

TOWN OF STOKESDALE
Regular Town Council Meeting
8325 Angel Pardue Road
Stokesdale, NC 27357
February 9, 2017

The Regular Town Council Meeting of the Stokesdale Town Council was held on Thursday, February 9, 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; Philip Pulliam, Budget Officer; Steve Mann, Northwest Observer.

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

INVOCATION: Given by Mayor Braswell.

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

REVIEW AND ADOPT AGENDA: Frank Bruno made a motion to adopt the agenda as written. Vicki White-Lawrence 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; September 8, 2016 Regular Town Council Meeting; January 4, 2017 Town Council Business Meeting; January 12, 2017 Regular Town Council Meeting; January 18, 2017 Town Council Business Meeting; January 25, 2017 Town Council Business Meeting: Bill Jones made a motion to approve these minutes listed on the agenda. Vicki White-Lawrence seconded the motion. All Council members voted aye and the motion carried.

COMMENTS FROM THE FLOOR AND/OR COMMENTS ABOUT THE PROPOSED WATER AUTHORITY: No comments were made from the floor.

NEW BUSINESS:

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

Frank Bruno said for the first time in a long time there was a little vandalism in downtown Stokesdale, so if anyone sees cars or trucks that don't belong there, please call the Sheriff's Department. Someone broke through the back door of his office, but he thinks they were trying to get into the hardware store next door.

Finance Report – January, 2017: Philip Pulliam, Budget Officer, provided details about the General Fund, Water Enterprise, and Water-Sewer Financial Reports for January, 2017. (Please see the Financial Reports for details).

Recognition of Stokesdale Parks and Recreation Association as the 2017 N.C. Recreation Association of the Year by the N.C. Youth Soccer Association: Vicki White-Lawrence introduced Scott Hoffmann, Executive Director of the Soccer Program, Jason Baynes, Director of Coaching for the Soccer Program and President of Stokesdale Parks and Recreation, and Brad Suggs, Assistant Director of the Soccer Program and Media Manager for Stokesdale Parks and Recreation. They were invited to the meeting tonight so Stokesdale Parks and Recreation could be recognized for receiving the NC Youth Soccer Association's (NCYSA) 2017 Recreation Association of the Year award and have their picture taken to be posted to the Town's Facebook page. Stokesdale Parks and Recreation has offered soccer for more than ten years, has over 50 volunteers, serves over 220 kids in the soccer program, and has been affiliated with the NCYSA for over three years. They were recognized for helping develop their soccer skills, as well as demonstrating positive reinforcement on the field and in the community. They also received a monetary donation which will be used to upgrade the equipment for their soccer program.

Repealing and Enacting a 25 MPH Speed Limit on US Highway 158: Discussion took place about extending the school zone on US Highway 158, currently on the east side of NC Highway 68, also to the west side of NC Highway 68.

Frank Bruno made a motion that Council repeal a 25 MPH speed limit on US 158, from NC 68, eastward to a point 0.04 mile west of SR 2102, Angel Pardue Road, in Stokesdale, Stokesdale Elementary School Zone, in effect from 30 minutes before to 30 minutes after school begins and ends on school days only. Vicki White-Lawrence seconded the motion. All Council members voted aye and the motion carried.

Frank Bruno made a motion that Council enact a 25 MPH speed limit on US 158 between a point 0.07 mile west of NC 68 and a point 0.04 mile west of SR 2102, Angel Pardue Road, in Stokesdale, Stokesdale Elementary School Zone, in effect from 30 minutes before to 30 minutes after school begins and ends on school days only. Vicki White-Lawrence seconded the motion. All Council members voted aye and the motion carried.

Consider Adding Kennerly Engineering & Design, Inc. to the Town Vendor List: Vickie White-Lawrence made a motion that Council add Kennerly Engineering & Design to the Town Vendor List. Bill Jones seconded the motion. All Council members voted aye and the motion carried.

