

**August 24, 2015**  
**Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes**

The Wendell Town Board of Commissioners held their regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, August 24, 2015, in the Board Meeting Room at 7:00 p.m. with Mayor Timothy A. Hinnant presiding. Present were Commissioners Virginia Gray; Sam Laughery; John Boyette; John Lutz and James Parham; Teresa Piner-Manager; Jonnie Driver-Clerk; Tamah Hughes-IT; Bill Carter-Police; Butch Kay-Finance; David Bergmark-Planning; Jeff Polaski and Kelley Connolly-Parks and Recreation.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Police Chief Bill Carter and invocation was given by Reverend James Lee of Wendell First Baptist Church.

**Adjustment and approval of the agenda**

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

**Item 1 – Public Comment Period**

No public comment was made.

**Item 2 – Consent Agenda**

- a. Approval of the Minutes from the Monday, August 10, 2015, Board Meeting.
- b. Approval of the Wake County Tax Report for May 2015.

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

**Item 3 – Recognition of Tar Heel District and State Champion Teams, Boys 7-8 and 9-10.**

Kelley Connolly thanked the Board for allowing the Parks and Recreation Department to be in attendance to recognize these two very special teams. She said that both teams had won their district and state championships.

Kelley said she would like to recognize two Town of Wendell employees, Jody Wall assistant coach for the 9-10 year old team and Matt Driver who was the head coach for the 7-8 year old team. They were applauded by the audience.

Kelley said she would like to thank the parents for the time and effort put toward support of the kids by driving them to and from practices. A lot of money was put into these teams and we appreciate their dedication. She also would like to thank the coaches who put their time and effort into getting the teams to the championships. She said Wendell had some of the finest coaches and we are thankful.

She said she would also like to thank the players. They listen, are coachable and are spoken highly of by other teams. They were applauded by the audience.

Kelley said the 7-8 year old boys started out with 8 recreation teams. Out of the eight teams, eleven boys made the All Star Team. She said they were the Wendell Blue and had unbelievable defense and offense. She said they started with the South Johnston Baseball Association Tournament and played four (4) games undefeated. They went on to play in the district tournament and there were eight (8) teams in that tournament and the top three were picked to play in the state championship. The Wendell Blue was crowned the District 6 Champions and moved to the State Championship. Kelley said we had two (2) teams in the tournament for the 7-8 year olds. The White team came in third place and

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advanced also. Kelley said the boys then went to Washington North Carolina for the State Tournament where they came on strong. They hit the ball well and were crowned the State Champions. Kelley said the Wendell Blue team's record for the three (3) tournaments was 13-0. They outscored their opponents 164 to 43.

Kelley, Jeff and Mayor Hinnant presented each player and coach with their Championship T-shirt and shook hands with each player.

Commissioner Parham asked if there was a grand slammer in the 7-8 year olds. Kelley said no, but there was one in the 9-10 year olds.

Kelley said the 9-10 year old team was a repeat team, meaning they also won the championship last year. She said that was something that never happens, to have the same team win two years in a row with 10 out of the 11 original players on the team was unheard of in recreational ball. She said the Town is very proud of this team. She said they started with the district tournament in Knightdale and the scores were phenomenal. They won the championship game with a 14-1 score. They had great defense and offense. She said they moved to Washington North Carolina for the State Championship and played seven (7) games. She said they got off to a slow start and lost the first game, but they came on strong in the next six (6) games. She said for the two (2) tournaments, they were 10 and 1 outscoring their opponents for the eleven (11) games 139 to 16. They had seven (7) pitchers and five (5) players with a home run.

Kelley, Jeff Polaski, and Mayor Hinnant presented each player and Coach with their Championship T-shirt, and shook hands with each. They were applauded by the audience.

Kelley said the Town would be recognizing the two teams on September 12<sup>th</sup> and would have a movie at 7:00 pm at the Town Square showing Big Hero 6. She said the two teams would also be the Grand Marshall in the Harvest Festival Parade.

Mayor Hinnant said we would be in recess until 7:30 pm to allow for picture taking.

