

**TOWN OF SEAGROVE
MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
August 6, 2013**

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

A. Approval of Minutes and Treasurer's Report

Items approved by motion were:

1. Minutes for June 28 were presented for review. After review, motion to accept the June 28 minutes was made by Commissioner Edmonds with second by Commissioner Mullins. Motion carried unanimously. Minutes will be posted on the Town website within a few days.
2. Treasurer's Report for June 28 was presented for review. After review, a motion to accept the June 28 report was made by Commissioner Mullins with second by Commissioner Hewitt. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Police Report:

Police Chief Maness gave the Police report. He detailed the number of miles driven (1221), hours worked during July were 184 with 2 hours special assignment 27 field interviews, 1 warrant served, 1 warrant drawn, 1 criminal citation, 25 traffic citations with 2 written and 23 verbal warnings. There were 4 motorist assist, 1 officer assists, and 1 traffic direction. There was 1 domestic call, 5 alarm calls and 5 miscellaneous calls. There were 2 incident reports, and 23 miscellaneous reports filed. There was \$7.00 in recovered property and 80 building checks. This year so far the police department is up to 210 calls for the year, up from last year.

C. Committee Reports:

Commissioner Edmonds has had the pipe inspected that was repaired. The middle of it was broken and caved in and was packed with debris. The pipe has been replaced however, it is currently still not draining properly and Commissioner Edmonds has asked that the town withhold payment until it is corrected. Commissioner Edmonds was informed that the pipe was charged to the Town's account.

Commissioner Edmonds has had a problem lately with not getting call backs regarding the sidewalks. He has called seven people with no response. He will continue to try and make contact.

If we are going to replace the signs, the DOT will need to get a complete list so they can be ordered. Sergeant Auman will get the list to Commissioner Edmonds by the end of the week.

Commissioner Mullins stated that the road at the park was dug last month, but with all the rain we have had it is getting into bad shape again and will have to be done again. The playground equipment is in very bad shape at this time. Would like to try and find the money to purchase new equipment. She would also like to get a grill at the Park and a new trash can. Could possibly get the grill for \$150.00 or less. Eddie Blake volunteered to install the grill if the Town was able to get one. Commissioner Mullins made a motion to purchase a new grill and trash can for the picnic area at the park. Mayor Pro-Tem Luther seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

In regards to the playground equipment, the swings were recently removed due to safety issues. Some of the equipment that was suggested for the playground includes a see-saw, merry-go-round and a slide. It was also suggested that contact be made with Verizon to install a payphone near the playground. Commissioner Hewitt made a motion to have Commissioner Mullins begin looking into pricing for new playground equipment. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Edmonds. Motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Pro-Tem Luther turned the meeting over to Eddie VunCannon, Chairman of the Centennial Committee regarding an update on the Centennial Celebration. Chairman VunCannon is currently working on producing an event flyer for the celebration, draft copies were handed out. A Facebook page has been established with updates about the celebration and information regarding the history of Seagrove. Collecting pictures and actual material for the Celebration. Have also received a copy of a letter written by the first female mayor, the original by-laws of the town, and the deed that deeded all the roads to the town.

The sponsorship collection for the banners is going very slow. As of right now they have only collected approximately \$1,100. Carol King has donated the remaining proceeds from the Country Days fund, approximately \$3,853.00. Chairman VunCannon is looking at possibly doing some type of fundraising for banner sponsorship such as a \$25.00 memorial contribution banner. Mr. VunCannon has spoken with the Luck family regarding using the parking lot area for running shuttle service. He has received a quote from Holiday Tours for \$999.00 a piece and has also checked with PART regarding possibly donating use of a bus for approximately 12 hours. He will follow up with this.

Mr. VunCannon has contacted the DOT regarding getting the parade route okayed. Was also told that they have gotten away from providing detour signs for the parade and they stated that they cannot provide those, there is a cost of \$300.00 associated with using their signs. May need to check into getting detour signs made. Mayor Hale stated that he could check with Chief Maness on other options.

Game booths are going to be set up for non-profit organizations such as 4-H and the Boy Scouts to help in recruiting and also some of the local churches. He has talked with the local Christian Church about setting up an area near the shuttle buses with a tent to do a food drive to collect canned food and non-perishable foods. They need to set a deadline for the sponsorship of approximately August 25th.

Commissioner Hewitt has been busy this last month with Jeff Potts' rezoning and the sign for Dollar General. They have followed procedure on the Potts rezoning and will have to do the same for the sign variance that Dollar General has requested.

