

**ROCKY MOUNT TOWN COUNCIL
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
JUNE 16, 2008**

The June 16, 2008 special Council meeting of the Rocky Mount Town Council was held in the Council Chambers of the Rocky Mount Municipal Building located at 345 Donald Avenue, Rocky Mount, Virginia at 5:00 p.m. with Mayor Steven C. Angle presiding. The following members of Council were present:

Vice Mayor Roger M. Seale and Council Members Stephen F. Agee, Posey W. Dillon, Jerry W. Greer, Sr., John H. Lester, and Sadie W. Tuning

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Angle.

The Town Clerk read for the record the following being present: All members of Town Council as noted: Town Manager C. James Ervin, Assistant Town Manager/Community Development Director Matthew C. Hankins, Finance Director Linda Woody, Town Attorney John T. Boitnott, Planning & Zoning Administrator Paul Stockwell, Chief of Police Erik Mollin, and Town Clerk Patricia H. Keatts. Let the record show that Deputy Clerk Stacey B. Sink was in the audience.

The Mayor led the *Pledge of Allegiance*.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Prior to the meeting, Council had received the agenda for review and consideration of approval.

- Motion was made by Council Member Agee to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Council Member Tuning and carried unanimously.

REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF ADOPTION OF FISCAL YEAR 2009 BUDGET

At the request of the Mayor, the Town Manager referenced the new insert pages for the budget that Council had received from the Finance Director prior to the meeting, with the updates reflecting the following: taking away the water loss search study, putting those funds into the contingency fund; taking funds that were going to be used for an engineering study for the water leak at the Emergency Services Building, and putting those funds into roof repairs for the roof instead; and that the remainder of the items in the budget still stand as is when discussed during the budget work sessions that were held.

The Mayor informed Council that they have had the opportunity to review for the past seven to eight weeks the proposed budget, and in saying that, asked what the pleasure of Council

was regarding reviewing and consideration the adoption of the Fiscal Year 2009 Budget. Council Member Greer asked if there could be discussion regarding concerns that some Council members may have regarding the budget, with the Mayor informing him that there was no motion on the floor at this time, therefore, there could be discussion.

The following is a brief overview of discussion that ensued regarding the proposed budget:

- Council Member Greer commented on the following:
 - Opposed to the idea that the Planning Department fees are going up.
 - Opposed to the idea of mandatory garbage fee going up \$1.00 more per month.
 - Doesn't think there is a need to hire a Main Street Director.
 - Opposed to the proposed employee wellness program at this point, but maybe in the future.
 - Since the Town helps fund the Ferrum Express bus line, would like to get an update on how it is doing. This is an expensive program to have if not being used.
 - Would like the proposed real estate tax drop an additional penny.
 - Don't think people can stand Town paying for special events as it went from \$9,800 to \$19,000.

- Vice Mayor Seale commented on the following:
 - The proposed planning fee increase would be for people requesting variances, etc. and be a user fee only, and would not impact any Town citizen that would not be requesting this. There was discussion regarding how the Town fees compare with Franklin County's fee, with the Planning & Zoning Administrator confirming that it was comparable to the County.
 - Discussed reducing the real estate tax an additional penny, with it being understood that this would be a reduction to the budget of approximately \$45,000 (per Finance Director).

- Council Member Dillon commented on the following:
 - Doesn't think the Town should hire a Main Street Director, and asked that the Community Development Director research the history of the position from when Community Partnership for Revitalization was first formed. Thinks Community Development Director would be a big asset in this position, giving the Town an idea on what obligations this position holds for the Town to see if it would be worthwhile funding, giving the Town a good year of testing the waters.
 - Although appreciates the Police Department, believes the budget for the Police Department that was approved last year was not sufficiently presented to Council in a capacity to let individual Council members know that there was an additional position, and now the department is trying to reorganize the department, with it trying to capitalize on those monies that was basically in the budget for that position.
 - Commented that there were approximately 13 people on staff in Police Department in 2001 when annexation took place, comparing that number to how many were on staff now, which is approximately 19 to 20, noting the growth of staff in the Police Department with only approximately 400 people being annexed into Town in 2001.
 - He not only understands the problems that take place in Town, but also understands

the concerns of citizens to provide for themselves with the way the economy is now.

