

Belhaven Town Council

Minutes - June 28, 2010

Regular Session

Call to Order, Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Adam W. O'Neal called the Belhaven Town Council meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. on Monday, June 28, 2010 at the Belhaven Civic Center at 257 W. Pungo Street. Council members present were: Steve W. Carawan, Howard D. Moore and Robert L. Stanley. Councilman J. Nelson Guy was not present due to health issues and Councilman McKee "Mac" Pigott, Mayor Pro-Tem was absent due to vacation. Councilman Stanley gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes – June 14, 2010 Budget Workshop and Regular Session

Mayor O'Neal stated that the minutes of the budget workshop and regular session of the June 14, 2010 meeting were open for review and adoption. There being no corrections to the minutes, Councilman Carawan made the motion to approve the June 14, 2010 workshop and regular session minutes. Councilman Stanley seconded the motion which carried unanimously, 3 to 0.

Public Comments

Mayor O'Neal stated that the Council would hear any comments from the public at this time. Mayor O'Neal recognized Mr. Phil Reynolds a resident of 548 East Street. Mr. Reynolds stated that he would like to give a public "thank-you" to Mr. Jimmy Davis who has served as Fire Chief over the past several months as he had learned a lot under his direction.

Amendment to the Agenda

Mayor O'Neal stated that an amendment needed to be made to the agenda to include 1) the Wynne's Gut Project update and 2) Permission for the Fireworks after Item X Recall Election. Councilman Carawan made a motion to amend the agenda to add the following: Wynne's Gut Project Update and Permission for the Fireworks Display by Zambelli. Councilman Stanley seconded the motion which carried unanimously, 3 to 0.

Pungo District Hospital Foundation – Permission to Use Town Property for the Lucky Ducky Regatta

Mayor O'Neal recognized Ms. Arden Root, the Director of the Pungo District Hospital Foundation. Ms. Root stated that the foundation was again sponsoring the Lucky Ducky Contest in Wynne's Gut and asked permission to hold this even on Friday, July 2 from approximately 4:30 P.M. to 6:30 P.M. Ms. Root stated that all litter generated in this event would be removed. Councilman Stanley made the motion to allow Pungo District Hospital Foundation the use of Town property along Wynne's Gut for the Lucky Ducky Regatta on Friday, June 2, 2010 from 4:30 P.M. to 6:30 P.M. Councilman Moore seconded the motion which carried unanimously, 3 to 0.

Presentation of Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2010-2011

Mayor O'Neal stated that the budget reflected changes that were made in the budget workshop and included a .45 tax revenue which was revenue neutral. Mayor O'Neal stated there were no utility increases and no salary increases for employees, as the budget was tight. Mayor O'Neal stated that the Town still relied heavily on electric revenue but were trying to cut back. Mayor O'Neal asked that the citizens remember that the Town

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absorbed wholesale electric rate increases of 18% and had even cut electric rates by 2%. Mayor O'Neal asked for a motion adopting the 2010-2011 Budget as presented. Councilman Moore made the motion to approve the 2010-2011 Budget as presented. Councilman Stanley seconded the motion which carried unanimously, 3 to 0.

Chief Jimmy Davis Report and Appointment of New Volunteer Fire Chief
Chief Davis gave the following final report:

MEMORANDUM

TO: Belhaven Town Council
FROM: Jimmy Davis, Fire Chief
SUBJECT: Fire Department Update
DATE: June 28, 2010

On November 23, 2009 the Town of Belhaven appointed me the Interim Fire Chief on a contract basis to evaluate and correct some issues within the department. These issues focused mainly on the lack of communications between the fire department and the Town Council, preparation for the upcoming Rating Response Survey, renovations of the fire station, evaluation and inventory of departmental equipment, training, FEMA grant, and the retirement fund.

Council/Fire Department Relations: Our department has strived to work with the Town Council in accomplishing things such as the renovation to the fire station, purchasing new equipment, surplus old equipment, and applying for grants. As a result, the working relationship between the two has improved tremendously in the past seven months.

Rating Response Survey: We have identified many areas of concern as they pertain to the upcoming survey in 2011. One of the major concerns was the lack of documentation of training hours, pump test, hose test, and many other requirements. This documentation now has been put in place but will need to be constantly updated to ensure that it is not neglected in the future. An inventory of all equipment has indicated the equipment needed for the apparatus before the survey. Our department has received the State Fire Matching Grant to purchase this equipment. It will need to be purchased and placed on the proper apparatus according to the state equipment requirements. The continued preparation for the survey is something that must stay on track to ensure positive results in early 2011.

