

Minutes  
Town Council Meeting  
February 21, 2006  
PROSPERITY, SC 29127  
7:00 pm

Council Attendance: Mayor Larry Spotts, Councilmen G.W. Dawkins,  
Allen Gallman, and Derek Underwood

Administrative Attendance: Karen Livingston, Clerk/Treasurer – Administrator;  
Fred Sexton, Public Works Director; Hank Bufkin,  
Town Attorney; Benji Sease, Chief of Police;  
Sabrina Manning, Recreation Director

Mayor Spotts called the meeting to order. Councilman Gallman opened the meeting with prayer. Mayor Spotts welcomed the new Clerk/Treasurer, Karen Livingston to the Town of Prosperity and looks forward to some great results.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Two sets of minutes to be approved

Mayor Spotts presented the minutes of the January 17, 2006 council meeting to Council for approval.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Dawkins to approve the minutes of January 17, 2006;  
Seconded by Councilman Underwood and so approved unanimously.

Mayor Spotts presented the minutes of the January 26, 2006 council meeting to Council for approval.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Gallman to approve the minutes of January 26, 2006;  
Seconded by Councilman Underwood and so approved unanimously.

**OPEN SESSION:**

Mayor Spotts recognized Daniel Hare who had signed up to speak to Council.

Mr. Hare introduced himself to Council. He read from a prepared statement. Prosperity Town Council exists for a purpose with specific results identified by the board. We the people in the communities throughout Prosperity would like to see some progress in our communities and equality for all. Once I asked the former Mayor Bruce Connelly why aren't there any minorities working in the town administration? He replied there were none qualified. In my eyes he is a racist and modern day Saddam Hussein. We want all people treated with respect and dignity. We also need motivated and innovated town employees to effectively deliver quality services. And we want residents to be informed about town services, responsibilities and the results. These are just a few goals identified to me by concerned citizens of this town. Mayor Spotts asked Mr. Hare what areas and

services exactly are you talking about? As far as the services has there been any utility decrease? Mayor Spotts responded that there have been no utility decrease or increase. Mr. Hare asked about public walkways and Mayor Spotts replied to Mr. Hare that we are in the process of getting information to add sidewalks from Elm Street across Hwy 76 to the school and from Mr. B.C. Bedenbaugh's house to Miller Street Apartments. Mayor Spotts then was asked about Equal Opportunity in Administration and assured Mr. Hare that all hiring was done above board and through the proper channels. Mr. Hare then wanted to speak on behalf of the student athletes. Mr. Hare wanted to talk about basketball and Mayor Spotts addressed Fred Sexton – Public Works Director who told him that basketball goals are in the warehouse and would be installed.

Mr. Bufkin – Town Attorney asked to address Mr. Hare. He stated that he found his comments to be very inflammatory and really out of line. The town works very hard to have equal opportunity program. We have several black employees that work throughout the town and all the hiring is done openly and publicly and just merely saying it does not make it so and I hope if you have specific complaints that you would make those complaints and don't throw such wild things as Saddam Hussein because that is just not true and it lessens the value of your comments.

**COMMITTEE CHANGE:** Mayor Spotts announced a Committee Change as follows:

- Councilman G.W. Dawkins will report on Building, Parks, Sanitation and Street Departments
- Mayor Spotts and Karen Livingston will report on the Recreation Department.
- Councilman Allen Gallman will report on Water and Sewer

#### **REPORT OF COMMITTEES:**

**Electrical, Fire Department, Parade, and Rescue:** Councilman Underwood stated that he had nothing to report for Electrical. Fire Department report included asbestos removal deadline of February 27, 2006. No report for Parade Committee or Rescue Committee. Mayor Spotts has arranged for Jimmy Smith Auctioneer to take the truck to Irmo to auction the truck on March 11, 2006 and proceeds to go toward the demolition of the old town hall building.

**Water and Sewer:** Councilman Gallman reported some sewage stoppage on Langford Street corrected by Fred Sexton and his crew. A water tap on McNeary Street and a water line on Connelly Drive. A motor was replaced on Langford Street, pump #5.

