

**May 11, 2015**  
**Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes**

The Wendell Town Board of Commissioners held their regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, May 11, 2015, at 7:00 pm in the Board Meeting Room with Mayor Timothy A. Hinnant presiding. Present were Commissioners Virginia Gray; John Boyette; James Parham; Jon Lutz; Sam Laughery; Town Manager Teresa Piner; Jonnie Driver-Clerk; Town Attorney James Cauley; Butch Kay-Finance; Tamah Hughes-IT; Jeff Polaski-Parks; David Bergmark-Planning; Bill Carter-Police and Alton Bryant-Public Works.

Mayor Hinnant called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chief Bill Carter and the invocation was given by Pastor Trip Lowery of Wendell United Methodist Church.

**Adjustment and approval of the agenda**

No adjustments were made and Commissioner Parham made a motion to approve the agenda. With no further discussion the motion passed unanimously.

**Item 1 – Public Comment Period**

No one wished to be heard.

**Item 2 – Consent Agenda**

- a. Approval of the Minutes from Monday, April 27, 2015 regularly scheduled Board meeting.
- b. Approval of the Minutes from the Monday, April 27, 2015 Special Called Budget Meeting.

Commissioner Parham made a motion to approve the consent agenda as written. With no further discussion the motion passed unanimously.

**Item 3 – Presentation of Sponsorship of Opening Day at Wendell Park by Newland Communities**

Kelley Connolly stated that Opening Day at the park marks the beginning of the baseball season. Big events like this take lots of planning, coordinating, staffing and funds. She said this special day would not be possible without the help of Newland Communities.

Kelley said this was the 3<sup>rd</sup>. time Wendell Parks and Recreation has hosted Opening Day. She said currently Wendell Parks and Recreation has 500 kids playing in the program, and most participated in Opening Day.

Kelley stated Jeff Polaski started Opening Day with an 8:30 am ribbon cutting on the new 18 hole disc golf course at Wendell Park. She said after the ribbon cutting for the disc golf, everyone headed to the dog park ribbon cutting at 8:45 pm. She said since the disc golf course and dog park had opened, it seemed that everyone was enjoying both of the amenities as they were being well used.

Kelley said Matt Driver and Phillip Smith did a superb job getting the park and disc golf course in tip top shape for the weekend. She said Tim Kay was the DJ/Announcer. Kelly said Opening Day was an all hands on event. We had 5 full-time staff and 10 part-time staff members helping vendors with supplies and getting sales items to their sites as well as parking, scorekeeping games and cleaning up the park after the event.

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Kelley presented Newland Communities with a copy of the \$3,000 check they gave to help with Opening Day at the park. She said Opening Day would not have been possible without Newland's support.

Mayor Hinnant thanked Newland Communities on behalf of the Board of Commissioners.

**Item 4 – Recognition of the Wendell Public Works Department and reading of a Proclamation in honor of National Public Works Week, May 17-23.**

National Public Works Week calls attention to the importance of public works in community life.

National Public Works Week is observed each year during the third full week of May. The week seeks to enhance the prestige of the often unsung heroes of our society, the professionals who serve the public good every day with quiet dedication.

The Mayor thanked the Wendell Public Works Employees for their hard work and for bettering the quality of life for the citizens of Wendell. Mayor Hinnant called the Public Works staff up and thanked them for attending the meeting. Mayor Hinnant read the Proclamation. He said he could not think of a more dedicated and deserving group to receive this honor.

**Item 5 – Recognition of the Town of Wendell and the Wendell Tree Board in receipt of the Tree City USA Growth Award for 2014**

Town Manager Piner said Wendell had been awarded the distinction of a Tree City USA Community for 32 consecutive years.

Teresa said the Town of Wendell had been selected as a 2014 Tree City USA Growth Award Recipient. She said in order to receive the Tree City USA Growth Award, a community must be a Tree City USA, spend at least as much on its community forestry program as it did in the previous year and achieve a total of at least ten points in one of the following categories:

Category A: Education and Public Relations

Category B: Partnerships

Category C: Planning and Management

Category D: Tree Planting and Maintenance

Mrs. Piner said the Tree Board completed its activities in Category A: Education and Public Relations. In doing so this year the Wendell Community achieved a total of 13 points! The activities that were completed by the tree board were: Interpretive Program for the nature trail walks that focused on tree and plant identification (3 points), Continuing Education for Forestry Managers and Tree Board Members for attending the tree workshop in Smithfield and the Tree Board Webinar Series (6points), and for our tree care workshops for Pruning Crape Myrtles held at Wendell Park and Tree Planting and Initial Tree Care held at J. Ashley Wall Town Square in 2014 (4points)

Teresa said over the past few weeks we had heard a lot about the great things Phillip had accomplished with the Tree Board and disc golf course.

