

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF GASTON
TOWN OF CRAMERTON**

July 12, 2005

The Board of Commissioners for the Town of Cramerton met in Regular Session, Tuesday, July 12, 2005.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Cathy C. Young; Mayor Pro Tempore Jeff Ramsey; Commissioners Ronald Murphy, Jacque Sumner, Willie Carter and Joel Lineberger.

OTHERS PRESENT: Michael Peoples, Town Manager; LuAnn Ellis, Town Clerk; Steve Baucom, Town Planner, Rodney Robinson, Deputy Chief of Police; Jamie Shytle, Chief Operator Waste Treatment Plant; and Bill Brown, Town Attorney.

CONSENT AGENDA: Upon a motion by Commissioner Murphy, seconded by Commissioner Sumner, the Board voted unanimously to approve the Consent Agenda as follows:

**Approval of the Minutes of the June 2, 2005 and June 7, 2005 Meetings
Membership Agreement and Resolution – Municipal Insurance Trust**

DISCUSSION – CRAMERTON (MAYWORTH) SCHOOL: The Town Manager stated that he had talked with the Town Managers from both Kinston and Randleman where Landmark Construction had completed projects similar to the one proposed for Cramerton. He stated that both places had the apartments for sixty-five and older restricted. He stated that they had no problems with the buildings or renting them. He stated that both projects were old schools that had been converted. He stated that the contractor used nice fixtures in the apartments and they added to the community.

Mayor Young stated that she felt that the project for seniors would benefit the community.

The Town Attorney stated that Mr. Rogers had planned to come to the meeting, but Mr. Mayo was on vacation and they would like the Board to discuss the matter and see if there would be Board support for the project before they came again and brought representatives from Landmark.

Commissioner Lineberger stated that he had gotten the impression that they were selling to investors to rent rather than sell homes individually. The Town Attorney stated that Landmark had rental units and he had also received word that their last application had just received approval.

Mayor Young stated that the Board's first objective was to save the building. She stated that she was concerned with the timeline and the fact that it could be another year before something happened. She stated that a lot of citizens were tied emotionally to the building and felt that she could support a project for persons sixty-five and older.

Commissioner Sumner stated that she would also support a complex for seniors sixty-five and older. She asked if there was a possibility to save the auditorium for the seniors to meet in. The

Town Attorney stated that he felt that the developer would be interested in listening to Board ideas.

Commissioner Murphy stated that the developer had stated that they were interested in the project to help recoup some of the loss against the partner that had been dropped. He stated that he did not favor the project if there was not an active homeowner's association to help control it.

Mayor Pro Tempore Ramsey stated that his first priority was to save the building. He stated that the project in Dallas seemed to be successful. He stated that he was concerned about the longevity and would like to have on-site management with stipulations.

Commissioner Carter stated that she was not happy with the project. She stated that she did not think that Mr. Rogers had been truthful and she was tired of being put off.

Mayor Pro Tempore Ramsey asked if the investors were ready to proceed with the project. He stated that he would like to see that anyone local if interested, was able to invest in the project.

Commissioner Carter asked what happened to the building if the project did not happen. She was advised that the building would revert back to Preservation NC and if not sold by them, back to the School Board.

Mr. Wib Queen stated that he had listened and had been involved with the project. He stated that the seniors in town wanted to have a place where they all could come and they would pitch in to help each other out. He stated that he would like to see a place where there were only seniors living there and they could take care of each other.

Mr. Neil Kiker, a deacon from First Baptist stated that it was sad that the project with upscale condos would not be happening. He stated that the church people were concerned about the ownership of the property once the project was finished. He stated that it would be great if the project could be for citizens sixty-five and older that they need a place to go, but they were also concerned about people living there that cared for their grandchildren

Mr. Kiker stated that the church does support the project, however, they did have concerns.

CRAMERTON VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT – REQUEST TO MAKE

CHANGES TO THE BUILDING: The Town Manager presented a request from the Fire Department to make the following changes to the building as per the lease agreement.

1. To cut into the back of the building to install an air conditioner in the storage room and convert the room into sleeping quarters.
2. To cut into the building to install a dryer vent.
3. To install a door in the doorway of the storage room.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Sumner, seconded by Commissioner Lineberger, the Board voted unanimously to approve the request.

WASTEWATER TREATMETN PLAN UPGRADE PROJECT DISCUSSION: The Town Manager stated that he had met with Mayor Young, Commissioner Murphy, Jamie Shytle, Keith West and the persons with the low bids for the project last week to try to reduce costs of the project since the bids came in higher than the loan amount.

Mr. West stated that a meeting had also been held with the State Construction and Loan people and they have advised the Town to look for a way to reduce the project and apply for additional funding. Mr. West stated that the project had two low bidders, one for each part of the construction. Hickory Construction was the low bid for the construction part and Recore was the low bid for the electrical part. He stated that they met with them and tried to find a way to reduce costs and not lose the integrity of the project. He stated that they could reduce the project a minimum of \$800,000.00.

