

## **REGULAR MEETING**

The Town Council of the Town of La Grange, North Carolina met in Regular Session at the Town Hall on December 4, 2006 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, Phyllis T. Harrison, CMC; Town Attorney, George Jenkins, Jr.

Absent: None

Guest: 13

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

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

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

There were no public hearings scheduled for this meeting.

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

Mr. Bennie Smith introduced himself to the Council as a former employee and a concerned citizen. Mr. Smith stated there were some issues that had been bothering him for some time. He said he didn't think it was right that after Aubrey Rouse's retirement from the Town that Tyrone Morgan, who was stepped up to Mr. Rouse's position, did not receive the title of "Public Works Director" nor did he have the same authority, plus Mr. Rouse's vehicle was given to the Code Enforcement Officer after money had been spent on another vehicle for him to drive.

Mr. Smith stated that there was a lot of dissention between Management and Public works. He said the Public Works Department was understaffed and citizens were complaining. He also commented that there was not a good relationship between the Town Manager and Public Works employees.

There were no comments from Council Members or Manager Craft.

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

There were no amendments to the agenda and it was approved as presented.

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

- a. Approval of Minutes**
  - 1. November 6, 2006 Regular Session**
- b. Approval of Resolution Setting the 2007 Town Council Meeting Schedule**  
Copy hereto attached.

Motion was made by Council Member Koonce and seconded by Council Member Ellis to approve the Consent Agenda. Motion carried 6-0 in favor of motion.

### **ITEM 8A: APPROVAL AND PRESENTATION OF PROCLAMATION TO GERALD K. SEVERSON FOR HIS 25 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE TOWN OF LA GRANGE**

Motion was made by Council Member Koonce and seconded by Council Member Ellis to approve said proclamation honoring Mr. Severson for his 25 years of service to the Town of La Grange. Motion carried 6-0 in favor of motion. Manager Craft presented the proclamation to Mr. Severson. Copy hereto attached.

**ITEM 8B: APPROVAL AND PRESENTATION OF PROCLAMATION TO AUBREY ROUSE FOR 30 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE TOWN OF LA GRANGE**

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Wooten and seconded by Council Member Sutton to approve said proclamation honoring Mr. Rouse for his 30 years of service to the Town of La Grange. Motion carried 6-0 in favor of motion. Manager Craft presented the proclamation to Mr. Rouse. Copy hereto attached.

**ITEM 8C: AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO HAVE AN AUDIT PERFORMED ON UTILITY FRANCHISE PAYMENTS**

Manager Craft reported that while he was attending the League of Municipalities Conference he learned that due to changes in the franchise law, that the Town will lose its ability to franchise out the service, and as a result of the change, the revenues from our Cable Franchise will be capped at current levels.

During the conference, the presenters indicated there have been approximately 30 municipalities that had their payments audited to determine whether or not the payments made to them were in fact what they were legally entitled to. The findings were that they were not being reimbursed according to their franchise agreement.

Manager Craft stated that it is significant in that the cable companies were keeping a portion of the funds that are legally the municipalities. He said he was not able to determine if Suddenlink or Cox was involved in either of the 30 instances mentioned above.

Manager Craft recommended that we do the audit to determine if we are receiving all the funds we should be receiving. He stated this audit would go back only through a two year period and would cost us approximately \$3,500.

Discussion was held among Council Members.

Motion was made by Council Member Thomas and seconded by Council Member Sutton to approve Manager Craft's recommendation and have the audit done. Motion carried 6-0 in favor of motion.

**ITEM 8D: AWARD OF UTILITY BILLING CONTRACT**

Manager Craft presented Council Members with a copy of three proposals to farm out our utility billing. The results are based on a price per piece including postage, a return envelope, and 8.5"x11" utility bill.

Manager Craft reviewed quotes to the Council that were received from Southern Imaging, South Data and Arista Billing. He recommended to the Council that they contract with South Data with a total monthly cost of \$656.00 with out inserts and \$777.60 with inserts.

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

**ITEM 8E: INFORMATIONAL ITEM – ANNUAL TOWN CHRISTMAS DINNER**

As a matter of information Town Manager Craft reminded Council Members that the annual Christmas Party would be held on Thursday, December 14, 2006, at the Country Butcher Café at 7:00 p.m.

## **ITEM 8F: INFORMATIONAL ITEM – HOLIDAY WORK SCHEDULE**

Manager Craft said that in accordance with the Town's Personnel Policy the Town's staff, other than the Police Department, will be off on Friday, December 22, Monday, December 25, and Tuesday, December 26 in observance of the Christmas Holidays, and Monday, January 1, 2007 in observance of the New Years Holiday.

## **ITEM 9A: CONSIDERATION OF BIDS RECEIVED FOR FRINK ALUMNI AND FRIENDS CULTURE CENTER SEWER EXTENSION PROJECT**

Manager Craft reminded Council Members that Gurley Engineering had been contracted to prepare bid documents for the sewer line extension for Frink Alumni Culture Center. Manager Craft stated that we advertised and received bids on December 1. We had six contractors that submitted bids. Manager Craft provided Council Members with a bid tabulation sheet showing where bids ranged from \$74,345 to \$159,611. Ormond Utilities was the low bidder.

Manager Craft told Council Members that there are three options that they have:

**Option #1: To only approve the base bid portion of this project which would result in the Town paying \$21,702.00 and The Frink Alumni Association paying \$14,084.34 to extend the sewer to the Frink Alumni rear property line (approximately 806 feet).**

**Option #2: To approve both the base bid and alternate bid which would extend the sewer line from the sewer outfall line to the right of way of Aldridge Store Road. In this case the Town would pay \$60,260.66 and The Frink Alumni Association paying \$14,084.34 (1/3 of the cost of the base bid).**

**Option #3: To reject all of the bids and do nothing.**

Council Member Thomas said he could not see where this was feasible with no hopes of anyone else locating in this area anytime in the near future. He said he thought this was an awful lot of money for the Town to spend to service only one customer.

Council Member Gladney said we needed to think about the future growth of La Grange.

Lengthy discussion was held among Council Members.

Motion was made by Council Member Gladney and seconded by Council Member Koonce to approve Option #2 which would include both the base bid and the alternate bid and award the contract to Ormond Utilities with a total project cost of \$74,345. Motion carried 5 to 1 in favor of motion. Council Member Thomas opposed

Motion was then made by Mayor Pro Tem Wooten and seconded by Council Member Koonce to go into closed session pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318 (8) in relation to personnel related issues. Motion carried 6-0 in favor of motion.

After closed session was completed Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Wooten and seconded by Council Member Ellis that Town Manager John Craft be awarded a \$2,500 bonus in lieu of his Christmas bonus. Motion carried 5 to 1 in favor of motion. Council Member Thomas opposed.