

TOWN OF STOKESDALE
Regular Town Council Meeting

8325 Angel Pardue Road
Stokesdale, NC 27357
January 12, 2017

The Regular Town Council Meeting of the Stokesdale Town Council was held on Thursday, January 12, 2017, at the Stokesdale Town Hall on 8325 Angel Pardue Road in Stokesdale, North Carolina.

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Mayor Randy Braswell, Mayor Pro Tem William N. (Bill) Jones, Frank Bruno, Vicki White-Lawrence, Tim Jones.

OTHERS PRESENT INCLUDED: Katy Gregg, Town Attorney; Kim Hemric, Town Administrator; Diana Marcus, Deputy Clerk; Steve Mann, Northwest Observer.

OTHERS ABSENT: Philip Pulliam, Budget Officer.

CALL COUNCIL MEETING TO ORDER: Mayor Braswell called the meeting to order at 7:00PM.

INVOCATION: Given by Thearon Hooks.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Recited by Council members and citizens in attendance.

REVIEW AND ADOPT AGENDA: Tim Jones asked to move the last item from under Unfinished Business and place it between the second and third item under New Business on the agenda.

Mayor Braswell made a motion to approve the agenda with that one change. Tim Jones seconded the motion. All Council members voted aye and the motion carried.

READING AND APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FOR THE FOLLOWING: July 14, 2016 Regular Town Council Meeting; August 11, 2016 Regular Town Council Meeting; September 8, 2016 Regular Town Council Meeting; October 13, 2016 Regular Town Council Meeting; November 2, 2016 Town Council Business Meeting; November 10, 2016 Regular Town Council Meeting; November 16, 2016 Town Council Business Meeting; November 30, 2016 Town Council Business Meeting; December 8, 2016 Regular Town Council Meeting; December 14, 2016 Town Council Business Meeting; December 21, 2016 Town Council Business Meeting; December 28, 2016 Town Council Business Meeting: Tim Jones advised that the changes he requested for the July 14, 2016 and September 8, 2016 Regular Town Council Meeting minutes have been submitted to Town staff, but they have not been able to make the changes since the changes were submitted only two business days prior to the meeting. Therefore, he would like to hold the minute drafts from the July 14, 2016 and September 8, 2016 Regular Town Council Meetings from being approved at this time, as well as the minute drafts from the August 11, 2016, October 13, 2016, November 10, 2016, and December 14, 2016 Regular Town Council Meetings.

Tim Jones made a motion that Council hold those minutes, that being July, August, September, October, November, and December of 2016, all those being the regularly scheduled Town Council Meeting minutes. No one seconded the motion, so the motion failed.

Discussion took place about the requested changes to the minute drafts from the July 14, 2016 and September 8, 2016 Regular Town Council Meetings. The requested changes were talked about in detail.

Mayor Braswell made a motion that Council approve the July 14, 2016 Regular Town Council Meeting minutes, and Diana, if you would make those corrections that we spoke about. Bill Jones seconded the motion with the stipulation that what Tim Jones wanted added, is added.

Discussion continued about the requested changes. Vicki White-Lawrence is not comfortable with approving minutes before the changes are actually made. She wants to see the final copy. Bill Jones advised that they were criticized for having the Town's minutes made available to the public in a timely manner. This is our January, 2017 meeting and we are still talking about the July 14, 2016 meeting. You can't just hold back a whole half a year and then decide you don't want any of them approved and not give the Clerk any idea of what you want changed for four months. The public has a right to see these minutes in a more, timely manner than this. Tim Jones couldn't agree with him more, but he also thinks they should be accurate.

Mayor Braswell withdrew his motion. The July 14, 2016 Regular Town Council Meeting minutes will be held until Diana Marcus makes the requested changes and sends them back out to Council for their review.

Mayor Braswell made a motion that Council approve the August 11, 2016 Regular Town Council Meeting minutes. Bill Jones seconded the motion. Mayor Braswell, Bill Jones, Frank Bruno, and Vicki White-Lawrence voted aye. Tim Jones voted nay. The motion carried with a 4 to 1 vote.