Mayor Young stated that the original price of the plant was close to seven million dollars. She stated that the inflation for prices had not been taken into account.

Commissioner Lineberger asked if there was an opportunity to get additional funding or extend the loan. He was advised that the loan could be extended.

Mayor Young asked if the State could be petitioned to keep the current rate and then piggy back the additional amount at a higher interest rate since the rates had increased since the Town applied for the loan. She was advised that you could not.

Commissioner Murphy stated that he was concerned about the fees paid already to the engineer. Mr. West stated that the fees were in line with the work that had been done. Commissioner Murphy stated that the fees were a part of the loan and the reserve had pretty much been depleted purchasing the plant and that the Board had anticipated a certain cost for the loan and had raised rates accordingly and now they were being told the price had doubled.

Mr. West stated that engineering fees were reimbursable with the loan funding. The Town Manager stated that the fees could be attached to the loan, but was it worth putting the fees in the bank?

Mayor Young asked about the timeframe for the revisions. She was advised that the application had been submitted for the SOC and the Town could ask for a relief for a period of time to complete the revisions.

Mayor Young stated that the construction would hopefully begin in December with the revisions.

Commissioner Murphy and Commissioner Lineberger asked if the utility rates would have to be increased again to account for the increase in the cost of the loan. They were advised that the numbers had not been worked out at this time.

Commissioner Murphy asked that Mr. West let his partners know of the Board's displeasure that the rates for inflation had not been included in the plant and the amount of funds already expended for engineering fees and the possibility of looking at more fees. Commissioner Murphy stated that the Board had to answer to the people of the town and it would hurt to have to go back with an additional increase in rates.

NEWPORT LANDING FINAL PLAT APPROVAL PENDING RECEIPT OF CERTIFIED PLANS: The Town Planner stated that the Town had not received a certified copy of plans for the water system for the development, and expected to hear from them any day. He stated that all other plans of the subdivision had been received and the developer would like to record the plat and begin construction. All department heads agreed that there were no problems with the final inspection and the developer had complied with the planning and zoning ordinances to this point.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Murphy, seconded by Mayor Pro Tempore Ramsey, the Board voted unanimously to approve the plat contingent on receiving the approved plans from the state concerning the water system.

DISCUSSION CONCERNING OUTSOURCING WATER BILLING: The Town Manager stated that he had received two proposals from firms to print and mail the water billings. He stated that it would cut out approximately six hours of employee time and save substantially on the mailings since the Town would be able to include a newsletter or other information such as the reports required by the state to be mailed to all customers.

The Town Manager stated that the information would be e-mailed to the company and the bills would be received at the same time the citizens are used to getting them.

Commissioner Sumner stated that she was concerned with the personnel on staff and the need for both clerks if this work was taken away. She was advised that the part that was being taken away was approximately six hours of work for one employee per month. She was further advised that the collections and billing operations would still have to be done, it was only the mailing that would be taken outside the office.

Commissioner Murphy stated that the Town may be able to ask some businesses to advertise which would help with the cost.

Mr. Jamie Shytle stated that it was a wonderful opportunity to meet the state requirements for public education on various matters.

Commissioner Lineberger made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Murphy to outsource the utility billing. The vote was as follows: Ayes: Commissioner Lineberger, Commissioner Murphy, Mayor Pro Tempore Ramsey. Noes: Commissioner Carter and Commissioner Sumner.

RESOLUTION FROM THE NC GOVERNOR'S SAFETY HIGHWAY PROGRAM GRANT: The Deputy Chief stated that this grant would help the department get five cameras for the police cars. He stated that most of the money to match the grant was in the budget and now the department could get five cameras rather than the one budgeted.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Murphy, seconded by Commissioner Sumner, the Board voted unanimously to approve the resolution.

DISCUSSION OF THE CRAMERTON ETJ: The Town Manager stated that there was an area off New Hope Road where the elementary school was located that was in the Cramerton ETJ, but could never be annexed into the Town due to the annexation agreement. He stated that the Town Planner (who had to leave the meeting due to an emergency) was supposed to speak to the Board concerning amending the ETJ district and reverting this property back to the County.

Commissioner Murphy stated that he was concerned about what might could happen to the property if the Town was not enforcing the zoning. He stated that there was an issue in Mount Holly and that the zoning was changed by one vote and a development of mobile homes were allowed to come into an area.

The Town Manager stated that if the ETJ lines were withdrawn, the County would hold the property for sixty days before it could become a part of the Gastonia jurisdiction and they had indicated that they would keep the zoning as the Town had it.