Mayor Hale announced that one of the Planning and Zoning Board Members, Paul Hopkins, has resigned effective immediately. Commissioner Mullins made a motion to accept the resignation of Mr. Hopkins. Mayor Pro-Tem Luther seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously. Commissioner Edmonds made a motion for Commissioner Hewitt to find a replacement for Mr. Hopkins. Mayor Pro-Tem Luther seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Eddie VunCannon, representative to the Seagrove/Ulah Water District Board brought forth an update about the water department. For general information, the water department cannot obtain a loan to upgrade the sewage system because the houses are not compact enough. All work that has been done has been done with grant money that is run through a municipality. At this time there are approximately 900 customers on the sewer system. The Town took out a \$1.9 million bond back in 1998 and the Water Department still owes approximately \$1.4 million on that bond and the yearly payment is approximately \$95,000 on the interest.

Black Lake is owned by the Baptist Association. They purchased half of it and the rest was through grant money. Some of the projects have been totally grant funded with different places providing matching funds.

In regards to Con-Agri, Mr. VunCannon stated that he continues to hear that it was stolen from the town. He also stated that there could be a "personal conflict of interest, business conflict of interest and family conflict of interest". He commented about a great article that was written about the competing festival in the area, but stated that he did not mention the "family conflict of interest" so it was not quite as effective as it could have been.

The next item of business was regarding the Water Department moving and the new building that has been proposed. They are close to putting out bids for it. They have voted to reduce the size of the building. Mr. VunCannon stated that he questions how they can be building a new building when there still isn't any sewage in town yet. He feels that the reason for this is because they cannot go out and get a loan. They are currently renting the facility they are in at this time. Mr. VunCannon stated that "in a way I am glad they did move out because there are two different types of groups in the town and I'd be afraid that if they were still here there would be fist fights". A question was

raised on how they are currently paying the rent and the rent is being paid through profit off the water payments made by the citizens.

Currently there are four projects in the works by the Water Department which includes the new building, a new 311 system (GIS System) which has currently been put on hold, the new Hydraulic study. A group had approached them that do this work. They were going to come up with a grant and the water department was going to match it (approximately \$9,000) to tell them the water pressure on the system. It included a computer program. This is on hold at this time due to the issues with the NC Rural Center. The final project is a pump screen at the lagoon to replace the metal screen that has rusted out.

In regards to the new pump station, Mr. VunCannon stated that he "keeps hearing that when the funding comes through, that the Town should get a cut of it." This is for the new pump that was just brought on-line and there are few residents who are currently hooked into this. A comment was made that most towns own their own water department and Mr. VunCannon stated that "yeah the majority of them do, but that's in the past. See, like people have said, it was stolen from the town, it was unethical behavior."

Mr. VunCannon then stated that he feels that since he has been appointed to the Water Board that the Council wants him to come back with the minutes and treasurer reports from the meetings. He would like for the town to contact the water department and request copies of the minutes be mailed to the town and that there would be a fee for obtaining these, and that we should annually ask for the financial reports. It was noted that the annual Financial Statement used to be put out at the library in the past, but has not been made public for the last 5 years or so. The Mayor asked Clerk Morse to contact the Water Department and request copies of the minutes and treasurer reports and to find out what the cost is for the copies of these reports and the map of the sewer lines that the Zone Board had requested. The Mayor and the Council just wants to see the Water Department be more open where trust can be established with the Board of the Water Department.

In order to be able to speak at the Water Board Meetings, you must contact Donnie Lassiter at Southern Wholesale in Asheboro to be able to be put on the schedule. The Mayor recommends that the water customers attend the meetings, present a copy of The Sunshine Law and make the point that the monthly meetings are to be open meetings.

Regarding the usage of the fire hydrant to fill trucks, this is supposed to be on the Honor System.

Mayor Hale apologized to the community that was in attendance because most of what had been discussed is not Town business, but there have been many phone calls and emails to himself and council members and he felt like it really needed to be brought out

to the public to have some understanding. Commissioner Edmonds thanked Eddie VunCannon for the work that he is doing on the Water Board.

Town Clerk Morse presented a report on the privilege licenses that have been received. Fifty to sixty were sent out and to date have received twenty-six back so far. Clerk Morse also presented a bill for the Randolph County Animal control cost of \$524.00. There was a total of \$600.00 budgeted for this cost. Commissioner Mullins made a motion to approve payment of this invoice. Commissioner Edmonds seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Hale presented the final bills from Summy Engineering, two bills, which are both 100% reimbursable from the Rural Center because it was figured into the grant itself. They must first see a check from the Town to the Administrator (Summy Engineering) before reimbursing this. One bill is for \$24,300 the other is \$480.00 for a total of \$24,780 which is 100% reimbursable. Once they receive our check they will issue a refund to us in approximately 60 days. Commissioner Edmonds made a motion to pay these invoices out of the general fund and once reimbursed that they be put back into the general fund. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mullins. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Hale read a Thank you Card received from Linda Latham Skeene, Bruce Latham and Mike Latham.