Discussion took place about the requested changes for the September 8, 2016 Regular Town Council Meeting minutes. The September 8, 2016 Regular Town Council Meeting minutes will be held until Diana Marcus makes the requested changes and sends them back out to Council for their review.

Mayor Braswell made a motion that Council approve the October 13, 2016 Regular Town Council Meeting minutes. Vicki White-Lawrence seconded the motion. Mayor Braswell, Bill Jones, Frank Bruno, and Vicki White-Lawrence voted aye. Tim Jones voted nay. The motion carried with a 4 to 1 vote.

Mayor Braswell made a motion that Council approve the November 2, 2016 Town Council Business Meeting minutes. Bill Jones seconded the motion. All Council members voted aye and the motion carried.

Mayor Braswell made a motion that Council approve the November 10, 2016 Regular Town Council Meeting minutes. Frank Bruno seconded the motion. Mayor Braswell, Bill Jones, Frank Bruno, and Vicki White-Lawrence voted aye. Tim Jones voted nay. The motion carried with a 4 to 1 vote.

Mayor Braswell made a motion that Council approve the December 8, 2016 Regular Town Council Meeting minutes. Bill Jones seconded the motion. Mayor Braswell, Bill Jones, Frank Bruno, and Vicki White-Lawrence voted aye. Tim Jones voted nay. The motion carried with a 4 to 1 vote.

Mayor Braswell made a motion that Council approve the December 14, 2016 Town Council Business Meeting minutes. Bill Jones seconded the motion. All Council members voted aye and the motion carried.

Mayor Braswell made a motion that Council approve the December 21, 2016 Town Council Business Meeting minutes. Vicki White-Lawrence seconded the motion. All Council members voted aye and the motion carried.

Mayor Braswell made a motion that Council approve the December 28, 2016 Town Council Business Meeting minutes. Bill Jones seconded the motion. Mayor Braswell, Bill Jones, Frank Bruno, and Vicki White-Lawrence voted aye. Tim Jones voted nay. The motion carried with a 4 to 1 vote.

Mayor Braswell made a motion that Council approve the November 16, 2016 Town Council Business Meeting minutes. Bill Jones seconded the motion. All Council members voted aye and the motion carried.

Mayor Braswell made a motion that Council approve the November 30, 2016 Town Council Business Meeting minutes. Bill Jones seconded the motion. All Council members voted aye and the motion carried.

Tim Jones made a motion that Town staff place the date of the meeting on the subject line in the email (when minute drafts are sent out to Town Council for review) instead of just placing "draft minutes" on that line. Vicki White-Lawrence seconded the motion. All Council members voted aye and the motion carried.

COMMENTS FROM THE FLOOR: John Flynt, 8133 Belews Creek Road, Stokesdale, had a question about "Poll of Council". He wanted to know if Town Council was voting on Council business through email polls or conducting business of the Town via email as opposed to open session. Mayor Braswell advised that Council had voted electronically on decisions that could not wait, and then ratified the decision publicly at the very next Regular Town Council Meeting. The town attorney did not like this, so Council has stopped voting electronically. Mr. Flynt was also concerned about Council not adopting the minutes from the previous meetings after four or five months, because they don't become official until Council votes to adopt them. It's almost like Council is trying to hide something from the public and it is an unnecessary delay. It seems that 30 days would be sufficient time to make changes or voice concerns. He appreciates Council's service to the Town. He is not being critical, but just had those questions. Tim Jones advised he takes responsibility for that delay. There is nothing beyond that going on.

NEW BUSINESS:

Report from Guilford County Sheriff's Department: No deputy was present to give the report. The report is available online.

Finance Report – December, 2016: Philip Pulliam, Budget Officer, is out sick, so no finance reports were available.

