



**TOWN OF AYDEN
GOVERNING BOARD MEETING
MINUTES**

June 8, 2015 – 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 7:05 pm

B. Roll Call

Present:

Mayor Tripp

Commissioners Davenport, Harris, Mewborn, Ross and Skinner

Absent:

None

Also Present:

Brandon Holland – Town Manager

Sherrri Scharf – Town Clerk

Phillip R. Dixon – Town Attorney

Scott Dixon – Associate to Town Attorney

C. Approval of the Agenda

Motion: Commissioner Skinner

Second: Commissioner Davenport

Discussion: None

Approved: 5-0

The motion to approve the agenda was approved as presented.

II. PUBLIC RECOGNITION

A. Presentations

Bobby Blowe, Municipal Engineering Services, addressed the Governing Board by stating that he had met with Town Manager Brandon Holland and Public Works & Utilities Director Robert Sutton in February to discuss the Town's sewer needs. He stated that he was present to discuss the recent announcement from NCDENR's Division of Water Infrastructure that Ayden's project for sewer rehabilitation was approved. The Town will receive a zero interest loan of \$980,000 from the Clean Water State Revolving Fund, with a 2% service fee due after

the bidding process is complete. Mr. Blowe stated he had attempted to have one-half of the loan "forgiven," which would essentially have converted \$490,000 of the loan into a grant, but two other project applications scored higher points than Ayden's. Mr. Blowe described the sewer rehabilitation work as a "find and fix" project, adding that if Ayden's sewer rehabilitation needs are greater than the loan amount, the Town can apply for more loans later. He stated that the first step will be submitting an engineering report (due October 1st) that documents where the worst problems are located. A meeting has been scheduled with Manager Holland and Mr. Sutton on Thursday to discuss project implementation. Mr. Blowe restated NCDENR's timeline: engineering report approval (March 2016); bid and design package submittal (September 2016), construction contract award (May 2017) and construction contract execution (June 2017).

Mayor Tripp stated that Ayden's sewer rehabilitation is an urgent priority and a construction contract needs to be executed before 2017; he feels the sewer line project should be complete no later than June 2016. Mr. Blowe replied that he didn't feel shortening the timeline would be a problem and that he will work closely with Manager Holland and Mr. Sutton to ensure this.

B. Public Comments

Ms. Darlene Pollard, 4202-A Deer Meadow, stated that she and the citizens don't have computers and so don't know what is happening at meetings, and she feels that they all want to know the Board's "job descriptions." She ended her comments by requesting that the Board give a financial donation to the Ayden Christian Care Center for its food pantry.

Ms. Jeanie Cox and her sister, Ms. Elve King, 395 Planters Street, stated that the ditch beside their property needs to be cleared out as it does not drain due to overgrowth. She asked that it be cleared from Planters all the way to McKinley.

Mayor Tripp thanked the citizens for airing their concerns and stated that the Town Manager would look into these matters.

III. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Open Session Minutes of May 19, 2015
- B. Special Called Meeting Minutes of May 27, 2015
- C. Special Called Meeting Minutes of June 3, 2015

Mayor Tripp called for a motion and corresponding vote.

Motion: Commissioner Skinner

Second: Commissioner Harris

Discussion: None

Approved: 5-0

The motion to approve the consent agenda was approved as presented.

IV. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. Zoning Text Amendment: Setback Requirements for Solar Farms

Community & Economic Planner Stephen Smith explained to the Board that he had received calls from other solar farms after the Town moved forward on the Coronal Development Services (f/k/a: Heliosage) plan. He reviewed the current standard and discovered an error that, if corrected, would make the language accurate and more concise.

The text amendment would be to Article 4, Note 27 (Solar Farms). The current standard as adopted on February 11, 2013 is as follows:

Article 4, Note 27: Solar Farm

(2) Setbacks – The setbacks, minimum lot width and minimum lot area requirements prescribed by Article 5 **shall not be** applicable.