Nikole Kennerly gave a brief overview of the services Kennerly Engineering & Design provides. Tim Jones asked for a rate sheet. Ms. Kennerly will send Council a rate sheet.

All Council members voted aye and the motion carried.

Water System RFQ: Discussion Regarding "Request for Engineering Qualifications" to Evaluate Town of Stokesdale's Current and Potential Water Customers "Best Value" Water Supply Options and Water System "Best Management Practices" (BMP) Said Evaluation to be Performed for Exclusive Benefit of the Town of Stokesdale only: Tim Jones would like to get an expert to evaluate the Town's water system specifically for Stokesdale in conjunction with the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in order to determine Stokesdale's best options. The expert would be expected to make a recommendation as to

whether or not Stokesdale should join a Water Authority or whether there is a better option for Stokesdale. His concern is that they don't currently have an expert watching out for the best interests of Stokesdale and its citizens. Mayor Braswell advised that he has the names of two engineering companies that were referred to him by the North Carolina Rural Water Association that could be used for this purpose. Discussion took place about sending the RFQs (Request for Qualifications) out with or without a deadline and the time needed to accomplish this task.

Mayor Braswell asked Kim Hemric to put this item on the agenda for the Wednesday, February 15th meeting so Council can discuss and vote on the RFQ for a consultant.

Discussion to Hire an Interim Stokesdale Water System Director: Tim Jones distributed a memo to Council for their review. He thinks this is something that Council should consider. Discussion took place about a job description and the immediate need to hire a Deputy Clerk to handle the internal administrative duties for the water system.

Mayor Braswell wants to continue this item to the Wednesday, February 15th Town Council Business Meeting.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Stokesdale Water System:

Citizens' Comment Period on the Stokesdale Water System and the Proposed Regional Water Authority: Mahalia McGee, 8403 Shilling Street, Stokesdale, doesn't understand why Stokesdale got involved with this Water Authority when they already purchase clear, clean, good quality water from Winston-Salem that works fine. She is also confused about how an Interim Water System Director got twisted around into a Deputy Clerk.

Mayor Braswell advised that a Water Authority has not yet been created. An RFQ (Request for Qualifications) was sent out Friday to engineering firms for the purpose of performing a feasibility study. The feasibility study will be performed by a qualified engineer that studies the region of the unincorporated area of Guilford County, Summerfield, Oak Ridge, and Stokesdale. He thinks the citizens of Stokesdale need to be looking at 25 years. The water line coming from Winston-Salem is 12 inches. That is not going to be enough water to supply the needs of this system in 25 years, which is an unqualified statement coming from him. Over a year ago, he and Bill Jones met with a group about Stokesdale possibly becoming a member of a Water Authority. He brought this information to the rest of Town Council's attention on May 2, 2016, that he and Bill Jones had attended a meeting that specifically spoke about Stokesdale possibly becoming a member of a Water Authority. There is a long way to go even though we have a timeline that may say different. Things are moving pretty fast. The cost for the feasibility study may be paid for with the \$14.5 million dollars that has been allocated. It has been requested that it be paid for with the grant money, but how much money that will come to Guilford County has not yet been addressed. Depending on what the feasibility study indicates when it is completed, will help determine the decision they make for Stokesdale. There are other options that Stokesdale is looking at other than joining a Water Authority. An inter-local agreement would allow Stokesdale to continue handling the Stokesdale Water System, but would allow the Town to buy water from the Water Authority. Town Council is trying to find a better water rate and lower accessibility fee for the citizens of Stokesdale. They want to

get the best quality of water at the best price for Stokesdale, and they need to hire professional help in order to make the best decision for Stokesdale.

Tim Jones made a motion to attach the Request for Qualifications to our minutes for this meeting, what we have here that's dated February 1, 2017, so it will be a permanent part of the record.

Katy Gregg advised that since Council discussed and voted on the Request for Qualifications at the February 1st Town Council Business Meeting last week, the Request for Qualifications should be made a part of those minutes. It doesn't need to be voted on, but needs to be a part of those minutes and can be put into the minute books.

