town Hall – Second Floor Boardroom

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Call to Order

Mayor Tripp called the meeting to order at 12:30 pm and thanked Madeleine Henley, the consultant from Walking Stick Associates, for agreeing to facilitate a workshop for the benefit of the Governing Board.

B. Roll Call

Present:

Mayor Tripp

Commissioners Davenport, Harris, Mewborn, Ross and Skinner

Absent:

None

Also Present:

Madeleine Henley, Walking Stick Associates

Brandon Holland – Town Manager

Sherri Scharf – Town Clerk

II. DISCUSSION

Ms. Henley initiated the workshop by stating that the group should establish meeting rules and objectives and adopt an agenda so that all participants would be “on the same page” regarding the purpose of the workshop. The Board then decided that everyone should participate in the process and provide input, including the Town Manager and Town Clerk. By consensus it was agreed the agenda would focus on the Board’s operational procedures and team approach and would end with a summary that included a final review of objectives.

Workshop Objectives

The following meeting objectives were presented and a general discussion ensued:

1. How to manage the public comment section of Governing Board meetings (Tripp)
2. Improve communication between Board members (Harris)
3. Promote sense of team building amongst commissioners (Harris)

4. Examine current process and established habits to determine if they work for the current Governing Board; i.e. how meetings are being held, how to get things done, how to address citizens' complaints (Harris)
5. Improve communications between the Town Manager and Board members (Skinner)
6. Improve communications between Governing Board and Town employees (Mewborn)
7. Discuss roles in managing the Town (Harris)
8. Satisfy mutual expectations by establishing new behaviors that become the norm (Harris)

Consensus was reached on the workshop agenda being centered on the Board's operational procedures and team approach.

A. Board's Operational Procedures

The following input was provided and a general discussion ensued.

1. Statutory Role and Responsibilities for the Mayor
 - Presides over Governing Board meetings (Harris)
 - Leads in economic development (Davenport)
 - Provides tiebreaking vote at Board meetings (Mewborn)
 - Brings consensus to Board meetings (Tripp)
 - Acts as the "face of the town" (Holland)
 - Town signatory for important documents (Harris)
 - Speaks on the Board's behalf (Mewborn)
2. Statutory Role and Responsibilities for the Commissioners
 - Listen to and represent Ayden citizens (Skinner)
 - Pass laws, ordinances, and policies (Ross)
 - Advocate for the Town Manager by sharing communications (Tripp)
 - Research issues (Mewborn)
 - Provide input to assist in developing Town's fiscal budget (Holland)
 - Help establish Town's direction through strategic planning (Harris)
3. Statutory Role and Responsibilities for the Town Manager
 - Effectively use Town's assets and manage its human and financial resources (Harris)
 - Be a "hands on" manager that separates "fact from fiction" as it relates to citizens' concerns (Davenport)
 - Communicate to Board members (Mewborn)
 - Help develop and create the Board's vision (Tripp)
 - Provide leadership to the Town staff (Holland)
 - Provide "open door policy" to the citizens (Ross)
 - Be an ambassador to the Town's businesses and civic organizations (Skinner)
 - Advocate for Ayden (intergovernmental/horizontal/vertical) – Harris
 - Act as buffer between the Governing Board and Town staff in order to honor the Town's Organizational Chart (Scharf)

4. Board Agendas and Meetings

It was the general consensus of the group that the process for establishing and conducting Governing Board meetings had been going smoothly but could use improvements. Consensus was reached on the following:

- Governing Board members can add items to the agenda with a phone call to the Town Manager
- Replace in-person departmental presentations with departmental written reports as part of the Board's agenda packages
- The Town Manager would summarize departmental activities during the Manager's Report at the monthly meetings. However, if a specific department has an item on the agenda, then that Department Head must be present at the monthly meeting.
- Have Management/Department Heads attend a Governing Board meeting each quarter in order to avoid a feeling of "disconnect"
- Commissioner Skinner stated that he wants to see monthly written call reports from the Police and Fire Departments in the Board agenda packages
- Should a citizen wish to speak during a time other than the Public Comments section at the start of the Board meeting, that individual must come forward to the podium and state his/her name and address so that the Town Clerk can record the comments in the official meeting minutes

5. Lines of Communication

The following input was provided and a general discussion ensued.

