

REGULAR MEETING

The Town Council of the Town of La Grange, North Carolina met in Regular Session at the Town Hall on February 2, 2009, at 7 p.m. with the following present:

Mayor Woodard H. Gurley; Mayor Pro Tem Bobby Wooten; Council Members Larry Gladney, Elliott Sutton, George Koonce, Gregory Rouse and Clifton Harrison; Town Manager, John P. Craft; Town Attorney, George Jenkins, Jr.; Town Clerk, Nelda H. Johnson, CMC.

Absent: None

Guest: 4

ITEMS 1, 2, 3: CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, WELCOME

Mayor Gurley called the meeting to order and asked Council Member Sutton to give the invocation. Mayor Gurley welcomed everyone to the Council Meeting.

ITEM 4: PUBLIC HEARINGS

ITEM 4A: REQUEST TO AMEND OFFICIAL TRAFFIC CONTROL MAP

The purpose of the public hearing was to discuss a potential amendment to the Official Traffic Control Map to limit parking to thirty (30) minutes along a portion of South Caswell and East Railroad Streets.

Manager Craft spoke stating that the Little Bank was requesting the parking in the area of the Little Bank be time limited parking. The request was by Mrs. Vivian C. Sutton, Vice President of the Little Bank.

Manager Craft stated that Town staff makes the following recommendation:

- Make parking in front of the Little Bank and the Harvey Building thirty (30) Minute Parking. If approved, this would equate to two (2) - thirty (30) minute parking spaces on South Caswell Street, four (4) spaces on East Railroad Street (plus the existing handicap space).

Mayor Gurley called for public comment.

No one spoke concerning the request.

Mayor Gurley closed the public hearing.

Motion was made by Council Member Harrison, seconded by Council Member Sutton to grant the request by the Little Bank and approve the recommendation by Town staff. Motion carried 5-1. Council Member Rouse voted in opposition.

ITEM 5: BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

None

ITEM 6: PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

None

ITEM 7: AMENDMENT(S) TO AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion was made by Council Member Gladney, seconded by Council Member Harrison to approve the printed agenda. Motion carried 6-0 in favor of motion.

ITEM 8: CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Approval of Minutes
 - i. January 5, 2009 Regular Session
 - ii. January 5, 2009 Closed Session
 - iii. January 12, 2009 Recessed Meeting
- b. Approval of 2008 Unpaid Real Estate Taxes as submitted by Darrell Parrish, Lenoir County Tax Assessor/Collector. Copy on file in Clerk's office.
- c. Annual Approval of Memorandum of Agreement with NC Department of Transportation. Copy of Agreement hereto attached.

Motion was made by Council Member Koonce, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Wooten to approve the Consent Agenda. Motion carried 6-0 in favor of motion.

ITEM 9: NEW BUSINESS

ITEM 9A: ACKNOWLEDGE PETITION REQUESTING ANNEXATION, AND ORDER TOWN CLERK TO INVESTIGATE PETITION FOR SUFFICIENCY

Manager Craft stated that Mr. Aldo Willis and wife, Marie Willis has submitted a petition requesting a non-contiguous annexation of their 9.39+/- acres of land located off of Aldridge Store Road. This property is known as map number 356607587837, record number 17239 in the Lenoir County tax office.

The Willis' intend to build their new offices for MW Allstar Construction at this location, and have requested annexation in order to receive sewer services from the Town. In accordance with NC General Statutes, the property owners must submit a petition requesting annexation. Once the petition is received, the Council by Resolution must direct the Town Clerk to investigate the petition for sufficiency.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Wooten, seconded by Council Member Harrison to acknowledge receipt of the petition and approval of RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE TOWN CLERK TO INVESTIGATE THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE PETITION. Motion carried 6-0 in favor of motion. Copy of petition hereto attached. Copy of Resolution No. 2009-02-224 hereto attached and filed in Resolution Book IV.