The requested revision would be:

Article 4, Note 27: Solar Farm

(2) Setbacks – The setbacks, minimum lot width and minimum lot area requirements prescribed by Article 5 **shall be** applicable.

The Planning Board considered this item at its May 18, 2015 meeting and voted unanimously to recommend approval.

Mayor Tripp then declared the public hearing to be open at 7:20 p.m. There were no public comments, so the Public Hearing was subsequently closed.

Mayor Tripp then called on the Board for a motion and corresponding vote:

Motion: Commissioner Harris

Second: Commissioner Davenport

Discussion: None

Approved: 5-0

The motion to approve the Zoning Text Amendment for Solar Farms was approved as presented.

B. Neuse River Basin Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan

Town Planner Stephen Smith explained that after Hurricane Floyd in 1999, the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 was created to ensure that all local governments have an approved plan in place in order to be eligible to receive disaster assistance funding.

In 2013, Pitt County received a Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program grant (\$77,500) through North Carolina Emergency Management to develop a Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan. The plan encompasses five counties (Pitt, Wayne, Jones, Greene, and Lenoir) and 26 municipalities. Town staff attended numerous meetings of the Pitt County Mitigation Advisory Committee

and the Regional Mitigation Advisory Committee that were held to solicit input and review comments as the draft plan was developed by Holland Consulting Planners.

The 2015 Neuse River Basin Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan is an update to the existing 2010 Pitt County Multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation that includes the County along with Ayden, Bethel, Falkland, Farmville, Fountain, Grifton Grimesland, Simpson, and Winterville. Pitt County's Multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan expires in July 2015. The Pitt County Board of County Commissioners adopted this plan on May 4, 2015.

Mr. Smith ended his presentation by stating that the document is quite large, but a copy is available at the Operations Center and online for anyone interested in reviewing it. Pitt County was recently notified by FEMA that the Neuse River Basin Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan has been approved pending formal adoption via resolutions by local communities.

Mayor Tripp then declared the Public Hearing to be open at 7:30 p.m. There were no public comments, so the public hearing was subsequently closed.

Mayor Tripp then called on the Board for a motion and corresponding vote:

Motion: Commissioner Mewborn

Second: Commissioner Harris

Discussion: None

Approved: 5-0

The motion to approve Resolution No. 14-15-20 to adopt the Neuse River Basin Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan was approved as presented.

C. Financing Proposals for Electric Substations Upgrades Project

Manager Holland asked Finance Director Alicia Simpson to address the Governing Board. Ms. Simpson stated the Local Government Commission (LGC) requires that a public hearing be held to allow for citizen input prior to filing an application for approval of the financing agreement for the Ayden and Weyerhaeuser Electric Substation Upgrades Project.

Once a public hearing is held and the Board chooses a financing option, Ms. Simpson can issue a Request for Quotes document to formalize the financing arrangement pending final approval from the LGC.

Mayor Tripp then declared the Public Hearing to be open at 7:35 p.m.

Ms. Mary Dail, 323 Garris Street, asked why the Town of Ayden was borrowing money for electric substations, and Mayor Tripp gave an update on the need to rehabilitate the aging Weyerhaeuser and NC-11 Electric Substations in order to ensure reliable power can be transmitted to all Ayden citizens.

A citizen who did not identify herself asked "are these repairs the reason why we are getting power surges?" Public Works & Utilities Director Robert Sutton explained that the project work requires some switching electric current back and forth, but that the power usually comes back up in one minute, adding that the two substations will be completed in mid-July.

Seeing that there were no more comments, Mayor Tripp declared the public hearing closed at 7:40 p.m.

Ms. Simpson then referred Board members to spreadsheets that had been previously distributed to them. The loan would be for \$1,500,000 and could be financed in one of three ways:

- An annual payment of \$318,237.59 for 5 years with 2% interest rate
- An annual payment of \$175,845.76 for 10 years with a 3% interest rate
- An annual payment of \$131,165.55 for 15 years with a 3.6% interest rate

After discussion amongst Board members, Mayor Tripp called for a motion and vote:

Motion: Commissioner Skinner

Second: Commissioner Mewborn

Discussion: None

Approved: 5-0

The motion to approve a 5 year loan for \$1,500,000 at a 2% interest rate for electric substations upgrades was approved as presented.