Other Issues Pertaining to the Water System: No items were discussed.

Continued – Resolution to Establish a Policy for Approval and Opening of Closed Session Minutes and General Accounts: Katy Gregg gave an overview and detailed explanation of the revised Resolution that she prepared so that Council understands what it means. Discussion took place about the inventory list of the closed session minutes.

Mayor Braswell made a motion to continue the Resolution to Establish Policy for Approval and Unsealing of Closed Session Minutes and General Accounts to the February 15th (Town Council Business Meeting) at 4:00pm for a possible vote. Vicki White-Lawrence seconded the motion. All Council members voted aye and the motion carried.

Mayor Braswell asked Katy Gregg how much this is going to cost. Ms. Gregg said she didn't have a clue because it depended on how long it would take her to read the minutes and do any research that may be necessary.

Mayor Braswell made a motion to continue the other two items to the February 15th Town Council Business Meeting. Bill Jones seconded the motion. All Council members voted aye and the motion carried.

Update on Dropbox for Water Payments: Bill Jones made a motion to continue this item to the Wednesday, February 15th meeting. Frank Bruno seconded the motion. All Council members voted aye and the motion carried.

COMMITTEE AND BOARD REPORTS:

Public Safety Committee: Thearon Hooks continues to work on the community watch program. He is contacting the new person at the Guilford County Sheriff's Department that is in charge of the community watch program. He is hoping to have a Deputy Sheriff come to a Town Hall meeting to do a presentation.

Property Committee: The Property Committee has been quiet, due to the cold weather.

Library Committee: Frank Bruno reminded everyone about the May 6th Make-A-Difference Day cleanup and asked everyone to keep thinking about projects for the Town Park.

Water Committee: The Water Committee has been quiet.

Parade Committee: Vicki White-Lawrence advised that the Parade Committee had a wrap-up meeting last month at Stokeridge. General items were discussed for next year.

Departmental and Administrative Report – Town Administrator: Kim Hemric wanted to confirm that Deputy Clerk Sandra Murrell resigned on good terms and she appreciates all the hard work she did and wishes her well with her future endeavors. Water meters will be read on Saturday and water bills will be sent out by Friday next week. A couple of weeks ago, she met with the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) to review specifics about the water system and everything was great. She completed a webinar this week that parallels the Town's billing software which she will put on the agenda for the February 15th Town Council Business Meeting. Redline Data is offering some great benefits at no additional cost to the Town, such as a telephone portal available 24/7 where customers can call to pay their water bill. They also provide an online portal where customers can view their water account and make a payment on their water bill. She also plans to develop a Citizens Academy to be rolled out on Saturday, May 6th for Make-A-Difference Day. It is a way to educate the public about what Town Council does, what the roles/duties are for the Town Administrator, Town Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Finance Officer, and Budget Officer, and what staff does with the water system. Today is Ms. Hemric's one-year anniversary with the Town of Stokesdale. She appreciates the opportunity and Town Council's support. She wanted to share some data that she compiled this past year about what she handles every day at Town Hall, which does not include either of the Deputy Clerks. She was hired as the Town Clerk and then promoted to Town Administrator five or six months later. She wants to give Council a real perspective of what she does every day here at Town Hall, so the numbers she is providing are on the low side because she didn't want to exaggerate the numbers. She has responded to over 3,600 emails on behalf of the Town pertaining to administrative, clerk, and finance officer functions, which does not include filtering out spam, the NC811 locates, or about 95% of the water emails. She has received and followed up on 1,040 phone calls. She has processed approximately 2,080 documents over the course of the year that doesn't include public requests for information or any special projects like new developments. She has submitted 27 state or municipal administrative reports over the last year. She has attended the Clerks Academy, the local governments finance officers' seminar, a technology and digital summit for small municipalities, attended 12 regular Town Council meetings, about 26 Wednesday business meetings, ten staff meetings, six Budget meetings, two Planning Board meetings, and lots and lots of online webinars and seminars. Over the last year, she has had face-to-face interaction with over 600 of the Town's citizens. Although Stokesdale is a very small community, an enormous amount of information is processed. There is a lot of internal communication among staff and Council members as well. She is in full support of replacing the Deputy Clerk.