Training: As part of the survey by the NC Office of the State Fire Marshal in the upcoming inspection they will evaluate the department's training program. This evaluation will consist of any training facilities, training props, training media library, training records to include certain topics, and pre-fire plans of certain buildings within your fire district. The training they specifically look for is 8 outside drills, 12 hours of driving

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training, 3 hours of hazardous materials, 12 hours of officer training, and 240 hours of company training. Our plan to prepare for the inspection can not include a training facility but we have already started to acquire training manuals for a library. Training schedules and policies will have to be maintained to improve the grade of the evaluation of the training program. The amount of training and the lack of required topics became a major concern for the department in the evaluation process and should be avoided in the future in order to keep your training program aligned with the survey requirements.

Retirement Fund: After a review of the retirement program and the individual firefighter's records again the problem came back to documentation or the failure to complete the administrative reporting of the department. For example some firefighters were not credited years of service because of failure to submit annual departmental roster, or they did not acquire the required 36 hours of training. NC Department of Treasurer is working to credit the years of service that can be given based upon the documentation that they have currently.

Department membership: Belhaven Fire & Rescue Department currently has twenty-five active members on its roster of which three are Junior Firefighters. An aggressive training program along with strong leadership is very important during the next several months due to the fact that the department has several new members which contribute to an inexperienced department.

Station Renovations: The station renovations are nearing completion with a few small items needing to be completed. It will be something that the Town and Fire Department can be proud of once completed and the fire department is completely moved back in. Once completed the department will need to organize it in way that will make their job easier in meeting all the requirements placed on emergency response agencies today.

In closing, during the past seven months the Belhaven Fire Department with the support of the Town of Belhaven and its Town Council has worked hard to improve its organization along with the response capabilities in providing emergency services to the citizens of Belhaven and surrounding the area. It is my sincere hope that the dedication and enthusiasm will continue making the Belhaven Fire Department better than ever.

It has been with great gratitude to serve the Town of Belhaven as your Interim Fire Chief as I strived to exceed your expectations.

Pc: Town Manager
Town Clerk
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Mayor O'Neal thanked Mr. Davis for his work as Fire Chief for Belhaven and was very thankful and proud that he was available to assist the Town when needed. Mayor O'Neal stated that Mr. Davis handled personnel items, removed politics and built continuity within the department. Mayor O'Neal stated that Mr. Davis oversaw a lot of the remodeling process at the department. Mayor O'Neal stated that Mr. Davis also corrected some equipment issues. Councilman Carawan stated that he was extremely pleased with the comradery of the department. Councilman Stanley stated that he agreed with the remarks already made to Mr. Chief but wanted to personally thank him from the "bottom of his heart". Mr. Davis stated that he was a phone call away if needed. Mayor O'Neal stated that he hoped that Mr. Davis could be utilized in the future for some training issues.

Appointment of New Volunteer Fire and Rescue Chief

Mayor O'Neal stated that Mr. Paul Wood, Jr. had agreed to serve as the new Fire and Rescue Chief beginning July 1, 2010. Councilman Moore made the motion to appoint Mr. Paul Wood, Jr. as Fire/Rescue Chief of the Belhaven Volunteer Fire and Rescue. Councilman Stanley seconded the motion which carried 3 to 0.

Cooperage Property Contract

Mayor O'Neal stated that Mr. Brantley Tillman, Mr. Henry Boyd and Mr. Joe Lassiter were present as the owners of the property on West Main Street (waterfront) known as the Cooperage property. Mr. Brantley Tillman stated that the property was an 8.94 acre tract which was appraised at \$3.6 million. Mr. Tillman stated that the owners were willing to sell the property to the Town for \$1.2 million therefore, donating \$2.4 million. Mr. Lassiter stated that he is a grant writer with Quible & Associates and would donate his time to complete a grant application that could pay the \$1.2 million so in turn the property would not cost the Town any funds. Mr. Lassiter stated that this grant application is due in July so time is of the essence. Mr. Lassiter stated that this property would give the town endless ways for the general public to have access to the water (such as: fishing pier, public docking, boardwalk maybe a club house with showers) without actually have to own waterfront property. Mayor O'Neal questioned the likelihood of CAMA issuing a grant for this large amount of money. Mr. Lassiter stated it was very likely as the property was appraised for a lot larger sum than was being requested for grant funds. Mayor O'Neal stated that the cost to the Town would be \$1.2 million with another \$500,000 - \$600,000 for needed improvements but with grant monies, there would actually be no cost to the Town and the sale would be contingent upon the grant award. Mayor O'Neal stated that it was important that all citizens be able to access the water. Mayor O'Neal also asked what was the deadline for the grant application. Mr. Lassiter stated that the grant deadline was July 21, 2010. There was some Council discussion concerning the need to proceed, especially with the grant application but to vote on the agreement to purchase at the next meeting. Councilman Carawan made the motion that the Town Manager move forward working with Mr. Lassiter on the grant application with the contingency that the vote for the agreement for purchase of sale be held at the next meeting of the Town Council on July 12, 2010. Councilman Stanley seconded the motion which carried unanimously, 3 to 0.