Commissioner Lineberger asked if there would be a problem with the mobile units that had been approved by the Town for the elementary school. The Town Manager stated that he did not believe there would be a problem.

The Board asked that this item be tabled until the next meeting.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE WATER BILLING ORDINANCE: The Town Manager stated that the Board had been given a handout at the last meeting of the proposed changes to the Water Billing Ordinance. He asked if there were any questions.

The Town Manager stated that there had not been a minimum charge for customers on a master meter. He stated that this would be one of the changes and in addition, require that the Home Owner's Association provide the town with a list of residents on a bi-monthly basis.

A discussion followed concerning the negotiation of master meters and whether or not the lines were inspected by the Town if they were not taken over by the Town.

Commissioner Murphy stated that he was concerned about the quality of the lines in the event that the Town would one day take them over. The Town Manager advised that they would be inspected prior to the Town taking them over. Commissioner Murphy stated that he felt that all lines that were attached to our system should be inspected.

Commissioner Murphy stated that he was also concerned about the testing of the fire hydrants and was not sure that the hydrants were being tested as they should. The Water System Supervisor stated that he was not sure if some of the hydrants had been tested in the developments that had master meters.

Commissioner Lineberger asked about the change from utility billing in the hundreds of gallons rather than in the thousands. The Town Manager stated that he was looking into the matter and he would prefer to bill in the hundreds because it gave a more accurate picture of the water being used.

Upon a motion by Mayor Pro Tempore Ramsey, seconded by Commissioner Lineberger, the Board voted unanimously to approve the changes as submitted.

ATTACH ORDINANCE CHANGES

TOWN INVESTMENT REPORT: The Town Manager stated that the certificate of deposit at BB&T had matured and the funds had been moved to First National Bank and to Finistar. He stated that the Town received better rates on the funds with the move.

TAX COLLECTION REPORT: The Town Manager stated that he had received a list of delinquent tax bills from the county and letters were being prepared for collection of the overdue amounts. He stated that the Town Attorney would be signing the letter.

The Town Attorney stated that the agreement with the County to collect the taxes had expired and he was working with the county attorney to have an automatic renewal in the agreement and in the meantime, the county was collecting taxes as if the agreement was in place.

REPORT – CRAMERTON (MAYWORTH) SCHOOL: The Deputy Police Chief stated that no trespassing signs had been placed at the old school building. He stated that there were several places that the building could be entered and the developer needed to secure these areas.

NEWSLETTER: The Town Manager stated that he had advised staff that a newsletter would be going out to the citizens and there was an August 1 deadline for items to be placed in the newsletter.

WEBSITE: The Town Manager stated that an outside firm had been hired to update the website for the town and to keep it updated. He stated that quite a bit of work had been done.

POLICE DEPARTMENT UPDATE: The Deputy Police Chief stated that he had submitted his report in writing.

Commissioner Sumner asked about the felony arrests. She was advised that two of them were from a break-in at the U-Store storage facility. The Deputy Police Chief stated that the security cameras did not work and the gates were broken. He stated that the other arrests were from identity theft.

The Deputy Police Chief was asked about the alleged sex offenders living in town. He stated that the officers tried to check once a week and they watched the state site where the names were posted. He stated that the sheriff's office advised the department when someone moved into town.

MAYOR YOUNG – COMMENTS: Mayor Young stated that she had received several calls from citizens concerning the area around Baker's furniture that used to be Reece Hardware where the homeless people had set up house.

The Deputy Police Chief stated that was private property and they could not remove anyone unless it was posted No Trespassing.

COMMISSIONER LINEBERGER – COMMENTS: Commissioner Lineberger stated that he had looked at the Cramerton Oaks development and the Board had stipulated that brick or simulated brick be put on the building. He stated that he had not seen any brick up there at this time and would like to have the Town Planner check on that as well as the amount of brick that should have been on the front of the buildings.

Commissioner Murphy stated that they had not repaired the damage to the sidewalk yet either.

CLOSED SESSION: Upon a motion by Commissioner Sumner, seconded by Commissioner Carter, the Board voted unanimously to go into closed session.

Upon returning to open session, the following action was taken:

Upon a motion by Commissioner Sumner, seconded by Commissioner Lineberger, the Board voted unanimously to renew the contract with the Town Attorney for a period of two years and amend the severance package to a period of six months, to increase his salary to \$74,000.00 annually; to require that he have one day regular office hours at town hall; and to provide a \$3,500.00 bonus this year.

Commissioner Murphy asked if the award of a bonus would require a budget amendment. The Town Manager stated that it would not at this time because additional funds were put into legal

services. He stated that if any work was to be contracted out, that an amendment may be needed later.

There being no further business, Mayor Young adjourned the meeting.

Mayor Cathy Young

ATTEST:

LuAnn A. Ellis, CMC, Town Clerk