**Item 4 – Presentation by Dallas Bonivita with Note in the Pocket.**

Ms. Bonivita stated that Note in the Pocket provided basic clothing needs to students throughout Wake County who lack appropriate clothes for school. She said today was the first day of Wake County Public School System Traditional Calendar year. She said last year 62,000 students applied and qualified for the free or reduced lunch program in Wake County. She said that families that have trouble feeding their kids are also struggling with clothes and shoes for school. She said students that miss their one well balanced meal for the day, fall behind and often stay behind.

Ms. Bonivita said Note in the Pocket was available to all 171 Wake County Schools, including Wendell Elementary, Wendell Middle and East Wake High Schools. She said through their unique identification and distribution programs, they were able to compile two weeks of outfits including new socks and underwear, tennis shoes and weather perfect outerwear in each child's size. She said they deliver those outfits to the schools and agencies that requested them.

Ms. Bonivita said Note in the Pocket believes that it is unacceptable that children would suffer in their education and social development because of a lack of clothing. She said the program was started ten

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(10) years ago by one family who saw the need and started doing something about it. She said about three years ago, they realized the program was working so they applied and received their non-profit status. Last year they provided clothes to almost 2400 people and 2,000 were children. Nearly 50,000 pieces of new or like new clothing items and shoes valued at over \$340,000 were delivered.

Ms. Bonivita said the reason she was here was to introduce Note in the Pocket to everyone in attendance. She said they were trying to build relationships with each of the towns in Wake County so that each town to promote regular clothing drives and to increase our volunteers to deliver the clothes. By building enough individual, religious, institutional and business support, they could continue to increase the numbers served by hundreds. She stated that their website address was Noteinthepocket.org and she would be glad to contact anyone that was interested in the program.

Commissioner Laughery asked if financial contributions could be made on the website. Mrs. Bonivita said yes.

Resident Carol Hinnant asked if the town could put the contact information on the website. Mayor Hinnant said most definitely.

**Item 5 Presentation and update of activities by the Wendell Chamber of Commerce.**

Stacy stated that the chamber had extended the drop-off for items to go into the Welcome Bags. She said they had such an overwhelming outpour from everyone, and hoped that it would all fit into the bags. She stated that the Chamber would probably start distributing the bags next week and she wanted to thank everyone for their participation. She said the Wendell magazine was set to go out in September and everyone with a Wendell Zip Code would receive one.

Stacy said that the chamber had changed their membership pricing structure. The Chamber had moved away from pricing being based off the number of employees and had created a base price which was \$17. A member can now become a partner and prepay for all the events throughout the year that they would like to be involved in.

Stacy said we are getting very excited about the upcoming Harvest Festival and you got to meet our Grand Marshalls tonight. She said the Band of Oz will play on Saturday night and Switch on Friday night and we will have Mr. & Miss Wendell to raise money for the local food banks. The application can be found on our website. She said we will also have a pedal tractor pull this year for the kids. She said I am about 15-20 vendors away from maxing out before the Police Chief starts to freak out on me a little bit.

Stacy said the Farmers Market would have a 5K on September 19<sup>th</sup>. Participants could dress up like their favorite vegetable if they chose to do so. She said all the proceeds go to the Farmers Market to keep the market going. We would also be opening the market to craft and artist trying to get through the slow period of vegetables until the fall season.

**Item 6 – Review and approval of a Quitclaim Deed request for property located on Academy Street, REID 0062300.**

Manager Piner stated the Town was contacted by Parrish Realty regarding a property on Academy Street, REID 0062300. The property was to be sold with the parcel at 420 W. Academy Street, however an unrecorded map was located and indicated that the 25 foot wide, and 125 foot deep property was to

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be used for the purpose of an alley. Wake County Real Estate Data indicated the property had been owned by an individual, Mrs. Joyner, as early as 1930.

Mrs. Piner said the new owner had asked the Town to relinquish any rights to the parcel through the quitclaim deed process. A quitclaim deed was used to transfer interest in real property without being sold. This process was used when an owner wanted to make certain that a person or entity was not interested in a future claim of ownership.

