

**Belhaven Town Council
Regular Session – Minutes
January 26, 2009**

Call to Order/Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance

The Belhaven Town Council met in regular session on Monday, January 26, 2009 at 7:00 P.M. at the Boyette Civic Center at 257 W. Pungo Street. Mayor Adam W. O’Neal called the meeting to order with the following Council members present: Steve W. Carawan, Howard D. Moore, McKee “Mac” Pigott and Robert L. Stanley.

Councilman/Mayor Pro-Tem J. Nelson Guy was not present. Town Manager Guinn Leverett, Town Attorney Arthur “Bud” Cockrell and Town Clerk Marie J. Adams were also present. Mayor recognized and introduced Mr. Johnny Donnell Clark, Deacon with Hoggard’s Temple Church of God in Christ who gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comments

Mayor O’Neal opened the meeting for public comments. Mayor O’Neal recognized Mr. Phil Reynolds of 548 East Street. Mr. Reynolds stated that the boat yard on Pantego Street appeared to be a junk yard and that rats are now in the area. Mr. Reynolds stated that the Sun Burn Cable Company property on Allen Street was also in a condition that created an eyesore.

Mayor O’Neal stated that he had spoken with the owner of the boat yard on Pantego Street and had been assured that the area would be cleaned up. Mayor O’Neal did state that because of the zoning for this property there were some liberties for the aesthetics of the property. Mayor O’Neal asked that Mr. Reynolds remind the Council if the property on Pantego Street is not cleaned up within the next couple of weeks.

Approval of Minutes – Regular Session – January 12, 2009

Mayor O’Neal stated that the regular session minutes of the Belhaven Town Council were open for review and adoption. There being no corrections to the minutes, Councilman Carawan made the motion to adopt the January 12, 2009 regular session minutes. Councilman Stanley seconded the motion which carried unanimously, 4 to 0.

Belhaven Historian – Mr. Russell Johnston

Mayor O’Neal recognized and introduced Mr. Russell Johnston, Belhaven’s Historian. Mr. Johnston stated that he had lived in the Belhaven area all of his life, except for the 7.5 years that he was in the service.

Hunting in the Town Limits of Belhaven

Mr. Johnston stated that he noticed that Black Bottom Cemetery was on the agenda so he opened the meeting by telling a story which took place at Black Bottom Cemetery. Mr. Johnston stated that in the 50s and 60s hunting was allowed in the town limits and that several coveys of quail were located in the Black Bottom Cemetery. Mr. Johnston stated that he and his friend, Mr. Leon Smith were avid hunters and decided to hunt those quail. Mr. Johnston stated that while hunting Mr. Smith had covered the back portion of the cemetery and that he heard a yell from Mr. Smith. Mr. Smith had fallen in a grave. Another quail hunting story transpired from that story; again, Mr. Johnston was hunting in town on Old County Road when he shot some quail and they fell upon a resident’s roof. Mr. Johnston being the sportsman that he was did not want to leave the game he

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had killed, so he knocked on the resident's door to ascertain if she knew of some way he could remove the quail from her roof. He was directed to use a fishing pole, needless to say, Mr. Johnston retrieved his game.

The Depression Era and the effects on Belhaven

Mr. Johnston then told stories concerning life in Belhaven during the depression. Mr. Johnston stated that the stock market failed and banks closed in 1929 but that Belhaven did actually feel the effects until around 1932-33. Mr. Johnston asked the group to think of what the effects of not having the banks in operation would be on the town today. Mr. Johnston stated at that time he shined shoes at the local barber shop where one of his brothers worked as a barber. Mr. Johnston stated that he averaged around \$2.00 per week which was not bad compared to his father's salary of \$8.00 per week while working with the WPA (Works Progress Administration) writer's note (this was sponsored through President Roosevelt) and this action built the Charlie Smith Community house and the breakwater. During the depression meals consisted mostly of beans and corn meal muffins as corn meal was cheap 3 lbs. for .25. Farming at that time period was cotton, corn and stock peas. Some farmers grew molasses cane, as it was good with the corn meals and beans.

