

**TOWN OF HILDEBRAN  
WESTERN PIEDMONT  
COUNCIL OF  
GOVERNMENTS  
CONF ROOMS A1/A2**

**MARCH 18, 2016  
6:00 P.M.**

**SPECIAL MEETING  
BUDGET WORKSHOP  
MINUTES**

- CALL TO ORDER** Mayor Cook called the special meeting/budget workshop to order at 6:00 p.m.
- COUNCIL PRESENT** The following members of the Board were present: Mayor Virginia Cook, Council Members Brenda Banks, Barbara Lowman and Lee Lowman. Council Member Jody York was absent. Leon King was not in attendance.
- STAFF PRESENT** The following staff members were present: Attorney Redmond Dill, Town Administrator Tom Drum, Town Clerk Alice Sanders, Finance Officer Fredrick Rankins and Administrative Assistance Rebecah Isenhour.
- CITIZENS & MEDIA PRESENT** See attached sheet.
- ADOPTION OF AGENDA** Council Member B. Lowman made a motion to adopt the agenda. All voted in favor.
- ORDER OF BUSINESS** Ms. Isenhour reported that she is working on revising the rental fees and policies for town facilities. Council requested that the proposed fee schedule be ready at the next budget meeting.
- Mayor Cook stated that a quote was obtained for decorative lights at the park at a cost of \$1,770.00 per light. Council instructed Ms. Isenhour to obtain less expensive quotes for bright street lights from Duke Power for consideration at the next budget meeting.
- Two quotes were provided for security/video cameras to be placed at the park. Council Member L. Lowman recommended Hunter Electronics LLC and it was the consensus of Council to choose this quote. Attorney Dill recommended Council to purchase the cameras in the current budget year to reserve money in next year's budget for the acquisition of property. He also suggested that Council Member L. Lowman review the final installation of the cameras before payment. The quote and budget amendment will be brought before the Board for final approval at the March 28<sup>th</sup> regular meeting.
- Mayor Cook requested an additional piece of playground equipment, a climbing wall, be budgeted next year. She predicted the cost to be \$6,000 to \$7,000 and it could be placed beside the super dome for children ages 6-12. Council Member L. Lowman requested that the trees that need to be

removed be addressed first and there was already the cost of connecting the walking trail. Council instructed Ms. Isenhour to obtain quotes for removing the tree(s) to present at the next budget meeting. Mayor Cook will contact the Bridge's Crew to see if they can help remove the limbs at little to no cost. Mr. Dill advised that before letting anyone come to take the wood to be sure that the wood is cleaned up and already cut for safety reasons. Council requested quotes for the climbing wall be obtained for consideration at the next budget meeting. Mayor Cook stated that she will try to get donations to help cover some of the expenses at the park.

Mayor Cook asked if Council wanted her to obtain a quote to extend the walking trail in the park. She stated that an engineer will have to be obtained in order to design the trail and meet all ADA compliances. The disc golf course will not be affected. Mr. Drum recommended getting a design and determine the width and depth of asphalt before putting it out to bid. Mayor Cook stated that she would work on getting those specifications.

Mayor Cook stated that currently, the gymnasium is being used as a shelter for the area during disasters. Mike Long approached her stating that a transfer switch for generators would be beneficial during emergencies. A quote was obtained for a transfer switch for both the gymnasium and the senior center. After discussion, it was the consensus of Council to not purchase the transfer switch and suggested that the County use the new senior center and library building as a shelter once the building is built.

Mayor Cook announced that the April craft show has been cancelled due to the fire at the building. She asked for input from the Board regarding future craft shows. After discussion, Council Members Banks and B. Lowman wanted to continue having the Holiday craft show in November. Council Member L. Lowman didn't want to include any craft shows. Mr. Rankins was instructed to include the costs for the Holiday craft show in next year's budget, contingent upon the parking lot being clear and safe for visitors.

Mayor Cook met with the Mayor and two Council members at the Town of Long View who suggested the Towns work together to offer a community farmers market and cruise ins at the Long View Recreation Center. There were concerns that there was not enough citizen participation at last year's farmers market at the proposed site. Ms. Isenhour stated that the tenant at the old library building has agreed to let the Town host the farmers market in the parking lot including power and use of the restrooms in exchange for a booth. It was the consensus to keep the farmers market at the parking lot across the street from Town Hall, contingent upon written permission from the tenant and landlord.

The Memorial Day event has been cancelled due to the fire at the complex. The fireworks can be postponed until the September festival. Mayor Cook

asked about the cruise ins since the Town Hall complex most likely will not be open and safe. Attorney Dill suggested that Mayor Cook provide the Town of Long View with Rex Lail's number for them to work together. Council requested that the September festival have food, music, vendors and activities for the kids and if desired and feasible, a cruise in. Council Member L. Lowman stated that if the Board votes to approve a cruise in, everyone must participate and support the event.

