

## **REGULAR MEETING**

The Town Council of the Town of La Grange, North Carolina met in Regular Session at the Town Hall on September 10, 2007, at 7:00 p.m. with the following present:

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

Absent: None

Guest: 11

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

Mayor Gurley called the meeting to order and ask Council Member Sutton to give the invocation. Mayor Gurley welcomed everyone to meeting and stated that it was the first official meeting in the Town's new council chambers and hoped that citizens would be encouraged to the attend council meetings.

### **ITEM 4: PUBLIC HEARINGS**

None

### **ITEM 5: PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

None

### **ITEM 6: AMENDMENTS TO AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Manager Craft requested that the following two items be added to the original agenda:

ITEM 8F: WATER SHORTAGE RESPONSE

ITEM 9H: MUNICIPAL FLAGS

Manager Craft requested that ITEM 9G: CASWELL STREET AND WASHINGTON STREET RESURFACING PROJECT be deleted as it will be discussed under ITEM: 9B.

Motion was made by Council Member Ellis, seconded by Council Member Sutton to approve the original agenda with the above additions and deletion. Motion carried 6-0 in favor of motion.

### **ITEM 7: CONSENT AGENDA**

#### **A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- i. August 6, 2007 Regular Session
- ii. August 27, 2007 Special Session

#### **B. APPROVAL OF ANNUAL FIRE DEPARTMENT FUNDING AGREEMENT WITH LENOIR COUNTY. Copy on file in Clerk's office.**

#### **C. APPROVAL OF ORDINANCE AMENDING THE FY 07-08 BUDGET. Copy hereto attached.**

Motion was made by Council Member Sutton, seconded by Council Member Ellis to approve the consent agenda. Motion carried 6-0 in favor of motion.

**ITEM 8: NEW BUSINESS****ITEM 8A: DISCUSSION RELATED TO THE REPAIR OR REPLACEMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICES BACKHOE**

Manager Craft discussed in detail the Town's 1998 Case Model 580L backhoe that is completely out of service and is in need of major repairs. Preliminary estimates of repairs are \$7,500. Manager Craft discussed the following options with the Council:

1. Make the estimated \$7,500 repairs and hope that nothing else major goes wrong this fiscal year. This piece of equipment is scheduled to be replaced in the FY 08-09 budget.
2. Not to repair the equipment, trade in or sale the machine and purchase a new machine. The Town can request bids for a new tractor from a minimum of three vendors and purchase the cheaper of the quotes received. Also, when purchasing new equipment, the Town can "piggy-back" on an existing bid or contract already awarded somewhere in the country within the past year.
3. The Town can rent a backhoe for two years at the time. Manager Craft stated that the lowest cost that he had received involving rental was \$19,000 per year.

Manager Craft stated that he felt the best option for the Town at this time was to purchase a new machine using the piggy-back method through the vendor that can provide the machine that the Town needs at the most affordable price.

After considerable discussion between the Council and Manager Craft, motion was made by Council Member Gladney, seconded by Council Member Koonce to authorize Manager Craft to proceed with option No. 2 to purchase a new machine through the piggy-back method. Motion carried 4-2 in favor of motion. Council Members Gladney, Koonce, Sutton and Ellis voted in favor of the motion. Mayor Pro Tem Wooten and Council Member Thomas voted in opposition.

**ITEM 8B: REQUEST BY BILLY SUTTON, DEVELOPER OF SUTTON ACRES, TO POST AND ENFORCE SPEED LIMIT WITHIN SUTTON ACRES**

Manager Craft stated that he had invited Police Chief, John L. Sullivan, to speak concerning this issue.

Chief Sullivan spoke stating that he had considered the request submitted by Mr. Sutton and felt that the posting of the speed limit within Sutton Acres would not accomplish what Mr. Sutton's letter indicated that he wanted because tickets issued less than 10 mph over the posted speed limit would likely be dismissed when it went to court. Manager Craft mentioned that he felt that the Town would be better off by posting signs at every entrance to town informing motorists that the speed limit for the Town is 25 MPH unless otherwise posted. By posting these signs, the police department would be able to ticket anyone anywhere in town without installing signs on every street. He mentioned the fact that we have had two requests in recent months for residential areas, and that this action would take care of the entire town with approximately 11 signs.

