

The regular meeting of the Hope Mills Board of Commissioners was called to order by Mayor Dees at 7:30 p.m. Commissioners Gorman, Luther, Legge, Smith, and Collins were present.

Others present were Town Manager Roy Taylor, Town Attorney William R. Davis, Director of Inspections Jerry Thompson, Public Works Director Bruce McLaurin, Police Chief John Hodges, and Fire Chief Chuck Hodges.

Rev. Michael Bost, Camden Christian Fellowship, gave the invocation, and Commissioner Smith led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. **ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA.**

There were none.

2. **PUBLIC CONCERNS - HOPE MILLS RESIDENTS AND/OR BUSINESS OWNERS.**

There were none.

3. **CONSENT AGENDA:**

Mayor Dees presented the consent agenda, and asked if there were any items the Board wished moved to the regular agenda for discussion.

Commissioner Luther made a motion to move items B and C to the regular agenda for discussion. Commissioner Collins seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Luther made a motion to approve consent agenda item A as presented. Commissioner Smith seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

A) Consideration to approve travel/training for Telecommunicators Kristi Moore and Jackie Ness, Advance Telecommunications Course, NC Justice Academy-Salemburg, February 12-17, 2006.

The Police Department requested approval for Telecommunicators Kristi Moore and Jackie Ness to attend an advanced telecommunication course at the North Carolina Justice Academy in Salemburg, NC, February 12-17, 2006. Mr. Stafford reported that there was money budgeted for this expenditure, and that any travel exceeding five days required Board approval.

Travel/Training approved.

“END CONSENT AGENDA”

4. **CONSIDERATION TO AUTHORIZE COMMERCIAL SANITATION FEE REFUND TO UNITED MANAGEMENT II (GOLFVIEW GREEN APARTMENTS), \$8,054.64.**

Mr. Stafford presented a report stating that United Management was a commercial dumpster customer through August 8, 2003. Mr. Stafford reported he had been contacted concerning their invoice, and was informed that the Town did not service their complex since August, 2003. Mr. Stafford stated according to PWC records, they received notice to cancel billing but it was overlooked and the customer had continued to pay for services through October, 2005. He stated that United Management had a new office manager for Golfview Green Apartments and this individual became aware that they were paying the Town and Waste Industries for sanitation services.

Mr. Stafford requested the Board approve a refund for \$8,054.64 to United Management II/Golfview Green Apartments.

Commissioner Luther expressed concerns why this problem was not caught before now since

it had been such a long period of time. Mayor Dees remarked he understood there was a change in management and that person caught the error.

Mr. Taylor noted that the Town did not collect these fees, and this oversight was never discovered by the Town nor United Management. Mr. Taylor said that this amount had been verified, and this was the only situation like this with multi-family apartments.

In response to a question from Mayor Dees, Mr. Taylor stated that with residential sanitation fees being on the tax roll, this type of problem would be eliminated.

In response to a question from Commissioner Gorman, Mr. Taylor stated this was an isolated incident and it was only discovered when new management was employed.

Commissioner Luther reiterated her concerns that someone should have caught this error.

Commissioner Legge made a motion to approve the sanitation fee refund to United Management II, Golfview Green Apartments, \$8,054.64. Commissioner Gorman seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

5. CONSIDERATION TO APPROVE CHANGE ORDER FOR BIKE PATH CONSTRUCTION.

Mr. Stafford presented a report stating that the contract with Highland Paving for the bike path extension was \$119,963.00, and they had submitted additional costs in the amount of \$5,850.00. Mr. Stafford reported that the changes were not part of the original engineering plans, but the Town had worked with the contractor to make the changes for safety in and around all parking and street entrances/exits.

Commissioner Luther remarked that these costs seemed out of proportion and should have been included in the original contract.

