

January 13, 2014

## Wendell Town Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes

The Wendell Town Board of Commissioners held their regularly scheduled board meeting on Monday, January 13, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Boardroom with Mayor Timothy A. Hinnant presiding. Present at the meeting were Commissioner's Sam Laughery, Jon Lutz; James Parham; John Boyette; Virginia Gray; Manager Teresa Piner; Town Clerk Jonnie Driver; IT Administrator Tamah Hughes; Finance Director Butch Kay; Police Chief Bill Carter; Public Works Director Alton Bryant; Attorney Jim Cauley; Planning Director Zunilda Rodriguez; and Planner David Bergmark .

Mayor Hinnant called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and thanked everyone for attending.

Police Chief Bill Carter led the Pledge of Allegiance and Bruce Tarnaski of St. Eugene's Catholic Church gave the invocation.

### **Adjust and Approval of the agenda**

Commissioner Laughery made a motion to add an Item 7B to the agenda for a report on the Economic Development Committee as well as an update on the Welcome to Wendell sign that had been talked about. The vote was Unanimous.

### **Item 1 – Public Comment**

Regina Harmon – 6616 Tells Branch Road, Wendell spoke about the success of the Christmas Light Show and the Old Fashion Candy Store. She stated she had spoken with businesses downtown and they indicated that it was successful in bringing traffic into town and increasing the sales. She said the Chamber would like to move the lighting of the square back to the First Friday in December, as this year we did it earlier in November and it was too early. She said we want to talk with Don and Joe about keeping the Christmas Lights on all the time, whereas now they are off during the intermission.

Ms. Harmon said she had heard a rumor that AT&T would be constructing a tower where the light show is and she hoped that the board could put that rumor to rest and let the chamber know if the light show was going to be able to come back. The Chamber would like to know where the light show would be moved if AT&T does put a tower there.

Ms. Harmon said some new things were added to the light show this year such as a fence along Fourth Street. She said she would like to bring up the softball tournaments. This past year we had 7 tournaments which were successful. Some of her questions were whether the Town would continue to have tournaments and could the Town do more tournaments. Can Parks and Recreation do them without hiring a company to come in and do them as they did last year? She said she would like to know if we could do other sports tournaments like soccer.

Ann Stuart – Hollybrook Road, Wendell stated she had a guest from Indiana over the holidays and they really enjoyed the light show. She said she saw a headline in the paper that really tore her up. She said Wendell does not need more public housing. If we had a boys and girls club it would be great. She said if we expect our tax base to grow in Wendell, and more businesses to come we have to have quality homes with people who can afford to shop here and support our business. She said she would certainly like to see this nipped in the bud. She said she had talked with other teachers in the area and they feel the same way, they say the discipline problems are at their worst and we need to try to do better for ourselves.

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**Item 2 – Consent Agenda**

- a. Approval of the minutes from the Monday, December 9, 2013 Board of Commissioners' meeting.
- b. Approval of the Wake County Tax Report for October 2013
- c. Approval of the 2014 Board of Commissioner's meeting schedule
- d. Approval to replace HVAC units at the Wendell Community Center

Commissioner Parham made a motion to approve the consent agenda as written. The vote was unanimous.

**Item 3 - Introduction of Patrol Officer Paul Opanasenko**

Chief Bill Carter stated that Officer Opanasenko was a Wake County native and graduate of Millbrook High School in Raleigh, North Carolina. Paul graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from UNC at Wilmington and in his last semester, Paul enrolled and completed Basic Law Enforcement Training at Brunswick Community College. Since then he has furthered his education by attending Utica College and graduating with a Master of Science in Cybersecurity.

Chief Carter said Paul was employed with the Louisburg College Police Department for approximately three and a half years before joining the Wendell Police Department. Paul obtained certification as a Field Training Officer and had completed several Incident Command Courses as produced by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. He also served as the Agency's coordinator over its use of the North Carolina Division of Criminal Information while at Louisburg College.

Chief Carter said Paul is currently a resident of Northern Wake County and began working with the Town on November 6, 2013.

Mayor Hinnant said on the behalf of the board we welcome you to Wendell.

**Item 4 – Discussion and action to fill a vacant position within the Wendell Police Department.**

Manager Teresa Piner stated that effective Tuesday, December 3, 2013, the Wendell Police Department staffing level was impacted by the resignation of one of its officers. She said the position was funded in the FY 2013-2014 budget

Mrs. Piner stated the Board of Commissioners voted to establish a hiring freeze for FY 2013-2014 for all non-essential positions effective July 1, 2013. The freeze does allow the manager to come before the Board and seek permission to fill that vacant position if the manager deems that position critical/essential.