- Town Manager notifies all Board members ASAP when major accidents occur
- Town Manager notifies all Board members ASAP regarding criminal activity or any activity that will likely be reported by the local news media
- Town Manager notifies all Board members ASAP if the Town's billing system goes down or of any other event that will negatively impact Ayden citizens, so that Board member are prepared to take citizens' phone calls
- It was suggested that the Town Manager establish a back-up "communicator" if he is unable to make the calls (The Mayor? The Town Clerk?)
- Board Members also need to share information with the Town Manager that he may not have as it relates to citizens or employees (Commissioners Davenport and Skinner gave the example of employees making direct contact with them rather than their supervisors at work)
- Commissioner Mewborn stated that he feels the Governing Board members should post their contact information on the Town's website
- Commissioner Harris asked for clarity, suggesting that having the Town Manager send a weekly summary of activities by email would be an effective mode of communication (there was consensus on this idea, except for Commissioner Davenport who does not have email/Internet access)

B. Board's Team Approach

Prompted by Ms. Henley to explore how the Board works together under the topic "*Satisfying Mutual Expectations*," the following input was provided and a general discussion ensued.

1. Commissioners' Expectations of the Town Manager
 - Behave in ways that earn the community's respect
 - Get involved in the Ayden community
 - Be professional when communicating expectations to Town staff
 - Be honest; don't act like you know something that you don't know
 - Take risks; don't be afraid of mistakes
 - Be committed to ensuring the Town's success
 - Be open; share information and knowledge
 - Be innovative, on the "cutting edge" in order to grow the Town
 - Have an "open door" in order to listen to citizens
 - Be decisive but carefully sift through information first before deciding
 - Be holistic (i.e. look at how all the parts/players fit together)

2. Commissioners' Expectations of the Mayor
 - Be the Town's spokesperson
 - Listen, guide and direct the Board members
 - Work on economic development efforts
 - Be an energetic cheerleader
 - Be honest
 - Be progressive
 - Show passion for the Town
 - Show leadership
 - Unify the Board

3. Mayor's Expectations of the Commissioners
 - Be prepared for meetings
 - Do the research and know the Town's business
 - Listen to the citizens and be visible to them
 - Communicate with the Mayor and Town Manager
 - Value teamwork as Board members
 - Be visionaries; think about the Town's future
 - Act professionally in your role
 - Build and maintain trust in key relationships
 - Be true to yourselves

4. Town Manager's Expectations of Mayor/Commissioners
 - Provide direction as a governing body; not individual agendas
 - Be open when communicating
 - Share your vision for Ayden
 - Provide clear goals for the Town
 - Support him while he carries out his fiduciary duties as town manager

C. Conclusion

Ms. Henley gave a summary of the day's accomplishments and reviewed the objectives previously established, asking the participants if they wished to make any changes. The objectives remained as they had been identified at the onset of the workshop. Ms. Henley then addressed the mayor, commissioners and town manager individually asking each of them whether or not they would be willing to commit to the objectives and to honor the expectations that they had established as a group. Each individual replied "yes." She then suggested that they officially adopt this newly established practice in an open meeting. She ended the workshop by asking each to fill out an evaluation of her service.

III. ADJOURNMENT

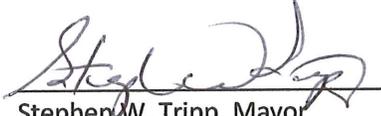
Mayor Tripp thanked Ms. Henley for her time and attention stating that the workshop had been very valuable for the Board. Then with there being no more business before the Board, and upon motion by Commissioner Harris, seconded by Commissioner Skinner, the Board agreed to adjourn at 4:30 pm.

CERTIFICATION

Minutes from the November 5th Special Called Meeting were adopted and certified this 8th day of December 2014 in Ayden, North Carolina.



AYDEN, NORTH CAROLINA


Stephen W. Tripp, Mayor

ATTEST:


Sherri L. Scharf, Town Clerk