

REGULAR MEETING

The Town Council of the Town of La Grange, North Carolina met in Regular Session at the Town Hall on October 2, 2006, at 7:00 p.m. with the following present:

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, Phyllis T. Harrison, CMC; Town Attorney, George Jenkins, Jr.

Absent: Mayor Woodard H. Gurley

Guest: 17

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

Mayor Pro Tem Wooten called the meeting to order. Invocation was given by Council Member Sutton. Mayor Pro Tem Wooten welcomed all guest and Council Members.

ITEM 4: PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were no public hearings scheduled for this meeting

ITEM 5: PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Mrs. Carolyn Ellis spoke to Council Members concerning the recent increase in the utility deposit. Mrs. Ellis stated that she has family who owns property here in La Grange and that the high deposit is a burden on people trying to relocate here. She ask Council Members to please reconsider this increase in utility deposits.

ITEM 6: AMENDMENTS TO AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Manager Craft asked if Item 8A (Discussion of Retiree Insurance) could be moved to 9C. under old business and also add 9D (Update on 103 Florida Avenue).

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

ITEM 7: CONSENT AGENDA

Motion was made by Council Member Koonce and seconded by Council Member Ellis to approve the consent agenda which consist of the following items:

- a. **Approval of Minutes**
- b. **Authorize the Submission of a Grant Application to the Governor's Crime Commission**

Motion carried 6-0 in favor of motion.

ITEM 8B: REQUEST TO ADDRESS THE TOWN COUNCIL – SALUTE

Mrs. Bonnie McLawhorn who represents Salute, an organization honoring the veterans, spoke to the Council concerning the upcoming events on November 3-5, 2006 in downtown Kinston. Mrs. McLawhorn stated that this year the emphasis would be on the Vietnam veterans who never received a proper "welcome home." Mrs. McLawhorn asked if at all possible that the Town make a donation to this event.

After discussion motion was made by Council Member Sutton and seconded by Council Member Thomas to approve a donation in the same amount as last year, which would be \$250.00. Motion carried 6-0 in favor of motion.

ITEM 8C: REQUEST TO ADDRESS THE TOWN COUNCIL – MR. OSCAR HERRING WITH THE COUNCIL ON AGING

Mr. Herring introduced to the Council Leigh Abel who is the new director of the Council on Aging. Ms. Abel first of all thanked the Council for the donation that was made last year and stated that they had purchase some furniture for the La Grange center with the money.

Ms. Abel provided Council Members with statistics concerning the growing percentage of senior citizens and the availability of different services that the Council on Aging provides. She said they do everything possible to provide in home care so they could stay at home as long as possible instead of relocating them to a nursing facility.

Ms. Abel said she was very thankful for Mrs. Minnie Ham who operates the senior citizen site in La Grange. She stated that she provides the very best social network that she could and this is extremely important for a senior citizen.

Ms. Abel informed the Council of the different services that the Council on Aging offers including, meals on wheels, transportation, exercise activities, help at home, someone to call each day to check and see if they need anything and many other services. She thanked the Council for their continued support for this program.

ITEM 8D: REQUEST TO ADDRESS THE TOWN COUNCIL – MRS. VALERIE KLEM , MANAGER OF LA GRANGE MEADOWS APARTMENTS

Mrs. Klem addressed the Council concerning the recent increase in the utility deposit. She stated that it is a real hardship for a senior citizen to pay a \$450.00 deposit when some of their social security checks are less than \$500.00 per month.

Mrs. Klem requested that the Council reconsider the increase and revert back to the \$250.00 deposit and \$10.00 connection fee.

Lengthy discussion was held among Mrs. Klem and Council Members concerning this matter.

Motion was made by Council Member Gladney and seconded by Council Member Koonce to amend the utility deposit that was recently adopted from \$450.00 to \$300.00. Council Members Gladney, Koonce and Ellis voted in favor of the amendment. Council Member Thomas, Sutton and Mayor Pro Tem Wooten opposed. Motion died for lack of majority.

Manger Craft said this item would be up for consideration at the next Council Meeting.

ITEM 8E: DISCUSSION PERTAINING TO THE MUNICIPAL FLAG

Manager Craft informed Council Members that the Town has exhausted its supply of Town flags that utilize the Chamber of Commerce's emblem. Prior to ordering replacements he stated that he wanted to be sure that the Council is satisfied with its flag or if there are changes desired.

Discussion was held among Council Members and it was suggested to Manager Craft that he contact the Arts Council and see if they could help design something possibly using the Town of La Grange seal.

