

**TOWN OF SEAGROVE  
MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING  
December 4, 2012**

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Mayor Hale. Commissioners in attendance were: Latham, Mullin, Hewitt, and Luther.

**A. Approval of Minutes and Treasurer's Report**

Items approved by motion were:

1. Minutes for November 6 were presented for review. After review, motion to accept the November minutes was made by Commissioner Mullin with second by Commissioner Luther. Motion carried unanimously. Minutes will be posted on the Town website within a few days.

2. Treasurer's Report for November was presented for review. Mayor Hale asked for clarification on Police Dept. Salary expense. Commissioner Mullin asked about water bill for the park and for clarification on differences between the layout of the Treasurers Report and the YTD vs. Budget Report. Commissioner Luther asked about the expense for animal control paid to the county. Commissioner Mullin stated that she thought Council agreed to not have the animal control expense in the budget for the year. Mayor Hale stated that animal control does not seem to be utilized. Commissioner Hewitt stated that the response from the animal control officers is slow, taking 2-3 days before arrival. The invoices for the first two quarters of the fiscal year have been paid and the county will be contacted for a refund and to cancel the service. Motion to accept the Treasurers Report made by Commissioner Hewitt with second by Commissioner Mullin. Motion carried unanimously.

**B. Police Report:**

Police Chief Maness gave the Police report. He detailed the number of miles driven (925), hours worked during November were 177 with 31 field interviews and 6 warrants served and 11 warrants drawn. Nine traffic citations were given with 3 written and 22 verbal warnings. There were 5 motorist assists, one officer assist, and 7 traffic directions given for the month. Alarm calls were 2 with 10 miscellaneous calls and 3 escorts. A larceny of 3 large HVAC units occurred at H&H Furniture valued at \$36K but one suspect has been arrested and further investigation is ongoing.

Mayor Hale then asked Chief Maness for an update on the status of the police car which was discussed in the November Council meeting. Chief Maness provided Council with handouts for state bid on vehicles where better deals are found. Additional items are needed to get the car up to police specifications. Total cost of a new car is \$26.8K. The Chief reminded Council about the status of the current cars and the mileage of each. Vibration and oil usage are of concern to

the officers. Chief Maness added that the cars must be in good condition in the event of a high speed pursuit. Unreliable equipment adds to the danger of such episodes. There is also the possibility of civil liability when equipment is not up to standards. Chief Maness explained that we have to look at all aspects rather than just the cost. He recommended acquiring a new car now and then in 3-4 years acquiring another new car and thus implementing a managed system where cars are turned over on a scheduled basis and avoiding a substandard fleet with high maintenance costs. This problem cannot continue to be deferred or police effectiveness will diminish. A possible used car would cost \$16,500 which has 30K miles. Chief Maness feels that a car like this already has problems or would not be for sale. A new car would last for 10-12 years and would likely be a better investment.

Mayor Hale asked about repair cost estimates on the existing car. Police Commissioner Mullin reported that he obtained options and estimates from a couple of repair shops. He stated that the mechanic reported that the engine and shock system are in good condition but that the transmission torque converter is bad. The transmission can be rebuilt or a used transmission can be installed. The last option is to park the car until it can be used for trade-in on a new car. However, trade-in value on this car would be only \$1,200-\$1,500 with the bad transmission. Commissioner Mullin stated that we all would like to get the new car but the problem is where the money will come from to purchase it. The money is not in the budget and she suggested that the current car be fixed and used until the new budget year. Perhaps tax revenues driven by sales from the new grocery store will provide sufficient funds for a new car. Commissioner Latham stated that due to the type of idle time on a police car, 13 miles should be added for each hour that the car is in service to account for true wear and tear mileage on the car. Commissioner Luther stated that she sees the need for a new car but does not know from where the money will come. Mayor Hale said that with 100% financing, payments will be \$5,600 per year. Commissioner Mullin said that next year budgeted revenues will already be \$5,000 lower because of the likely loss of the Hold Harmless tax proceeds from the state. The county property revaluation will not take place until 2013 or 2014 so new proceeds cannot be counted in next year's budget. Mayor Hale asked how long the price of the car was good for and Chief Maness explained that the cars are moved through the state bid process and are continually changing. Mayor Hale questioned the wisdom of spending over \$2,000 on a car valued at only \$1,200-\$1,500. He recommended that the transmission be fixed to get the car to the new budget year and then try to incorporate the cost into that budget. Commissioner Hewitt asked about the possibility of obtaining grant money for the new car. Chief Maness stated that their efforts on this were unsuccessful. Greta Lint explained that grants run in 6-month to 1-year cycles and that if the cycle is missed, you have to wait until the next cycle to apply. Further, she stated that Federal grants may be lower due to the condition of the Federal budget. Chief Maness mentioned that he had contacted the Federal Government about grants and was told that they had no money.