Mr. Drum will be working with staff over the next few weeks to determine an appropriate salary for each employee based upon the League of Municipalities annual salary survey that is based on realistic salaries. He stated that salaries should not be decreased but should be increased to where they need to be, if possible, to be competitive. He will provide a recommendation to the Board by May.

Other issues for the Board to consider with next year's budget includes:

- Attorney fees for pending lawsuit
- Any item that the Town's insurance does not cover from the fire
- Expenditures for the first phase of the sidewalk project
- Asphalt at the park

Council Member B. Lowman stated that a citizen had asked about the Town having a volunteer cleanup day. Mayor Cook stated that there used to be yearly volunteer days in the past. The event takes advertising, planning and lots of time. She stated that all Council members need to participate, if it wishes to host an event. It was mentioned that boy scouts have helped participate in the past. Mr. Rankins reminded everyone of the yearly litter sweep held by the DOT and Mayor Cook stated she would research that program.

Council Member L. Lowman asked for clarification regarding the insurance repayment from the fire at the Town Hall complex due to the misconception in the community. Attorney Dill stated that the Town will be getting reimbursement for the value of what was lost. Unfortunately, the value of what was lost in the old school building is minimal. Most of the reimbursement that the Town will receive is for the damage and cleanup of the Town Hall building and demolition. The Town will not be receiving a tremendous payout from the insurance company.

Council Member L. Lowman expressed concerns about the East Burke Youth Athletic Association and the pool not being reopened and the lack of opportunities for recreation for the Town's youth. He stated that he has been asked about opening a recreation center in the spot where the old school building is located. Council had concerns about the expense of employing someone to oversee a center. Mayor Cook stated that grant money is available to help fund the building and hopefully the revenue brought in from events will cover the cost of the employees. Mr. L.

Lowman suggested that Council consider long-term recreation avenues for the youth.

Council Member B. Lowman suggested that the area summer camps come to a movie in the auditorium since the pool will not be open this year. It was suggested that the Town consider purchasing a roll-down screen. Council Member L. Lowman stated that the old school building, once demolished and cleared, could be a spot for a new recreation center. Attorney Dill and Administrator Drum both stated, from other Town's experiences who operate a recreation center, that the cost to run a center is very expensive and will most likely never break even. Mr. Drum stated that a PARTF grant will only provide funds to build the building and not for maintenance or personnel. He felt that a recreation director would need to be hired if the Town chose this option.

Mayor Cook shared that if Town Hall is moved to the old First Citizens Bank, that the whole building complex could be renovated for rentals or for the youth over a 20-25 year plan to be done in phases in order that the tax rate remain the same.

Attorney Dill suggested that if the Town is successful in purchasing the bank, Council needs to determine if the Town is going to pay cash for the building or finance. He felt the Town has enough resources on hand to buy the building and reviewed possible expenses to retrofit and estimated a couple thousand dollars for renovations. He suggested the Board take its time to retrofit the building correctly since the facility will function as the Town Hall for many years.

Mayor Cook suggested a 20-30 year USDA loan for renovations on the current Town Hall building and possibly any expenses that the Town may incur due to the fire. Mr. Drum stated that financing long term will involve the LGC which slows the process.

Ms. Sanders reported that the current copier lease is expiring soon and SHARP provided a new 60-month lease that involves a new machine with more features at almost the same cost. The quote will be submitted for approval at the March 28<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Council Member B. Lowman asked about the latest of the sewer billing and collections. Staff has had discussions with Mr. Drum and he will propose a few changes after reviewing the sewer ordinance and spending more time with staff.

Mayor Cook called for a brief recess at 7:41 p.m.

Mayor Cook reopened the meeting at 7:49 p.m.

Mr. Rankins reviewed the budget by line item. The following is a list of items for consideration at the next budget meeting:

- Setting up a reserve fund for the deputy vehicle and sidewalks
- Christmas light reserve fund
- Banners for town entrances
- REACT appropriations, consider lowering since no cruise ins
- Park maintenance items review (mulch, etc.)
- Park supplies tracking

**ANNOUNCEMENTS** Mr. Rankins announced that the general fund will most likely decrease from \$1.5 million to \$1.3 million by the end of the year.

Attorney Dill stated that with the Town's pending fund balance, it appears to him that it would make sense to purchase the bank building with cash by the end of the fiscal year.

**ADJOURNMENT** Council Member Banks made a motion at 8:18 p.m. to recess the special meeting/budget workshop to April 22, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. at the Western Piedmont Council of Governments Conference Room A1. All voted in favor.

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