



**TOWN OF AYDEN
GOVERNING BOARD MEETING
MINUTES**

October 6, 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 7:00 pm

- B. Roll Call
Present:
Mayor Tripp
Commissioners Davenport, Harris, Ross and Skinner

Absent:
Commissioner Mewborn

Also Present:
Brandon Holland – Town Manager
Sherri Scharf – Town Clerk
J. Scott Dixon – Associate Town Attorney

Mayor Tripp stated that Commissioner Mewborn will be attending the annual NC League of Municipalities conference on October 12th, which would have been the regularly scheduled Governing Board meeting time. The Board agreed to move the meeting time up to October 6th; unfortunately Commissioner Mewborn could not attend this evening due to the passing of his nephew. Mayor Tripp asked the Board to keep him in their thoughts and prayers.

C. Approval of the Agenda

Mayor Tripp called on a motion to approve the agenda.

Motion: Commissioner Harris
Second: Commissioner Skinner
Discussion: None
Approved: 4-0
The motion to approve the agenda passed.

II. PRESENTATIONS/PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

III. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Open Session Minutes of September 14, 2015
- B. Open Session Minutes of September 15, 2015
- C. Open Session Minutes of September 17, 2015

Mayor Tripp called for a motion to approve the consent agenda.

Motion: Commissioner Skinner

Second: Commissioner Davenport

Discussion: None

Approved: 4-0

The motion to approve the consent agenda passed.

IV. PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

V. ACTION ITEMS

- A. Pitt County Interlocal Agreement: Agribusiness and Food Enterprise Center

Town Manager Brandon Holland stated that he and Mayor Tripp recently met with Nancy Shephard, an EDA representative for the southeastern U.S., in Ayden to discuss the status of the Town's EDA grant application for the NC Agribusiness and Food Enterprise Center which will allow several clients to participate in commercial scale food processing and packaging in the same facility. This business incubator concept is ideal for small entrepreneurs/companies who are not ready for large-scale facilities.

Ms. Shephard discussed in detail the application requirements to qualify for project funding. The primary requirements are:

1. Economic impact study that illustrates the impact of private investments on the economic region surrounding Pitt County. The proposed Agribusiness and Food Enterprise Center is projected to increase regional food sales by \$80 million and provide up to 225 new Pitt County jobs. Manager Holland distributed a draft study to the Board members.
2. Engineering report that specifies how the facility will be developed: site clearing, utilities, building layout, use of equipment, etc. A site visit to one of NC State University's buildings offered insight for consideration such as equipment on wheels for easy transport in and out of various work spaces in the facility. The report initially showed a training site at the facility, but the economic impact study found that the square footage was "too valuable" for such use, so the Town will consider using space at the Ayden Arts & Recreation Community Center Manager for training classes. Manager Holland stated that he received a draft report and that he will share it with the Board.
3. Land on which to build the Food Enterprise Center. Manager Holland stated that the Interlocal Agreement between Pitt County and the Town of Ayden provides a 4.36 acre parcel of land on Elliott Dixon Dr. south of Ayden (Worthington Industrial Park) that is

suitable for a 24,000 square foot facility. Should the Board approve its execution tonight, the parcel would be considered a donation and deeded to the Town of Ayden. If Ayden does not secure the EDA grant funding, the property would be deeded back to Pitt County. Manager Holland stated that securing this property increases the likelihood that the Town will be granted the funds. He added that although congressional budget negotiations are tied to the release of EDA funds, if Ayden receives EDA (federal) funds, the State may provide additional funding.

Mayor Tripp stated that the Town has been developing this concept for the past two years. He stated that Dr. Daubert, NC State University Food, Bioprocessing and Nutrition Sciences, recently told him that NC ships sweet potatoes to PA, so "why not Ayden?," adding that the Food Enterprise Center will transform the eastern region and be a driver for employment. Mayor Tripp held up Greer, SC and Research Triangle Park, NC as examples of automotive and technology markets that started with the same business incubator model that Ayden plans to adopt. He reported that the Town Manager's office has already received phone calls from individuals with food products they want to bring to Ayden's Food Enterprise Center.