The Tree Board had planned scheduled pruning of the Crepe Myrtles by the Food Lion, but because of the weather the workshop was cancelled, so Phillip went out on his own and pruned the trees and gave impromptu lessons on proper pruning techniques as citizens stopping by.

Phillip presented a slide show of the Arbor Day Celebration and said that the Tree Board planted a Dogwood Tree at Wendell Elementary, Red Bud Tree at Carver Elementary, a Willow Oak at Lake Myra Elementary and a Willow Oak at Wendell Middle School. He said they also planted an Oak Leaf Holly at J. Ashley Wall Town Square. Phillip said they enjoyed the Arbor Day Celebration at the schools because they could reach a lot of children. The kids really enjoy the educational information on Arbor Day and they get hands on experience with planting the trees.

Phillip said we were very fortunate to have good folks that serve on the Town of Wendell Tree Board. Some have been on the board for many years Warren Boyette Chairman, Lewis Piner, Joy Hicks and Preston Peterson. Phillip said we would like to do a tree inventory in Wendell, because we do not know what kinds of trees we have and their condition.

Phillip introduced Warren Boyette Chairman of the Tree Board and Lewis Piner who were in attendance. They presented the Tree City USA Growth Award to Mayor Hinnant. Mayor Hinnant said the success with our Tree Board was having long standing members such as Warren Boyette and Lewis Piner and knowing their mission and working well together to accomplish that mission. Mayor Hinnant thanked the Tree Board for the reward.

**Item 6 – Recognition of Wendell Creative Arts and Science Magnet Elementary for receiving the honor as Top Elementary Magnet School of Excellence in America**

Manager Piner said congratulations go to Wendell Elementary for their recent recognition as the Top Magnet Elementary School in America. The recognition was one of five awards that Magnet Schools of America presents annually. She said Wendell Elementary ranks top among the 319 magnet schools that applied.

Mrs. Piner said Wendell Elementary School was designated as a magnet school in 1982 and in 2009 became a “Creative Arts and Science” magnet. Wendell Elementary has been named as a magnet school of distinction each year it has been eligible to apply and for the past four years had been recognized as a North Carolina School of High Growth.

Mrs. Piner said the Wendell Community would like to take this opportunity to honor and thank the administration, staff, parents and especially the students for their outstanding performance.

Cindy Zittle, Magnet Coordinator for Wendell Elementary stated Magnet Schools of America was based out of Washington, DC, and helped over 4,000 magnet and special program schools by awarding what was called the Magnet School of Excellence Award and Magnet School of Distinction Award. She said first we completed an application about the magnet program how we learn in our school. Our philosophy is based on Howard Gardner’s multiple intelligences. She said we believe that children learn in multiple ways, not only book smart with paper and pencil, but music, arts, and nature. We believe we need to give students experiences in all these ways to help them learn and grow and demonstrate what they know. She said we also shared in the application that we were a very strong community school, we have partnerships with many different organizations, churches, and groups in Wendell that truly help support our school. She said she believed that made a big difference in making a strong application. She said next they found out they were a School of Excellence and they chose Wendell Elementary as one of the top six schools in the United States. She said a team came out and visited our school, toured

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all the classrooms, and met privately with the some of our volunteers. Thank you Wendell for supporting our school, they truly believed that made a difference in Wendell Elementary receiving this award.

Mayor Hinnant read the proclamation and it was presented to the principal.

Mayor Parham said he was a super big fan of education, and even more on Howard Gardner who introduced ideas and techniques that teachers had not been including in the classrooms and when they are included, children blossom. He said he believed Wendell was moving forward and that was what we needed to continue to do.

**Item 7 – Update on the Wake County Transit Plan**

David Bergmark said the four future transit plan options for Wake County would be unveiled to the public during a series of “Choose Our Transit” events starting on Monday, May 11, 2015. All events will begin at 6:00 p.m. One event will be held at the Wendell Community Center on Wednesday, May 13<sup>th</sup>. David said it was not a matter of picking one, but responding to them and seeing where we go from here.

**Item 8 – Review and request by the Wendell Chamber of Commerce asking the Town of Wendell to sponsor the band for Saturday night’s performance and to authorize the placement of a beer garden at the 2015 Harvest Festival.**

Manager Piner stated the Wendell Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors has submitted a request to the Wendell Board of Commissioners for the Chamber to operate a beer garden at the 2015 Wendell Harvest Festival. The desired site for the beer garden was the same as the 2014 beer garden and was located on the East side of the J. Ashley Wall Towne Square Stage.