Mrs. Piner stated it is the Manager's opinion that the position is considered critical and should be filled as soon as possible for the safety of the officers and citizens. With the filling of this position, the police department is not at full staff due to the freezing and lack of funding for two positions.

Commissioner Parham made a motion to move forward with the advertising of the vacant position and fill the position as soon as possible. The vote was unanimous.

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**Item 5 – Discussion and action to fill a vacant position within the Wendell Planning Department.**

Mrs. Piner stated effective, Friday, January 31, 2014 the Planning Department staffing level would be impacted by the resignation of Planning Director, Zunilda Rodriguez.

Mrs. Piner stated the position was funded in the FY 2013-2014 budget. The hiring and training process for an experienced planner will take some time. With approval from the Board to move forward with the hiring process, it is not anticipated that the planner position would be filled until March.

Mrs. Piner stated it was her opinion that the position was considered critical due to activity and economic opportunities which are important to the community. She said at this time Planner David Bergmark will assume the position as Interim Director. The filling of this position will leave the planning department short one position that was not funded for 2013-2014.

Commissioner Parham made a motion to fill the vacant position. The vote was unanimous.

**Item 6 – Review, Discussion, and Action of the NCDOT Secondary Road Agreement**

Manager Piner stated NCDOT performs mowing along NCDOT roads once a quarter. In an effort to keep the Town of Wendell aesthetically pleasing and safe, the Wendell Public Works Department mows and maintains right of ways along section of state maintained roads within the corporate limits. The mowing agreement would allow for reimbursement from NCDOT for the work already being conducted. The town would be reimbursed on an annual basis of \$1,801.20. This amount although not substantial would assist in offsetting the cost of work being performed.

The Board supported the approval of the contract, action was not required.

**Item 7 – Scheduling of the 2014 Board Retreat**

Mayor Hinnant stated the board had decided to have the Board Retreat on Saturday, February 22, 2014 from 8:00 am to 12:00 noon at the Community Center. He stated if the board members had items for discussion to get them to Teresa so that she could prepare the agenda for the retreat.

**Item 7B – Update on Economic Development**

Planner David Bergmark said at the last Economic Development meeting the Downtown Workgroup discussed adding downtown properties on our available properties database. The Corporate Development work group had a guest speaker from Carol antic Realty who came to talk about the importance of schools and how the County looks at the process for where schools would locate. Also the workgroup discussed how to better market large areas of land and identify those properties. He said there would be a seminar Wednesday, January 15, at Carol antic Realty for an update of what the trends have been this past year.

Planning Director Zunilda Rodriguez stated the Economic Development Committee in December approved a draft frame work sponsorship program which they will bring to the board on February 11, 2014 on the Way Finding Signage Program. The location is on Wendell Boulevard by Broach Signs and the Town Engineer will be drafting up a survey so that the town can pursue a sign easement at that location.

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**Item 8 – Commissioner’s Comments**

Commissioner Gray stated she attended the Wendell Chamber’s Retreat on Saturday, January 11, and they spent a lot of time talking about and planning the events for 2014. They discussed and tweaked their internal structure and they also talked about membership services. She felt that the chamber accomplished a lot at the retreat.

Commissioner Boyette stated he would like to welcome Officer Opanosenko to Wendell. He said he would like to thank everyone for the support they give to the board.

Commissioner Parham welcomed Officer Opanosenko to Wendell. He said he would like to address Mrs. Stewart’s concern which she spoke of earlier. He said a meeting was held today at the Eastern Regional Center addressing that article and the discussion of housing should not have even been in the paper. The person that came and shared information about this grant had nothing to do with affordable housing. He stated that he would like to invite a representative to come to a board meeting and address the public about the block grant and its intended purpose.

Commissioner Parham said the Wendell Library has a new manager Debra Davis and she has a lot of events planned for January.

Commissioner Lutz stated he was happy to hear Ms. Harmon’s report on the businesses downtown and he would encourage everyone to continue to support our downtown businesses and restaurants.

Commissioner Laughery said he wanted to echo what Regina stated earlier about the Christmas Lights and the downtown businesses. He said he understood that Don’s wife Betsy was taken to the hospital this afternoon. We need to support our businesses.

**Item 9 – Mayor’s Comments**

Mayor Hinnant said he echoed what all the other commissioners had stated. He said the only way our businesses will survive is if we support them. He thanked everyone for supporting our businesses and he reminded everyone that the Wendell Falls Parkway is open and the speed limit is being monitored, but there will be a time when it will become more heavily enforced.

**Item 10 – Adjourn**

Commissioner Parham made a motion to adjourn at 7:30 p.m. The vote was unanimous.

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James Parham, Mayor Pro Tempore

Attest:

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Jonnie S. Driver, Town Clerk