

**Belhaven Town Council  
Minutes – Regular Session  
Monday, July 27, 2009**

**Call to Order/Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance**

The Town Council of the Town of Belhaven met in regular session on Monday, July 27, 2009 at 7:00 P.M. This meeting immediately followed the reception held for former and retired volunteer rescue members which started at 6:00 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, J. Nelson Guy, Mayor Pro-Tem; Howard D. Moore, McKee “Mac” Pigott and Robert L. Stanley. Town Manager Dr. Guinn Leverett, Town Finance Officer Mr. Kyle J. DeHaven and Town Clerk Marie J. Adams were also present. Mayor O’Neal recognized and introduced Mr. Johnny Donnell Clark who gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Approval of Minutes – Regular and Closed Session – July 13, 2009**

Mayor O’Neal announced that the Regular and Closed Session minutes of July 13, 2009 were open for review and approval. There being no corrections to the minutes, Councilman Carawan made the motion to approve as written. Councilman Stanley seconded the motion which carried unanimously, 5 to 0.

**Public Comments**

Mayor O’Neal asked for any comments from the public. There were none.

**Auction of Surplus Property by Electronic Means**

Mayor O’Neal stated that Town Manager Leverett had brought before the Council the idea of having surplus property sales on line instead of local auctions. Town Manager Leverett stated that he had learned of an electronic way to auction off surplus items and would need permission from the council to create an account with Govdeals.com. Councilman Carawan questioned the cost to create the on-line account. Town Manager Leverett stated that the service was free. Town Manager Leverett stated that the Council would still declare items surplus and with this program the items could then be sold on line, therefore not having to store items to have an auction. Councilman Carawan made the motion that the Town Manager be allowed to create an account with Govdeals.com (auction website) to sell surplus town equipment. Councilman Stanley seconded the motion which carried unanimously, 5 to 0.

**The Wooten Company – USDA Rural Development Rehabilitation Project**

Mayor O’Neal stated that the Town had received funding for the Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) and to replace/repair the sewer by-pass (receiving sewer from the County) and that there was a \$1,000,000 match. Mayor O’Neal stated that Town Manager Leverett has learned that the Town could apply for a grant/loan for that \$1,000,000 match and that permission was needed for The Wooten Company to pursue this additional funding through USDA. Councilman Pigott stated that The Wooten Company has performed well for the Town in past projects and asked that their hours for this project be tabulated. Councilman Pigott made the motion for the Town to work with The Wooten Company to pursue these additional funds from the USDA to aid in funding the force main by-pass or to seek other sources to find matches sources of \$1,000,000.00. Councilman Moore seconded the motion which carried, 5 to 0. Councilman Carawan stated that this upgrade

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in the sewer by-pass was necessitated because of the inflow of sewer from the county and ½ of the matching grant should be the responsibility of Beaufort County.

**Town Manager's Report**

Town Manager Leverett reported briefly on the following: 1) meeting scheduled this Wednesday, July 29 with Mr. Jeff Kidwell, who is heading up the Battalina Creek effort for the insurance company which wrote the bond for the subdivision. Mr. Howard Nichols will also be working on this as he was the project engineer for The East Group for this development and has a wealth of background information for this project. The Town now has reason to believe that this project will now be done sooner than later. 2) NC Water Resources Congress will meet in Raleigh on August 11, 2009. Mayor O'Neal stated that Town Manager Leverett made it known how important this agency was in contacts in Washington, DC for getting the breakwater project funded. Mayor O'Neal also thanked Town Manager Leverett for his insistence to become a member of the NC Water Resources Congress and its' importance. 3) Breakwater – construction plans should be ready in August and plan to award a contract for replacement this September and construction to begin this Fall 2009.

**Miscellaneous Council/Mayor Concerns**

Mayor O'Neal recognized Councilman Guy. Councilman Guy presented the following information to the public.

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I believe that every person in office is allowed to be in that position by God all mighty. From Obama in the white house right down to me in this council seat. He is in control of everything that goes on. At times he will allow us to hang ourselves (so to speak) when we don't ask him for direction.