ITEM 8F: DISCUSSION PERTAINING TO THE LOCATION OF FUTURE COUNCIL MEETINGS

Manager Craft stated that with the dedication of the new Town Hall facility in the near future the Council needs to formally determine where to hold its Council Meetings. He said we have several choices, the conference room at the current Town Hall, the Fire

Department, the EMS building or the large room used by the Council on Aging at the new Town Hall. Manager Craft said after discussing this with Chief Sullivan he has concerns regarding the public being in the Police Department (the existing Town Hall) after hours.

Attorney Jenkins suggested that we meet at the present Town Hall on November 6, 2006, and then amend the ordinance to relocate our meeting place. Manager Craft also said we would need to advertise and have a Public Hearing.

Manager Craft reminded Council Members that we plan to move to the new Town Hall on November 3, 2006, and be open for business on November 6, 2006. There will be a dedication ceremony on November 6, 2006, at 10:00 p.m.

Motion was made by Council Member Gladney, and seconded by Council Member Ellis to hold a public hearing to amend the ordinance concerning the meeting place at 7:00 p.m. on November 6, 2006. Motion carried 6-0 in favor of motion.

ITEM 8G: DISCUSSION PERTAINING TO POTENTIAL SEWER LINE EXTENSION TO SERVE LA GRANGE FRINK ALUMNI CULTURE CENTER

Manager Craft stated that he had two Request for Proposals submitted to him, one from Gurley Engineering and one from McDavid and Associates. Manager Craft said he was waiting for additional information from other firms.

Discussion was held among Council Members concerning this item.

Motion was made by Council Member Gladney and seconded by Council Member Ellis authorizing Manager Craft to look into this item further and to hold a Special Meeting on October 19, 2006, at 5:00 p.m. Motion carried 6-0 in favor of motion.

OLD BUSINESS

ITEM 9A: TOWN HALL RENOVATION PROJECT

Manager Craft reported that the carpet had been installed, computer and alarm company have done some work, landscaping will begin in about a week to ten days, sign is in place and every thing is on schedule.

ITEM 9B: DELIVERY OF NEW FIRE TRUCK

For information only, Manager Craft told Council Members that the new fire truck would be delivered on October 14, 2006.

ITEM 9C: DISCUSSION PERTAINING TO RETIREE HEALTH INSURANCE BENEFITS

Manager Craft reported to Council Members that the action taken by the Council at the September 11, 2006. Council Meeting regarding the health insurance is not consistent with established case law. Manager Craft said the when the list was given to the Council of the ones that were "vested " in the program (had completed 25 years of service) it should have included Andrew Whitfield and it only listed Phyllis Harrison, Jimmy Sutton, Aubrey Rouse and Jerry Severson. Manager Craft stated that in order for our policy to be consistent with the previous decision of the Court, a motion would need to be made to amend, if not rescind the action taken last month.

"Attorney Jenkins suggested," that the Council rescind their prior action and make a new motion that is more specific and more exact than the one that was made. The one that was made did not specifically provide what the \$500 per employee would be used for and it did not include Andrew."

Motion was made by Council Member Gladney “that we rescind the motion that was passed and adopted on September 11, 2006, regarding the retiree health insurance benefits.” Motion seconded by Council Member Ellis. Motion carried 6-0 in favor of motion.

Lengthy discussion was held among Council Members and Manger Craft.

Motion was made by Council Member Gladney that “we table this until we have the Mayor in here on this because we are missing a member here. I think we should table this tonight to be fair until November 6, 2006.” Motion was seconded by Council Member Koonce. Council Members Gladney, Koonce and Ellis voted in favor of motion to table. Council Members Sutton, Thomas and Mayor Pro Tem Wooten opposed. Motion failed for lack of majority.

Motion was then made by Council Member Thomas “that with the exception of the five that are indicated in green that have announced retirement or vested in this program that we stop the benefits with the retired benefits.” Motion died for lack of second.

9D: UPDATE ON FLORIDA AVENUE

For information only, Manager Craft reported that the Town now owns 103 Florida Avenue. He also stated that we were working with other property owners about possibly burning dilapidated structures.

With no further business to come before the Council, motion was made by Council Member Gladney and seconded by Council Member Koonce to recess until 5:00 p.m. on October 19, 2006. Motion carried 6-0 in favor of motion.

Phyllis T. Harrison, CMC, Town Clerk

Woodard H. Gurley, Mayor