

**ROCKY MOUNT TOWN COUNCIL
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
TOWN HALL MEETING
OCTOBER 6, 2008**

The October 6, 2008 special Council town hall style 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 7:00 p.m. with Mayor Steven C. Angle presiding. The following members of Council were present:

Vice Mayor Posey W. Dillon and Council Members Jerry W. Greer, Sr., John H. Lester, Roger M. Seale, Robert W. Strickler and Gregory B. Walker

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, Chief of Police Erick Mollin, Finance Director Linda Woody, Public Works Director Cecil Mason, Wastewater Treatment Plant Superintendent Jessie Jones, and Town Clerk Patricia H. Keatts.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

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

TOWN HALL STYLE MEETING

The Town Manager shared a general orientation on a town hall style meeting, stating that the agenda for the meeting is outlined for the Town of Rocky Mount department heads to be able to talk about some of their projects and to give an overview of their departments. At the end of the presentations, the citizens will be able to ask questions, and if the questions asked cannot be answered at that time, the Town will research the question and get back with that citizen. He further mentioned that it is the intent of the Town that the citizens get to know the Town of Rocky Mount department heads and how their

departments work.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Police Department

The Chief of Police introduced himself, stating that he has been the Chief of Police in the full-time position for approximately one year. The Chief of Police highlighted the following:

- Went of structure of the Police Department
- Explained the restructure of new positions, which consisted of:
 - Narcotics
 - School Resource Officers
 - Restructuring of Jason Maxey (recently back from Kosovo), and T. J. Robertson (recently back from Iraq)
- Explained the recent activities:
 - Tank Hill community meeting
 - National Night Out
 - Special Olympics Torch Run
 - DARE Day
 - Relay for Life
 - Law Enforcement Memorial
 - Franklin County High School mock drill
- Went over the Police Department's group involvement, which involved hosting:
 - Virginia Crime Prevention meeting
 - Regional gang meeting
- Additional activities involving the Police Department:
 - Community policing efforts, which includes foot patrols and business checks. This effort has seen an increase of approximately 1,000 more business checks being done (previous year was 1,248). Also, located about 16 businesses whose doors had been left unlocked.
 - School checks during school and after school hours.
 - Trying to increase awareness throughout the neighborhoods of any on-going crime by having more community meetings and reintroducing the formal Neighborhood Watch program.
 - Appreciates everyone's support of the school resource officer and narcotics officer in the schools, which consists of Franklin County High School, Benjamin Franklin Middle School, and CATCE Center.

Finance Department

The Finance Director introduced herself, handing out a fact sheet that she had readily

available to the public prior to the meeting. The information relayed to the public by the Finance Director consisted of:

- Town has three separate funds: General, Utility and Capital Projects:
 - General Fund contains: Administrative, Public Safety, Public Works, Municipal Grounds & Facilities, and Community Development.
 - Utility Fund contains Water Plant & Distribution, Wastewater Plant & Collection, and Utility Billing.
 - Capital Projects contains large dollar and one-time type projects.

- Went over the audit time line:
 - Fiscal year end is June 30.
 - Adjustments and close books by August 25.
 - Auditors arrive around September 1 for two weeks of testing.
 - Report submitted by November 30.

- Went over budget time line:
 - January – meet with the department heads for budget requests.
 - February and March – budgetary numbers are collected.
 - Mid-April – balanced budget to Town Council for review and work sessions.
 - June – public hearings are held prior to adoption of budget.

- Top five General Fund revenue sources make up 64% of total fiscal year 2008 collections:

▪ Meals tax	\$1,092,531	19%
▪ State-Street maintenance	\$1,025,546	18%
▪ Business licenses	\$ 558,259	10%
▪ Real estate taxes	\$ 501,496	9%
▪ Interest earnings	\$ 453,033	8%

Total General Fund Collected for Fiscal Year 2008 equals \$5,708,995.

