

Minutes
of the
Spring Hope Board of Commissioners Meeting
August 10, 2009
7:00 pm

Members present: Mayor Buddy Gwaltney, Commissioners Marion Clark, Stanley Hawley, Bill Newkirk and Lee Bissett. Commissioner Clyde Best was absent.

Also, present John Holpe, Town Manager; Betsy Boykin, Town Clerk; Mark Edwards, Town Attorney; Ken Murchison, Spring Hope Enterprise; Amanda Clark, Nashville Graphic.

Citizens attending: Allen Allen, Terri Allen, Pauline France, Arda Daniel, Eula Brantley, John Clark and Ricky Tucker, Jeff Breedlove, Clint Smith, Brent Edwards and Chief Denton.

Mayor Gwaltney called the meeting to order and Commissioner Newkirk gave the invocation.

Commissioner Bissett made a motion to approve the minutes of July 13, 2009, seconded by Commissioner Hawley and it passed unanimously.

Public Forum: Pauline France and Gay Sturgeon.

They appeared before the board to discuss beautification of the town. Mrs. France read a letter written by Terry Alford concerning the appearance of the town. The committee was asking for funds to be put in the budget for maintaining the downtown area. They had questioned why the town employees were not maintaining the town. John Holpe, Town Manager stated that last year we had seven employees, and this year we only have six employees. He had also gotten a notice today that James Hopkins, maintenance employees was resigning. He stated that there were several places in town that the employees had to cut grass. Mayor Gwaltney recommended that the town manager get in contact with Mike Bartholomew at the Nash Rocky Mount Schools to see if he could get some agricultural students to help with this project. It was suggested to contact the Revitalization Board to see what they recommended. Commissioner Newkirk stated that the town had only five or six people working and that they could not do it all. He stated that citizens complain when the board raises taxes and then when the board dropped the tax rate, the citizens still want money in the budget for beautification. Commissioner Hawley suggested checking with the Department of Correction to see if they would send their inmates to help clean up the town.

Sylvia Williams, president of the Chamber of Commerce thanked Pauline France, Mr. & Mrs. Allen for the help cleaning up the downtown area.

Kevin Varnell with Stocks Engineering was present regarding several items:

Bids were opened Monday, August 10, 2009 for street improvement (potholes). They were:
Barnhill Contracting Company- \$ 28,083.26 and Smith Contracting Inc.- \$ 35,165.29

The bid amount included two-inch asphalt and six inch CABC patching and nine inch asphalt full depth patching. He had prepared a map of the street improvement plan.

The streets that need the most repairs were West Main Street from Ash Street to May Street and from May Street to Warren Street and McLean Street from the school out to 581. John Holpe, Town Manager stated that it would be better for the board to take a month to study this plan and make a decision at the September meeting on how to proceed with the plan.

Kevin Varnell stated that he, along with the town manager would attend a meeting Wednesday to get an update on the Rural Center Grant and USDA grant and loan project. He gave an update on the Clean Water Management Trust Fund Project. He stated that all of the sewer line work regarding the collection system and the lift station has been completed. The chlorination chamber is under construction. He stated the town would have \$ 104,000 left over that can be used for other projects.

Kevin Varnell, also stated that the USDA has additional stimulus money available, mostly in form of grants. The grants would be for infrastructure projects. Commissioner Bissett made a motion to proceed with the grant application for stimulus fund for water and sewer improvements. Commissioner Newkirk seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Commissioner Newkirk made a motion to continue with the Small Main Street Program, seconded by Commissioner Hawley and it passed unanimously.

Commissioner Hawley made a motion to approve a lease contract regarding communication equipment on the West Branch Street Water Storage Tank with Strickland's Industries for \$ 25.00 per month and Time Warner Cable for \$ 150.00 per month effective a month from the day when the lease is signed and earmarked it to beautification. Commissioner Bissett seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Commissioner Bissett made a motion to approve the budget amendment of \$ 5,000 for sound equipment donation made to the Spaulding Auditorium. Commissioner Hawley seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Betsy Boykin, Town Clerk reported on the financial statement for the Music Jubilee Account. After reporting on the loan, revenues and expenditures, the account owes the General Fund \$ 948.00.

John Holpe, Town Manager stated he would be going to a meeting on October 25, and October 26 on Economic Development Consulting Work.

The Chamber of Commerce has requested that the town co-sponsor the Pumpkin Festival Beauty Pageant without any financial help. The Board of Commissioners approved the town to be a co-sponsor of the Beauty Pageant.

John Holpe, Town Manager discussed developing a Strategic Energy Plan. He stated it would consist of installing energy efficient windows in the community building, new lighting on the streets and new control panels. There would be no local match on this plan.

Tim Denton, Police Chief gave an update on the police department.

Officer Clint Smith made a presentation to the board about officer safety. He mentioned the incident that occurred July 26 on East Nash Street, where there would be a need for a taser. He stated that incident is proof that the officers should be allowed to use tasers if they are trained. He explained how tasers work and how they are much safer than handguns and asked the board for permission to use donated funds to purchase a taser for the police department. He stated that with the proper policies and training, this department is more than capable to carry such a tool. He stated that he and another officer had already had the training. He was asking the board blessing to purchase the taser.

Commissioner Newkirk stated that he would not approve the request after questioning Officer Smith what nationality was the person that was involved in the incident. Officer Smith stated that the issue had nothing to do with race. Commissioner Newkirk stated that he does not want to hinder police officers in the line of duty, but stated he wanted this to go on record as being against the Town of Spring Hope officers carrying tasers.

Mayor Gwaltney and the other commissioners said they would approve the request, but the mayor asked to put off a vote until the September meeting since Commissioner Best was not present to vote.

There being no further business, Commissioner Hawley made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Bissett and it passed unanimously.