Mrs. Piner said research showed no indication that the town had been used as an alley, and the Town had been under the assumption that the property was private property based on tax records from the 30's.

Mrs. Piner said the Quitclaim deed has been looked at by the Town Attorney and he asked that a stated be included protecting and reserving any special utility rights of way. It would read as follows: "This conveyance is subject to and the Grantor does hereby expressly reserve and perpetually retain any easements or rights of way needed for the continued operation and maintenance of any public utilities currently existing within, on, under, across or upon the described property". Mrs. Piner said there were no records that showed utility lines there, but this would cover the Town if in the future utility lines were discovered.

Commissioner Boyette said he just want to make sure that he understood this correctly. The piece of property was owned by a private individual. Mrs. Piner said that was correct, the deed indicates it had been owned by a private individual since 1930. Commissioner Boyette asked if it was the small piece of property that someone was asking the town to relinquish ownership. Mrs. Piner said typically if there was a plat indicating a recorded alley and the Town was being requested to close that alleyway, the Town would go through a public hearing process to close the alley and then the property would be divided evenly between the two adjoining property owners. She said in this case there is no evidence of a recorded plat indicating an alley (an unrecorded one was located), there was no record of the property being used as an alley. There are recorded of private ownership since 1930, therefore the owner, before making improvements to the property, would like to clear up any confusion about future rights or intentions held by the Town.

Commissioner Parham made a motion to approve the Quit Claim deed on Academy Street for Real Estate Number 0062300 with the inclusion of the wording "This conveyance is subject to and the Grantor does hereby expressly reserve and perpetually retain any easements or rights of way needed for the continued operation and maintenance of any public utilities currently existing within, on, under, across or upon the described property" as recommended by our town attorney. The vote was unanimous.

**Item 7 – Update on the Downtown Wi-Fi project by Tamah Hughes.**

Tamah stated she was excited about this project which had been a lot of fun. She said the equipment was up in the latter part of June and testing was conducted throughout July at six access points up. She said there had been three departments working on this project IT, Planning and Public Works. She said Mike Chambers was the electrician and Duke Progress Energy turned up the last location on July 29<sup>th</sup>. She said we were still having trouble with the last location, but we working on getting it fixed.

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Tamah said in order to meet the day to day Town operations and provide internet access to the downtown area, internet service was upgraded from 10 megabytes to 50 megabytes at an increase of \$936 per month. She said the total project cost came in just under \$22,000 and the monthly operating cost was \$1,000 per month.

Mayor Hinnant asked what the next step would be to enhance the Wi-Fi. He said he had some people from out of Town come in and they said if they were in one of the downtown buildings, and were close to a door or window they were able to get reception, but if you were deeper into the building you could not get reception. He said someone told me there was a way to enhance the Wi-Fi. Tamah said the Town project was to provide service on the street. She said access inside the buildings was questionable. Reception would depend on the construction of the building and the location of the individual inside the building. To provide service inside the downtown business, the Town would have to invest in some equipment and possibly different technology. She said while that might be a possibility, it was significantly more expensive. Mayor Hinnant said he was not saying that the Town did not accomplish its goal, but if we wanted to go to the next step what would it cost. He asked Tamah to get some preliminary information and see what the next step would be and what it would cost. He said he thought it would be good if we could accomplish that so that people could get service inside the building. Tamah said we could add more equipment if needed.

There are charts in your agenda packets and one of them was a heat map that showed the location of Wi-Fi activity. We can use that to decide where to put additional equipment to make that happen. She said there were options for us and we would look at those options and see what we need to do to enhance it in the future.

Commissioner Laughery said in answer to the Mayor's questions, he did not think the Town could guarantee service in all the locations inside the businesses, but there was an option that businesses could put in boosters that would help. Tamah said that was a possibility; however the Town does not own the private systems so we would have to enter into some type of inter-local agreement to do that and it would involve lawyers. Commissioner Laughery said people could also get a booster for cell phone service inside their buildings. Tamah said that was correct, AT&T and Verizon had boosters and they range from \$200-300.