Mr. Taylor stated that these improvements were not included on the plans as prepared by the town engineer, and the situations were not realized until the project was ongoing. He stated these situations arose during the construction, and if not addressed, would cause deterioration to the walking path. Mr. Taylor said he did not know why the engineer did not have these improvements on the plans as he was on site before plan preparation, but these enhancements were made to the project to protect the Town's investment. Mr. Taylor reported that the total project cost was \$126,000.00.

Commissioner Luther commented that this was no reflection on the Manager, but stated she felt in the future, contracts and plans should be thoroughly reviewed to make sure this type situation did not happen again.

In response to a question from Mayor Dees, Mr. Taylor stated that these funds would come from the general fund.

In response to a question from Commissioner Legge, Mr. Taylor stated that there was not much funding remaining in the parks and recreation developers fees that had been paid, as the money had been set aside and applied to this project cost.

Commissioner Legge commented that perhaps in the future those board members having some construction experience background should also review plans and contracts prior to board approval. Further, Commissioner Legge stated that if there were any funds available in the parks and recreation budget, that he felt this change order should come from that department for payment rather than the general fund.

Commissioner Collins remarked he had observed the bike path, and it looked very good. He stated his only concern was that the Board was just made aware of this situation and felt that the Board should have known about this in advance and requested that they be notified of these types of

situations in the future.

Commissioner Legge remarked that it would have cost more if the contractor had left the project and returned and did the work.

Commissioner Luther asked if the fees for illegal tree cutting would go into the general fund, and Mr. Taylor responded that they would unless the Board directed otherwise. Mr. Taylor stated when the individual tendered the fees, he would advise the Board.

Commissioner Collins made a motion to approve the \$5,850.00 change order and that the funds come from the parks and recreation budget. Commissioner Smith seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

6. OLD BUSINESS:

Mr. Taylor stated that Mr. Bill Berry, Public Works Commission, had previously presented to the Board an interlocal agreement regarding the water line that was strapped to the bridge. Mr. Taylor stated in the original agreement the wording was confusing and the dollar amounts were questioned. Mr. Taylor noted that PWC had tagged onto the Town's grant from the state, and the agreement had been rewritten with a more definitive dollar amount. Basically, Mr. Taylor stated that PWC was asking for reimbursement of the 12 inch water main, and he would bring this agreement before the Board at the next meeting for consideration and review.

7. CONSIDERATION/DISCUSSION WORKSHOP TOPICS.

Mayor Dees presented a list of suggested workshop topics for the Board's workshop, Thursday, January 5, 2006, and stated that he had some additional items to add: 1) smoking policy for town buildings, 2) county recreation pull out, 3) adopt a street program (activate), 4) sell spirit/pride items with town logo, i.e. tee shirts, caps.

Mayor Dees asked the Board if there were other topics they would like to consider.

Commissioner Luther remarked that she would like to ask the Board to discuss upgrading the wrecker towing fees as these had not been updated since 1996, and she would like to ask for Board review on this.

Commissioner Gorman asked specifically what ordinance amendments were to be reviewed so that the Board could take a look at these in advance of the meeting. Mayor Dees remarked that the main ones he was concerned with were the ones that involved committees as there was a lack of uniformity, and he felt that these should be amended so as the Board would not knowingly be in violation of its own ordinances. Mayor Dees said there were concerns regarding some committees permitted resident and non-resident members, and felt some of these items should be cleared up. Further, Mayor Dees commented that most of the committees were functioning ok, but some should be reviewed.

Commissioner Gorman briefly reviewed the applications review process that the previous Board had established, and Mayor Dees said that he felt the Board needed to talk about this process further. Mayor Dees commented that the application for appointment may need to be revised and further, he felt that all Commissioners should have a voice on committee appointments.

Commissioner Legge remarked that he had spoken with Mr. Taylor and Commissioner Collins, and he would like an item for discussion regarding a policy/procedure handbook development for every employee. He stated this would be very useful for not only new hires, but for current employees. Commissioner Legge further stated that he would like to discuss leasing motorcycles for the Police Department at some time.