Chairman of the Planning Board David Fernandez stated that Dollar General submitted a sign request last month that was outside the zoning regulations and their request was denied. He spoke with Rich and the realtor to let them know what they need to do to get the size sign they want, which is to request a variance. Commissioner Mullins, Hewitt and Chairman Fernandez went to the new store in Candor to see their sign and did not think it was disproportionate. They will be closing on the property on the 15th of August and plan to be in full construction mode by the end of the first week of September. The Zoning committee unanimously approved the recommendation to accept the variance. Mayor Hale called a Special Called Meeting for Saturday, August 24th at 1:00 for a public hearing.

D. Public Hearing:

Commissioner Mullins made a motion to close out of council and go into a Board of Adjusters session, which Commissioner Hewitt seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

The Board of Adjustors asked for any input as to the rezoning request of Mr. Jeff Potts to rezone his property to residential restricted. There were not questions or comments.

Commissioner Mullins made a motion to close as Board of Adjustors and return to session as Town Council. Mayor Pro-Tem Luther seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Hewitt made a motion to accept the rezoning request from Mr. Potts for property #011306/013378 as restricted residential. Commissioner Mullins seconded, motion passed unanimously.

E. Community Business:

Ed Blake stated that he appreciates all that the board has done at the park. Mr. Blake showed the council pictures of the improvements made since he took over working at the park. Both outfields have been re-seeded. The soccer association recently had 27 teams from all over the state at a tournament recently.

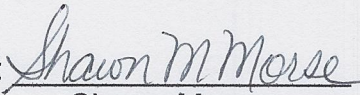
Mr. Blake requested that he be added to the agenda at next months meeting for some business. Request was approved.

He has recently had the school fields turned over to him and they are being used as practice fields. There is a trash issue at this location and he needs new trash cans since he is unable to use the ones for the school grounds.

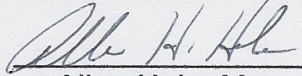
Commissioner Edmonds made a motion to have one trash can placed at the school fields to assist with the trash needs, which are not maintained by the county. Mayor Pro-Tem seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

There being no other business to address, motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Edmonds and seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Luther. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

ATTEST:


Shawn Morse
Town Clerk

TOWN OF SEAGROVE


Allen Hale, Mayor

I would like to start out saying, that I do not hate nor have malice towards anyone. I was raised to respect people, even when I disagreed with their actions. I try not to be judgmental, of people's motives I've always figured that was God's job not mine. With that being said, I would like to respond to a recent article written by an individual who claims to be an investigative reporter.

There were several things written about the council and myself that were either half-truth or things that were just his opinion (is that investigative reporting). I only want to bring up a few items because of time, however if you the citizens of this town or the surrounding area have any questions, I, or any council member will be happy to answer your questions.

A little background as to how this got started. I was asked by the reporter to meet with him at Town Hall. He stated that he had heard about Seagrove and wanted to find out about some of the things going on. He said also that he wrote for an on-line paper and many times his articles were picked up by magazines. I am always excited to talk about the great things going on in our town and looked at this as an opportunity to show others outside of the town that Seagrove is back. After just a few minutes into the interview I began to realize that he was only interested in the contract with Ed Blake and the Carolina Bats. I asked Mr. Ballentine why he didn't ask about things like the new grocery store or what the new business coming to town was that had everyone talking (this was during the time that people had heard a new business was wanting to build a new store) or any other things and why his questions only had to do with the Carolina Bats. I said "you're not even asking about the Soccer Association which also plays at the park under contract". His response was that he had received phone calls about the baseball contract and was there to find out about it. I ended the meeting and told him that in the future if he wanted to meet about the park that I would have Ed Blake, Chris Underwood (Carolina Soccer Association), Ruby Mullin (park commissioner) and our town attorney present. After he left I contacted our attorney to let him know what was going on.

1. The article said that I told the Town Clerk not to give the reporter any information. This is not completely true. I did tell The Town Clerk, not to give any information to the reporter until our attorney had seen what he was requesting. This was done to protect the town.
2. About the SBI letter. Mr. Walker accused me of embezzlement of \$300 when I took the check written by First Bank for the Christmas tree for the first Christmas Tree Lighting and bought the tree. The check was made out to the Town of Seagrove because at the time the bank, said, "they were unsure who to write it to". Since I had been the one to ask them for the donation they wrote it to the town. Receipts were given to the bank for the tree in which the check was written and showed it was deposited by the Tree Farm. When Mr. Walker made the accusation of this I produced copies of the receipts to each council member, the Town Clerk and the Town Auditor. The issue was dropped. No investigation was

ever requested to my knowledge. I have never been contacted by anyone about this since.

