

**TOWN OF SEAGROVE
MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
September 3, 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:

Minutes for August 6 were presented for review. After review, motion to accept the 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.

Minutes for the August 24th Special Call Meeting were presented for review. After review, motion to accept the minutes was made by Commissioner Edmonds with a second by Commissioner Hewitt. Motion carried unanimously. Minutes will be posted on the Town website within a few days.

Treasurer's Report for August 6 was presented for review. After review, a motion to accept the Treasurer's report was made by Commissioner Mullins with second by Commissioner Edmonds. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Police Report:

The Police report was presented by Chief Maness. He detailed the number of miles driven (1808), hours worked during August were 215.5 with 5 hours special assignment at Seagrove School, and 7 hours in court. There were 42 field interviews, 8 warrants served, 2 warrants drawn, 2 on view arrests, 2 criminal citations, 20 traffic citations, 1 written warning, 29 verbal warnings, 5 pedestrian/motorist assists, and 7 officer assists. There were 2 alarm calls and 4 miscellaneous calls. There were 6 incident reports, 3 follow up reports and 30 miscellaneous reports filed. There was a ½ a pill seized at a value of \$10.00, 4 grams of meth with a value of \$300-\$400.00. There was \$76.00 in recovered property and 94 building checks. The new police car was also on display for the public to see.

C. Committee Reports:

Commissioner Edmonds reported that the culvert still has not been completely repaired and was just informed tonight that the contractor has requested that he contact him. He will follow up on this call.

Commissioner Mullins stated that Keith is getting gravel laid down on the bottom part of the road at the park due to wash out by the rain. Mayor Hale asked if Commissioner Mullins had looked into the playground equipment. She has, and has found that it is very important. Ed Blake gave Commissioner Mullins information about a website that sells used playground equipment for her to check on.

Mayor Pro-Tem Luther updated the information on the Centennial Celebration scheduled for September 21st. Eddie VonCannon had a meeting with the group that is working on the event. Everything is in place at the library, just need to get set in the order that they are going to show it in. Mr. VonCannon then passed out copies of a magazine article in the Outreach Magazine out of Southern Pines. Our State Magazine may have a write up and The Courier Tribune is going to have one as well on the Sunday prior to the event. Once the banners are complete there are going to be 21 along Main Street and 19 on Broad Street. The total for the Banners is \$2,480.00 and approximately \$1,700.00 for the hardware. The TDA has agreed to donate \$2,500 toward this cost. Permission has been granted by the DOT to block off Plank Road for the festival.

Currently there are 8 churches that will be doing games and fundraising activities and 7 civic organizations that will have a booth. Mayor Hale noted that a Vendor Permit will have to be submitted.

Commissioner Hewitt had nothing new to report. However, the Planning and Zoning committee has not currently found a replacement for Mr. Hopkins place on the board. Commissioner Hewitt and Chairman Fernandez have decided to wait on the nomination for this position.

Town Clerk Morse presented a report on the privilege licenses that have been received. To date there have been a total of \$950.00 in privilege licenses. There are still a few that need to be sent in.

Mayor Hale announced that the Town Hall now has a new answering machine that was donated to the town by an individual. It is currently working.

D. Old Business:

Mayor Hale stated that there have been some questions in regards to the Town Seal being used by the potters. It was found that there was no trademark for the seal and potters could not use it due to these issues. The creator of the seal, Glenda Little, originally had donated the Seal to the Town for their use. The Town Attorney Frank Marley was questioned about what the town needs to do to use or patent the Seal. He is not able to give an opinion on this matter due to not being familiar with Patent/Trademark laws. Commissioner Mullin made a motion to have Mayor Pro-Tem

Luther speak with Ms. Little regarding usage of the Town Seal, Commissioner Hewitt seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

E. New Business:

Mayor Hale introduced Dennette Lilly, who had recently approached the Mayor in regard to growing the Christmas Tree Lighting event by adding a parade prior to the tree lighting. Ms. Lilly stated that she would like to keep the same parade route that was used at the Country Days festival. She has already spoken with Chief Needham at the Fire Department and Chief Maness about helping out. She wants to have Santa Claus as the final person in the parade riding on the fire truck. She has secured Van Denton from Fox 8 as the Grand Marshall of the parade and has a call in to Senator Tillman to be one of our political figures. A car has been secured for him to ride in. Still in need of a vehicle for Van Denton, but is working on this. The parade will be December 7th. They will begin lining up at 4:30 and the parade will start at 5:00. She has churches and other civic organizations involved. Commissioner Mullin made a motion for the Town to sanction this event as a Holiday Parade, Mayor Pro-Tem Luther seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Mullin then made a motion to have Dennette Lilly as the Chairman of the Holiday parade, Commissioner Edmonds seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Hale then introduced Harrison McNeil, a local student who is working on a project that involves the Town through the LIFT program in Asheboro. Harrison asked for approval to do a 5K Run/Walk on November 9th beginning at 8:00 a.m., with the proceeds for this event going to the Christians United of Southern Randolph County to stock the food pantry. The cost is going to be \$15.00 for Runners, \$10.00 for Walkers prior to the event and \$20.00 for Runners and \$15.00 for Walkers on the day of the event. Chief Maness has helped Mr. McNeil develop the route for the run/walk event. Commissioner Edmonds made a motion that the Town allows this event. Commissioner Mullin seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Hale then introduced Ed Blake, of the Carolina Bats Traveling Baseball team. Mr. Blake began his discussion with a grant that was given to the Town to provide upgrades to the park back in 1999 with matching funds by the town. He gave an overview of what has been done with the park over the past three years. He provided pictures of what has been done with the park since he took over the contract on the park. Commissioner Edmonds made a motion to have the Attorney look over any documentation that Mr. Blake has for further investigation. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Luther and the motion passed unanimously.