Commissioner Gray said she would like for everyone to understand that as much as she would like to get service into the businesses, the system was doing exactly what was planned. She said we developed a plan to provide WI-FI service along the streets in the downtown for the Harvest Festival, outdoor dining and other outdoor events and it was doing exactly what it was planned to provide.

Tamah said the rocket was located on the roof of Town Hall and if that rocket goes down so does all the other locations. We have backhaul and access points on six locations, but not on the rocket. We have six access points, 7 backhaul units, 1 rocket, and it had 3X3 block coverage. She said we had two lit signs and some canvas banners which were not yet installed, but we were going to put them in the Third Street area. She said we could get more banners if needed.

Commissioner Laughery said we were not guaranteeing this to be 24 hour 365 day service. Something could go down. He said he did not know if there was a system to receive alerts if we were to have a major function down. Tamah said it was set up to alert her phone. Tamah said the disclaimer when you

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access the Wi-Fi system says there was no guarantee for service. She said the goal was to keep it up as much as possible.

Tamah said last week's view of the downtown Wi-Fi provides a daily average for one week. She said the passerby's totaled 4,159 which was the number of people that came into town, but did not stay long enough to get on the system. She said the visitor category was the number of people that came into Town, stayed more than five minutes and their device sent signals out strong enough to be connected, but they never connected (by choice). She said the connected ones, had a daily average of 141 people. She said 5-20 minutes was the length of time that someone would probably use at a restaurant, the next one was 20-60 minutes and they were probably in Town shopping, 1-6 hours was the ones that stayed on a long time and the daily average was 157, the 6 hour plus were 47. She said the bottom group was the occasional users and they had visited at least once before, but do not meet weekly requirements meaning they didn't have enough visits to be called a weekly visitor. She said a weekly visitor had visited at least two distinct weeks out of the past four, but not frequently enough to be considered daily users. She said the daily users connected five days consecutive.

Mayor Hinnant said it was unfortunate that the Chamber members left, because they would have benefited from this presentation. He said he appreciate Commissioner Laughery enlightening me on the boosters for the businesses. He said he was going to ask David Bergmark when he met with the Economic Development Committee and the Appearance Commission maybe we need to change how we do our façade grants, because request were for appearance and economic development. He said he would think if someone wanted to apply for a grant to purchase a booster for their business, that it would be available. He said he would like to ask David to have the committees take a look at this and talk about it.

Commissioner Laughery said he knew that we had a few businesses that installed their own Wi-Fi in. Have they contacted the Town about getting rid of their Wi-Fi and use the Town's Wi-Fi to save them some money. Tamah said she had a conversation with one person who asked if he would run the Wi-Fi through his building and she told him it can be used but the system was designed to work consistently, inside a building for business purposes.

Commissioner Lutz asked with the upcoming events and the Harvest Festival had any tests of the system been done to see if it would handle a crowd like that. Tamah said no, but we have the megabytes split 30-20 right now and we were going to crank Town Hall down to about 5 megabytes for Saturday and she did not think 45 would have a problem serving the square.

Commissioner Boyette said if we were keeping statistics on who comes and goes and how long they were there and how often they were connecting, it brings up some questions as to how long this data was kept, who was in charge, and if someone comes and ask was a person on the internet and where they were, what was the procedure for obtaining and distributing that information. Tamah stated that she did not have it to that level. She only had the statistics that she gave tonight and it was all new to her at this time. She said she did not have a data base to scrub. Commissioner Boyette said there has to be a data base somewhere for reports to be generated and who had access to that. Tamah said she was the only employee with that access. Commissioner Boyette said if someone came and asked for that information, was it public record. He just did not want us to put ourselves in a difficult situation.

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Commissioner Laughery asked how many other communities in our area had Wi-Fi through their town. Tamah said no one at this time.