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

Tim Jones asked the Town Administrator to put an announcement on the Town website about the "We the People" Classes that are being held at Town Hall.

COMMENTS FROM COUNCIL: Tim Jones thanked Kim Hemric for her year of service. He thinks that everyone will miss Sandra (Murrell). He thanked Ms. Hemric for the time she puts in on the water system. It still concerns him that the Town is not advertising for an individual that has the expertise and experience needed for the water system to help alleviate some of the pressure that is on Town Council and the staff. He also thanked everyone for coming to the meeting.

Frank Bruno advised that our 9th Circuit Court Judge has decided to make law instead of enforcing law. He thinks they should attend a "We the People" Class, so they can learn that their job is to actually enforce the Constitution and not make the Constitution. This is just an observation.

Bill Jones advised that a Resolution was passed in November, 2015, requesting that the Guilford County Commissioners return Stokesdale's sales tax money back to the Town. He has tried to create an interactive website for people in the state to access and learn about this issue, but has been unsuccessful in his attempt. Therefore, he would like someone that is computer literate to assist him with this endeavor. The officials don't feel any obligation to return the sales tax money back to the small towns, so he thinks it is going to take a state-wide effort to make it happen. There are 47 counties including Guilford County that base their sales tax distribution on ad-valorem, which means those other small towns are not getting their sales tax money back either. There have been some local bills passed in some of the other counties. Once this interactive website is created with all of this information, it will be provided to the public for their input and will be sent to these small towns. He feels that what they are doing is immoral, and although may be legal, just isn't right. As long he is on Council, he will fight for this change until he succeeds or drops dead.

Mayor Braswell said the Town appreciates all the hard work Bill Jones has done to try getting the sales tax money back for the Town. He feels that Bill Jones is doing a lot of good for a lot of communities similar to Stokesdale throughout the state.

Mayor Braswell said it was exciting to see Stokesdale Parks and Recreation be recognized publicly. Those are some very hard working people that do a lot for our community in many ways. They do a lot for the kids and lot to bring the community together. He is proud to be their Mayor.

Mayor Braswell congratulated Kim Hemric on her one-year anniversary. He knows that it has been a very challenging job for her to handle. He is looking forward to Ms. Hemric being a fixture in Stokesdale for many years to come. He also spoke very highly of Sandra Murrell and all the hard work she did.

Mayor Braswell advised that Stokesdale was included in a study and ranks as the number one most affordable place to live in North Carolina. This is a study that is important to builders and economic development, but he feels that what makes a community the best place to live is an organization like Stokesdale Parks and Recreation.

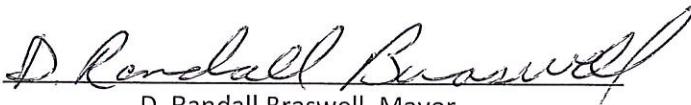
Mayor Braswell said his son, Jonathan, and his wife had a reveal party last weekend which he had never seen before. His son shot a target and the target exploded into a pink color. They are going to have a girl named Iris in June, so he and Cindy are now going to have two grandchildren, Everett and Iris.

Vicki White-Lawrence wanted to commend Kim Hemric for her idea about the Citizens Academy. She had participated in the Guilford County Citizens Academy this past fall and it was great. They introduced the department heads from all of the departments. When they offer it again she would certainly encourage everyone to participate, because, as Kim Hemric said, it really teaches about how the government works within the county, and Ms. Hemric's idea for a Stokesdale Citizens Academy is a great idea.

ADJOURNMENT: Vicki White-Lawrence made a motion to adjourn. Frank Bruno seconded the motion. All Council members voted aye and the meeting adjourned at 9:20pm.


Diana Marcus, Deputy Clerk

Approved:


D. Randall Braswell, Mayor