



**TOWN OF AYDEN
GOVERNING BOARD MEETING
MINUTES**

July 27, 2015 – 5:30 pm (Reconvened from July 13th)
Ayden Town Hall – Second Floor Boardroom

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Call to Order
Mayor Tripp called the meeting to order at 5:35 pm

B. Roll Call
Present:
Mayor Tripp
Commissioners Davenport, Mewborn and Skinner

Absent:
Commissioners Harris and Ross

Also Present:
Brandon Holland – Town Manager
Sherri Scharf –Town Clerk
Gray Matthis – Executive Director, Ayden Housing Authority
Phillip R. Dixon – Town Attorney

II. DISCUSSION

Mayor Tripp called on Town Manager Holland who provided a handout of Ayden Housing Authority (AHA) budget information as related to the prior discussion of pay increases at the July 13th meeting. The Manager's handout showed a total increase of \$8,804 when a 4% pay raise was factored into the FY 2014-15 salaries of all six AHA employees (a salary adjustment for Executive Director Gray Matthis was not a part of the equation). Manager Holland then called attention to the fact that during the start of its fiscal year in April 2015, the AHA had saved \$11,000 on its employee healthcare costs and \$3,816 from having left a vacant desk position unfilled for a total savings of \$13,816. He stated that the Town has actually saved more than it paid out from April to the end of July.

Since the recent dissolution of the Ayden Housing Authority (March) will eventually have the AHA functioning as a department of the Town, this knowledge led to a discussion about healthcare costs for Town employees versus the AHA employees. The \$11,000 savings realized by the AHA came from switching insurance over to BCBS, but the \$1,500 deductible per employee is \$500 higher than the one for Town employees.

After discussion amongst Board members, Mayor Tripp acknowledged that they were struggling with the AHA transition from an independent agency to a Town department. He felt that the Board members were in agreement that BCBS insurance coverage should be the same for all.

Town Attorney Phil Dixon asked if it would be appropriate to make a motion to swap the AHA's current cost savings rather than take back the money spent in salary increases. Subsequently a motion was made:

Motion: Commissioner Skinner

Second: Commissioner Mewborn

The motion was to not penalize the AHA employees for pay raises received but, rather, wait until August and have their salaries revert back to their original state before the mistake that led to a 4% increase.

Commissioner Davenport stated that AHA employees should NOT be treated the same as Town employees because the federal government sets the pay scale for HUD communities and, accordingly, Mr. Matthis distributes pay increases based on NC public housing agencies of like size.

In response to a question from Commissioner Mewborn, Mr. Matthis responded that he did not feel there had been enough time for him to "digest" the AHA dissolution since it happened in March and the AHA's new fiscal year began in April.

Town Attorney Dixon explained to the Governing Board that the Town had made the decision in the 1970's to have the AHA operate as a department of the Town because they did not want to have a separate oversight board for the AHA. However, the NC Secretary of State revealed that the Town had never recorded this decision, which is the remedy Attorney Dixon sought, and which was implemented in March 2015. He stated that the transition will be a complex matter and suggested that the Town consider it "as soon as reasonably practicable" in order to allow enough adequate time to incorporate all the changes.

Mayor Tripp stated that he feels the Governing Board has been inconsistent in how it has managed employee benefits for Town employees versus the AHA employees. He would like to maintain the 4% pay increase for AHA employees until all data has been collected and analyzed so that the Board does not inadvertently make a decision that turns into a mistake. He also suggested that the Town Manager complete a longevity pay "study" for the AHA and have it before the Governing Board for approval and plan to implement by July 1, 2016 so that the AHA employees will have this same benefit currently in place for Town employees.

Attorney Dixon stated that a substitute motion could be made, but not by Commissioner Skinner since he made the last motion and it did not pass, although he could withdraw the motion if he chose to do so.

Commissioner Mewborn stated that he felt the Board did not have enough data to make a fair judgment and Attorney Dixon suggested language for a new motion.

Motion: Commissioner Mewborn

Second: Commissioner Davenport

Discussion: None

Approved: 3-0

The motion to leave the 4% pay increase in place for AHA employees until more data is collected to compare, contrast and reconcile the two groups of employees was approved as presented.

Commissioner Skinner subsequently withdrew his previous motion.

Commissioner Skinner then suggested that in order to avoid any future mistakes the Board should receive draft meeting minutes shortly after a meeting has occurred. He feels that the error in the AHA meeting minutes led to the payroll mistake, and this all could have been avoided if the Board had seen the minutes well in advance.

After some discussion amongst Board members, acknowledging that AHA activities would now be incorporated into the Town's regular business meetings, a motion was made regarding the Governing Board Meeting Minutes.

Motion: Commissioner Skinner

Second: Commissioner Mewborn

Discussion: None

Approved: 3-0

The motion for the Town Clerk to have draft meeting minutes distributed to Governing Board members within 7 business days of a held meeting passed as presented.

Commissioner Skinner then stated that he receives a lot of complaints from citizens about customer service phones going unanswered and calls not being returned. He feels it is an ongoing problem that has gone on too long, and Commissioner Mewborn agreed that it needs to be straightened out now.

Commissioner Davenport stated that she is still concerned that the Town does not know how to address a "group home" in a neighborhood where "boys run loose." In response, Manager Holland stated that the landowner was contacted but had not returned any calls. He added that the Police Department has monitored the neighborhood but found that nobody is doing anything illegal.

More discussion ensued on the "group home issue" which prompted Mayor Tripp to ask Attorney Dixon to send a "legal letter" that may resolve the issue.

Commissioner Skinner requested updates for the Board's planning and zoning ordinance notebooks so that they check on these issues when they receive calls.

III. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Tripp called for a motion to adjourn.

Motion: Commissioner Mewborn

Second: Commissioner Skinner

Discussion: None

Approved: 3-0

The motion to adjourn at 6:30 passed.

CERTIFICATION

Minutes from July 27th, 2015 Special Called Meeting were adopted and certified this 10th day of August 2015 in Ayden, North Carolina.



AYDEN, NORTH CAROLINA



Stephen W. Tripp, Mayor

ATTEST:



Sherri Scharf, Town Clerk