Mrs. Piner said additionally, the Chamber was requesting the Town of Wendell to sponsor the band for Saturday night at the Harvest Festival.

Teresa said that she and the Police Chief had met and discussed the Beer Garden and they felt that the event was successful last year and they had no objections to the garden for the 2015 festival. She said at the budget meeting on May 5, 2015, the board elected, although they did not vote on the budget, to contribute \$2,000 toward the festival in 2015. Mayor Hinnant said he supported the \$2,000 contribution to the Chamber and the beer garden and just want to make sure that they quit serving beer at 10 pm.

Mayor Hinnant opened the item for discussion and there was no discussion. The Mayor informed Mrs. Piner to move forward with the \$2,000 contribution to the Chamber for the Harvest Festival and the Chamber could proceed with planning for the beer garden.

**Item 9 - Presentation of the Draft Budget for FY 2015/2016**

Teresa stated the proposed budget called for no tax increase. The board’s policy to maintain the fund balance at 40 percent of expenditures remains in place. She said the Local Government Commission recommends that on June 30 of each year, for towns to maintain a minimum balance of 8 percent of the prior year’s expenditures or approximately 1 month of expenditures. She said others suggest that the standard be a minimum of three months’ expenditures or approximately 25 percent of expenditures. Wendell’s unaudited fund balance remains near 40 percent. This does not include the funds of over 2

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million dollars which the Town holds to cover water and sewer capacity fees. The impact of the rebound of housing construction would not have an impact on tax revenue until the next fiscal year. Wendell was facing the need to address capital purchases while revenues remain relatively flat. She said the General Fund of the Town's budget receives its operating funds from various sources including property ad-valorem taxes, intergovernmental or state shared revenues, user fees and miscellaneous revenue.

Mrs. Piner said individual department budgets remain relatively unchanged, the proposed budget has increased by 6 percent due to items such as elections, codification of ordinances, Wi-Fi Upgrades, Pedestrian plan match, public buildings and grounds and the cost of leaf and limb pick-up as well as insurance increases.

Mrs. Piner said fees for solid waste pickup would remain the same. Household garbage every week and recycling pickup every other week. She said the pickup of bulky waste at the last meeting was discussed and proposed to be eliminated in 2016.

Mrs. Piner said salary increases based upon the budget work session would be a cost of living adjustment at \$1300, and merit increases would be reviewed in January following annual reviews which would be completed in December.

Mrs. Piner said \$14,000 was in the budget for Parks and Recreation to have events this year and another \$3,000 was included for the Holiday Light Show.

She said that there were three loans being proposed for the FY 2015-16 budgets. She stated that the 15 year loan to be paid with Powell Bill Funds addressed street resurfacing at \$800,000; CDBG matching fund would also be included for the paving of Lakewood Drive. She said Fourth and Main Street improvements would be \$112,000 and storm drainage repair on Todd Street drainage had completely collapsed. She said this would be a 15 year loan had a designated funding source through Powell Bill Funds at a cost of \$115,164 a year.

Mayor Hinnant said when he knew we currently had a salary paid out of the Powell Bill Funds. He said when Wendell Falls started to build out, he would like to see that salary moved out of the Powell Bill into the General Fund. He said this would give us a little more flexibility.

Teresa said on facility needs we were looking at a \$571,000 loan to improve the Public Works Building and fence expansion, town hall improvements, wayfinding signage and surveying PARTF for improvements to the park and this would be a ten year loan at 3 percent interest with a payment of \$66,000 per year. She said we had met with the Local Government Commission and they had recommended the current loan that the Town had on the Clark Property be rolled into the 10 year loan which would bring the interest rate down from about 6.5 percent to the current interest rate of 3 percent.

Mrs. Piner said the equipment needs we had would be a 5 year loan and did not have to be approved by the LGC and payments were calculated at 3 percent as well.

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Teresa said as we look ahead we would need to plan for a future municipal complex, where to site it, long range plans for a police satellite station. She said vacancies and new positions would be needed in each department because of the growth we were experiencing and road improvements.

Teresa said we would schedule a public hearing for the budget on Tuesday, May 26<sup>th</sup>, due to Memorial Day being on Monday, May 25<sup>th</sup>. The proposed budget would be made available to the public to view at Town Hall as well as the Library.