After suggestion from the audience regarding a local transmission specialist and further discussion among the Council, Commissioner Mullin made a motion to seek repair/rebuild of the transmission for an amount not to exceed \$950.00. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hewitt. Commissioner Latham stated that it was just putting a band aid on the problem. Police Commissioner Mullin mentioned that the money would come from the police budget but other repairs and maintenance to the police vehicles would have to come from the Town reserves. Motion passed unanimously.



Sergeant Auman was called on by Chief Maness to report on an on-going situation in town on one street in particular. He detailed the activities and efforts by the police department thus far. He is receiving frequent calls on his personal cell phone from residents but none of them are willing to get more involved to help solve the problem. He suggested adding street lights in the area if there were power poles on which to mount them. Further, police officers are working during off-duty hours in an effort to bring a solution. Chief Maness asked for the public to dial 911 when they are reporting an incident rather than the police officer's personal phone. This allows a record to be made of the call and, if Seagrove Police officers are not on duty, the County Sheriff's office can respond. Mayor Hale asked Chief Maness to provide a count of poles and lights on the street so that additional lights can be added. Chief Maness said that the department would continue in their efforts to bring this problem to a successful resolution.

### **C. Committee Reports:**

Commissioner Latham had nothing to report for the Public Safety Committee.

Commissioner Mullin reported that the landscape contractor planned to add some mulch around the shrubs and trees at the park. In addition, he plans to perform some maintenance on the road to the picnic shelter and clear some of the undergrowth around the restroom area.

Commissioner Luther reported that the committee for the Centennial Celebration had conducted another meeting but that plans were on hold until after the Holiday season. She called on Eddie Vonnannon, who reported that volunteers were being sought and different ideas were being discussed. One suggestion is for year-long activities with flags being posted around town and cost estimates are being reviewed. Another activity being discussed is a simple map to provide to tourists with various buildings and businesses highlighted with a brief history. There are many ideas being considered for the celebration phase. The location is being discussed with the type of format under consideration. Fundraising and volunteerism will be critical to the effort. Children's games and activities that can be done inexpensively are also under consideration. Meetings to further the planning will start again in January. Commissioner Luther then recommended that a service for leaf pick-up be considered for next fall.

Commissioner Hewitt deferred to Planning & Zoning Board Chair Emily Coltrane to report on their recent activities. Chair Coltrane explained the request by Community One to change their sign and the results based on the new scenic overlay plan. Commissioner Hewitt made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Planning & Zoning Board regarding the sign. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mullin and approved unanimously.

Chair Coltrane then said that the Board discussed the banner sign at Snow Hill Pottery. This issue had been discussed in September with Clerk Knowles instructed to send a letter at that time. The letter had not been sent due to a telephone conversation with Knowles and visit by Commissioner Hewitt with the owner and promises to have the banner sign replaced with a conforming permanent sign. After discussion, Commissioner Mullin made a motion to have Clerk Knowles prepare and mail a letter giving the owner 30 days to rectify the situation or be subjected to a fine of \$25 per day thereafter. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Luther and approved unanimously.

The final item presented by Chair Coltrane was to address pedestrian traffic at the Business 220 and Hwy 705 intersection and installation of a crosswalk. Mayor Hale explained that the NCDOT will not approve a crosswalk without having sidewalks in place. Sidewalks have been discussed in the past and easements are in place but grant opportunities for sidewalks have expired long ago. However, Mayor Hale explained that if Council wants to reopen the issue, Powell Bill money could be a possibility for funding. Mayor Hale stated that he would contact Commissioner Edmonds to solicit bids for installation of sidewalks at the intersection and extending into the immediate downtown area. Commissioner Luther made a motion for solicitation of bids with second by Commissioner Hewitt. Motion passed unanimously. Location of existing and future sewer lines will be taken into consideration as sidewalks are planned.

