

SPECIAL MEETING

The Town Council of the Town of La Grange, North Carolina met in a Special Meeting on Saturday, February 17, 2007, at 8:00 a.m. with the following present:

Woodard H. Gurley, Mayor; Bobby R. Wooten, Mayor Pro Tem; Council Members Larry Gladney, Walter Ellis, Jr., George Koonce, and Jeff Thomas; Town Manager, John P. Craft; Town Attorney, George Jenkins, Jr.; Town Clerk, Nelda H. Johnson, CMC.

Absent: Elliott Sutton, Council Member

Guest: 2

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

Mayor Gurley called the meeting to order and ask Mayor Pro Tem Wooten to give the invocation. Mayor Gurley welcomed everyone.

ITEM 4: AMENDMENTS TO AND APPROVAL OF THE TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

The purpose of the Special Meeting was the Council's annual retreat work session and Mayor Gurley turned the meeting over to Manager Craft.

ITEM 5: DISCUSSION TOPICS

ITEM 5A: IMPLEMENTATION OF A CURFEW

Manager Craft stated that Council Member Gladney has requested that the Council discuss the possibility of implementing a curfew here in Town similar to the City of Kinston.

Police Chief, John L. Sullivan, Jr., and Assistant Police Chief, Jerry Davis was present for the discussion of this topic.

After lengthy discussion, Police Chief Sullivan and Assistant Chief Davis were asked to present to the Council in April, in their professional opinion, a list of needs/tools that the La Grange Police Department needed to help with drug problems and deter gang activity in our Town.

ITEM 5B: TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS ADDITION

Manager Craft handed out a drawing he had done on the size of a new addition and the arrangement of the furniture and fixtures with an itemized cost. The estimated cost of the addition would be approximately \$127,408.90 and the building process would take about five to six months. Manager Craft was instructed to present the proposal to the Council at its March 5, 2007, meeting.

ITEM 5C: FUTURE RECREATIONAL PROJECTS

Manager Craft reported that for the nearly two years that he had been with the Town that recreational opportunities had been discussed but never anything specific. Manager Craft mentioned the following projects for consideration as recreational projects to consider in the future:

- Construction of a walking trail at Lions Park
- Covered shelters with picnic tables at Lions Park
- Addition of sidewalks in strategic areas of Town to link existing sidewalks to other areas of Town with sidewalks for a walking trail
- Construction of a soccer field and/or football field
- Further enhancement of the baseball and softball facilities
- Construction of a small par 3 golf course similar to that of Bill Fay Park in Kinston

After discussion, Manager Craft stated that he would look into pricing covered shelters with picnic tables and cement slabs and bathrooms, and the construction of a walking trail at the Lions Park and would present this for further consideration in March or April.

A customer survey would help give some guidance as to the needs/wishes of the citizens and possibly will be inserted in the customer's utility bill in the near future.

ITEM 5D: WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT IMPROVEMENTS

Manager Craft stated that the Town had two main sewer lines that come into Town that really divide the Town into two basins. If we take those two main basins and determine which one has the worst infiltration and inflow problem we could then concentrate on that basin and work our way completely through the basin, manhole to manhole. The basin that goes out toward Jack Jones that goes up beside and crosses a large ditch, that is probably where a problem will be found. Manager Craft recommended, in his opinion, that the Town start the search in that manner. The worst problems in our system have got to be repaired first. Over Four Million Dollars has already been spent on the sewer system slip lining and repairing old pipe. In opinion only, the slip lining did not fix the problem. Tearing up sewer lines and replacing with new pipe is timely and costly, but that is the only real long-term solution.

Manager Craft related to the Council that a number of persons are interested in beginning subdivisions in La Grange at the present. The property on Aldridge Store Road across from the Frink Alumni Association, the owners are ready to build (approximately 40 lots); Perry Management has made contact with the Town and they are ready to start Phase II of Lake Pines (43 acres); several persons have inquired about developing the property east of Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive; Billy Sutton will probably want to begin Phase II of Sutton Acres within about ten months.

Manager Craft stated that he was giving the Council this information because all these additions will cause additional flow and our plant is not under moratorium and we need to try to go ahead and get them permitted before the Town is placed back under moratorium. It really boils down to if we can get them permitted, can we accept the flow.

With the infiltration and inflow problems and our capacity issues, we probably need to go ahead and start laying the ground work for an expansion of the wastewater treatment plant to be able to accommodate additional flow. That was what the Manager's trip to Washington, DC was all about, trying to get funds appropriated to facilitate an upgrade to the plant.

If the Town does not get a federal grant, plans need to be in the making for the funds through loan funding or a grant through USDA is a possibility.

Manager Craft stated that he would like for the Council to instruct him to go ahead and make contact with three or four engineering firms and get proposals on the design and an evaluation and design of our system. The Town really needs to determine what we want our flow to be. 1.4 million capacity is about double what we have now and should carry the Town's needs well into the future.