You say don't mix politics and God, if that is true then we should not have the opening prayer when we start the meeting or pray over our meals such as the ~~one~~ <sup>SEPERATE BROTHERS</sup> we had earlier.

Our Mayor usually has a power point presentation when he has a visual point to make. I don't have a power point presentation that you can look at as I talk so I ask you to visualize this subject, in your mind.

Two weeks ago after our last meeting the Emergency Medical Service Volunteer Squad of Belhaven was shut down. Through a lack of down home communication, or miss reading the information given to me, or, it may be that I can't figure this out on my own.

What ever the case may be I was in error, assuming, and you know what happens when you ass/u/me.

I have had more than 30 calls, untold visits and plenty of stops as I tried to buy groceries or get gas and the topic was always the same.

That being "Why did the council vote to shutdown the EMS Volunteers."

I have talked to our county manager Paul Spruil and our emergency management head man John Pack today to verify certain things I read and here we go with that word again ( assumed)

This is my power point: so put your mind to work and visualize as I read from the paper dated July 22<sup>nd</sup> 2009

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Do you realize the closest EMS is Pinetown at 15 miles ; Bath at 16 miles and Pamlico Beach at 25 miles. The soonest anyone could get

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Councilman Guy also referenced an article in the July 22, 2009 Beaufort-Hyde News, concerning the EMS for the Belhaven Community. Councilman Guy noted several quotes by Mr. Ricky White of White Oak EMS who is providing the EMS for the Belhaven Community as a paid 24/7 service as quotes by County Manager Spruill and Commissioner Richardson.

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Beaufort-Hyde News

Wednesday, J

## EMS

from page 1A

WHEN I SAY RICKY I'M TALKING ABOUT WHITE OAK EMS  
CONVINCE TO START TRAINING

USE RICKY WHITE SAYS

into the simple account. "No. That money goes straight to Ricky. He bills and collects, but we have access to his records for audit purposes," Spruill said.

White estimated \$65,000 in revenue during the first year of operation. The town and county are subsidizing the project at \$260,000, according to Spruill.

"Ricky is at risk. We're not. If he meets his goal, he keeps it (the profit). If he is below his goal, he still keeps it. Either way he is guaranteed a monthly payment," Spruill said, adding that at the end of the first year the board will review White's estimations, along with his estimates for the second and third year.

Since its opening on July 1, White Oak Medical Service has responded to 20 calls, according to Leverett.

White said he is operating with his employees from Windsor and is hoping to hire local EMTs soon. The employees are working full schedules — some are working 24 hours, others are on 12-hour shifts.

"One problem we're having is locating some of the places. The GPS can't find them all. I've made up a book of roads and now know the numbers and which is east and west," White said.

White said the former EMS volunteers and fire department officials are serving as a great asset in the transition.

"I can't believe how great they've been. They are really helping out and the people are really friendly. Some are upset about the transaction. I heard the Belhaven EMS was shutdown. Is it true? I was hoping to use them as a backup," White said, adding that they would be a great help especially during Northside's football games when an ambulance's presence is required. "I have no problem with them as a back up."

White said he had already worked mutual aid accidents with Bath and Pamlico Beach.

"We are trying to cover the area without a backup volunteer rescue. We have invested in an improved level," Spruill said. "We want to make a clean break. It is our responsibility to cover special events. We will try to cover them, but we may ask you to. It will be

he noticed is that he and his employees cannot leave the EMS station unless the Beaufort County communicator calls them to a scene.

Several incidences have occurred when several volunteer EMS squads were called out before White Oak and never responded — all the time while White Oak was ready to go.

"Some communities don't have volunteers during the day. I have been a volunteer for 32 years. I had nothing to do with them shutting down," White said.

Richardson said 24-7 EMS came to fruition because the number of volunteers was limited and the volunteer rescue couldn't handle the coverage area as efficiently.

The county commissioners had hoped to rely on the Belhaven Volunteer EMS for at least three months, according to Spruill, but Belhaven town officials opted not to use the volunteers at all.

"We hoped it would overlap, but it is not as rosy as some may think. There is animosity and the town board had to act. We can't have two rescue (squads), just as we can't have two police (departments). It's contradictory," Carawan said.