**Sanitation and Street Department:** Councilman Gallman had no report from this Committee. Mayor Spotts asked Fred Sexton for an update on the Packer Truck. Fred reported that estimates had been obtained and the truck is scheduled to go into the shop Friday. Garbage pickup should not be delayed.

Councilman Underwood suggested we research and pursue grant funding for sidewalks and asked Council to look at areas that needed sidewalks. Councilman Dawkins updated

Council on the Gina Mayes Ditch Project. Site has been surveyed to determine rite of way.

**Police Department:** Chief Benji Sease reported on railroad crossings. If arms are put on crossings there is no way they can be over ridden except by CSX or Norfolk Southern employees. If the arms come down they will stay down because no county or police employee can reset them. Mr. Mudd also caution against directing traffic through a faulty arm because it would increase the liability to the Town.

Mayor Spotts reported that the 35 MPH speed zone is going to be extended past Prosperity Elementary School to Wessinger Drive.

Councilman Underwood complimented the entire Police Department on their efficiency and thanked them for everything they do.

**Building, Recreation and Parks Department:** Registrations are coming in for Spring Recreation Programs. Town Members receive a five-dollar discount on their registration fee. No increase in registration fees. Sabrina Manning – Recreation Director stated that applications were still being taken and urged people to come on and sign up. Councilman Dawkins also reminded all to support Prosperity by purchasing a sign at the ball fields. Councilman Gallman talked to Rusty Rhodes about getting red clay for the ballfield.

Councilman Underwood asked if concerns from citizens about dilapidated buildings should be brought before full council? Hank Bufkin, Town Attorney will draft a letter to the property owner for the Council to sign informally hopefully to co hearse people to do the right thing so we would not have to raise the level up to where it would cost everybody.

**Utility Department:** Fred Sexton had nothing to report at this time.

**Town Attorney:** Request that Council table the 1<sup>st</sup> reading of the electric surcharge ordinance due to the fact that our wholesale power supplier suggested that we might approach that problem differently with our rate structure. Council agreed to table the first reading of the electric surcharge.

**Clerk/Treasurer Administrator:** Ms. Livingston had no report at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

**Replacement of broken windows in Town Center:** One bid was received for replacement of broken windows. Council decided to put item on Agenda for March meeting and in the meantime get more bids.

**A MOTION** was made by Councilman Dawkins to go into Executive Session; Seconded by Councilman Gallman and so approved unanimously.

A **MOTION** was made by Councilman Underwood to go out of Executive Session; Seconded by Councilman Dawkins and so approved unanimously.

**Caldwell Land Project:** The Town of Prosperity entered into a verbal agreement with George Harvey Caldwell about 25 years ago that in return for him giving up the property upon which the lift station would be that we would agree to a lower, in town, rate for utilities. It was brought to Mr. Caldwell's attention by a renter that out of town rates were being paid. The Council discussed the right thing to do and agreed that for the one house on McFall Drive would pay the in town rate for utilities as long as the property is owned by George Harvey Caldwell and Mr. Caldwell is alive.

A **MOTION** was made by Councilman Underwood that utilities would be charged at in-town rates at 172 McFall Drive, as long as George Harvey Caldwell owns the property and is alive. Seconded by Councilman Dawkins and so approved unanimously.

Ms. Livingston is to send a letter to Mr. Caldwell to inform him of the motion.

**Rugs for hallways in Town Center:** Ms. Livingston suggested Cintas for our rug service since we already use them for our uniforms. The cost would be \$10.75 per week for 6 rugs in various sizes.

A **MOTION** was made by Councilman Underwood to enter into a one year contract with Cintas for the rugs; Seconded by Councilman Gallman so approved unanimously.

**Cleaning Bids for Town Center:** Council reviewed the (5) cleaning bids provided.

A **MOTION** was made by Councilman Gallman to accept the lowest bid, Newberry Industries, at \$204.75 per month; Seconded by Councilman Dawkins and so approved unanimously.

