

REGULAR MEETING

The Town Council of the Town of La Grange, North Carolina met in Regular Session at the Town Hall on December 1, 2008, 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: 2

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

Mayor Gurley called the meeting to order and asked Mayor Pro Tem Wooten to give the invocation. Mayor Gurley welcomed the visitors.

ITEM 4: PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

ITEM 5: BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

No cases to be heard.

ITEM 6: PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

None

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

Manager Craft recommended approval of the printed agenda as submitted with one addition: ITEM 9B: APPROVAL OF CONTRACT WITH BLACKBOARD CONNECT/CONNECT CTY

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Wooten, seconded by Council Member Sutton to approve the original agenda and the addition of ITEM 9B. Motion carried 6-0 in favor of motion.

ITEM 8: CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Approval of Minutes
 1. November 3, 2008, Regular Session
 2. November 12, 2008, Recessed Session
- b. Approval of Resolution Establishing the 2009 Council Meeting Schedule. Copy of Resolution 2008-12-217 hereto attached and filed in Resolution Book III.

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

ITEM 9: NEW BUSINESS

ITEM 9A: DISCUSSION RELATED TO ELECTRIC RATES

Manager Craft discussed with the Council that the NCEMPA Rate Committee, Board of Commissioners, and ElectriCities Board of Directors had met and passed a 4% rate increase effective February 1, 2009. The NCEMPA rates were amended so that the charges will be applied to allocated demand. The first block charges increased from

\$36.82 to \$41.53/KW (\$4.71/KW) and the Town's allocated demand is 2,108 KW (Town's share of plants capacity). This increase will cost the Town \$9,928 per month for a total of \$119,144 each year.

Manager Craft explained to the Council that the Town must consider an electric rate increase to recoup added expense. The actual increase would equate to 3.9% for all electric rates; and, demand and Manager Craft recommended to the Council that the Town increase the electric rates by 3.9% to cover additional costs associated with the impending rates increases, effective the February 2009 billing.

Motion was made by Council Member Sutton, seconded by Council Member Harrison to accept Manager Craft's recommendation and increase the Town's electric rates by 3.9% effective with the February 2009 billing. Motion carried 5-1 in favor of motion. Council Member Rouse voted against the motion.

ITEM 9B: APPROVAL OF CONTRACT WITH BLACKBOARD CONNECT/CONNECT CTY

Manager Craft provided the Council with a brochure giving information concerning Blackboard Connect/Connect CTY's services and their unlimited uses from emergency communications to keeping our citizens informed, involved and connected. Should the Town contract with Connect CTY, their company would compile a list of the Town's customers based on available phone numbers and from that customer base all citizens or a select group of citizens or area that a particular message might be targeted would receive information via a prerecorded message. Connect CTY can be used to inform the public of amended garbage collection schedules, planned power outages, hydrant flushing, disruption in water service, public hearings for rezoning, variances, etc., Town closures due to bad weather and holidays. There are numerous other kinds of information that would be valuable to our public.

Connect CTY obtains listed phone numbers from several sources and will probably capture around 75% of the Town's customer base. This will not include unlisted phone numbers or most cell phone numbers. Customers can add email addresses and cell phone numbers for text messages.

After discussion, motion was made by Council Member Gladney, seconded by Council Member Rouse that the Town contract with Connect CTY for their services. Motion carried 5-1 in favor of motion. Council Member Harrison opposed the motion.

ITEM 10: UNFINISHED BUSINESS

ITEM 10A: DISCUSSION RELATED TO RECREATION FACILITIES

Manager Craft stated that he had met with Steve Molar who is the representative with the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF). The Town's grant submission was discussed and reviewed and Mr. Molar will be making recommendations for any improvements or enhancements in the grant application. Manager Craft stated that there were two things that he needed to remind the Council and one was the economic situation everyone find themselves in and the Trust Fund is not going to release as many funds as they have in the past and the grant applications will become very competitive.

In the past the Town has had public hearings and citizens surveys. Another survey will be sent to the citizens for additional public comments as the Town proceeds with the project. The Town needs to determine and prioritize what facilities are to be used or put into place for Phase I. From the last survey the top three priorities were baseball/softball, basketball and playground area.

Manager Craft stated that after meeting with Mr. Molar it is his recommendation that the Town begin with Phase I which would include two of the three basketball courts, two baseball fields (one long field and one short field) with lighting only on one field; and

one-half of the playground equipment (a decision will be made later on the age group that will be targeted). Also a picnic area, concession stand, and bathrooms would be included in the Phase I along with some parking. A preliminary estimate for Phase I is 1.1 million dollars.

Phase II would include a multipurpose field, tennis courts, additional playground equipment, two additional fields, the third basketball court and additional parking.

After Council discussion, motion was made by Council Member Gladney, seconded by Council Rouse to direct Manager Craft to continue with the PARTF grant and Phase I of the Town's recreational park. Motion carried 6-0 in favor of motion.

ITEM 10B: UPDATE ON DOWNTOWN BUILDING DEMOLITION PROJECT

Manager Craft stated that at last month's Council Meeting he presented a design for the parking area downtown and now has obtained estimates to make those improvements. The low bidder was Charles Hughes Construction in the amount of \$26,500 with an additional \$1,000 for the landscaping.

Manager Craft recommended that Charles Hughes Construction be awarded the bid for the parking lot construction and not award the landscaping project at this time.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Wooten, seconded by Council Member Harrison to accept Manager Craft's recommendation. Motion carried 6-0 in favor of motion.

ITEM 10C: APPROVAL AND ADOPTION OF LAND USE PLAN

Manager Craft provided the Council with an amended copy of the Land Use Plan which reflected the changes as directed at the November 12, 2008, meeting. The Public Hearing has been held, as required by law, and Manager Craft stated that he recommended approval of the amended Land Use Plan.

Motion was made by Council Member Gladney, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Wooten to adopt the amended Land Use Plan.

Council Member Harrison stated that he would like to discuss the amended Land Use Plan.

Council Member Harrison referred to Page 30, Objective No. 4 and Objective No. 5 stating that these requirements were not wise and would not help bring new construction into La Grange as it would be a detriment. Also, Page 32, Objective No. 2 (Consider the addition of a town owned golf course) Council Member Harrison stated that the Town should not consider financing a golf course because with the medium average household income being about \$28,000, people are just trying to exist.

Manager Craft stated that the Land Use Plan was a twenty year planning document for subdivisions and there may be items the Council is asked to consider and incorporate into ordinances into the future, but certainly not a requirement.

Motion carried 5-1 in favor of the motion to approve the amended Land Use Plan. Council Member Harrison voted against the motion. Copy on file in Clerk's office.

ITEM 11: CLOSED SESSION

Motion was made by Council Member Sutton, seconded by Council Member Harrison to go into Closed Session pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 143-318.11 (a) (4) (5) (6) (7) for discussions related to the approval of Closed Session minutes, and for the discussions related to Contract Negotiations, and Personnel. Motion carried 6-0 in favor of motion.

ITEM 12: ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mayor Gurley declared the meeting adjourned.

Nelda H. Johnson, CMC, Town Clerk

Woodard H. Gurley, Mayor