- Rates and due dates for taxes:

<u>Type</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>DueDate</u>
▪ Real estate	.12 per \$100 of assessed value	02/28
▪ Personal property	.51 per \$100 of assessed value	02/28
▪ Machines and tools	.17 per \$100 of assessed value	02/28
▪ Car decals	\$25/vehicle	03/31
▪ BPOL-Retail	.13 per \$100 of gross receipts	05/31
▪ BPOL-Professional	.50 per \$100 of gross receipts	05/31
▪ BPOL-Repairs/Services	.30 per \$100 of gross receipts	05/32

- Top three Utility Fund revenue sources make up 94% of total fiscal year 2008 collections

▪ Water charges	\$1,229,060	46%
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- Sewer charges \$ 771,100 29%
 - Meals tax transfer \$ 514,278 19%
- Total Utility Fund collections for Fiscal Year 2008 equals \$2,672,675.

- Number and source of utility customers:

<u>Source</u>	<u>In-Town</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Out-of-Town</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>%</u>
▪ Residential	1,762	64%	630	22%	2,392	86%
▪ Commercial	291	10%	43	2%	334	12%
▪ Industrial	43	2%	2	0%	45	2%
Total	2,096	75%	675	24%	2,771	100%

- Top six General Fund expenditure categories make up 80% of total Fiscal Year 2008 expenses:

- Police Department \$1,377,652 28%
 - Transfer to other funds \$ 814,278 17%
 - Public Works – streets \$ 692,769 14%
 - General Government (Administration) \$ 566,269 12%
 - Debt service \$ 298,707 6%
 - Street lights and traffic lights \$ 213,675 4%
- Total General Fund expenditures for Fiscal Year 2008 Equals \$4,914,061

- Utility Fund expenses for total Fiscal Year 2008 are:

- Debt service \$1,180,591 35%
 - Water operations \$ 904,801 27%
 - Depreciation (unfunded) \$ 662,472 20%
 - Wastewater operations \$ 490,768 14%
 - Other \$ 158,134 5%
- Total Utility Fund expenses for Fiscal Year 2008 equals \$3,396,766

- Water accountability loss:

- Average for Fiscal Year 2007 80.01% Loss = 19.90%
- Average for Fiscal Year 2008 85.90% Loss = 14.10%
- Average for Fiscal Year 2009 84.98% Loss = 15.02%

- Town portion of capital projects for Fiscal Year 2009 are:

- Uptown water and sewer lines \$ 72,550
- Cox property access road \$100,000

- Debt service:

<u>Project</u>	<u>Balance at 07/01/2009</u>	<u>Annual Debt Service</u>	<u>Years Left</u>
▪ Emergency Services Building	\$1,755,113	\$190,887	3
▪ Public Works Building/			

	Parking/Road	\$1,242,000	\$165,537	29
▪	Sewer Plant	\$2,371,381	\$514,278	6
▪	Annexed water line	\$2,065,000	\$163,093	23
▪	Annexed sewer line	\$2,656,929	\$256,623	14
▪	Old Fort Road utilities	<u>\$1,058,000</u>	<u>\$141,013</u>	29
	Total	\$11,148,423	\$1,431,431	
▪	Legal debt limit (10% of assessed value)	\$35,996,800		
▪	Less: Debt outstanding	<u>(\$11,148,423)</u>		
▪	Available for debt	\$24,848,377		

The Finance Director stated that the Town’s cash reserves and investments are safe, and that the Town will not lose any principal during the current financial industry crisis.

Water Department

Due to the recent retirement of the Water Department Superintendent, the Town Manager stated that since that position has yet to be filled, he would give the report to Council and the citizens.

- Proud of how staff had handled the long drought this year.
 - The Town will need an alternate water source.
 - He and staff with the Water Department are currently working on contracting with the Western Virginia Water Authority for such an alternate water source, with this coming before Town Council for consideration of approval.
 - Continuing to draw water from the Black Water River and contracting with Western Virginia Water Authority will give the Town two sources of water that will meet the Town’s water needs.

Wastewater Treatment Plant

The Superintendent of the Wastewater Treatment Plant introduced himself, stating that he has been with the Town for 38 years, highlighting the following:

- The current Wastewater Treatment Plant began operation in May 1994.
- The plant has a capacity of 2 m.g.d.
- The plant is currently at 40% capacity.
- The plant meets all the permitted requirements set by the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).
- The quality of water discharged into the Pigg River is one of the best in the state of Virginia.
- The plant has a staff of four certified operators that operate and maintain the Wastewater Treatment Plant along with six pump stations.
- In 2009, another pump station will be built off of Old Fort Road to serve the

Tavern at Oaks Subdivision.