Mr. Johnson stated that while he worked at the Barber Shop, shining shoes, Kenneth Lamb was next door at his father's (Hank) jewelry store. The story proceeded with the two of them getting together and having in their possession a "blank gun" like you would use to fire to start a race, etc. They had no ammo for the gun but wanted to fire it badly so the two of them filed down a 22 bullet so it would fit the chamber of the blank gun and then they proceeded to bicker as to whom would shoot it first. Mr. Lamb ended up shooting the gun first and because of the filing of the bullet it ricocheted right back and hit him between the eyes. Mr. Johnson was a little glad that Mr. Lamb shot first, as he wiped the bullet off and assured Mr. Lamb that he would be alright.

The same Mr. Lamb purchased at 1932 Model T for \$20.00 and had air horns added to make the car a total of \$22.00.

Babe Ruth

Mr. Johnston proceeded to tell another story about two gentlemen coming in the barber shop who had been hunting in Hyde County. One gentleman had his shoes shined and then had Mr. Johnston's brother Bill provide barber services. The gentleman had been drinking (evidently) because when he sat up in the barber chair he got sick. The gentlemen with him paid Mr. Johnston \$5.00 to clean up after him (this was a lot of money during that time period). As they proceeded to leave the one gentleman said, "come on Babe let's go". Mr. Johnston had just cleaned the shoes of Babe Ruth!

In Closing

Mr. Johnston closed his mini stories with a joke he had received off of the internet concerning an attorney practicing in Belhaven without a brain.

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Councilman Pigott questioned if the Cooperage Mill was in operation at that time. Mr. Johnson stated yes, but that during the depression they had laid off about 1/3 of their force.

Mr. Johnston's mini-stories received spontaneous applause from the audience.

Black Bottom Cemetery Presentation – Mr. Jonathan Smith, ECU Grad Student

Mayor O'Neal recognized and introduced Mr. Jonathan Smith, a student of East Carolina University working on his master degree. Mr. Smith stated that this project of identifying graves at the Black Bottom Cemetery started as a class project and now has become the subject of his thesis. Mr. Smith showed a layout of graves to the audience with a power point presentation. Mr. Smith stated that he had received pertinent and helpful information from Mrs. Marie Whitaker. Mr. Smith stated that it was originally thought that there were 100 – 150 graves; but the total has grown to 602. The purpose of the study was to determine a pattern of burials and he has determined that the graves are organized in family groups with the earliest burial being marked at 1909 and the latest 1999. The location of the graves was chosen by family members as to where they wanted to be buried. Mr. Smith stated that some of the graves are not abandoned as family members know where their family members are buried. Mr. Smith stated that those graves which were exposed have been covered. Mr. Smith stated that he is proud that the Town of Belhaven initiated the clean up and is looking for volunteers to maintain the cemetery. Mr. Smith stated that he felt the boundary of the cemetery followed the boundary ditch line. Mayor O'Neal stated that he was concerned with spill over of graves not on the property. Mr. Smith stated that the graves seemed to be within the boundary. Councilman Carawan questioned where Mr. Smith obtained the information. Mr. Smith stated that most of the information was taken off of the grave markers. Councilman Pigott suggested that should anyone have additional information concerning this cemetery or its' burials to contact Town Manager Leverett. Mayor O'Neal stated that this project performed by Mr. Smith had a meaning and purpose and will be a part of Belhaven archives.

Authorizing Resolution – Town of Belhaven Obligations for the North Carolina Clean Water Management Trust Fund Historic Waterfront Sanitary Sewer Rehabilitation (Inflow and Infiltration)

Mayor O'Neal stated that the following resolution should be adopted to proceed with the grant application through the North Carolina Clean Water Management Trust for work on the Town's inflow and infiltration of the sewer system. Councilman Pigott made the motion to adopt the following resolution. Councilman Stanley seconded the motion. Councilman Pigott stated that the Town of Columbia just received \$400,000 from the same type of grant. The motion carried 4 to 0, unanimously.