The Belhaven Town Council decided to discontinue its volunteer EMS during a closed session July 13, according to Pigott.

"We decided to dissolve the EMS backup, but keep the trucks ready. We were relying on two to three volunteers to respond to the calls. It had nothing to do with their service, we just hired a man to do it," Pigott said.

Carawan said, "I appreciate all the volunteers, but we can't make all sides equal."

Questions arose about the use of the town's ambulances. Pigott said the fire chief called John Pack, director of emergency management for Beaufort County, and discontinued the use of the ambulances.

"We need to keep them alive," Richardson said.

Pack said he received a letter from the town stating the dissolution of the Belhaven EMS, which would occur "sometime in July."

"It happened the next day so I had to start moving on it with the state," Pack said, Tuesday.

The county is hoping to keep Belhaven's two ambulances active, according to Pack.

be maintained by an active EMS squad.

One idea to accomplish the task of keeping the ambulances vital is to retitle them to the county.

"The county would then maintain them and would assume liability," Pack said. "We want to find an arrangement to do this and make this happen. We are actively working out the issues and don't want to violate any state laws."

"As it stands right now, White Oak can use the ambulances if needed. Broad Creek EMS was using one of the town's ambulances last week because theirs was in the shop."

Belhaven owns the ambulances.

"Look at them (the ambulances) as equipment and flexibility," Spruill said, during the meeting.

White said he may need additional help for about two months before he feels comfortable handling the area alone.

"It was good working with them on the calls and I hope this won't stop them from helping me," White said. "I am doing the best job I can."

Spruill said, "It is our obligation to cover the area, but we will do it with you."

Mutual aid is still available in White Oak's coverage area, according to Pack.

"If we need to dispatch a second call out, while White Oak is responding to another call we will dispatch the closest EMS," Pack said.

White asked that if the board heard any negatively about his service to please notify him.

"That goes toward our success too. We will let you know," Richardson said.

The next EMS board meeting is at 9 a.m. on Sept. 17, in the old town council chambers in Belhaven.

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There was no second following Councilman Guy's motion to reinstate the Belhaven Volunteer EMS. The motion failed.

Councilman Pigott stated there was no voting in closed session, but discussion and agreed in closed session to dissolve Belhaven Volunteer EMS. Councilman Pigott stated that he called Chief Derrick Myers and told him to not move the trucks unless called by himself or another Council member.

Mayor O'Neal stated that he made it a point not to be critical of the EMS and that now citizens have intermediate care (start IV's etc.) when picked up instead of having to wait to get to the hospital for that type of treatment. Mayor O'Neal stated that the community was now getting quicker service and asked how you could be against that. Mayor O'Neal stated that before the 24/7 EMS paid service, there was a call on East Street and that it was not answered by Belhaven Volunteer and Bath Community Volunteer transported the patient. Mayor O'Neal stated that you could not have both volunteer EMS and a paid EMS service. Mayor O'Neal stated that the former volunteer EMS were using the town Council by involving politics in this transition. Mayor O'Neal stated that the former volunteer EMS did a great job when a lot of the volunteers worked in town, but over the past couple of years 2 -3 volunteers could not handle all the calls. Mayor O'Neal explained that the full-time EMS service was provided to the citizens and the community with no increase in taxes, etc. and it was time to move on and was very disappointed that the issue was used for politics. Councilman Stanley asked to make this scenario clearer for everybody. Example: White Oak (the full-time 24/7 paid EMS) receives a call out of the town limits and within minutes another call for an in-town resident comes in. Who is the mutual aid? Mayor O'Neal stated that mutual aid (which would be Pamlico Beach, Pinetown or Bath Community) would be called for the in-town call should White Oak be on another call.

Councilman Guy stated that he was not against the White Oak but for Mutual Aid, the Belhaven Volunteer EMS should be used as the other departments would take too long to back up. Councilman Guy stressed the fact that the mutual aid for EMS should be closer.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business, Mayor O'Neal declared the meeting adjourned at 7:34 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie J. Adams, CMC  
Town Clerk