

Belhaven Town Council

Minutes – February 23, 2009

Call to Order/Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance

The Town Council of the Town of Belhaven met in regular session on Monday, February 23, 2009 at 7:00 P.M. Mayor Adam W. O’Neal called the meeting to order with the following Council present: Steve W. Carawan, J. Nelson Guy, Mayor Pro-Tem; Howard D. Moore, McKee “Mac” Pigott and Robert L. Stanley. Town Manager Guinn Leverett and Town Clerk Marie J. Adams were also present. Mayor O’Neal recognized Mr. Johnny Donnell Clark, Deacon with Hoggard’s Temple Church of God in Christ who gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes – Closed Session January 26, 2009 and Regular Session February 9, 2009

Mayor O’Neal announced that the Closed Session Minutes of January 26 2009 and Regular Session Minutes of February 9, 2009 were open for review and approval. There being no corrections to the minutes, Councilman Pigott made the motion to approve both sets of minutes as written. Councilman Pigott seconded the motion which carried unanimously, 5 to 0.

Public Comments

Mayor O’Neal asked for any public comments at this time. There were no public comments.

ElectriCities- North Carolina Eastern Municipal Power Agency - Renewable Energy Development and Service Agreement Resolution

Mayor O’Neal stated that each entity that sold electricity was to be able to utilize a renewable energy; i.e.; solar and/or wind power. Mayor O’Neal stated that should the Council enter into this agreement/resolution with ElectriCities it would be into effect until 2012. Councilman Carawan made the motion to table the issue.

Councilman Carawan stated that Mr. Ken Raber with ElectriCities would be available at the second meeting in March to discuss the issue. Councilman Pigott stated that he understood that the renewable energy was state mandated but he did not like the fact that the Town would be dictated as to what the Town may or may not do and that a better explanation was needed. The motion carried unanimously, 5 to 0.

Amend Agenda to Add Rate Stabilization

Mayor O’Neal stated that the agenda should be amended to include the consideration of the Town utilizing the rate stabilization fund. Councilman Carawan made the motion to amend the agenda to add the consideration of the rate stabilization as the next agenda item. Councilman Stanley seconded the motion which carried unanimously, 5 to 0.

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Utilize Rate Stabilization Fund

Mayor O’Neal stated that the Town had a \$100,000 balance in the rate stabilization fund and that this fund was established to help stabilize electric rates (to keep from passing electric increases to the customers). Mayor O’Neal asked that a motion be made to access the rate stabilization funds, if needed. Mayor O’Neal also stated that a presentation would be made in the near future showing where the town stood with electric rates in comparison to other towns. Mayor O’Neal stated that the town was receiving an increase in wholesale electric of 4% this month.

Councilman Carawan made the motion to direct the Town Manager to utilize the rate stabilization fund, if necessary, to hold utility rates at their current levels. Councilman Moore seconded the motion which carried unanimously, 5 to 0.

Town Manager’s Report

Town Manager Leverett reported briefly on the following:

1) Budget Pay – the theory behind budget pay is simple: pay the same amount on your utility bill for 11 months and adjust to actual costs in the 12th month. Town Manager Leverett presented a draft budget pay policy. DRAFT

BUDGET PAY

The town of Belhaven is offering a new voluntary serve to aid customers in budgeting utility payments.

Budget Pay is based on your actual utility bills from calendar year 2008, and will take a weighted average of those bills. You will be billed that average amount for 11 months, and the 12th month will be a “true up” bill to adjust for actual consumption. Thus, for 11 months there will be no surprises.

Customer prior month account balance must be zero to begin Budget Pay. Budget amount must be paid on or before due date. Extensions and payment arrangements are not granted.

Budget Pay will not reduce you total utility bill over the course of a year. It will make the payments uniform for 11 months as an aid to your household budget. It is also important to note that Budget Pay assumes you maintain the same usage patterns.

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If you conserve in your actual usage of utility services, the 12th month would be a credit back to you. If, however, your usage actually goes up, the variance will be noted on the monthly bill you receive. If usage exceeds 40% of normal for two consecutive months, you may be switch back to actual billing.

Town Manager Leverett stated that balances carry forward and stated that the same policy for collection would remain.

Councilman Pigott stated that late fees should still be added. Councilman Pigott stated that the Department of Social Services will not pay unless you are threatened for cut-off of utilities. Councilman Pigott stated that this policy encourages the customers to pay late.

Mayor O’Neal stated that the policy should help all the citizens not just those who pay before the 15th of each month, so that the statement in the proposed policy concerning late pay should be removed from the policy. Consensus of the Town Council was to proceed with the Budget Pay Policy as corrected by the Mayor.

2) Washington, DC – Town Manager Leverett stated that he and Mayor O’Neal would be traveling to Washington, DC to lobby for funds for the replacement of the breakwater.

Councilman Pigott asked that should anyone have pictures of the breakwater as it was built in 1938 to please share them with the Town.

3) Energy Audit – March 3 – Town Manager Leverett announced that the Town still had a few time slots available for free energy audits on March 3. These audits will be performed by Electricities’ technicians at no charge and asked citizens to contact the Municipal Building to sign up for this energy audit.

4&5)Metal Roof Fire Department – Town Manager Leverett stated that with the completion of the repairs to the many roofs at the Fire Department the Town would be taking bids (with an ad in the News & Observer this weekend) to complete this roof project.

Miscellaneous Concerns/Comments

Councilman Pigott stated that he was very impressed with the detail report that the chief had given on the speeds that had been recorded on radar. Councilman Pigott was real concerned with the speeds in the residential 25 mph areas and asked that those speeding beware. Mayor O’Neal, on the other hand, stated that he did not think that the speeding was chronic as only a few were more than 9 mph over the posted speeds. Councilman Pigott again warned the public on speeding.

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Adjournment

There being no further business, Mayor O'Neal adjourned the meeting at 7:23 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie J. Adams, Town Clerk