Mayor Tripp called on the Board for a motion to approve the interlocal agreement:

Motion: Commissioner Skinner

Second: Commissioner Harris

Discussion: None

Approved: 4-0

The motion to approve the Pitt County Interlocal Agreement to deed Parcel No. 62663 to the Town of Ayden was proved as presented.

B. Disconnection Notifications to Landlords

Manager Holland stated that the Town had been contacted by an Ayden landlord who owns 12 rental properties. He told of two incidences of utility disconnections of which he had not been made aware due to the Town's privacy policy that does not allow disclosure of account information to anyone who does not have his/her name on the account. He said one of these incidences cost him \$10,000 in property repairs due to residents who had not had electric or water utilities for 4 months, but remained in the (manufactured) home as "squatters" who paid their rent, but not their utilities. He stated that had he known utilities had been disconnected and would not be turned back on, he would have evicted them before he incurred such substantial damage. He is demanding that the Town develop a "landlord friendly" utility disconnection policy.

Manager Holland knows of other towns/cities who notify the landlords when utilities are about to be disconnected at rental properties. He added that the law is unclear on utility information disclosure since it is not classified as a public record, but also not protected information. He stated that a form could be created and it would be a standard notice.

Commissioner Davenport asked whether the Town should be paid to look after "this man's business," adding that the landlord is responsible for knowing whether his tenants pay their utility bills. Commissioner Skinner stated that it could be implemented on a trial basis.

Associate Attorney Scott Dixon states that he sees this as a courtesy notification and that there are no legal issues that he is aware of, but offered to check on statutes to be sure.

Mayor Tripp called for a motion on the subject.

Motion: Commissioner Skinner

Second: Commissioner Harris

Discussion: None

Approved: 3-1

The motion to approve landlord notification of utility disconnections on a trial basis with monitoring passed with Commissioner Davenport opposed.

C. Changes to Ayden's Facilities and Rental Use Policy

Ayden's 700-seat auditorium at the Arts & Recreation Community Center is one of the buildings covered by the Town's rental and use policy. In the past 12 months, there have been a number of legitimate non-profit groups who are interested in paying to use the auditorium for events ranging from a play (gospel or secular), musical performance or talent show.

Manager Holland stated that because the lessee must sign an agreement proving that he/she is an Ayden Utilities customer, the Town has had to regularly and repeatedly turn away groups because leasing the space to them would be a violation of the current "in-town only" policy. Not only does the Town of Ayden lose a chance for additional revenue, but the citizens themselves are deprived of an opportunity to see a performance that they might enjoy and/or support a "worthy cause" with their ticket admission.

If the policy revisions are approved, the Manager Holland will still retain the right to approve each proposed usage of the auditorium and authorize entering into the lease agreement including the scheduling of off-duty police officers, the cost of which will be born by the lessee seeking the use of the auditorium. Manager Holland stated that most places keep the deposit for a venue the size of Ayden's auditorium to offset cleaning costs.

Proposed changes to the current facilities rental and use policy are indicated in bold face:

In the case of individuals requesting rental of facilities, they must be a customer in good standing with Ayden Utilities, **except for organizations wishing to lease the auditorium, in which case they must produce a copy of their organization's IRS 501(c)(3) Public Charity Approval Letter to prove they belong to a legitimate non-profit organization.**

Fee Schedule for Auditorium

\$350 per use (non-profit organization)

\$700 per use (for-profit and only if recreational, cultural, civic and arts related in nature)

\$150 **non-refundable** deposit (to pay for cleaning crew)

\$25 per hour per officer for security (one officer per 100 guests)

Commissioner Harris inquired about for-profit organizations using the space. Town Clerk Sherri Scharf, who manages the auditorium rentals, stated it is rare that they want to use the

space, but if they made a request, they would need to include a proposal and/or event flyer to assist the Town Manager in making the decision to accept or reject the use.