Update on Clerk's Inventory of Unreleased Closed Session Minutes: Kim Hemric advised she was asked to do a summary of the unreleased closed session minutes and had emailed a spreadsheet she created with a summary, number of pages, date, and the topic of the session to Town Council. She wasn't able to complete them all, but feels she has provided 27 or 30 of them that she has been able to audit. She will continue working on them. Mayor Braswell understands that is a major undertaking and is satisfied Ms. Hemric is working on it. Katy Gregg plans to review the closed session minutes to confirm that the content of those minutes need not continue to be closed and will allow them to be released. Then Council can vote to release those minutes based on her advice.

Resolution to Establish a Policy for Approval and Opening of Closed Session Minutes and General Accounts: Mayor Braswell made a motion that Council continue the Resolution to Establish a Policy for Approval and Opening of Closed Session Minutes and General Accounts so the Town attorney has an opportunity to go over the Resolution. Tim Jones seconded the motion. All Council members voted aye and the motion carried.

Detailed Water Distribution System Distribution System Specifications – As Updated by C. McGougan, July, 2016: Mayor Braswell advised that he and Tim Jones worked on a project to update the technical specifications for the Town's water system. A consultant helped them go through it and he hopes to get them approved and get the revised amendments on the Town website. There are no big changes. They are things that will make the system more structurally sound and protect the potential for contamination. He wants to continue this item until the Wednesday, January 18th Town Council Business Meeting.

Consider Estimates from CommTech and Sentry Watch: Frank Bruno explained that Sentry Watch wants to replace the whole system and CommTech wants to upgrade the existing system. Mayor Braswell would like to continue this item until the Wednesday, January 25th Town Council Business Meeting.

Consider Adding G2 Utilities, Inc. to Town Vendor List: Mayor Braswell made a motion that Council add G2 Utilities, Incorporated to the Town Vendor List. Bill Jones seconded the motion.

Discussion took place about the water meter services they provide and the prices.

All Council members voted aye and the motion carried.

Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Annual Town Audit Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR): Cannon and Company currently performs the Town's annual audit and has performed the Town's annual audit for possibly ten years. Changing auditors was discussed.

Tim Jones made a motion that Council send out an RFQ for the annual Town audit. Vicki White-Lawrence seconded the motion.

Discussion took place about an RFQ and an RFP (Request for Proposal).

All Council members voted aye.

Increase in Accessibility Fees for Large Water Meters: Discussion took place about meter sizes.

Tim Jones would like to propose (make a motion) that Council increase the accessibility fee (customer fee) for 2-inch meters to \$45.75, for 6-inch meters to \$140.00, and 3/4-inch remaining the same at \$30.50.

Discussion took place about calculating a fee schedule for the water system. Katy Gregg agrees that having a more complete justification for water system fees that is backed up by mathematical reasoning is going to be much better for the Town.

Tim Jones withdrew his motion.

Bill Jones asked to add an additional agenda item that he forgot to add earlier.

Digital Recorder and Microphone Discussion: Bill Jones made a motion that Council allocate \$500.00 in the budget for the purchase of a recorder and two replacement microphones for the two that don't work. He has priced these (microphones) and they are relatively inexpensive, so he would recommend they get the same kind so they all match, but you are looking at about \$125.00, which if you take off the back of it, it is a solid-state piece of equipment, so there are not really any repairs to it. Mayor Braswell seconded the motion.

Discussion took place about the equipment and how to modernize the system to enable taking the audio recording or electronic minutes and putting them onto the internet/Town website. Katy Gregg advised that there is not a state statute that requires the minutes to be sent to Raleigh for archiving. Kim Hemric thinks it is a "best practice" to do so. Mayor Braswell suggested going in the brown cabinet in the equipment closet to see if there are any audio tapes.

Tim Jones said, "If we are going to buy a recording device, then I can accept that. It is certainly something that we use all the time here in Town Hall. But, let's take that one out of the mechanical room back there that we don't use and try to sell it before it gets so old it's nothing but a paperweight, if we're going to do that." Mayor Braswell said, "So that'll be another motion to declare it as surplus."