Town Manager Holland reminded Board members that the spreadsheets were based on estimates at that the Town would have a final figure once the LGC approved the process.

D. FY 2015-16 Budget

Town Manager Holland stated that the FY 2015-16 Budget identified revenue and expenditure estimates and is inclusive of all financial obligations while funding all municipal services and maintaining a continuum of quality services to Ayden citizens. Revenues are projected conservatively and expenditures realistically. Key highlights are detailed below:

- \$59,351 used from General Fund Balance to balance budget, largely due to additional needed improvements at Lee Street Recreation Building and purchases of police vehicles and a new Fire Department Equipment Truck
- Tax rate of \$0.54 per \$100 valuation is same as FY 14-15
- Stormwater Tiered Fee System will generate approximately \$120,000 for drainage projects (Monthly fee = \$10 industrial; \$6 commercial; \$3.50 residential customers)
 - Projects = Snow Hill/Planters area and West Haven/Verna area
- Governing Board to consider a mixed beverage ballot proposal for 2015 Election
- \$13,000 Ayden Chamber of Commerce support (inclusive of Christmas parade)
- \$5,000 Collard Festival Support
- \$9,000 divided equally among Ayden's Elementary, Middle and High Schools
- \$50,000 for road resurfacing
- \$8,000 for surveillance cameras for police detectives
- \$25,000 for cooling system for Ayden Gymnasium
- Electric rates will initially remain the same as FY 14-15 until Electric Rate Study make a recommendation for rate adjustments in conjunction with Duke Energy-Progress sale of assets
- \$1,500,000 for Electric Substation(s) rehabilitation to be financed via loan
- Water rates remain same as FY 14-15

- Sewer rate increase of 7.5% (\$3.72 avg. increase per customer) to offset 17% increase from CMSD for treating Ayden's wastewater
- \$50,000 for infrastructure extension to prepare for installation of SW Bypass
- \$100,000 for inflow/infiltration (I&I) study to determine priority areas to focus on sewer line rehabilitation
- State Revolving Fund (SRF) Loan for \$980,000 zero-interest loan to assist in "find and fix" sewer rehabilitation project (based on above-referenced I & I study results)

Mayor Tripp declared the public hearing open at 7:45 p.m.

Ms. Virginia Riggs, 4142 New Circle Drive, stated that she does not have a computer and asked for a copy of the budget. Mayor Tripp responded that she or any other citizen could come to the Town Clerk's office at Town Hall and request a copy.

Alice Cannon Parker, 4353 East Avenue, asked why the sewer repair is critical now when the Town has been doing it all along.

Mayor Tripp replied that the SRF Loan would be a return on investment because if Ayden doesn't spend the money to find and fix I&I, the citizens will continue to pay on debt every year for treating wastewater.

Commissioner Davenport, who has been a CMSD Board member for the past 12 years, stated that some citizens feel the Town should pay for surface or storm water running through the system, but it is that very thing that has driven up Ayden's CMSD costs by 17%. She said that sewer pipes in some parts of the Town are 100 years old and rusted out which is why they leak. She added that the Town is still paying for the last sewer lines in order to have the growth it has today, and that infrastructure needs always means debt. She asked the citizens to simply "trust us," adding that "it will be OK in the end."

Mayor Tripp commented on Ayden being a "business" and that the citizens are "stockholders" who borrow money to invest in the Town's future growth. He mentioned that investments are paying off in that the Hines Drive and Kennedy Estate drainage projects are nearly complete. Once the Town completes all its drainage projects, it will be a matter of maintenance only. He added that the Town had not done an electric rate study in 20 years, and that it is important to determine new rates both now and in the future.

