

MINUTES
Town Council Meeting
September 21, 2004
PROSPERITY, SC 29127
7:00 p.m.

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

General Attendance: Andrea Cantrell, Town Administrator; Hank Bufkin, Town Attorney; Janet Chastain, Clerk/Treasurer; Fred Sexton, Public Works Director; Mark Bowers; George Wise & Paul Gable

Mayor Connelly called the meeting to order. Councilman Gallman opened the meeting with prayer.

OPEN SESSION

There were no comments from the public at this time. Mayor Connelly stated that he would like to make a presentation to George Wise. He stated that this was in recognition of twenty years of service. Mayor Connelly thanked George Wise for twenty years of dedicated service to Town of Prosperity Utilities Department. George Wise was presented with a certificate of service.

REPORT OF COMMITTEES

Electrical, Fire Department, & Parade: Councilman Underwood stated that he had no report at this time.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mayor Connelly presented the minutes of the August 17, 2004 council meeting to Council for approval.

Councilman Spotts pointed out that he felt that the figures that the Mayor had stated on page four of the minutes regarding the reserve funds were incorrect. Mayor Connelly questioned if Councilman Spotts was trying to make a correction on the minutes. Councilman Spotts stated that he was not because it is written according to what was stated during the meeting.

A MOTION by Councilman Gallman to approve the minutes of August 17, 2004; Seconded by Councilman Dawkins and so approved unanimously.

REPORT OF COMMITTEES CONTINUED

Sanitation and Street: Councilman Dawkins stated that Mr. Sexton had informed him that the street repairs would be worked on within the next week. He also stated that the sidewalks on Highway 391 and on Highway 76 are in need of being edged and trimmed around. Mr. Sexton had informed him that this would be taken care of also in the next couple weeks. Mayor Connelly stated that some visitors to our Town this week spoke very highly of how the Town looked. Councilman Gallman stated that the roads are looking good and it makes our Town look better.

Building, Recreation and Parks: Councilman Gallman stated that the Dollar General should be opening in a couple of weeks. He stated that he was pleased with this growth within the Town. Councilman Gallman stated that there are still two wash outs beside the bleachers at the Langford Street ballfield. Gravel has been added but there is still a problem. He asked that Mr. Sexton look into to this and make sure they are filled with dirt also. The grass planted in other areas of this ball field have stopped additional wash outs. Mayor Connelly questioned if the soccer season has started yet. Councilman Gallman stated that the soccer season has started but he does not have any numbers of participation. Ms. Cantrell stated that we currently have 168 signed up to play this season. She stated that we have three traveling teams because we do not have enough space for all the teams to play at our facilities. Councilman Gallman stated that they have been having a problem with the lights on the Pony League fields going on and off. Ms. Cantrell stated that Mr. Sexton had tested these lights several times and thought the problem was fixed. Mr. Sexton stated that he would check on it again. Discussion followed on possible causes of this problem.

Police Department: Mayor Connelly stated that Chief Sease could not attend the meeting tonight. Mayor Connelly stated that Chief Sease had left no report for Council. Councilman Gallman stated that the Police Department is doing a great job. Mayor Connelly stated that we are still getting some funds in for our K-9 fund. Ms. Cantrell stated that some of the funds would go towards the medical bills for Zora but additional funds could be used towards the purchase and training of a new K-9.

Water and Sewer Department: Councilman Spotts stated that all of the lift stations have been cleaned and degreased. This is the semi-annual maintenance. He stated that a pipe on lift station #3 is leaking and will need to be replaced. Mr. Sexton is going to look at the problem and see if we can fix it. If not a contractor will be called in to do these repairs. Mayor Connelly questioned Mr. Sexton on how the connections are going for the Dollar General and the Wightman addition. Mr. Sexton stated that the Dollar General is completed at this time and Wightman has electricity but they are still working on the sewer. He stated that he is waiting on the contractor for this project to get back in touch with him.