3. The contract with the Seagrove Athletic Association and Carolina Bats. When I first became Mayor one thing that had bothered me was the fact Seagrove had used over \$1,000 of each man, woman and child in tax money building a park that was not being used except in a few cases. I met with Seagrove Athletic Association members who were using the park for t-ball games only. I asked why they weren't using the park for regular games and was informed that the fields were unplayable. I asked how much would it take to make the fields playable and was told about \$3,000. I told them to come up with a business plan showing how the town could be repaid for this investment. Months later we (the Town Council) had still not heard anything. It was in the paper about the fields not being used and that we hoping to be able find a solution so they could be used on a regular bases. Mr. Blake called me and asked if I would meet him at the park after reading the article. He said he represented a local travel baseball group named the Carolina Bats and that they would like a chance to upgrade the fields and use them for travel ball and maybe local ball for the kids, girls and boys. I told Mr. Blake that I would give him the same chance that I had given the Seagrove Athletic Association that they needed to come up with business plan and present it to council. The next month he and his group did just that. The council was so impressed that awarded him his first contract. After hearing of this, the SAA headed by its president protested and the next month presented a business plan that mirrored the Carolina Bats plan. The council went back and forth about the situation deciding to give the Seagrove Athletic Association use of the fields for local ball the first part of the season and the Bats the latter part of the season. Scott Auman and Ruby Mullin were made Park Commissioners to over see the contracts. The first year the Seagrove did nothing it said it would and the contract was awarded to the Bats. During this time Mayor Pro tem Scott Auman suddenly resigned from the board for personal reasons and the council voted to put Mike Walker on the council as his replacement. Mr. Walker, along with his sister-in-laws, (one town council member and the other who served as Town Clerk) tried to kill the contract with the Bats. Mr. Walker brought up Mr. Blake's criminal record at the time and said that he did not deserve a chance to work with our kids. Commissioner David Garner stated that he too had a criminal record, but was given a second chance and felt that Ed deserved a second chance as well. Council voted to give the contract to The Carolina Bats and Ed Blake 3 to 2. Only Mr. Walker and his sister-in-law Barbara Graves voted against the contract.
4. The Carolina Bats awarded a new contract. The Bats were signed to new contract when the hired Mr. Frank Marley as it's attorney. Mr. Marley discovered several problems and spoke at a council meeting about his concerns. The council voted to chance some of the items after advise from the attorney to make things clearer. A new contract had to be drawn up showing these changes.

5. The Bats not paying bills owed the town. The contracts from the start have included that the Seagrove Athletic Association and Carolina Bats pay the utilities at the park. This included water, power and gas. Since no gas is used at this time at the park this has never been an issue. Power has been paid for by the Carolina Bats since the second contract after they put the power in their name. Since that time no money has been paid for power to the town. As far as the water bill is concerned until we (the council) were made aware that Mr. Blake was unable to put the concession stand water bill separate from the towns water bill at the park, we just kept paying the bill. The original Town Clerk on the contract (Cathy McCaskill) did not pass on information to the next town clerk that this problem existed. Once council was made aware of the problem a solution was reached to bill the water bill then bill the Carolina Bats and the Carolina Soccer Association one third each as their part. The council took into consideration all the work and money Carolina Bats and the Carolina Soccer Association had put into making the park fields and concession area so beautiful that they forgave them of their respective parts. This amounted to about \$700 for each group.
6. As to the issue of the \$17,000 that the town is in the red. According to our Auditor, it was reported to Council that Randolph County had not collected all of the taxes due Seagrove from what was projected in its share. This caused a short fall of \$17,000. He said this would probably show as a \$17,000 overage next year after the taxes were collected. He stated that this happens from time to time and was not because of any over expediters by the council or Mayor. The town stayed within its budget based on the projected revenues from the County and State.
7. The article ended with someone writing in about the fact that I had lost the sidewalk grant of \$31,920. I have 2 letters from Cathy McCaskill dated February 5, 2010 and February 8, 2010 showing that we received the grant on 12/28/2010 and even has the contract number awarded by the state.

I hope this will put to rest some of the false accusations by this so-called investigative reporter. For the last 4 years I have endured constant bad mouthing and lies from certain people in town and have been staked on a regular bases. I hope the people of this great little town will not allow this actively to continue with the next administration. I have heard for years that are 2 groups in this town, my question is why? Seagrove needs to come together and find a way to work with each other and not be so full of hatred. I thank you for this time and pray for each of you.

Sincerely,

Allen H. Hale
Mayor of Seagrove, NC