Mayor Braswell seconded the motion. All Council members voted aye and the motion carried.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Stokesdale Water System:

Citizens' Comment Period on the Stokesdale Water System: John Flynt, 8133 Belews Creek Road, Stokesdale, advised he reads the Northwest Observer and knows the Town of Stokesdale is considering a Regional Water Authority with Oak Ridge, Summerfield, Rockingham County, and Guilford County. He wants to make sure the Town protects its autonomy. If Stokesdale enters into an agreement with the three towns, they may establish new rules and the Stokesdale water system may need to be updated or replaced. Summerfield and Oak Ridge each have a property tax, and he wants to make sure the Town can determine its own fate and not have Guilford County determine it. Oak Ridge and Summerfield would have significantly more money and reserves to build common-sized lines and the like. He wants to make sure the Town doesn't force a significant property tax. A Water Authority is not just water, but is also the possibility of sewer, so if Oak Ridge and Summerfield want sewer, Stokesdale may also be required to provide sewer.

Discussion took place about the grant money and the feasibility study. Mayor Braswell advised that Rockingham County removed themselves from the Water Authority. Stokesdale, Oak Ridge, Summerfield, and Guilford County now have an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding), and Rockingham County is not a part of that. Tim Jones wanted to know when the Town would notify their citizens that this decision is being contemplated and what will be put in place to receive feedback from them. Mayor Braswell advised that the MOU has been passed and it's time to write the RFQ (Request for Qualifications) and then get an RFP (Request for Proposal) in order to obtain a feasibility study, which will determine the best decision to make. Tim Jones feels that the best decision for Stokesdale is to make a direct connection to Rockingham County instead of joining a Water Authority with Guilford County. Bill Jones advised waiting until the

feasibility study is completed before making a decision. Mayor Braswell advised that there are other options besides a Water Authority and thinks this process could take years to complete.

Other Issues Pertaining to the Water System: The Panasonic laptop which will be dedicated to the water system is now on the Town's network. The next step will be engaging the electronic meter software.

Poll of Council – There were no polls this month. Mayor Braswell would still like to use electronic polls in an emergency because there is no Town Manager. Katy Gregg said that she understands that. She thinks that it would be a good transition for this Council to look at delegating this authority to the Town Administrator. That would negate 99.9 percent of any possibility of having to have that polling of Council. The statute does allow for electronic meetings, but there are requirements for that. She does not feel like the typical polls of Council is the better way to proceed. She feels the better way to proceed, legally, would be for this Council to continue having their weekly business meetings where that can be done. It will just have to wait until the regularly scheduled meetings or the Wednesday business meetings which are considered public meetings or this Council delegate some authority to the Town Administrator that would allow her or him to conduct business on behalf of the Town within certain realms.

Mayor Braswell made a motion that we permanently remove poll of council from this agenda. Vicki White-Lawrence seconded the motion. Bill Jones, Frank Bruno, Vicki White-Lawrence, and Tim Jones voted aye. Mayor Braswell voted nay. The motion carried with a 4 to 1 vote.

Discussion took place about finding out how much Council voted to authorize the Mayor to spend on items related to the water system.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Follow-up Discussion: Mayor Braswell thinks this was discussed enough so they will move on.

Discussion of Access to the Town Minute Books: Mayor Braswell advised that Diana Marcus is working on getting the minutes onto the Town website and Vicki White-Lawrence has been working on indexing the minute books.

Tim Jones made a motion that he would like to by April 1st, have those minute books accessible (for public access or Town Council) during Town (Hall) business hours, and when he says the minute books, he means the copies of the Town's documents. His understanding is the actual originals are stored in our (in Town Hall) fireproof file cabinets and/or stored off-site. Kim Hemric confirmed that the originals are stored in the fireproof cabinet. Tim Jones amended the motion from April 1st to June 1st, (but an extension could be requested if needed). Vicki White-Lawrence seconded the motion. Tim Jones would like to make it a part of this motion to scan those minutes into some sort of electronic file and store it somewhere besides Stokesdale for a backup once we're certain we have them organized. Vicki White-Lawrence and Tim Jones voted aye. Mayor Braswell, Bill Jones, and Frank Bruno voted nay. The motion failed with a 3 to 2 vote.