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Mr. Tillman stated that he would like to see the Town move forward with the project as Belhaven's two main assets were the hospital and the water. Councilman Stanley questioned wetlands and if a structure could be built on the property. Mr. Lassiter stated that the property was zoned Marine Business which allowed for structures and that the wetlands were delineated on the maps and totaled about 2.6 acres. Mr. Tillman stated that should the Town decide to make a profit on the property after receiving the grant then the grant monies would have to be paid back. Mayor O'Neal thanked the owners for their offer to sell to the Town which will benefit the Town.

Recall Elections

Mayor O'Neal stated that the Town Council had previously adopted an amendment to the Town charter to allow Recall Elections, but that it did not pass the approval of the general assembly. Mayor O'Neal stated that the proposed Recall Election is one taken from another Town which was approved by the general assembly and had wording change for Belhaven. Mayor O'Neal stated that the purpose of the Recall Election was so that if there is an elected official that a majority of the citizens are dissatisfied with then he can be removed. Following some discussion, Councilman Carawan made the motion to approve the Recall Election provision. Councilman Moore seconded the motion which carried 3 to 0.

Wynne's Gut Project

Mayor O'Neal introduced Mr. Hood Richardson, Engineer for the Wynne's Gut project. Mr. Richardson first complimented the Council on their endeavor to have a Recall Election. Mr. Richardson stated that the permit for the Wynne's Gut renovations allowed for a 15' pier and 9 boat slips. Mayor O'Neal stated that someone from the community (a do-gooder) called Washington, DC concerning this project and that the original grant award had for the inclusion of 30 boat slips, and because of their interference the project was stopped after bids were received. Mr. Richardson stated that 30 boat slips would not work in the Wynne's Gut area as there was not enough room. Mayor O'Neal stated that now the Town needed to rework a plan for Wynne's Gut which would fit the original grant in order to move forward. Following some discussion the Council agreed to vote on this issue at the July 26 meeting and asked that Mr. Richardson have some plan ready for Council action at that date. Councilman Carawan made a motion to direct the Town Manager and Mr. Hood Richardson to proceed with the Wynne's Gut project and to report back at the July 26 Council meeting. Councilman Stanley seconded the motion which carried unanimously, 3 to 0.

Issuance of Fireworks Permit to Zambelli Pyrotechnics

Mayor O'Neal stated that a motion should be made allowing Zambelli Pyrotechnics to perform the fireworks display on Saturday, July 3. Councilman Stanley made the motion allowing Zambelli Pyrotechnics a permit to perform the fireworks display on Saturday, July 3, 2010 starting at 9:00 P.M. Councilman Moore seconded the motion which carried unanimously, 3 to 0.

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Town Manager's Report

Town Manager Leverett reported briefly on the following: introduced new Finance Officer, Mr. Steve Noble, CPA, who had been working with our former Finance Officer DeHaven on Saturday and Wednesday to close out the year; announced that the Town had a two year extension on the Wynne's Gut project; stated that he had promised former Fire Chief Jimmy Davis a letter of recommendation – following some discussion, Mayor O'Neal stated that a resolution at the next Council meeting would be appropriate. Mayor O'Neal stated that with the hiring of Mr. Noble, the Town of Belhaven had its' first full-time Certified Public Accountant (CPA). Mayor O'Neal stated that Mr. Noble's mother was the former Mayor of Aurora, Mrs. Grace Bonner and that he was very proud to have him working for the Town of Belhaven. Mr. Noble stated that he was glad to be here. Mayor O'Neal stated that with the hiring of the Finance Officer and the Code Enforcement Officer that Town Manager Leverett had two new people who would be able to assist him.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Mayor O'Neal declared the meeting adjourned at 7:57 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie J. Adams, CMC
Town Clerk