Mayor Dees stated that he would like to clarify that he was not proposing rewriting the ordinances, but was mainly focusing on the appointment of committees. He stated that the Commissioners and staff could work together for wording on these amendments to be brought back to the Board for approval.

Commissioner Gorman said he would like to see Article I, Section 2.2, regarding the terms of elected officials discussed.

In response to a question from Commissioner Legge regarding the historic grant, Mayor Dees commented that the Board had briefly discussed using part of this funding for some preservation of historic cemeteries. Mayor Dees said he had an idea several years ago that he addressed with Mayor Deaver regarding placing pictures of former mayors in the Town Hall, and stated that Mayor Deaver had worked very diligently on this project. Mayor Dees stated he would like to use some of this money for framing and matting of pictures of former mayors for display.

Commissioner Gorman stated that he felt this was a great suggestion.

Commissioner Legge made a motion to authorize part of the historic grant funding for framing/matting of pictures of former mayors. Commissioner Gorman seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Luther commented regarding annexation, and stated she was not sure what the Town could do so far as any major annexations, but she would like to see the Town close donut holes around Town and would like the Town to proceed with planning to close these areas in as soon as possible. Mayor Dees commented that he felt there were some areas that needed to be looked at: 1) donut hole areas, 2) bypass area, 3) Elk Road area. Mayor Dees said possibly the Town could do a survey in those subdivisions along the Elk Road area regarding voluntary annexation. In addition, Mayor Dees stated that the development across from Gates Four should be considered as well. Commissioner Luther commented that area was already in the Town's area of intent.

In response to a question from Commissioner Luther, Mr. Taylor confirmed there were plans for a shopping center in making along the bypass.

In response to a question from Commissioner Legge, Mr. Taylor stated he thought Commissioner Luther's strategies were good. He stated that there were some donut hole areas that needed to be closed in, and Elk Road had already been identified as a target annexation area and that the bypass would evolve. Mr. Taylor stated that a workshop needed to be devoted to the discussion of annexation as a stand alone topic.

Mayor Dees remarked regarding dialog with the county regarding rejoining the County Planning Board, and stated if the Town was not going to rejoin, then it needed to ask for help in its area of intent so that the development standards would conform to the Town's standards.

In response to a question from Commissioner Gorman, Mayor Dees briefly commented regarding the tax rate comparison and stated he was still compiling information on this subject.

Mayor Dees asked for the Board to advise the priority of the topics and he would compile a list for discussion. Mayor Dees stated he felt the committees should be discussed as soon as possible.

Commissioner Collins stated he would like discussion on the commercial garbage situation as the Town was losing several thousand dollars a year on this.

Mayor Dees commented that he thought the Town had discussed this in the past and felt that it should consider: 1) a contract for services, 2) get out of the commercial garbage business totally, 3) continue providing the service but increase the commercial rates. In addition, Mayor Dees said he thought the Board also needed to discuss once a week residential pickup.

Commissioner Collins stated that he would like to add the following items to the workshop topics:

1. Budget preparation (would like to get the budget adopted before the end of June).
2. Town Hall telephone system needs improving.

3. Newsletter.
4. Website.
5. Policy/procedure handbook.

Mayor Dees stated that he agreed with the need for a hand book, and stated possibly this could be put on the website as well. Commissioner Gorman stated that he thought it would be very important for the Town to have a handbook and this did not have to be anything extensive or costly. Mayor Dees said he felt that each department head should have a copy of the policy and procedure handbook, and it would be good for the citizens to know what was going on as well.

Commissioner Collins said also he thought that employee incentives were needed.

Commissioner Luther remarked that nothing had been mentioned regarding the dam, and that she recently had a conversation with a County Commissioner who stated to please contact them if they could help in anyway. Mr. Taylor stated that he was assembling all the history on the dam and he was finding more documents and would sit down and plot a course. He stated that he had talked with the County Commissioners, but had not specifically asked for any financial assistance at this point.