- Stated that it is well and fine for government to grow, but not at the expense of the taxpayer.
 - Mentioned the balloon payment of the Emergency Services Building, with Vice Mayor Seale commenting why it was set up that way when the building was built.
 - Mentioned the development of the Lynch property and there was discussion on how the payback would work.
 - Also agreed with the reduction of the real estate tax by an additional penny.
- Council Member Lester commented on the following:
 - Requested more funding for Helping Hands, other than what was already discussed and budgeted as presented in the agencies' request
 - Expressed that he would like to not hear about all gloom and doom for the Town, but that the Council improve, move ahead, and not sit and strangle themselves, taking advantage of good growth when it can.
 - Appreciates the concerns of the citizens due to the economy, as he, himself, is without a job, but he is going to move on and make the best of the situation and try to look at the bright side of things regarding growth in government in a good way.
 - Agrees that money cannot be thrown around, but when looking at economical growth that benefits all, funding should be considered in a positive way.
 - Council Member Agee commented on the following:
 - Reminded those present that the proposed budget shows a 5% to 5.5% reduction from last year's budget, and Council has to live with real work figures.
 - Proposed Planning fees are proposed for a reason for the operation of the department and to help cover expenses related to Planning Department fees.
 - Proposed \$1.00 monthly increase in garbage fees is still putting the Public Works Department for that service \$30,000 in the red in order to run the garbage trucks.
 - Main Street Director position comes with assistance in funding from Franklin County.
 - The proposed wellness program will help cost reduction in health insurance, and also help save money in the long run.
 - Proposed Police Department reorganization is something that has needed to be done in the last 15 years and is a public safety issue, and if anyone had attended the public meetings when this was discussed, they would have heard what needed to be done, as this meeting was open to the public.
 - Budget has been pared down drastically as proposed and has a lot of merit.

There was discussion by Council in reducing the real estate fee an additional penny.

- The Mayor commented on the following:
 - The budget process is difficult and is a tool and guideline. It does not dictate that every cent in the proposed budget be spent.
 - The fees in the Planning Department are user fees and not spread amongst all the citizens.

- Anyone who runs their own business knows you cannot sell things at a loss, and the garbage fee is still at a loss, even if raised another dollar.
- The proposed Main Street Director position does not mean that it will be filled.
- Wellness program depends on enrollment and won't be economical if no one joins.
- The proposed additional one cent drop in real estate tax does impact everyone, but Council's need to look at the bigger picture and ask themselves what they would do when they come to a point when it has to be raised.

The Mayor asked what the pleasure of Council was.

- Motion was made by Council Member Agee to reduce the real estate tax another penny, taking it down to 12 cents in the proposed budget, and to adopt the rest of the items in the budget, with those items staying as they appear, with motion on the floor being seconded by Council Member Lester. Discussion ensued.

Council Member Dillon made a substitute motion that if the budget is adopted as it is now presented, that any new position in this budget be brought before Council before filled. The Mayor stated he felt this was the intention, with the Town Manager confirming that it was staff's intention in July to get Council's consensus that the Town is still going in the direction that all agree is correct. Let the record show that the substitute motion on the floor was seconded by Council Member Greer. Discussion ensued.

It was confirmed to Vice Mayor Seale that the substitute motion on the floor were dealing with policy in regards to any new positions, and not existing, with the Town Manager stating that it was his understanding it meant the Main Street Director position. The Mayor confirmed that was his understanding also.

Council Member Greer questioned if both motions contained the Main Street Program Director position and taking out the employee wellness program, with the Mayor confirming only the Main Street Program Director position, and the wellness program if there is not enough enrollment from staff. Council Member Greer questioned what made up enough enrollment, with the Town Manager confirming to Council that there was a threshold on managing it well, with the Finance Department knowing what that will be. Council Member Greer questioned what the Town would give other employees who didn't enroll into the wellness program, with the Mayor stating that this is an option for the employees to join and if they do not, that is their choice. The Town Manager stated that the proposed wellness program encourages physical fitness and reduction in the use of the Town's health benefit, with this saving the Town money in the long run. He further confirmed that the wellness program is not just open to the YMCA, but other programs that are local businesses within the Town corporate limits.

Let the record show that the substitute motion passed unanimously.

A roll call vote was taken on the first motion on the floor, being: voting in favor of the motion on the floor were Mayor Angle, Vice Mayor Seale, and Council Members Agee, Lester and Tuning. Voting no to the motion on the floor were Council Members Dillon

and Greer. Let the record show that the motion on the floor passed five to two.

REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF ADOPTION OF FISCAL YEAR 2009-2013 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Mayor stated that the proposed Fiscal Year 2009-2013 Capital Improvement Plan does not lock Council into doing any of the proposed projects.

There being no discussion, the Mayor entertained a motion.

- Motion was made by Vice Mayor Seale to approve the proposed Fiscal Year 2009-2013 Capital Improvement Plan as presented, with motion on the floor being seconded by Council Member Tuning. A roll call vote was not taken, but let the record show that Council Member Greer voted in opposition to the motion on the floor. Let the record show that the motion on the floor passed five to two.

REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF ADOPTION OF DRAFT APPROPRIATION RESOLUTION

The Town Manager informed Council that the second half of passing the budget was the need to consider the adoption of the “Town of Rocky Mount – FY 09 Appropriation Resolution”, and that any motion would include the changes as stated earlier that were passed by motion.

There being no discussion, the Mayor entertained a motion.

- Motion was made by Council Member Lester to approve the proposed “Town of Rocky Mount – FY 09 Appropriation Resolution” with proposed changes, with motion on the floor being seconded by Council Member Agee. A roll call vote was not taken, but let the record show that Council Member Greer voted in opposition to the motion on the floor. Let the record show that the motion on the floor passed five to two.

ADJOURNMENT

At 5:56 p.m., motion was made by Council Member Agee to adjourn, seconded by Council Member Tuning and carried unanimously.

Steven C. Angle, Mayor

ATTEST:

Patricia H. Keatts/Town Clerk

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