Manager Craft stated that if the Council was okay with contacting engineers, he would go ahead and put out request for proposals. Manager Craft was instructed to continue his efforts.

ITEM 5E: DRAINAGE PROBLEMS AND ISSUES

Manager Craft reported to the Council that when Carolantic Engineering prepared drainage system maps the areas that were identified as drainage problem areas were Mitchell Street and East Washington Street. The work has already been done especially in the Mitchell Street Area and on East Washington Street.

Other areas identified as having drainage problems were:

- Hickory Street
- Forrest Drive (Eastwood Subdivision)
- East Boundary Street
- Carey/Joyner Streets
- Summit Drive

Manager Craft stated that the worst problem areas, in his opinion, were Forrest Drive (Eastwood Subdivision) and East Boundary Street and these areas had received the most complaints.

The ditches are the problem at Eastwood Subdivision because they have not been cleaned out for years. Property owners have built utility buildings practically on the edge of the ditch and also fences have been put up along the top of the ditch.

Extensive work would have to be done to open the ditch from back of Jimmy Boone's house back to Jerry Severson's house on Franklin Street. A path would have to be cut on the right-of-way, remove the trees, dig the ditch out and haul the dirt away. That would be the worst part of this project. The Town would also have to take a fence down on one side of some properties. The ditch would be cleaned out from Franklin Street, up to Forrest Drive, then to Walters Drive and then on East Washington Street all the way to Firetower Road.

Manager Craft estimated this project to cost about \$50,000 and felt that flooding in this area could cause the most potential to damage homes.

Manager Craft also mentioned that Magnolia Run off of North Caswell Street has a significant problem with drainage, but this area has not begun to be developed. This is the largest flooding problem that affects our inflow/infiltration problem.

The West Boundary Street drainage problem was also discussed at length.

Manager Craft reported that our drainage funds historically come primarily from Powell Bill Funds, and to use the majority of the Powell Bill allocation for drainage work would eliminate resurfacing projects for the next few years.

Manager Craft asked for direction on which area to concentrate efforts to fix the drainage problems.

It was the general consensus of the Council that the Eastwood Subdivision needed the most help with drainage problems at this time. Manager Craft was to get quotes to perform the work.

ITEM 5F: COUNCIL MEMBER COMPENSATION

Council Member Gladney requested that the topic of Council Member compensation be discussed.

Council Member Gladney related to the Council that he has been asked by citizens that if a Council Member is absent for a meeting if he gets paid as those in attendance.

This issue was discussed and Attorney Jenkins stated that our ordinance states that Council Members are paid by their term and not by number of meetings attended.

Council Member Gladney left the meeting room at this time.

ITEM 5G: 2007-2008 BUDGET PRIORITIES

Manager Craft stated that as he begun to prepare the budget, he would like to get input from the Town Council as to any specific expenditures that needed to be addressed.

No one told Manager Craft anything specific but related that the way that the budget was presented last year was just fine.

ITEM: 5H: POTENTIAL AREAS OR ANNEXATION

Mayor Gurley requested the discussion of potential areas for annexation.

Manager Craft stated that in 2001 The Wooten Company did an annexation study for the Town and he reviewed the three areas that were recommended for possible annexation plus one that he recommended.

Manager Craft handed out a list of the four possible areas for annexation with updated data as to the tax value, estimated cost of annexation with the number of years for recovery time and possible revenues for the Town.

- Hickory Street Area
- Glendale Area
- Pelletier Town
- Crouse-Hinds Property

No areas were identified by the Council to pursue annexation of at this time.

Manager Craft discussed each of the properties with the Council and the Glendale Area seemed the most favorable due to Perry Management possibly developing their property behind the Lake Pines area. This property would tie-in with the Glendale Area.

ITEM 5I: REVIEW OF APPLICABLE ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER

Attorney Jenkins addressed the Council on this topic of discussion. Attorney Jenkins handed out information pertaining to Robert's Rules of Order and discussed it at length with the Council.

ITEM 5J: SET DATE TO MEET WITH COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Manager Craft informed the Council that a date needed to be set to meet with the Lenoir County Commissioners as we do at this time of the year.

Monday, March 12 was set with an alternate date of Tuesday, March 20. The time was set for 6:30 p.m.

ITEM 6: CLOSED SESSION

Motion was made by Council Member Thomas, seconded by Council Member Ellis to go into Closed Session pursuant to N.C.G.S. §143-318.11 (a)(4)(5) to discuss matter(s) related to contract negotiations. Motion carried 4-0 in favor of motion.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Wooten, seconded by Council Member Thomas to return to the Special Meeting. Motion carried 4-0 in favor of motion.

No action was taken in closed session.

ITEM 7: ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Mayor announced that the meeting was adjourned.

Nelda H. Johnson, CMC, Town Clerk

Woodard H. Gurley, Mayor