

**TOWN OF HILDEBRAN
AUDITORIUM**

**FEBRUARY 23, 2015
7:00 p.m.**

**REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES**

CALL TO ORDER Mayor Cook called the regular meeting of the Town Council to order at 7:09 p.m.

COUNCIL PRESENT The following members of the Board were present: Mayor Virginia Cook, Council Members Brenda Banks, Wendell Hildebrand, Jamie Hollowell, Barbara Lowman and Lee Lowman.

STAFF PRESENT The following staff members were present: Attorney Redmond Dill, Town Clerk Alice Sanders, Finance Officer Fredrick Rankins, Administrative Assistant Rebecah Isenhour and Office Support Assistant Greta McKinney.

CITIZENS PRESENT See attached list for other citizens.

MEDIA Frank Bumb, from the *Hickory Daily Record* was in attendance.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE The Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag was led by Town Attorney Dill.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA Council Member B. Lowman made a motion to amend the agenda to move Public Comment after New Business. All voted in favor. Council Member Banks made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. All voted in favor.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES Council Member B. Lowman made a motion to approve the January 23, 2015 Special Meeting Minutes, the January 26, 2015 Regular Meeting Minutes and the February 5, 2015 Special Meeting Minutes. All voted in favor.

OLD BUSINESS None at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

PLANNING BOARD/BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT APPOINTMENT (TERM ENDING JUNE 30, 2017) Mayor Cook explained that due to the resignation of Cheyanne Lovelace, Council will need to appoint a Planning Board/Board of Adjustment member to fulfill her term ending June 30, 2017. Two applications were distributed to the Board in their agenda packets. The Board voted by written ballot as follows: Council Members Hildebrand, Hollowell, B. Lowman and L. Lowman voted for Clyde Church. Council Member Banks voted for Elizabeth Fields. Council Member Hollowell made a motion to appoint Clyde Church to the Planning Board/Board of Adjustment for the term ending June 30, 2017. All voted in favor.

APPROVE TWO AMENDMENTS TO Mayor Cook reported that the NC Department of Cultural Resources has amended the records retention schedule for municipalities

THE RECORDS
RETENTION
SCHEDULE FOR
MUNICIPALITIES

effective 1/5/15. The Town was informed that it had not yet approved the amended section to the schedule that was effective 8/29/13. Council Member B. Lowman made a motion to approve both amendments to the records retention schedule. All voted in favor.

REVISED
“UTILITIES &
BILLING
DEPARTMENT /
POLICIES &
PROCEDURES

Mayor Cook stated that she and Ms. Sanders visited Sandy Reece, Billing & Collection Supervisor at the City of Thomasville, in order to learn how to better handle delinquent sewer accounts since the Town has no legal authority to cut water off for these accounts. She stated that the Town needs a policy in place in order to plug the sewer for delinquent accounts. Council Member L. Lowman made a motion to approve the revised policy. All voted in favor.

FACILITIES
REPORT

None at this time.

JANUARY TAX
REPORT

Ms. Sanders provided the tax report for the month of January 2015. The tax report is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes (Attachment A.)

DEPUTY REPORT
GARY TOWERY

Deputy Towery provided his report for the month of January 2015 in the agenda packet.

COMMITTEE
REPORTS &
UPDATES

Transportation Advisory Committee (COG) – Mayor Cook reported that she did not attend the meeting due to a Town meeting that was held on the same night.

Western Piedmont Council of Governments Policy Board - Council Member B. Lowman attended the January meeting.

Burke Economic Development – Mayor Cook reported that there were meetings held in closed session and she had no report.

Recreation & Tourism Committee – Council Member B. Lowman reported that the pool will have lifeguard positions available for this season.

Water Resource Committee – No report at this time.

VEDIC (Valdese) – Mayor Cook reported that the meeting was held in closed session and she had no report.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Attorney Dill explained that he will call names according to the sign in sheet and each speaker will be given three minutes. He asked for cell phone and electronic devices to be turned off in order to not disrupt the meeting. He instructed that the comments be directed to the Board and be in a courteous and polite manner.

Richard Bell stated that he was allowed to record the meeting. He stated that he felt the destruction of the building was about the lumber and estimated that the flooring alone would bring in about \$100,000.

Marti Smith referenced the 2010 Town Comprehensive Plan that indicated that the Town wanted to preserve cultural and historic properties of significance and gave multiple suggestions for use of the building according to the Town's survey. She asked what has changed in five years and what the rush is to tear down the building. She requested the Board to work with the community to preserve the building.

Johnny Childers spoke on behalf of the Hildebran Heritage and Development Association, Inc. (HHDA) and Citizens United to Preserve the Old Hildebran School. He presented Council with the results of a petition campaign that they have conducted over the past four weeks. He reported that 745 Town residents have signed the petition requesting the Board to rescind its decision made on January 26, 2015 and instead explore all options to preserve the building.

Troy Smart asked Council to remember the oath that each member took and stated that the oath binds the members to the duty of the citizens and not personal opinions. He asked Council to consider the requests of the citizens and to rescind its vote.

Mark Lackey stated that his point is that Council has two choices. The first choice is to stand fast with its previous decision and demolish the school, ignoring the citizens' wishes as evidenced by the petition. The second choice would be to rescind its vote and align with the majority of citizens and come together with the community.

Marie Parkhurst stated that she is neither for nor against tearing the building down. She asked for honest, straight forward information and asked for a special information session. She presented questions to the Board and asked for answers to be in writing or to be read at a public meeting. She stated that she is tired of rumors and hearsay.

Jack Hodges Jr. spoke against the demolition of the building. He feels the building is more than an object but is the focal point of the community of Hildebran for not only the residents, but those that live outside the Town limits.