ITEM 9B: ESTABLISH DATE FOR ANNUAL RETREAT

Manager Craft stated that in order to prepare for the FY 2009-2010 budget he would like to recommend that the Council establish a date for a retreat. This would enable the Council to discuss items at greater length. Manager Craft recommended Saturday, March 14, 2009, beginning at 8 a.m. and concluding by mid afternoon. Items recommended are:

- o Consider a policy to address funding requests from non-profits and other agencies requesting funding from the Town
- o Drainage System Improvements
- o Paving / Resurfacing Projects
- o Recreation Projects
- o Fund priorities for major projects facing the Town
- o Any other topics as determined by the Council

Motion was made by Council Member Koonce, seconded by Council Member Gladney to establish Saturday, March 14, 2009, as the date for the retreat. Motion carried 6-0 in favor of motion.

ITEM 9C: PRESENTATION OF 2007-2008 AUDIT BY PITTARD PERRY AND CRONE

Dean Horne, auditor with Pittard Perry and Crone, presented his findings concerning the Town's FY 2007-2008 financial audit.

Mr. Horne stated that the State of North Carolina is a party to the audit contract. A representative from the Town, representative from Pittard Perry and Crone and representative from the State of North Carolina signs the audit contract. The State of North Carolina has accepted the final copy of the audit for 2007-2008. Mr. Horne stated that the audit has an unqualified opinion, which is the highest rating.

The State requires 8% of the budget to be in Fund Balance and at the end of FY 2007-2008 the Town's Fund Balance was about 44%.

After an overview of the audit was presented, motion was made by Council Member Gladney, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Wooten to approve the auditor's report for FY 2007-2008. Motion carried 6-0 in favor of motion.

ITEM 9D: DISCUSSION PERTAINING TO AUTOMATED METER READING SYSTEM

Manager Craft stated that included in the FY 2008-2009 budget, funds were included to purchase and install an Automated Meter Reading System (AMR). This would include all residential electric meters and many of our commercial electric meters.

Manager Craft invited Keith Thornton, Electric Supervisor, and Tyrone Morgan, Superintendent of Public Works, to join him in the presentation to the Council as the decision would impact their jobs.

Manager Craft stated that about \$155,000 had been earmarked in the electric budget for the purpose of purchasing the backbone of the AMR. About \$20,000 had originally been included in the water fund to replace water meters in the first phase of the project. Due to the Town not being able to purchase additional water rights from the Town of Farmville because the water lines are not completed between Greenville and Farmville, it has created some additional funds in the water department.

The original concept of the AMR was the electric meters being read monthly and the water meters being read every other month which would reduce the Town's meter reading days by 50%. Advantages of the AMR System are daily readings, reduced staff time during monthly reading, increased accuracy and nearly eliminate the need for re-reads and the possibility of errors.

Manager Craft continued to discuss the advantages of an AMR System, which included time of use rates and pay as you go options.

Council Member Gladney stated that he was in agreement with Manager Craft on purchasing the AMR electric and water meters, but the timing was wrong with the economic situation. The purchase of the meters and the electric rates going up, public perception would not be good and they would not understand.

Manager Craft stated that August 2008, the cost per meter averaged \$122.34. Today, the average cost per meter averages \$88.64. This is a savings of more than \$68,000 or 27% to the Town. The company, Landis+Gyr has offered this discount because of the economic situation and need to make sales. Their offer is good until Friday of this week, February 6.

After a continued lengthy discussion among the Council and Manager Craft, motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Wooten, seconded by Council Member Sutton to allow Manager Craft to continue with the AMR System by purchasing the electric and water meters.

Council Member Gladney made a substitute motion, seconded by Council Member Rouse to allow Manager Craft to continue with the AMR System by purchasing the electric meters only. Motion carried 5-1 in favor of motion with Council Member Sutton voting in opposition.

ITEM 10: UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

ITEM 11: CLOSED SESSION

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Wooten, seconded by Council Member Gladney to go into Closed Session as authorized by North Carolina General Statute 143-318.11 (a) (4) (5) (6). Motion carried 6-0 in favor of motion.

INFORMATIONAL ITEM

Manager Craft stated that he had provided each Council Member with a copy of the latest design for Phase I for the PARTF grant application and the grant was submitted today. It will be late June before the Town will be notified if we received the grant. Funding is limited as well as smaller towns have also applied for this grant.

ITEM 12: ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Council Member Gladney, seconded by Council Member Sutton to adjourn. Motion carried 6-0 in favor of motion.

Nelda H. Johnson, CMC, Town Clerk

Woodard H. Gurley, Mayor