

CALL TO ORDER/  
INVOCATION

Mayor Cook called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

COUNCIL  
PRESENT

The following members of the Board were present: Mayor Virginia Cook, Council Members Brenda Banks, Wendell Hildebrand, and Barbara Lowman. Council Member Lee Lowman arrived at 7:08 p.m. Council Member Hollowell was not in attendance.

STAFF PRESENT

The following staff members were present: Attorney Redmond Dill, Finance Officer Fredrick Rankins and Office Support Assistant Greta McKinney.

CITIZENS  
PRESENT

See attached sheet.

MEDIA

No one from the media was in attendance.

OPEN SPECIAL  
MEETING

Mayor Cook opened the Special Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

ADOPTION OF  
AGENDA

Council Member Hildebrand made a motion to adopt the agenda. All voted in favor.

ORDER OF  
BUSINESS:  
COUNCIL TO HOLD  
A PLANNING  
SESSION TO  
DISCUSS EVENTS  
AND SMALL  
PROJECTS DURING  
2015

Mayor Cook distributed information to Council in order to begin working on the upcoming budget process. She reviewed actions that have been completed during FY 2014-2015. She stated that the digital sign will be delayed until March due to the work availability of Duke Energy. She informed Council that they may want to consider adding a line item in the upcoming budget for a second sign to be located in front of the auditorium.

Mayor Cook reviewed an action plan for the FY 2015-2016 budget.

- She reported that Finance Officer Rankins will provide Council with a monthly finance report for facilities and projects to show income and expenditures.
- Mayor Cook reviewed the expense from the Hocus Pocus movie showing, the Malpass Brothers concert and the Adam Trent show. Council Member B. Lowman stated that the budgeted amount for the shows was \$8,000.00. She asked why the expenses reported were \$13,278.17 and where the money came from to pay for the overage. Mr. Rankins replied that the additional \$5,278.17 was taken from the marketing line item. Attorney Dill asked why the

receipts were not listed on the report. Mr. Rankins reported that income was about \$800.00 for each show.

- Mayor Cook suggested having the farmers market only on Tuesdays since no other communities have a farmers market on that day.
- Mayor Cook stated that she would like to participate in the Christmas parade in something different than riding in cars. Ms. Lowman requested 4-door cars. Attorney Dill stated that some officials in other municipalities use the Town's fire truck.
- Mayor Cook stated that she will contact local churches to hold a choir concert in the auditorium at Christmas. She also suggested contacting schools to allow them to use the auditorium at no cost for their concerts.
- Mayor Cook asked if Council was in agreement with having the farmers market one day a week. Attorney Dill asked how much was spent on the farmers market this past season. Mr. Rankins stated it was about \$6,000.00 and pointed out that a \$2.00 fee per vendor each market day is charged. Council was informed that grant money is no longer available. Council Member B. Lowman stated that \$5,000.00 was budgeted for the farmers market and wanted to confirm that \$6,000.00 was spent. Mr. Rankins confirmed and stated that the additional money was taken out of the marketing budget. Council Member L. Lowman asked who made the call to pull the extra money out of the marketing line item. Mr. Rankins stated that the money is in the marketing category for marketing purposes for whatever general events the Town does, which includes craft shows, farmers market, egg hunt, movies, etc. Council Member L. Lowman stated that moving forward, that the amount budgeted in a line item is the limit to spend. He stated that it was made clear when the budget amount was determined for the shows in the auditorium to stay within that amount but money was taken out of another line item and that this was a fail. Council Member Hildebrand asked what the marketing funds would be used for. Council Member L. Lowman stated that when specific line items are budgeted, funds should not be pulled from other line items.

Council Member L. Lowman questioned the amount of money budgeted for the farmers market. Mr. Rankins reported that of the \$6,000.00 spent, most of the expenses were advertisements which included \$3,700.00 in radio ads and \$2,200.00 in print ads. Council stated that the digital sign will help with advertising.

Council Member L. Lowman expressed his displeasure with the website not being kept current. He further stated that to attract families to the community, the Town should focus on events for children.

- The following items were suggested for next year's budget for the park: lighting, security, a veteran's wall, connecting the walking track, lining trees among the property lines, planting new shrubbery/trees in the Spring and getting security cameras.
- Council discussed adding WiFi for the gymnasium. Mayor Cook stated that she would need the Board's approval to sign a contract with the Board of Elections to use the gymnasium for the primary and that they will need internet access for the voting process. Security for the WiFi was also discussed.
- Mayor Cook stated that staff is working on a new sewer policy in order to help with collections.
- Council discussed acquiring a server and dedicated IT support. The Mayor's computer also needs updating. It was suggested to get a laptop and docking station instead of a desktop.
- Mr. Rankins stated that \$25,000.00 a year has been put in economic development in past years but Council stopped contributing recently since the money was not being spent. He reported that the current amount in economic development is \$219,494.00. Mayor Cook reported that a new pet grooming shop will be opening in Town.
- The Board needs to decide if new Christmas lights/banners need to be added to the budget. It was suggested to get another company to hang lights next year for safety reasons.
- Mayor Cook stated that she is working with the WPCOG to obtain grant money for the additional sidewalks. She reported that the installation of the traffic light on Hwy 70 due to the replacement of the Icard Bridge is temporary and she will be working with local businesses to try to keep the light.
- Improvements to streets will need to be reviewed which will use Powell Bill funds.
- Rex Lail, representing HHDA, requested the Town donate more funds to HHDA during the next budget year. It was suggested to add different ideas at the cruise-ins like farm equipment, motorcycles, etc. and to have activities for children.
- Mayor Cook reviewed goals for the Town to include attracting businesses, developing and maintaining relationships with existing businesses, marketing the Town and applying for grants for economic development.
- Mayor Cook reviewed goals for the Town to form and strengthen partnerships by supporting Burke County libraries, partnering with other municipalities in eastern Burke County to influence County affairs, maintaining close relationships with the Sheriff's department, increasing visibility of staff and elected officials at Town events and continuing to seek educational opportunities for staff and elected officials.

- Mayor Cook instructed the Board to let her know if there were any other items to be added to the list to be considered for next fiscal year's budget.
- Council discussed possible food markets for the Town.

ANNOUNCEMENTS Mayor Cook stated that budget meetings will begin in March 2015.

Richard Bell pointed out that the deputy's current location is not ideal. He suggested that cameras be placed in Town Hall. Council Member L. Lowman stated that he agreed and that he had discussed this issue with the Mayor.

Attorney Dill stated that the Board needs to look at the costs for the non-required services with non-revenue sources and determine if it wants to continue spending on these services or put money into a police force, etc.

ADJOURNMENT All business being concluded, Council Member B. Lowman made a motion to adjourn at 8:57 p.m. All voted in favor.

ATTEST I attest these are the approved minutes of the Board.

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Alice Sanders, Town Clerk

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Virginia Cook, Mayor