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AUTHORIZING RESOLUTION**

**TOWN OF BELHAVEN OBLIGATIONS
FOR THE
NORTH CAROLINA CLEAN WATER MANAGEMENT TRUST FUND
HISTORIC WATERFRONT SANITARY SEWER REHABILITATION**

WHEREAS, the Town of Belhaven, is hereby applying to the North Carolina Clean Water Management Trust Fund (“the Fund”) for grant funds for the Historic Waterfront Area Sanitary Sewer Rehabilitation: and

WHEREAS, if the North Carolina Clean Water Management Trust Fund approves funding of the project as described in this grant application, the Fund will prepare a Grant Agreement for execution by the Town of Belhaven; and

WHEREAS, the Grant Agreement will specify the terms and conditions under which the Fund will provide the grant funding; and

WHEREAS, the Grant Agreement will require the Town of Belhaven to perform certain functions and obligations in order to carry out the work described in this grant application.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Town Council of the Town of Belhaven assures the North Carolina Clean Water Management Trust Fund that it understands the functions and obligations to which the Town of Belhaven is committing itself in order to carry out the work described in this grant application, and further agrees that the Town of Belhaven will proceed with diligence to perform those functions and obligations to accomplish the work described in this grant application.

Adopted this 26th day of January, 2009.

TOWN OF BELHAVEN TOWN COUNCIL

Adam W. O’Neal, Mayor

ATTEST:

Marie J. Adams, CMC
Town Clerk

(SEAL)

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Authorizing Resolution – Widen Old County Road

Mayor O’Neal stated that the following resolution was needed in order to move the project to widen Old County Road at a faster pace. Mayor O’Neal stated that the resolution would authorize the Town Manager to open bids and award a contract for this project based on the lowest bid from a responsive and responsible bidder. Councilman Moore made the motion to adopt the following resolution. Councilman Stanley seconded the motion which carried unanimously, 4 to 0.

**Authorizing Resolution
To
Widen Old County Road**

WHEREAS, the Town of Belhaven is undertaking to widen Old County Road in front of the Belhaven Post Office; and

WHEREAS, the Wooten Company is engaged as the Town’s Engineering Company for the project and will prepare the required Bid Document Specifications for the project; and

WHEREAS, bids for the project are expected to arrive at the Municipal Building at a date and time to be determined.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Town Manager be authorized to open those bids and execute a contract for the project based on the lowest bid from a responsive and responsible bidder. This procedure is authorized so that the project may begin at the soonest possible moment.

Adopted this 26th day of January, 2009.

Adam W. O’Neal, Mayor

ATTEST:

**Marie J. Adams, CMC
Town Clerk**

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Recall Election Guidelines

Mayor O’Neal stated that the Recall Election guidelines had been reviewed by the Council and were basically ready to be revised into ordinance form with some language corrections, not for content but for grammatical reasons. Councilman Carawan made the motion that the Recall Election Guidelines (Rules) are written in ordinance form for the next meeting and be approved pending grammatical changes. Councilman Stanley seconded the motion which carried unanimously, 4 to 0. Attorney Cockrell stated that when the ordinance is adopted it would then need to be submitted to the legislature and federal government for their approval of an amendment to the Town’s Charter. Mayor O’Neal stated that out of about 800 municipalities, 17 have Recall Election and that Belhaven will be 18.

Miscellaneous Mayor and Council Comments/Concerns

Councilman Carawan stated that concerning the paving project on Old County Road to widen the street and that the Town had met with the engineers and expressed the Council’s concern to expedite the project and that with the adoption of resolution, earlier tonight, the Town is ready to proceed.

Councilman Carawan stated that the board walk at Wynne’s Gut was ongoing.

Mayor O’Neal stated that the road widening should be completed by summer, breakwater should begin by March and dockage this summer.

Town Manager Leverett stated that he had no additional report.

Mayor O’Neal stated that the watershed project was coming to fruition on Pantego Street.

Closed Session 143-318.11(a) 3

Mayor O’Neal stated that there was a need for a closed session according to GS 143-318.11(a) 3 to consult with attorney. Councilman Carawan made the motion to adjourn regular session and to reconvene into closed session according to GS 143-318.11(a) 3. Councilman Moore seconded the motion which carried unanimously, 4 to 0. The regular session adjourned at 7:41 P.M at which time Town Clerk Adams left the meeting.

Reconvene Into Regular Session

Following closed session, Councilman Pigott made the motion to reconvene into regular session. Councilman Carawan seconded the motion which carried unanimously, 4 to 0. The meeting reconvened at 8:29 P.M. There was no action taken after reconvening into regular session

Adjournment

There being no further business, Mayor O’Neal declared the meeting adjourned at 8:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Marie J. Adams, Town Clerk

Guinn Leverett, Town Manager
Recording Secretary