Motion was made by Council Member Thomas, seconded by Council Member Sutton to purchase and post city wide speed limit signs of 25 mph unless otherwise posted at every entrance that leads into the Town of La Grange. Motion carried 6-0 in favor of motion.

**ITEM 8C: DISCUSSION RELATED TO PROPOSED SUBDIVISION ORDINANCE**

Manager Craft gave the Mayor and Council Members a copy of the proposed Subdivision Ordinance that the Planning and Zoning Board is recommending the Council adopt. Manager Craft asked that the Mayor and Council review this ordinance and later a Special Meeting would be scheduled to discuss the proposed ordinance and

also recommend that the Council invite the Planning Board. A public hearing would have to be scheduled to formally adopt the Subdivision Ordinance.

The Special Meeting was set for September 24, 2007 at 7 p.m.

#### **ITEM 8D: UPDATE ON CONDEMNED AND DILAPIDATED PROPERTIES**

Heith Harrison, Code Enforcement Officer, gave a presentation to the Council on the update of the condemned and dilapidated properties.

Mr. Harrison stated that he had about 54 properties on his list but had narrowed the list down to 18 properties. Mr. Harrison showed slides of each of the following properties and gave an update on the status of each property.

1. 608 West King Street – ready to be demolished; waiting for asbestos inspection
2. 105 A Jones Street – ready to be demolished
3. 105 B Jones Street – ready to be demolished
4. 209 West Boundary Street – on hold because of asbestos costs
5. 105 North Caswell Street – tearing down front porch
6. 115 West Boundary Street – to be repaired
7. 301 South Carey Street – Fire Department to burn
8. 303 South Carey Street – Fire Department to burn
9. 206 South Charles Street – probably will be moved out of Town
10. 403 West James Street – on hold
11. 201 West Boundary Street – needs inspections
12. 307 East Boundary Street – unable to contact property owner
13. 209 West King Street – unable to contact property owner
14. 702 West Queen Street – unable to contact property owner
15. 509 West Queen Street – property is for sale
16. 305 South Wooten Street – no repairs have been made
17. 208 West Boundary Street – no repairs have been made
18. 707-715 West King Street – on hold

#### **ITEM 8E: UPDATE ON STATUS OF WELL #4**

Manager Craft updated the Council of the current status of the pump at Well #4. The shaft for the main pump had broken causing a significant water supply problem for the Town. This problem resulted from the loss of Well #4, one of only two treated water producing wells; which caused significant supply issues. Fortunately, Wesley Sutton noticed the problem soon after it occurred and began the removal of the pump, and promptly notified the contractor that would make such a repair of the problem which allowed the Town to get a “jump” on the problem. The pump was removed and a new shaft was built for it, and was reinstalled the following afternoon. Due to the time required for new seals that were installed, the pump could not be restarted until the following morning.

To ensure that the Town had an adequate supply of water, the Manager made contact with North Lenoir Water Corporation and made arrangements to purchase water from them through the interconnection with that system in the event that our finished storage supply became insufficient. Fortunately, we were able to provide our needs with the finished water that remained in the tanks, and the water that was produced by Well # 2, which ran around the clock providing an adequate supply of water. There was no water purchased from North Lenoir Water Corporation.

Manager Craft also informed the Council that the Town was aware of the possibility of such a problem, and had already began the process of providing additional supply sources in the form of the two new wells that are already planned. The installation of these two wells will eliminate the possibility of the reoccurrence of such an event in the future, unless the Town was to lose three wells simultaneously.

**ITEM 8F: WATER SHORTAGE RESPONSE**

Manager Craft reported that Mayor Gurley had received a letter from Governor Easley's office concerning our state's water shortage. Governor Easley is requesting that Towns in the drought areas begin phase one of water conservation by asking persons with public or private water supply to begin voluntarily conserving.

The Council agreed to begin the voluntary conversation of water as detailed in the conservation program.