**Fuel Cost Adjustment:** 1<sup>st</sup> reading of demand charge for electricity was tabled. Mayor Spotts introduced a fuel adjustment charge that is being added to the town's electric bill by Duke Power. Councilman Underwood explained the charge to Council. Currently Duke Power is adding the adjustment to their bill we pay wholesale in the amount of \$26,000 that the Town is absorbing each year. The adjustment is .21026 cents that would be passed on to the consumer if a motion was made and approved. The adjustment would change when Duke Power's adjustment rate changed; the fuel adjustment would not be an increase in rates or anything of that nature we would just be passing the fuel cost adjustment on to the customer. This is something we have to do or we are going to come up short on our budget. Mayor Spotts added that the fuel adjustment charge only changes once a year. Our rates are the lowest rates in the area and instead of doing a demand charge that would cost the town in software upgrades and meters, this is something we can do to add on each month on the bill with little or no administrative cost.

Mayor Spotts asked Mr. Bufkin if we had to have an ordinance to add the fuel adjustment to the monthly bills. Mr. Bufkin responded that our rates are set by ordinance so we need to have a verbal first reading of the ordinance and actually have a written ordinance for second reading at our next meeting. Councilman Underwood questioned if the fuel adjustment should show on the bill as a separate line item. Mr. Bufkin suggested that our first reading would say that that amount would be added to the bill and if it is possible for the software to show it without additional cost that we do that to show people where the money is. Mayor Spotts asked Ms. Livingston to check and make sure that our software will handle the change to show the fuel adjustment as a separate line item.

**A MOTION** was made by Councilman Dawkins to have 1<sup>st</sup> reading on the fuel adjustment charge; Seconded by Councilman Gallman and so approved unanimously.

**Dean Richardson with CC McGregor and Company:** Mr. Richardson introduced himself and distributed some preliminary draft reports on general fund and utility fund revenue and related expenses for the Council review. The information presented covers the 04-05-budget year. Mr. Richardson voiced concerns about the software systems we have in place and reiterated the fact that these findings were relayed to Council in the audit report for 03-04. Mr. Richardson suggested a plan of action to strengthen controls. He also suggested adding policies and procedures to ensure the absence of repeated audit points in the future.

Mayor Spotts assured Mr. Richardson that a plan would be put into operation and thanked Mr. Richardson for his information.

**YMCA:** Councilman Underwood made a suggestion to check with our Benefits Administrator to see if Town Employees could get a discount on health insurance premiums if they become members of the YMCA. Councilman Underwood has contacted the YMCA and they are willing to give Town employees a 10% corporate discount on memberships to be paid monthly by payroll deductions. To participate there would have to be at least 3 Town employees enrolled. The cost would be \$13.70 ppp for full family and \$9.14 ppp for single membership. Councilman Underwood has asked that Department heads talk to Town employees and see if there is an interest in membership. He also asked Ms. Livingston to follow-up with State Benefits Administrator to see if we would get a discount on insurance premiums for membership to the YMCA. Councilman Underwood is also going to check with the Y to see if a one-year contract is required to participate in the program.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

**Water & Sewer Authority:** Mr. Ingell did not come to the meeting so this item is to be put back on the agenda for March.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Town Talk:** Mayor Spotts announced the first quarterly open forum to be held March 7, 2006 at 7:00 pm. Councilman Underwood introduced an idea for naming the forum to TOWN TALK – A PUBLIC FORUM WITH YOUR TOWN COUNCIL. He also suggested putting the introduced name on the bills for March.

**Asbestos Removal & Sealed Bids for items at Town Hall:** Mayor Spotts asked that all items from the Old Town Hall be put in the warehouse to prepare for the sale of items. Ms. Livingston is to put a notice in the newspaper to accept sealed bids for items. Bids are final – as is. Mr. Bufkin is going to draw up a liability release for items that must be torn down to remove.

**Town Council is traveling to Columbia, SC February 22, 2006:** Town Council will be attending the MASC meeting in Columbia at the Columbia Marriott.

Mr. Bufkin complimented Weathers Construction on the good job they did with the Town Center and verified that the Civic Center was on track for completion by March 10, 2006.

**A MOTION** was made by Councilman Dawkins to adjourn at 8:40 PM; Seconded by Councilman Gallman and so approved unanimously.

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Karen L. Livingston  
Clerk/Treasurer