Town Administrator: Ms. Cantrell stated that she had no report at this time. Mayor Connelly stated that festival committee did an outstanding job with the Prosperity's Hoppin' events this year. He stated that each year the festival is improving and Council

should commend Ms. Cantrell along with the other committee members. The Fire Department and Rescue Squad furnished the food for Saturday and this was a big success for both parties involved. The Frogmore stew for Friday night, prepared by Wendell Bedenbaugh, was sold out. The rides were a huge success. The individuals over the tractor show and car show were overwhelmed with the response received for this event. Mayor Connelly stated that he had got good responses from local merchants regarding the amount of traffic that this event brought to the Town. It was a wonderful outpouring of community support for this event. This event is not to make money for the Town of Prosperity but to encourage a community to come together and fellowship. Mayor Connelly thanked Ms. Cantrell and the committee on behalf of the Town of Prosperity for all the hard work put into this event. Councilman Gallman stated that this is great publicity for the Town. Mayor Connelly stated that since the festival he had been contacted by another car club wanting to be involved next year. He stated that he would be passing this information on to Ms. Cantrell. Mayor Connelly stated that he would like to see the Town write a letter to the festival committee thanking them.

Town Attorney: Mr. Bufkin stated that Bellsouth is suing the Town. He stated that he would be representing the Town in this claim. He stated that he had a reasonable answer to give towards this claim and possibly a counter claim against them. This would be going out this week.

Old School Renovations: Mayor Connelly stated that the renovations are at a stand still at this point. He stated that it is time for Council to make some decision and move forward with this project. Further discussions will follow in the Executive Session tonight.

NEW BUSINESS

Tractor for the Sanitation Department: Mr. Sexton stated that the Sanitation Department is in need of a piece of equipment to pick up limbs and debris. He had obtained some prices and would like to present it to Council. The quote is \$21,500.00 and this includes a three-year warranty. He stated that the large John Deer that is being used now needs to be taken off the road. Mayor Connelly questioned what else the John Deer could be used for if taken off of this job. Mr. Sexton stated that they would still utilize it in the Water Department. The tractor that is being recommended for the Sanitation Department has the capability of adding attachments also to be utilized in other departments. The trencher attachment would be \$4,800.00 making the total price \$25,000.00. Mr. Sexton stated that the John Deer that they are currently using is twenty to twenty-five years old. He stated that they are currently having some problems with the John Deer. Councilman Underwood questioned how much is maintenance costs on the John Deer on a yearly basis. Mr. Sexton stated that he was not certain. Councilman Spotts stated that a piece of equipment is looked at based on how many hours it has been used. Mayor Connelly questioned if the proposed tractor had a bucket attachment like the backhoe. Mr. Sexton stated that it did not but the John Deer could still be used for these purposes. Mayor Connelly questioned how many repairs would have to be made on the backhoe. He stated that they had received an estimated repair bill of \$13,000.00. Mr.

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Sexton stated that this quote was what would be needed to get the backhoe in top working condition. If it continues to be utilized on a daily basis these repairs will have to be done. Councilman Gallman clarified that the backhoe is currently in okay working condition but if it is utilized on a daily basis it will not withstand the workload without the repairs. Mr. Sexton confirmed this. Mayor Connelly questioned future anticipated repairs. Mr. Sexton stated that the hydraulic pump, transmission and the motor have never had major repairs done to them and with everyday use these parts will probably need costly repairs. Councilman Dawkins questioned where the funds would come from to purchase a new tractor. Mayor Connelly stated that it would have to be reserves. He asked Mr. Sexton if this would enable us to do the work without hiring outside contractors. Mr. Sexton stated that we usually have to rent a trencher if needed but with this work on Conifer Drive a rental unit was not available so we had to obtain a contractor to do the trenching needed. This costs was about \$250.00. Councilman Underwood stated that this was one of the items that were discussed during the budget meeting. Mayor Connelly stated that it was discussed but not included as a budgeted item. Mayor Connelly asked that some research is done on the maintenance needed on the backhoe and additional information is gathered on the purchase of a new tractor. Taken as information at this time.