Commissioner Ross stated that she agrees the Town needs to invest in infrastructure, but she does not want to levy a stormwater fee on the citizens; she feels the Town could look harder for cost savings within the budget.

This led to a great deal of discussion among the other Governing Board members who each agreed that they, too, did not want to increase rates or impose fees on citizens, but that it would be necessary to make the Town better now and to invest in its future, which will benefit all citizens. Major emphasis was placed on repairing sewer lines to eliminate stormwater from passing through the sewer, so that the Town could reduce its current and future debt to CMSD.

Mayor Tripp then called for a motion and corresponding votes on the FY 2015-16 Budget. Commissioner Skinner asked to have the Ayden Fire Department Budget voted on first, so that he could excuse himself, citing a conflict of interest as he is on its Board.

Motion: Commissioner Harris

Second: Commissioner Davenport

Discussion: None

Approved: 4-0

The motion to approve the FY 2015-16 Ayden Fire Department budget passed with Commissioner Skinner abstaining from the vote.

Mayor Tripp then called for a motion and votes on the remaining FY 2015-16 Budget.

Motion: Commissioner Davenport

Second: Commissioner Harris

Discussion: None

Approved: 4-1

The motion to approve FY 2015-16 Town of Ayden Budget passed with Commissioner Ross opposed.

V. ACTION ITEMS

Approve Design Drawing for Parking Spaces at Veterans' Park

In response to a family's concern expressed at the May 19th Governing Board meeting, Board members asked Manager Holland to stop the project work of installing handicapped spaces on the Snow Hill Street at Veterans' Park until a new design plan could be considered.

Mayor Tripp stated that after the May meeting, he had asked Manager Holland for a utilization report for Ayden's Park. Manager Holland replied that by far the District Park has been the most utilized park. In fact, over the past 18 months, the small shelter at Veterans' Park (i.e. nearest to Snow Hill St.) has basically not been reserved and the J.J. Brown Park has been under-utilized as well. Mayor Tripp wondered if this is due to there being no bathroom facility at Veterans' Park.

After much discussion amongst Board members regarding traffic flow safety concerns at the Snow Hill Street side of the park and possible solutions to the issue, a motion was suggested.

Motion: Commissioner Skinner

Second: Commissioner Harris

Discussion: None

Approved: 5-0

The motion to table the decision on a handicapped parking spaces redesign at Veterans' Park to allow for a recommendation from the Arts & Recreation Commission passed.

VI. INFORMATION

Staff Departmental Reports (4)

VII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Board members expressed thanks to the citizens for coming to the meeting. Commissioner Ross stated that the Shriners are interested in bringing a parade to downtown Ayden in 2017.

VIII. CLOSED SESSION

Mayor Tripp called upon Town Attorney Phil Dixon who recommended that the Board enter Closed Session pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (3) – to consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney/client privilege between the attorney and the public body, which privilege is hereby acknowledged.

Mayor Tripp called for a motion and subsequent vote to enter closed session.

Motion: Commissioner Skinner

Second: Commissioner Ross

Discussion: None

Approved: 5-0

The motion to enter closed session at 8:45 pm was approved.

IX. RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

Mayor Tripp called for a motion and subsequent vote to return to open session.

Motion: Commissioner Skinner

Second: Commissioner Harris

Discussion: None

Approved: 5-0

The motion to return to open session at 8:55 pm was approved.

X. ADJOURNMENT

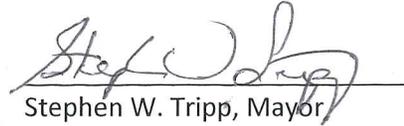
Having completed the business before them, Mayor Tripp announced that without objection the Governing Board would stand adjourned at 9:00 pm.

CERTIFICATION

Minutes from June 8th, 2015 meeting were adopted and certified this 13th day of July 2015 in Ayden, North Carolina.



AYDEN, NORTH CAROLINA


Stephen W. Tripp, Mayor

ATTEST:


Sherri L. Scharf, Town Clerk