Commissioner Harris expressed desire to see the space get better utilization but also wanted to ensure that if two non-profit groups wanted to reserve the auditorium at the same time, that an Ayden-based group would get priority.

Commissioner Ross inquired whether off-duty or reserve police officers are covered by the Town's insurance. Town Clerk Sherri Scharf, who oversees the Town's liability insurance claims and renewals, stated that they are covered for injuries including workers' comp.

Mayor Tripp called for a motion to approve the changes to the facilities rental and use policy.

Motion: Commissioner Skinner

Second: Commissioner Harris

Discussion: None

Approved: 4-0

The motion to approve revisions to the facilities rental and use policy for the Doug Mitchell Auditorium on a trial basis with monitoring passed.

VI. DISCUSSION ITEMS

None

VII. INFORMATION

Staff Departmental Reports

Police Chief Stanley stated that he has had more officers on the streets recently and that things have been pretty quiet. However, he wants a conversation between the Police Department and Ayden's citizens. He is ready to conduct a survey to seek citizen feedback regarding the police officers and services provided to the community to gauge where the Department may be lacking and also where they may be excelling. The survey template is based on one developed by the Department of Justice. It is confidential and will cover topics such as community involvement, procedures, fairness and overall satisfaction with the Ayden Police Department (APD). Officers will go door to door – with focus given to “problem” neighborhoods and those with elderly residents - to hand out surveys with postage paid envelopes. Chief Stanley also intends to send them via regular mail. The MidEast Commission uses Survey Monkey and has offered to develop an online survey that will be posted on the APD's Facebook page and the Town's website. Online results will go to the Commission who will compile the data into a report and send it back to APD. Chief Stanley is optimistic that the survey will give the APD the information it needs to improve service delivery.

Commissioner Skinner stated that the more homes that receive it the better, suggesting that if all citizens receive it (not just the ones in the “problem areas”), the APD will have a “cross-section of how people honestly feel.” Commissioner Harris stated that that ECU frequently does surveys and it is best to completed them within 8-10 days of distribution; often reminders are necessary in order to get more responses.

VIII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Board members expressed appreciation for the timely response in restoring power during a recent outage caused by a tropical storm that dumped up to 11 inches of rain in some areas. Commissioner Skinner added that “you get what you pay for” when it comes to employees who have the work ethic and skill to restore power services.

Commissioner Davenport expressed appreciation for having had the “ditches” cleared ahead of the storm, adding that there were very few areas flooded during this storm, which she attributed to the drainage ways being cleared.

Mayor Tripp agreed stating that he saw Robert Sutton and his crew checking manholes during the pouring rain and observed that there was no sewer overflow through the manholes. He also stated that the Fawn Road large canal was cleared of trees and shrubs because the Town gained access to it, which is not always the case.

IX. CLOSED SESSION

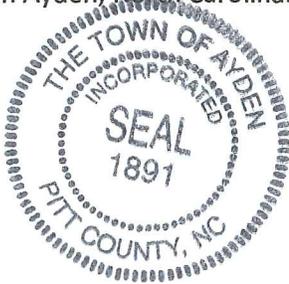
None

X. ADJOURNMENT

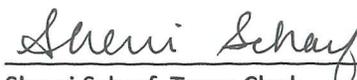
Having completed the business before them, Mayor Tripp announced that without objection the Governing Board would stand adjourned at 8:05 pm.

CERTIFICATION

Minutes from October 6th, 2015 meeting were adopted and certified this 9th day of November 2015 in Ayden, North Carolina.



ATTEST:


Sherri Scharf, Town Clerk

AYDEN, NORTH CAROLINA


Stephen W. Tripp, Mayor