Cable Contract Consultant Agreement: Ms. Cantrell stated that the Town had been notified by our cable franchise that the contract will be ending in 2007. The Municipal Association has contracted Local Government Services to assist municipalities in negotiating better cable contracts. The representative with MASC is Greg Fender. Ms. Cantrell stated that she had contacted him and asked him to present the Town with a scope of service and a quote on how much it would cost the Town to get their services in helping us negotiate this contract. She presented all of Council with the proposed contract between the Town and MASC/Local Government Services (see attached contract). The fee would be \$1047.00 and this is based on our population. Ms. Cantrell stated that Mr. Fender is confident that they can help the Town get a better franchise agreement. Mr. Bufkin recommended that the Town definitely take advantage of this service offered by MASC and Local Government Services. Mayor Connelly agreed that this would be money well spent.

A MOTION by Councilman Underwood for the Town to enter into this agreement with Local Government Services for a fee of \$1047.00; Seconded by Councilman Gallman and so approved unanimously.

Reserve Funds – Larry Spotts: Councilman Spotts that during the last council meeting the figures presented by Mayor Connelly were incorrect. He stated that he had researched the past figures and there never was a balance of \$880,000.00. He stated that in July 2001 the Town reserves balance was \$65,983.00 and the Utility reserves balance was \$547,617.00. In August the Town reserves balance was \$36,052.00 and the Utility reserves balance was \$572,928.00. The reserve balance decreased in the Town but overall they did not drop drastically. Councilman Spotts reviewed some major expenses that were taken out of the reserves over the past couple of year. He stated that even with these expenses the reserve balance in the Utility department has remained about the same.

Mayor Connelly stated that there have been some large expenditures totaling into the \$400,000.00 range. Councilman Spotts stated that he agreed with this but they have also been recouped over the years. Mr. Bufkin stated that it was his understanding that these reserves are established for emergency situations. Councilman Spotts stated that not only emergencies but also for things like equipment purchases. Mr. Bufkin stated that a study needed to be done to determine how much would need to be held in reserves to replace the Towns whole system. Councilman Spotts stated that his point is that the reserve balances have not dropped as significantly as stated last month during the meeting. Mayor Connelly stated that the reserve balance in May 2004 had dropped to \$496,000.00. Mayor Connelly also stated that an official study to determine replacement costs of our system has not been done. He also stated that the reserves are not set up for daily use but for emergency situations. Mayor Connelly stated that there are several expenditures that are being discussed right now that would require reserve funds because they were not budgeted items. Some of the items mentioned were a transformer for Wightman Church (\$7,000.00), the tractor discussed tonight, shed repairs (\$6,000.00), and lawsuit with Bellsouth.

Water Department – Fred Sexton: Mr. Sexton stated that the Town just received our sanitary survey. This is an annual survey performed by DHEC in which they review about twelve programs that we have to keep up each year. This year we received a satisfactory on our survey. Mr. Sexton stated that this is the first time that we received this rating since we established our own water system. Mayor Connelly commended Mr. Sexton for this accomplishment. Councilman Underwood questioned what factors that kept the Town from getting this rating in the past. Ms. Cantrell stated that it has only been a couple years since the Town established our own water system, which is when we started having this survey. It took this period of time to implement the programs needed to receive this rating.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A MOTION by Councilman Gallman to go into to Executive Session for the purpose of discussing a contract; Seconded by Councilman Underwood and so approved unanimously.

A MOTION by Councilman Dawkins to come out of Executive Session; Seconded by Councilman Gallman and so approved unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

2nd Reading of Retail Telecommunications Services Ordinance: Ms. Cantrell stated that the purpose of this ordinance is to allow the Municipal Association to handle the telecommunications business license tax however the State votes to allow us to (See attached copy of ordinance). Mayor Connelly stated that MASC was previously collecting on the Towns behalf .75% and this would allow them to collect 1%. In the past the Town received 3% but they had cut our revenue back to .75% which really hurt our revenue.

A MOTION by Councilman Underwood to approve the second reading of the Retail Telecommunications Services Ordinance; Seconded by Councilman Gallman and so approved unanimously.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Mayor Connelly stated that right after the festival last month he received a telephone call from the Porsche Auto Club. They are requesting to come into Prosperity on October 23, 2004 to have a car show. They specifically asked that they be able to utilize the German Restaurant here in Prosperity. It will be around thirty cars and they will be using the public parking lot behind Grace Church. He stated that unless there are objections we would let them proceed with this. There were no objections at this time.