Commissioner Collins stated that he felt the Board should establish a dam committee and let the committee lobby the legislators. Mayor Dees commented that this was one of the committees that he would be asking the Board to consider.

Commissioner Legge stated that he would like as the number two discussion to take care of personnel openings.

8. STAFF CONCERNS.

Mr. Taylor reported that he would be attending a BRAC meeting in Raleigh on January 11th, and he would report back to the Board at its next meeting.

9. OFFICIAL CONCERNS.

Commissioner Gorman welcomed everyone to the meeting and said it was good to see everyone in attendance. He wished everyone a Happy New Year and stated he felt it was a great year in store and he looked forward to the workshop and he was looking for a lot of good accomplishments.

Commissioner Legge wished everyone a Happy New and said he appreciated everyone attending the meeting. He stated he had a heavy heart as he had extended family involved in the West Virginia coal mine accident and asked that everyone please keep all of these families in their prayers.

Commissioner Collins said he appreciated everyone attending the meeting and asked everyone to be patient with the Board because there was a lot of work that had to be done. He stated the Board was going to try to make things better.

Commissioner Luther expressed appreciation to everyone for attending the meeting, and expressed sympathy to the Hodges family in the loss of his sister, and asked everyone to keep this family in their prayers as well as the families in West Virginia.

Commissioner Smith commented as follows:

1. Expressed sympathy to Commissioner Legge and the West Virginia families.
2. Expressed sympathy to Police Chief John Hodges and his family.

3. Commented that he researched topics before coming to the board meeting and felt comfortable with his vote.
4. Read from Robert's Rule of Order regarding executive sessions, and commented that there were three things that would help him govern the town; his faith, the law, and his interpretation of the law. Commissioner Smith said he could not speak about what was discussed in closed session and he would not jeopardize himself, the Board, or the Town by divulging any information that was discussed in closed session. Commissioner Smith said that he was approachable and welcomed suggestions from the citizens and he was willing to listen, but he would not jeopardize himself, the Board, or the Town by discussing anything that was discussed in closed session. Mayor Dees commented as follows:
 1. Expressed condolences to Chief Hodges and Commissioner Legge.
 2. Stated that the Clerk would be out-of-town on Monday and Tuesday, January 9-10, attending a clerks meeting in Wrightsville Beach.
 3. Stated that he and Commissioner Legge would be out-of- town January 11-13 attending Essentials of Government class as sponsored by the School of Government.
 4. Stated he had contacted Gordon Rose's office and there was very little activity in the permitting process on the dam project due to the holidays and there was nothing new to report on at this time.
 5. Stated that he had contacted some of the local Representatives and Congressmen, and had a meeting with Representative Rick Glazier on Wednesday to discuss possibly helping the Town with funding the project. He also stated that he had some other contacts to make.
 6. Stated that he and Mr. Taylor had been discussing the possibility of using the water in the lake for hydraulic energy producing. He stated he had made a contact who was of the opinion that using water to produce energy might be a help to the Town. In addition, Mayor Dees stated that this gentleman would be willing to come and discuss these possibilities with the Town. Further, Mayor Dees said he had discussed this with Mr. Stafford who thought if the Town had an energy company willing to enter into a long term agreement on buying energy produced, this could be used as collateral on a loan. Mayor Dees said it was his understanding there was a federal law that if energy was produced then the local energy company had to buy it, but you could negotiate with other companies for the best deal. He said he was hopeful this possibly might work out for the Town.
 7. Reminded the Board of the workshop on Thursday, January 5th at 7:00 p.m.
 8. Stated the next regular board meeting would be Tuesday, January 17th at 7:30 p.m.
10. ADJOURNMENT.

At 8:35 p.m., upon a motion by Commissioner Luther, seconded by Commissioner Legge and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned.

EDDIE DEES, MAYOR

ATTEST:

Phyllis C. Register, MMC, Town Clerk