Community Development Department

The Community Development Director introduced himself, stating that the Community Development Department not only handles community development, but also planning and zoning. He further commented that he has been with the Town for almost one year, and that during that time, he learns something new every day. The following was highlighted:

- Went over current community development projects:
 - Uptown Revitalization project management.
 - Working to responsibly develop Town in appropriate locations without burdening transportation, parks, or public infrastructure.

- Went over current economic development projects:
 - Working with Franklin County to aggressively market the Industrial Park space and diversity economy.
 - Working to develop the Cox property as next great community interest.

- Update on corridor growth:
 - Trying to attract new businesses to the corridor that reflect community interest.

- Update on grants and incentives:
 - Over \$700,000 in grant funding earned to-date this year.

- Update on Enterprise Zone:
 - Over two million dollars invested.

- Update on zoning and planning:
 - One great asset is the GIS, which helps map water and sewer lines, roadways, which all help manage growth. Mentioned the GIS Technician, Nathan Wright, who is a great person in doing this; plus, handles the weed and overgrowth, along with managing erosion and sediment control.
 - Mentioned Paul Stockwell, Planning & Zoning Administrator, who does a great job in writing code and making it more efficient.

- Parks & Management
 - Works with Public Works Department to help manage the Town's parks.
 - Gave update on Celeste Park.
 - Mentioned working on trail to connect the Veterans' Memorial Park to Lynch landing.
 - Department manages the rental of the Farmers' Market and Community & Hospitality Center (Depot) for special events.

Public Works Department

The Public Works Director introduced himself and stated that he has 16 employees in his department. The following was highlighted:

- Projects completed:
 - Replaced water line in Beverly Hills Subdivision.
 - Installed sewer for Grayson Street area.
 - Installed water line from Shady Lane north on Virgil Goode Highway.

- Projects currently working on:
 - Replacing 500 feet of 2" water line with a 6" ductile iron pipe on end of Windsor Drive.
 - Leaf pick up starting early November; hopefully, ending middle to end of December.
 - Starting brush cutting on right-of-ways on streets and sidewalks.
 - Installing parking area and bridge (or culvert) in Celeste Park.
 - Those that have garbage pick up service need to have garbage out by 7:00 a.m. the day of the scheduled pick up.

Fire Marshal

The Fire Marshal introduced himself as Fire Chief for the Rocky Mount Volunteer Fire Department (RMVFD). The following was highlighted:

- It is very hard to find young people to volunteer; however, it has been better this year.

- Went over how expensive it is to outfit the firemen as mandated by National Fire Protection Association (NFPA):
 - Pants: \$550
 - Boots: \$225 to \$250
 - Helmet: \$225 to \$250
 - Coats: \$750
 - Gloves: \$50 to \$60
 - Hoods under the helmet: \$25 to \$30
 - Rechargeable flashlight: \$100
 - Tanks: \$3,500 to \$4,000
 - Small radios: \$1,200 to \$1,500
 - Infra-red camera (one at each fire station): \$12,000

- Have 27 members on roll now. In considering outfitting each member, take the total costs mentioned above and multiply that by 27. This gets quite expensive.

- The RMVFD is authorized to have a total of 35 volunteers and hopes that one day they will have that many.

- The RMVFD does quite a lot of fund raising, with an auxiliary being formed to help with costs. The costs are not separate, but all in one amount.
- Operate out of two stations: new station located on North Main Street station and the old one located on Floyd Avenue near intersection of State Route 40 West and Floyd Avenue. Still run some trucks out of the old fire station. With having the two stations, it allows the RMVFD to operate within a five-mile radius of the Town, and the RMVFD goes whenever they are called to do so. With the help of the Public Works Director, went through insurance classification, which is derived on how far you are from a fire station, arrival time, which affects people's insurance rate.
- Have a 1979 Chevrolet, which is due to be replaced by a new truck, with the funding coming from FEMA and the Town. This is the only gasoline truck they have. NFPA no longer will permit gas operated vehicles, as they now have to be diesel operated.
- Over the past five years, RMVFD has received from FEMA grant funding in excess of \$350,000. By receiving grant funding from FEMA, every call has a number assigned to it and has to be entered into a computer program, with volunteers doing this work.
- Received \$30,000 from Franklin County for operational maintenance.
- Received approximately \$11,000 from the Fire Department Program.
- Most money all and above this amount is a stipend that the volunteers receive from the Town of Rocky Mount.
- Have worked this year with Franklin County on starting a fire house program.
- The state mandates that three fire trucks always will respond to a structure fire.
- Gave a rundown on some of the trucks at fire stations.