Commissioner Laughery asked if the final date for the budget approval was set for June 24<sup>th</sup>. Mayor Hinnant said that will be too late. The Mayor recommended it be after the public hearing on Tuesday, May 26<sup>th</sup>. Mayor Hinnant said if we know we are going to pass the budget, there was no need to have another meeting after the public hearing. If we do not get a vote, then we could vote at the Special Called meeting on June 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Item 10 – Commissioner Comments**

Commissioner Laughery said he wanted to thank the Public Works Department for their hard work. They do a great job of keeping the town clean. He said we had a number of businesses that would be opening over the next several months such as the Tap Room, Amish Bakery, Donut Shop and the distillery. He hoped our citizens would take advantage of our businesses and shop local.

Commissioner Lutz said he wanted to again congratulate Wendell Elementary School for their achievement. This is a great moment for the school. He said he would like to encourage the citizens to take a look at the budget and come up with ideas or suggestions, because this was where you had input.

Commissioner Parham said kudos to the magnet school and he would encourage everyone to a c c e n t u a t e the positive from this day forward, because we do have some excellent elementary schools and he was sure the Middle and High Schools were going to get there also. He said he had a filming with Prime BBQ and Christopher Prieto and the BBQ was delicious. He said it would air on Channel Six on Memorial Day. He said he went to National Day of Prayer and the message given by Wendell Baptist Church on how prayer changes things was exactly what we needed to hear. He said he attended the Relay for Life and had not seen such a collection of survivors and memorials for people that had passed away because of cancer.

Commissioner Boyette said he would like to thank Newland Communities for sponsoring Opening Day at the Park. He wanted to thank Public works for all the hard work they put in day after day, he saw them out there and he knew they worked very hard. He said he was proud of his Alma Mater Wendell Elementary School. He said the thing that was good about this town was that it takes a whole bunch of people all following after each other and improving upon what the generation before did and he thought that was what Wendell Elementary was doing, pushing forward and doing their best. He was proud of Wendell Elementary and thanked them for their hard work.

Commissioner Gray said we had so much to be proud of in Wendell. It seemed like our whole meeting was about good things that were happening and that was good. She would like to thank Public Works as well, sometime she thought they had a thankless job and she really appreciated it. She sees them go by each day and how hard they work. She said one of the Public Works employees won the Employee of the year this past year and when we left the award ceremony she was headed to the grocery store and

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the Employee of the Year was already at the message board sign working. That made such an impression on her. She wanted to thank Newland for Opening Day sponsorship and we enjoyed partnering with them. Thanks to the Tree Board and Phillip Smith. She said she had attended a couple of the Arbor Day Celebrations and the kids really love planting the trees. She said she would like to thank Wendell Creative Arts and Science Magnet Elementary School and she was so proud of them and she had been on a cloud since they won the award. She said one thing that people had not considered tonight was what an impact having such a successful school does for economic development, we need that. She said since the last board meeting I had attended the ribbon cuttings at Opening Day, the sidewalk sale, National Day of Prayer, Public Safety Day, the plant giveaway at the Farmer's Market site which would have its grand opening this weekend. She said she attended the Wake County Preservation Celebration at Dr. Thomas Avera house on Robertson Pond Road and John and Marla received Landmark Status. We need to capture and embrace that.

**Item 11 – Mayor Comments**

Mayor Hinnant said he wanted to thank Wendell Elementary, what a prestigious award that was to receive. Mayor Hinnant said he graduated from Wendell Elementary also. He thanked Newland Communities for sponsoring Opening Day at the Park. He also thanked and appreciated Public Works. He saw how hard they worked. He said because of Wendell Falls being part of our community and because at their build out there would be 4,000 homes, he thought we needed to look at how our elections were structured. He said currently, we had general elections and he knew that at some point in time, those 4,000 homes would decide who represented Wendell. If we want to have representation in all parts of Wendell, we would have to go from a general election to being elected by districts and that would insure that we don't have one area dictating how the Town would be run. Mayor Hinnant asked Attorney Cauley if he would help guide us in the direction we needed to go. Attorney Cauley said he would be glad to bring some alternatives to consider. The board was in agreement.

**Item 12 – Closed Session**

Commissioner Parham made a motion to go into closed session to receive legal advice within the scope of attorney client privileges pursuant to §143-318.11(a). The motion passed unanimously. Commissioner Hinnant made a motion to resume the regular meeting. The motion passed unanimously. No action was taken.

**Item 13 - Adjourn**

Commissioner Gray made a motion to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:21 pm.

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Timothy A. Hinnant, Mayor

Attest:

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Jonnie S. Driver, Town Clerk