

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

April 23, 2015

The Board of Commissioners for the Town of Cramerton met in regular session on Tuesday, April 23, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. in the G.M. Michael Room at the Cramerton Town Hall.

Board members present: Mayor Ronnie Worley; Mayor Pro Tempore Will Cauthen; Commissioners Demetrios Koutsoupias; Tammy Lawrence; and Sandra R. Ware. Commissioner Sam Carpenter was absent.

Staff present: Kevin Krouse, Interim Town Manager and Planning Director; Bill Brown, Town Attorney; Chief Greg Ratchford; Joel Lineberger, Finance Director; and Wilene Cunningham, Town Clerk.

Call to Order and Determination of Quorum: Mayor Worley called the meeting to order and determined that a quorum was present.

Adoption of Agenda for this Meeting: Mayor Pro Tem Cauthen made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lawrence and approved by all.

Public Comment: No one signed up to speak.

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF AGENDA ITEMS NOT REQUIRING A PUBLIC HEARING:

Discussion and Possible Action to Approve the Proposed February 24, 2015 and March 3, 2015 Meeting Minutes. A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Cauthen to approve the proposed February 24, 2015 and March 3, 2015 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Koutsoupias and approved by all.

INTERIM TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT:

- *Update on Goat Island Walk Through on April 16:* Mr. Krouse stated that shrubs would be planted tomorrow. He stated he spoke to Cam Carpenter and was advised that flood debris was being picked up as the dog park and disc golf areas were recently flooded. A French drain system may need to be considered for the dog park. New ropes have been installed on the playground equipment. Lighting will be completed by Duke Energy by Friday. The plaque will arrive tomorrow and the programs are being printed. Commissioner Ware requested tents be available at the grand opening event.
- *Lakewood Greenway Update:* Mr. Krouse stated approval for the eight foot trail has not been received by NCDOT. The reduction from ten foot to eight foot will create an approximate savings of \$100,000.00. The Carolina Thread Trail application for \$68,000.00 has been completed.
- *Villages at Cramerton Mills Update:* Mr. Krouse stated a meeting is scheduled with Nick Parker at the end of next week. The water line connection to Hamrick Road and New Hope Road is being redesigned to save a tree at the church. Five houses are being planned to be constructed by June. PSNC is installing their utility lines. A possible unveiling date is being considered for October.
- *Arbor Day:* The joint Arbor Day celebration is scheduled for Saturday from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Stowe Park. Next year's celebration will be held on Goat Island.
- *Central Park Study:* Mr. Krouse distributed copies to the Board of the final Central Park Study which included phasing.

Discussion and Possible Action to Approve the Engineering Services Agreement with Withers & Ravenel to design and engineer the Lakewood Greenway Project. Mr. Krouse stated NCDOT reviewed the agreement for engineering services and cost estimates. Attorney

Brown also reviewed the agreement and item #10 Ownership of Documents was amended. Attorney Brown stated this was due to intellectual property and we have joint use. Mayor Pro Tem Cauthen asked about indemnification. Attorney Brown stated this was included and had been agreed upon. A motion was made by Commissioner Koutsoupas to approve the agreement for engineering services agreement with Withers & Ravenel, Inc. to design and engineer the Lakewood Greenway Project. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Cauthen and approved by all.

Discussion of FY15-16 Budget:

The Finance Director stated May 5th is the proposed date to present a balanced budget. He explained that Officer Marlow had been placed on full time status with the police department and an additional full time officer would be added in January 2016. Mr. Lineberger addressed ad valorem revenue and sales and tax revenue. An increase is expected due to the revaluation of property. He stated the interlocal police services agreement with the Town of McAdenville increased \$22,500.00. The Finance Director stated the budgeted amount for the franchise tax was based on the past five years. He stated there was a balance remaining for the sale of property on Hamrick Road to VCM Bowman. Attorney Brown stated the closing for this property sale could occur prior to June 30, 2015. Mr. Lineberger stated the budget could be scheduled for approval at the June 2, 2015 Board meeting. The Finance Director stated Gaston County Tax Office has had few appeals regarding the revaluations. New construction includes the South Fork Village Apartments and no recommendation was given to increase the Town's property tax rate. Mr. Lineberger stated the addition of a tag fee would increase revenue by \$15,000.00 at a rate of \$5.00 per vehicle. No action was taken to add this fee.