The Fire Chief invited anyone wanting a tour of the new fire station to let him know.

General Town Items

The Town Manager introduced himself and highlighted the following:

- The department heads that you just heard from is the Town staff and they do great work. They are the big lifters and they deserve credit for what they do.
- Currently working on continued improvement with working relationship with the County. In working together with them, the Town and County is able to do a lot more. Has seen a lot of good things coming out of the working

relationship, especially in recreation and economics.

- Continuing partnerships with outside agencies. Gave an example of Cathy McBride's house and how everyone came together to make this happen.
- Talks and sits down with people when walking through Town regarding industrial and economic development, with the Town trying to work on bringing meaningful jobs to the Town. Currently, have state and federal money going into the Cox property, with the Town trying to get companies to locate there to give the Town adequate employment in the Industrial Park.
- Town continues to establish a music venue, which is a high item on the list, trying to fold this into the Crooked Road Music Trail. Last week, released a Request for Proposals for architects to come and talk to the Town about the Town using buildings in the Town for this type of music venue, but ultimately, want to hear from the citizens.
- One of the things that is dysfunctional in the Town is a lot of storm water management, such as the Franklin Heights Subdivision. This needs to be looked into, and will do so once the Town has the opportunity. Will see this through the working budget. Also, will get input from citizens on which storm water management projects are important to them.
- A lot of places in Town could benefit from sidewalks. Each year, would like to include sidewalks into the budget mix, and see how, as a community, this can be funded. Town Council and department heads can make a stab at this by hearing what the citizens say about sidewalks.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Council Member Lester:
 - With the bailout of Congress, and with the current real estate assessments done by Franklin County, Town needs to begin thinking about creating own economy, such as the Crooked Road music venue, which would help the Town to meet this need.
 - With community development in mind, will need assistance from Franklin County to make this happen. Would like to explore the old Winn-Dixie building for this.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS FROM PUBLIC

- Sherman Witcher (who lives outside the Town limits) spoke on behalf of the Warren Street Society, stating that Darlene Swaine, Director of the society, is looking at proposing a cultural center next to Warren Street. Mr. Witcher's comments were more directed to the Town getting parking for the center, working with the society as an investor, partnering with them with seed money from the Town.
- Vanessa Carter of Carter's Jewelers, stated that she believes the town hall style meetings are good and likes what she saw in *The Franklin News-Post* October 3, 2008 edition, referencing the promotional flyer of Floyd, Virginia. Questioned if the Town will be putting forth the effort to promote the town of Rocky Mount in a like manner.
- Matthew Hankins, Assistant Town Manager/Community Development Director, stated that he also noticed the same flyer in the newspaper, but the best way to promote the Town is to work with Franklin County and Franklin County Chamber of Commerce. Also looking at placing large ads in national and regional publications that have high profile, and can accomplish this by partnering with those he mentioned. Instead of the Town individually dealing with questions coming into the Town office, will forward to Franklin County so County dollars can be put together with Town dollars for one piece to be done jointly. Should see results from this endeavor in 2009, as this was just announced in August 2008.
- Janie Hopkins, Executive Director for the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce, stated that Scott Martin, Director of Franklin County Commerce & Leisure Services, did a Franklin County Guide in the spring of this year. It was sent to those who had visited the Town with zip codes other than 24151.

Let the record show that several people started talking from the floor, and not at the lectern; therefore, no written comment is for the record as they did not identify themselves. Of particular notice, the Mayor called an end to some of the discussion, with the Mayor stating that what was being discussed was not the forum for that type of discussion, and could be discussed later between the two parties involved.

The Mayor ended the meeting by stating that Council plans to continue the town hall style forum meeting several times a year, and appreciates everyone's attendance.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:30 p.m., motion was made by Council Member Greer to adjourn, seconded by Council Member Walker and carried unanimously.

Steven C. Angle, Mayor

ATTEST:

Patricia H. Keatts/Town Clerk

/phk