Mayor Connelly stated that Ms. Cantrell had received a telephone call from Country Music Television requesting to interview seven people in Prosperity. They would like to come into Prosperity for a thirty-day period and film on location. It would be around ten people brought in that would be housed with Prosperity citizens. They would pay for this housing. Part of these proceeds would go towards the charity of our choice. Mayor Connelly stated that they have already interviewed Ladison Hamm. We do not know if they will proceed with this but we wanted Council to be aware of it.

Mayor Connelly stated that he was also contacted by ESPN asking for our help in promoting and hosting a bass tournament. This tournament would guarantee pay out of around \$50,000.00. There would be a minimum of one day and possibly a couple of days. They have asked that the Town help them find accommodations, pay for accommodations for three people and put up \$2,000.00. The publicity and exposure for the Town would be great.

Mayor Connelly stated that he had also been contacted by a television show called "Trading Spaces". They wanted to know if we would be interested in them doing a Town overhaul. There will be about twenty-seven Towns participating in this. The winning Town will get thirty days of television time of interviewing the merchants and citizens in the Town. Then at the first of next year they will put together a television program called "Town Haul". During this period they would totally redo the storefronts in the Town at no costs to the merchants or the Town. The national exposure would be great. The representative from the show spent approximately two hours with us over the weekend interviewing people and looking over the Town.

Mayor Connelly also reported that CSX had a luncheon last week and contacted him regarding the Depot. They expressed concern regarding the Depot in Prosperity not being kept up. They are discussing giving the Town the Depot.

Mayor Connelly stated that Howard Duvall, with the Municipal Association, had heard of the Town's issues with Newberry County Electric Coop and the power line running

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through Prosperity. Mr. Duvall stated that MASC would offer legal support in this situation and back the Town in any way needed.

Mr. Bufkin questioned the status of the Epting property on highway 76. Mayor Connelly stated that he had heard that the deal would close on October 11th. Mr. Bufkin stated that he had heard that the Piggly Wiggly was having some reservations regarding this purchase. Mayor Connelly stated that he had also heard that if the Piggly Wiggly was not interested in developing this land that an IGA grocery store would be.

Mayor Connelly stated that in his history with the Town this is the most items to come up at one time that would promote Prosperity in some way. He stated that the one item that would need to be addressed tonight is the fishing tournament. They are asking for the Town to give \$2,000.00 and accommodations for three people. Ms. Cantrell stated that when she received this information it was stated that the \$2,000.00 would be negotiable. This would be the most the Town would have to give. She also stated that the Town could put together a package, that Council is comfortable with, to offer them in order to allow Prosperity to be the host of this tournament. Councilman Gallman stated that he felt that Council should pursue this because it would be great publicity for Prosperity. Mayor Connelly stated that he felt that the Chamber of Commerce in Newberry would offer some support to the Town regarding this. Ms. Cantrell agreed and stated that she could contact Cheryl Starnes with the Chamber and see if they would join us. She also stated that the Newberry County Accommodations Tax Committee might also be willing to the Town some assistance with this. Mayor Connelly stated ESPN would be handling all the arrangements. The date that they are looking at is June 19, 2005. Mr. Bufkin stated that the Lake levels would be coming back up by then and this would really help promote the Lake again. Mayor Connelly stated that the Merchant's Association had contacted him regarding this and he will be meeting with them soon. They seem to be very excited about the potential of these events. Discussion followed regarding how much money the Town would have to give for the tournament and the different possibilities in which the Town could obtain funds to go towards this.

A MOTION by Councilman Gallman to for the Town to spend a maximum of \$3,000.00 to go towards the ESPN Bass Tournament on June 19, 2005; Seconded by Councilman Underwood and so approved unanimously.

A MOTION by Councilman Dawkins to adjourn the Council Meeting at 8:27 p.m.; Seconded by Councilman Gallman and so approved unanimously.

Janet Chastain
Clerk/Treasurer