COMMITTEE AND BOARD REPORTS:

Property Committee: Snow was cleared off of the left side of the Town Hall parking lot and ice-melt was put down. Drains are being cleaned out of drains that clogged regularly down at the Town Park.

Public Safety-Water Committee: Thearon Hooks prepared a Public Safety-Water Committee Summary for 2016. He read the summary to everyone and provided a copy to Council members. The portable generator files were reviewed and he recommends running it regularly to insure proper operation. He recommends everyone signing up on the GEANI (Guilford Emergency Alert-Notification-Information) System, in order to receive notifications for emergency situations for weather, armed suspects, and disaster events. Go to www.ready.gov to sign up. In the event of an emergency related to the Stokesdale Water System, procedures have been developed to notify water customers of the emergency and supplies have been purchased that will be placed on doors if this happens.

Parade Committee: Vicki White-Lawrence advised that the Parade Committee is having a wrap-up meeting on Saturday at Stokeridge for dinner at 5:00pm.

Departmental and Administrative Report – Town Administrator: Kim Hemric advised that water meters will be read on Saturday, the 14th, and Town Hall will be closed Monday, the 16th, for the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. Water bills will be mailed out by Friday, the 20th. Last month, 538 water bills were processed and mailed out, and ten new water service applications were received. Staff continues to work on internal policies and best practices. She thanked Vicki White-Lawrence for coming in to work on indexing the minutes which is an ongoing project and much appreciated. She will be attending the Clerks Academy next week in Raleigh for a couple of days and she is looking forward to that. She hopes to have the December, 2016, Financial Reports next week.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Mayor Braswell read the announcements listed on the agenda.

COMMENTS FROM COUNCIL: Tim Jones would like to encourage everyone to study this coming Water Authority that's going to be operating in Stokesdale. Get your questions ready and keep themselves informed, and hopefully, we all make a good decision about those coming events. He is still in favor of small government and is still opposed to a property tax for Stokesdale. He wishes a handful of them could come up with some sort of plan in order to pursue the return of that sales tax distribution money by some means. Thank you and thank you for coming.

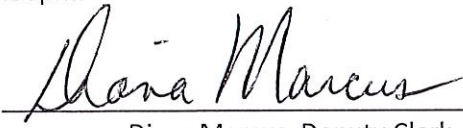
Frank Bruno thanked everyone on the Parade Committee. They did a great job on the parade, the tree lighting, and all the decorations. Please volunteer next year and help out if you can.

Bill Jones thanked everyone that worked on the Parade Committee. He missed the parade for the first time due to back surgery. He saw pictures and heard it was a good parade.

Mayor Braswell thanked everyone on the Parade Committee. The tree lighting was incredible. Those people are so dedicated and loyal supporting the parade. He watched the parade from a rocking chair in front of his daughter's beauty shop on Main Street. He really enjoyed the day and all of the people. There is a great sense of community and he really appreciates all the hard work the committee members did to make the parade a huge success. He thanked Vicki White-Lawrence for all the years she has kept the Parade Committee going and thanked Chairperson Pam Mick. His daughter, Amanda, gave birth to his and Cindy's first grandchild on New Year's Day at 3:00am. He feels blessed and thankful.

Vicki White-Lawrence thanked all the volunteers on the Parade Committee and appreciates being able to step back after handling it for so many years. It is a good thing for Stokesdale and brings a lot of attention to our Town. People do appreciate it, and it is rewarding even though it is a lot of hard work.

ADJOURNMENT: Tim Jones made a motion to adjourn. Frank Bruno seconded the motion. All Council members voted aye and the meeting adjourned at 9:56pm.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Diana Marcus", written over a horizontal line.

Diana Marcus, Deputy Clerk

Approved:

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "D. Randall Braswell", written over a horizontal line.

D. Randall Braswell, Mayor