The Finance Director stated departmental employment expenses are normally 48 to 50 percent and average 48.04 percent this year. A payroll audit will be conducted this year by Collis and Associates. The fuel usage cost remains consistent with prior years. The cost for street lighting increased due to the addition of lighting for the Goat Island Bridge. The other operating expense line allows for discretionary spending of approximately 18 percent.

The Finance Director stated to balance the budget as proposed would require \$215,000.00. He stated there is a self-imposed 40 percent reserve in the fund balance and is beyond what is necessary by LGC recommendations. Commissioner Koutsoupas commented on the possibility of reducing costs by producing the Town's newsletter quarterly instead of monthly and updating the Town's website. Mr. Krouse stated the Town's website needed to be upgraded and to be maintained by a company rather than the Town's staff. Quotes are being requested for the cost of an update to the website. Commissioner Ware stated the information in the newsletter is mainly Parks and Recreation. Mr. Krouse stated other forms of social media could be used and suggested the possible design of a phone app. Commissioner Koutsoupas asked if an intern was utilized every year. Mayor Pro Tem Cauthen stated it is a good program when well managed. Mr. Krouse stated Chief Ratchford was working on the last two sections regarding codification and this should be sent to American Legal in this fiscal year.

Commissioner Koutsoupas asked about the police department salaries. The Finance Director stated fourteen officers are on payroll and an additional officer will be added as January 1, 2016.

Mayor Pro Tem Cauthen addressed the paving projects. Mr. Krouse stated Front Street is in the top five streets to be considered for paving and will require the construction of curb guttering and sidewalk. A traffic count needs to be conducted. Commissioner Koutsoupas asked about the contract renewal for Dixie Lawn. Mr. Krouse stated the contract renewal would occur in June. Commissioner Ware commented that Dixie Lawn provides additional services that they do not bill for. Chief Ratchford stated the firing range is maintained by Dixie Lawn at no cost. No increase in contract cost is expected.

Commissioner Koutsoupas asked about the status of this year's farmer's market. Commissioner Lawrence stated the farmer's market will not be held this year. She explained that there was a lack of vendors and a farmer's market manager was needed. Mr. Krouse stated someone needs to be available to organize this event and several local markets allow a lead farmer to be in charge. Discussion was held regarding the number of man hours required for proper advertising and the setup of tents and the possible use of volunteers and members for the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and the Beautification Committee. Attorney Brown stated the Town of Cornelius has opened two community gardens and this is working out well. Chief Ratchford commented on the costs of events that involve the services of the police and fire department.

Commissioner Koutsoupas asked if a fee is charged. Chief Ratchford stated all departments affected present the cost of services but it is not always collected.

The Finance Director stated he spoke with the City of Gastonia regarding the CWMTF Project and right of way agreements with Pharr Yarns and permitting from Southern Railroad. Commissioner Lawrence asked about the status of placing the Veterans Memorial and permission from the railroad to place the memorial at the location of the old railroad depot. Commissioner Lawrence asked about the railroad removing the building on Mayflower and painting the trestle.

Discussion was held regarding the costs associated with maintaining the Town's assets. The initial cost would be \$850,000.00 over the course of the next four years. Discussion was held regarding consideration of a bond. Mayor Worley stated it was important to inform the citizens of when action would be taken regarding paving of the streets. Mayor Pro Tem Cauthen stated the overall plan needs to be reviewed. Mr. Krouse stated there will be a cost each time equipment is mobilized.

Mr. Krouse stated the fire department location study will be ready for review at the next Board meeting. Mr. Steve Allan will be presenting information at the May 5th Board meeting. Mayor Pro Tem Cauthen asked about contacting a commercial developer. Mr. Krouse stated the monies would need to be spent in two years.

BUSINESS ITEMS/TOPICS OF DISCUSSION FOR EACH COMMISSIONER:

Commissioner Ware had nothing to report.

Commissioner Koutsoupas had nothing to report.

Mayor Pro Tem Cauthen had nothing to report.

Commissioner Lawrence stated they would be landscaping at the Goat Island Bridge on Saturday.

Mayor Worley stated a networking event was being held at the Chronicle Mill in Belmont tonight.

A five minute recess was called prior to entering into closed session.

CLOSED SESSION: A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Cauthen to enter into closed session. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ware and approved by all.

A motion was made by Commissioner Koutsoupas and seconded by Commissioner Lawrence to enter into open session. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

ADJOURNMENT: Upon returning to open session, there being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Ware to adjourn the meeting at 8:19 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lawrence and approved by all.

Mayor Ronnie Worley

ATTEST:

Wilene Cunningham, Town Clerk