E. Community Business:

Potter Phil Morgan addressed the meeting and stated that he met with the DOT last week in regards to the exit change on Hwy 220. He is working with them trying to get an area attraction sign installed at Exit 61. The DOT is requiring \$1,200.00 per year for this sign. The three non-profits in the area are trying to get that fee lowered. He stated that traffic has really decreased in the area since the exits were changed approximately 6 weeks ago. Ed Blake offered to allow the area potters to advertise at the ball fields as well.

Fred Johnston came forward regarding the increase in the Privilege License and Vendor fees this year. He stated his displeasure in this increase. Mayor Hale explained to Mr. Johnston that this increase was suggested by a local potter and that all businesses in the Town are affected by this. The council had a choice to either increase these Privilege Fees or raise taxes.

Bonnie Burns requested a copy of the Special Event Ordinance for her review.

Mr. David Journagin brought up the issue about the condition of Wayman Road. Commissioner Edmonds again reiterated that they have been working on the culvert on that street that was stopped up and he is working with the contractor to complete this project. He also stated that when this project is completed the pot holes on other streets will be patched as well.

Mr. Journagin then commented about the lack of playground equipment at the park. Mayor Hale informed them that the Council is in the process of trying to get new playground equipment; however, the cost is very high for new equipment. Commissioner Mullin was given information about a website that sells slightly used equipment which she will look at.

Ed Blake then came forward again and provided documentation of what he has spent for electricity at the park along with insurance for the park.

Bonnie Burns stated that she noticed that there are two to three signs missing throughout town, Walker Ave being one of them. Mayor Hale requested Chief Maness to make a list of any missing Town signs and forward that information to Commissioner Edmonds.

Mayor Hale then gave an explanation about the recent article that has been published by an investigative reporter. He then read his response to this article. Commissioner Mullin then read her response to this article as well. Mayor Pro-Tem Luther defended Commissioner Mullins job as Park Commissioner and stated that she has done everything she needs to do to make sure that the park is kept up.

More discussion followed regarding the investigative reports blogs. The reporter from The Courier-Tribune then posed questions regarding issues brought up in the blog and she has requested copies of several documents pertaining to the park. Mayor Hale requested that she give this request in writing. She then posed questions to Mr. Blake regarding issues brought forth in the article, which Mr. Blake answered.

Mayor Hale asked the commissioners for permission to have his comments attached to the minutes for this meeting. Motion was made by Commissioner Mullin to allow the Mayors comments be attached to the minutes. Mayor Pro-Tem Luther seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

There being no other business to address, motion to adjourn was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Luther and seconded by Commissioner Hewitt. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

ATTEST: Shawn M Morse
Shawn Morse
Town Clerk

TOWN OF SEAGROVE
Allen Hale
Allen Hale, Mayor

I want to start out by 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 being 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 or others 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 about some of the things going on. He said that he was an investigative reporter who wrote for an on-line paper and magazines picked up many times his articles. I am always excited to talk about the great things going on in this 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 between the Town and 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 with the Carolina Bats. I said "your 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. I noticed he did not put in his article anything that I said about the contract.

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 enwhich 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 were hoping to be able to 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 baseball and softball for the local 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 they 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 oversee the contracts. The first year the Seagrove Athletic Association did nothing it said it would do and the contract was then awarded to the Bats only after several. 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 a new contract when the Town Council hired Mr. Frank Marley as its attorney. Mr. Marley identified certain issues with the original contract's language and spoke at a council meeting about these changes. The council voted to change some of the items after advise from the attorney that we make things clearer. A new contract had to be drawn up showing these changes.

5. **The Bats not paying bills owed the town or providing Insurance.** The contracts from the start have included that the Seagrove Athletic Association and Carolina Bats pay the utilities at the park and provide an insurance policy in their name to the Town. The utilities 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 separate the concession stand water bill from the towns water bill at the park, as a result 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. As for the Insurance Policy, to our knowledge Mr. Blake has a \$1,000,000 insurance policy, as does the Carolina Soccer Association on all activities at the park for their prospective events.
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 expenditures 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 3, 2011 and February 8, 2011 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 stalked 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

February 3, 2011

Kristal Kingi-Shearin
Operations Director
HWTFC
1100 Navaho Drive, Suite 203
Raleigh, NC 27609

Dear Kristal:

The Town of Seagrove was awarded a \$31,920 grant for sidewalks on 12/28/2010, Contract #609. The purpose of this letter is to provide the information needed for the contract as per stated in your email and agreement.

The Town of Seagrove is an entity in the State of North Carolina and was incorporated in 1913. A list of references is as follows:

- *Maxton McDowell, CPA, 379 South Cox Street, Asheboro, NC 27203, 336-626-9970
- *George Sherrill, NC Department of Commerce, 4318 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699
- *Bonnie Renfro, President, Randolph County EDC, P. O. Box 2001, Asheboro, NC 27203

The budget for this project is a proposed budget at this time of \$31,920. The Board of Commissioners voted to use Powell monies to add to this project if needed.

The Town of Seagrove has had two CDBG grants in the last 5 years. Grant #SE0301 was for \$400,000 to construct a wastewater line to Sapona Plastics and Grant #SE0302 was for \$750,000 to construct a wastewater lagoon. Both grants have been closed.

The Town would like to elect Payment Setup Option 1. Our 2010 audit is attached for your review. If you need anything else, feel free to contact me at 336-625-6175 ext. 8973 or 336-873-7307.

Sincerely,

Cathy G. McCaskill
Town Clerk