**Item 8 – Commissioner Comments**

Commissioner Gray stated last week she finished up with Phase I of the Eastern Wake County Education Workgroup. She stated the group met every month listening to people and creating a list of suggestions for the Wake County School Board for the schools in Wendell, Wendell Elementary, Carver Elementary, Lake Myra Elementary, Wendell Middle and East Wake High and as a result of that a lot of changes have already been made that are small but have a significant impact, and she was already seeing some of that and the results were very good. She said the recommendations were going to be presented to the Wake County School Board in the next couple of weeks and Dr. Edward McFarland who was the Assistant Superintendent is in charge of our area. She said he is going to develop an executive summary and I asked him to please send me a copy of the summary when it is available and if anyone is interested in reading it I will have it. She said Wendell needs to be the squeaky wheel right now and I am happy to know that a lot of the changes have been precipitated on behalf of Wake County Public Schools and the Wake County School Board. She said they want to make some improvements in our area. She said serving on the Workgroup gave me an opportunity to be around the teachers and they were dedicated to our children and that made her proud.

Commissioner Gray said also wanted to congratulate Shane Barham at Wendell Creative Arts and Science Magnet Elementary School. She said he was a finalist, one of five for Wake County Principal of the year and she was real proud of him. She said when you had the number one magnet school in the nation; she could not imagine why you would not be the winner. She said Wendell Middles School Assistant Principal Jennifer Palmer was also a finalist for Assistant Principal of the year for Wake County. She said we had a lot of great things going on in Wendell.

Commissioner Gray said Mr. Stacy Alston, the new Principal at East Wake High School asked her to invite everyone to a big Tail Gate Party at East Wake High starting at 4:00 and he really would like everyone to come.

Commissioner Gray said she would like to congratulate our State Championship Baseball teams and would like to thank Matt Drive and Jody Wall for giving their time to the kids. She also wanted to thank Jeff and Kelley and the entire Parks and Recreation Staff. She said she looked forward to next year. She wanted to win three times in a row.

Commissioner Parham said he would also like to congratulate our Championship teams. He said we were joking earlier that we should re-name Wendell, the Town of Champions. He said traditional schools opened today and we know that traffic was heavy on the roads, and sometimes when there was a school bus stopping you don't know whether to stop or not, but if you see the red stop sign extended, be safe and stop. He said kudos to Parks and Recreation, Jeff had done a super job with the park which probably motivated our boys to do such a super job.

Commissioner Parham said he appreciated the updates the Chamber was providing, because sometimes we forget the dates and now can write them down and put them in my phone and try to make as many of those events as possible.

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Commissioner Lutz said he was excited to hear about the grant the Parks and Recreation received recently. He said he knew that moving the playground from the edge of the woods to a more visible location was something that everyone would be excited about.

Commissioner Laughery said he would like to apologize for not notifying Teresa and the other Board members that he would not be in attendance at the last board meeting. He had planned a cruise about five months ago, and thought he had informed everyone. Commissioner Laughery said he did want to mention a couple of things that he had asked to be put on the agenda. One was the Economic Development recommendation that in his opinion the Board gave a short trip to when it came through. He said that was an important group that we appointed and we need to seriously consider their recommendations. Whether we approve it or not, listening to our committees and understanding where they were coming from was very important. He said the commercial property condition downtown was another item he asked to have on the agenda. He said this was a major issue and he was hoping since he would not be on the board that the next board would continue to make this a priority. He said he knew it was difficult to do anything, but if we do nothing, nothing will come out of it. He said the last thing was the Harvest Festival and last year was the best festival we had had since he had been in Wendell. He said our primary role as a board, was to support them, but instead we reduced their funding by 25%. He said he did not understand that, and would like to have this on a future agenda for discussion of the funding of the Harvest Festival for the Chamber of Commerce. He said that was an important event for us and we need to support it.

Commissioner Boyette had no comments.

**Item 9 – Mayor Comments**

Mayor Hinnant said it was a great night honoring our youth, and our Town staff had done an excellent job. He informed Commissioner Laughery that the Board could put the Chamber of Commerce on the agenda, but when we met previously and discussed funding, the problem was because of mismanagement of the funds, and that was why we did not reward them. It needed to go on record that we did not punish them. They mismanaged their monies and we do not reward people with our tax dollars because they mismanage their funds.

**Item 10 – Adjourn.**

Mayor Hinnant adjourned the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

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Timothy A. Hinnant, Mayor

Attest:

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Jonnie S. Driver, Town Clerk