Cindy Reed asked Council to reconsider its decision to demolish the building. She read Council Member L. Lowman's Facebook post that was dated January 8, 2015.

James Saxman asked the Council if it was familiar with the laws and responsibilities that govern the cell tower behind the building. He also asked if the contractors removing the asbestos were licensed.

Sherri Hughes asked Council why the decision was made to demolish the building. She stated that she preferred her tax dollars be used to refurbish the building. She asked for fairness and for Council to reconsider its decision.

Shana Packer spoke about leaving a legacy for the betterment of the citizens as a whole. She stated that the citizens as a whole do not want the building destroyed. She also stated that she has called organizations to help restore the building and options are available. She asked for Council to hear the citizens and rescind its vote.

Stephanie Higdon questioned the Mayor and Board's actions regarding the bidding process and the denial of a group of citizens' request to tour the building due to safety and liability issues, pointing out that there are two tenants currently leasing a part of the building. She also stated that the company hired to demolish the building has only been in business since 2013 and questioned the availability of references and stated that the company did not hold a general contractor's license.

Debbie Greenhill urged the Board to not demolish the building and to work together to decide what would benefit the community in order to support the Town.

Harold Greenhill offered alternatives to demolishing the building including funding through historical sites and private funding. He asked Council to rescind its vote and come up with a plan by starting with an architect to provide a concept drawing. He pointed out that the Town does have cash money to begin this process. He also asked to let the citizens make the decision by putting it on the next election and by allowing a bond referendum at the next election.

Leon King emphasized that the community has come together since the January 26, 2015 meeting and stated that the community can work together to save the building by giving time, money and resources to refurbish the building. He asked Council to rescind the vote and save the school and heritage.

Brian Angel asked the Board to rescind its vote and asked why the Board wanted to tear it down while hundreds of people want to keep the building.

Elsie Childres stated that as long as the Council carries out its duty to serve the people of Hildebran, the citizens will support the Board and if not, the citizens will be back and will remind the Board.

Cheyenne Lovelace stated that she had signed the petition to save the building and did not appreciate a Council member tossing the petition to the side. She stated that she was disappointed in the Council members that she voted for. She complained that the day after the regular council meeting in January, the signs that support saving the school were removed but a political sign across the street was not removed and she believed the political sign was in violation of a Town ordinance. Ms. Lovelace also requested that the nuisance form be revised to allow the form to be submitted anonymously. She stated that there is a hazard with cars along the white line of the road at Garcia Auto Center and she would like for this to be addressed.

Betty Martin stated that she came to remind the Council of its responsibility according to God's word, to be ministers of God for our good. She stated that she is praying that God will give Council the wisdom and understanding to refurbish the building and to void the contract to demolish the building.

Bettina Martin Hart asked where the transparency is concerning this decision. She stated that there were funds to be obtained to refurbish the building and asked for Council to rescind its vote.

Vivian Wilson pleaded for Council to take an objective approach on its vote on the decision to demolish the building. She emphasized that the majority of the citizens want to keep the building. She asked Council to reconsider its decision and represent the citizens and to do what's right.

Jeremy Chapman asked Council to choose wisely and asked for the remainder of his time be used for Council to think about its decision.

Jessica Wilson spoke to the public about remaining strong and to seek truth and justice. She asked the group to stand united.

Sparky Hurst stated that he felt there was nothing wrong with the building except cosmetic issues and he believed volunteers could repair anything that was wrong.

Ben Honeycutt spoke about honoring the citizens' wishes to preserve the heritage. He stated that the Board members are in office to represent citizens and their wishes. He emphasized that the citizens are asking for additional time to explore more funding opportunities. He pleaded for the Board to listen to the citizens.

Barry Hildebrand spoke about his father, Charlie Hildebrand, and his contributions to the Town over the years, including starting the library. He stated that saving the building will take effort and time and should start with the Board who has managed to rally the entire Town over

this cause. He gave several suggestions on how to begin refurbishing the building and suggested using the building for a new, expanded library.

Mayor Cook called for a five minute recess at 8:40 p.m. Council Member L. Lowman left the meeting. Mayor Cook called the meeting back to order at 8:49 p.m.

OTHER BUSINESS

Council Member B. Lowman made a motion to excuse Council Member L. Lowman due to business reasons. All voted in favor.

Council Member Hildebrand thanked the citizens for attending the meeting and for caring about the Town. He thanked everyone that spent their Saturdays going door to door to sign petitions and stated that he had never seen the Town so unified.

Council Member Hildebrand, on behalf of the citizens, made a motion to rescind the vote to demolish the old school building made at the January 26, 2015 meeting. Attorney Dill stated the motion cannot be made by Council Member Hildebrand since he did not support the motion before and that the motion to rescind the vote can only be made by a council member that voted in favor of the motion the first time.

Mayor Cook requested approval of \$3,000.00 to be allotted for the Easter egg hunt in March. Council Member B. Lowman made a motion to approve \$3,000.00 for the Easter egg hunt and to approve a budget amendment for this line item. All voted in favor. (The budget amendment is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes (Attachment B.)

CLOSED SESSION

Council Member Hollowell made a motion at 8:56 p.m. to recess into closed session pursuant to General Statute 143-318.11 (a) (4) to discuss matters relating to the location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by the public body, including agreement on a tentative list of economic development incentives that may be offered by the public body in negotiations. All voted in favor.

Council Member B. Lowman made a motion to return to open session at 9:30 p.m. All voted in favor.

Council Member Hildebrand made a motion to request Attorney Dill to contact the City of Hickory about the sewer system. All voted in favor.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

All business being concluded, Council Member Banks made a motion to adjourn at 9:32 p.m. All voted in favor.

I attest these are the approved minutes of the Board.

Alice Sanders, Town Clerk

Virginia Cook, Mayor