Clerk Knowles reported that problems with the wireless internet in town hall continued to happen sporadically. The best solution would be to install a hard wire connection to the internet server. A member of the audience stated that he had the appropriate wire and would install it.

Mayor Hale then brought up an item of old business to the Council. He has been recently informed that the Town had not issued a resolution exempting the Town from soliciting requests for qualifications for engineers on the water and sewer project. The project was originally started and the engineering firm hired by others and the Water Dept. joined in. The Town came in later and continued to use the same engineering firm. A resolution approved by Council exempting Four Seasons Furniture, Fresh Cuts Grocery, Seagrove/Ulah Water District and the Town of Seagrove will be needed for the project since the overall engineering fees will be less than the \$30,000.00 threshold required by statute. After approval, this resolution will be sent to the NC Rural Center. Motion to accept resolution made by Commissioner Mullin with second by Commissioner Luther. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **D. New Business/Discussion:**

Mayor Hale introduced Chris Underwood with the Central Carolina Soccer Association. Mr. Underwood detailed the history and changes within their organization and their desire to partner with the town under a long term arrangement to utilize the park to conduct soccer tournaments. These tournaments will bring out of town participants and their families to Seagrove while will increase exposure of the town on many levels. Mr. Underwood proposed to rejuvenate the lower field with clean-up and changes, move parking areas to increase fields for play and to bring in gravel and level out a new area for parking. The fields would be used for youth and adult leagues. The changes would also benefit the baseball programs currently in place. There will be a meeting at 4:00 p.m. on January 7, 2013 in which this topic will be discussed further. Ultimately, the final plans will be brought back to Town Council for acceptance and approval.

Mayor Hale called on Commissioner Mullin to discuss the possibility of replacing the existing sign at the park with a lighted marquee sign on which to make announcements concerning upcoming events and tournaments. There would certainly be no change to the name of the park. There was discussion as to funding for the sign and alternatives were mentioned. Mayor Hale



called for a motion to look into this possibility and pricing which was made by Commissioner Hewitt. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Mullin. Motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Hale then announced that Clerk Knowles had accepted a full time position and would be unable to continue with the duties of the Town Clerk. Knowles had requested that Council begin to seek a replacement and would continue to work through a transition period with the new clerk. Mayor Hale indicated that Council had pursued a replacement and announced that Wendy Berry is being proposed as the new Town Clerk. Ms. Berry has a background in education and accounting and holds a Masters Degree in Accounting. She currently serves as instructor at Montgomery Community College. Motion to accept Ms. Berry as Deputy Town Clerk until Mr. Knowles' departure in 30 days was made by Commissioner Mullin with second by Commissioner Hewitt. Motion passed unanimously. Mrs. Berry was then sworn in as Deputy Town Clerk by Mayor Hale.

#### **E. Public Discussion:**

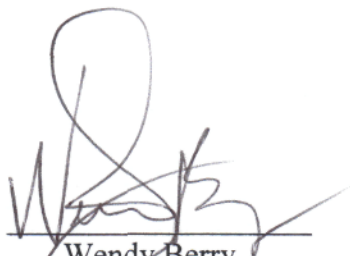
David Fernandez congratulated Council and the Town on a wonderful celebration with the Christmas Tree Lighting event. Mr. Fernandez said that the Spirit of Christmas was alive and well in Seagrove that evening. Mayor Hale explained that Council worked as volunteers and not as a body of government during this celebration due to 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment regulations. He and the Council members thanked all the volunteers who served to make the event special and successful. This was the third year of the community event and it has continued to grow in every way.

Commissioner Mullin mentioned that there is a food box outside of town hall for donations to the Food Bank for the Holiday Season. Suggestion was made by the community to ask attendees of next year's Christmas Tree Lighting to bring a can of food for the Food Bank. This will be considered for next year. A tree for the next event has already been donated as well.


Mayor Hale then recognized Gordon "Junior" Milks who recently passed away. Mr. Milks served on the Seagrove Town Council for 10 years. Mr. Milks was honored with a moment of silence during the meeting.

There being no other business to address, motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Mullin and seconded by Commissioner Luther. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

ATTEST:

  
Wendy Berry  
Town Clerk

TOWN OF SEAGROVE

  
Allen Hale, Mayor