**ITEM 9: OLD BUSINESS****ITEM 9A: UPDATE ON COUNCIL CHAMBERS ADDITION**

Manager Craft stated that this was the final update on the Council Chambers addition. The ribbon cutting and open house was held on Sunday, September 9, 2007, with approximately 70-75 persons attending including Congressman G. K. Butterfield, Senator Charlie Albertson and Representative Van Braxton. Southern Bank and Trust Company donated \$9,000 for the sound system, Monrovia Growers donated approximately 100 plants for the landscaping and the Woodmen of the World donated the NC and US flags.

Council Member Sutton commended Manager Craft for his work and dedication in making the Council Chambers an asset for our citizens.

**ITEM 9B: UPDATE ON RESURFACING PROJECT – PORTION OF CASWELL AND WASHINGTON STREETS**

Manager Craft reported that the Public Services Department had repaired three of the potholes on the sewer system on Caswell Street and had plans for the repair of the remaining problems that we are currently aware of on Caswell and Washington Streets. He also stated that the NC Department of Transportation had several potholes caused by problems on the storm water system that they would be correcting. The project is still on go, but was unsure of an actual date that the actual resurfacing will begin.

**ITEM 9C: UPDATE ON THE RAIL CROSSING CLOSURES**

Manager Craft informed the Council that the Rail Crossing Closures, signalization, and the associated resurfacing and street widening was still in the planning phase and was really no closer to happening that was the previous month. He indicated that he would keep them informed as any movement occurred on the project.

**ITEM 9D: WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT & WATER SUPPLY SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS**

Manager Craft reminded the Council that a grant application was submitted to the Clean Water Management Trust Fund requesting grant funding to make improvements to the Wastewater Treatment Plant. The proposed improvements include the replacements of the control systems at the wastewater treatment plant, an upgrade to the grit chamber and the addition of additional raw sewage pumps.

Manager Craft had been in contact with staff from the Clean Water Management Trust Fund who had indicated a better than average chance that the engineering, design, and permitting for this project would be funded in the amount of \$65,000 - \$70,000; with the Town match being 10% or less of that cost. Manager Craft had been informed that the CWMTF had changed their procedures to fund projects in different funding cycles to ensure that construction cost estimates were made just before the funding request was submitted to avoid cost overruns and to ensure that funds allocated by the CWMTF were expended soon after allocation. He referenced the fact that the Town had

submitted the Reuse Project for funding in 2004, which was approved in late 2005, and at this time, had yet to spend any of the funds allocated. He felt that the proposed changes would benefit everyone. He ended by informing the Council that the Town could resubmit their request for funding of the actual improvements upon the completion of the plans, specifications, and receipt of a permit to make the proposed improvements from the State.

**ITEM 9E: RECREATION INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS – WALKING TRAIL**

Manager Craft reported that possibly additional lighting would be installed at the walking trail and a guard rail placed along the side where the culvert is on the backside.

**ITEM 9F: CWMTF RE-USE GRANT**

Manager Craft informed the Council that the Town was still awaiting the amended contract documents, and approval to execute the option to purchase the land, from the CWMTF staff.

**ITEM 9G: CASWELL STREET AND WASHINGTON STREET RESURFACING PROJECT**

Deleted from the agenda

**ITEM 9H: MUNICIPAL FLAG**

Manager Craft brought to the attention of the Council that the Town needed to purchase new Town flags of the current color and design that is being used or have a new flag designed.

After discussion, the Council decided to open up this item to the public for citizen response through the Chamber of Commerce. A contest could possibly be held for the design of a new flag and voted on through the Chamber.

**ITEM 10: CLOSED SESSION**

Motion was made by Council Member Gladney, seconded by Council Member Sutton to go into Closed Session pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11 (a) (4) (5) (6) for discussions related to the approval of closed session minutes, personnel related items and Economic Development. Motion carried 6-0 in favor of motion.

Motion was made by Council Member Gladney, seconded by Council Member Ellis to return to the Regular Meeting. Motion carried 6-0 in favor of motion.

**ITEM 11: ADJOURNMENT**

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

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Nelda H. Johnson, CMC, Town Clerk

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Woodard H. Gurley, Mayor