

Minutes
Town Council Meeting
December 20, 2005
PROSPERITY, SC 29127

Prior to the Council Meeting at 5:30 p.m. Mayor Connelly and Council hosted an Open House for the Public to view the newly renovated Town Center. A building dedication was held at 6:30 p.m.

7:00 PM

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

Administrative Attendance: Andrea Cantrell, Town Administrator; Missy Grubbs, Clerk Treasurer; Hank Bufkin, Town Attorney; Benji Sease, Chief of Police; Sabrina Manning, Recreation Director

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mayor Connelly stated that there are three sets of minutes that need to be approved. He asked that Ms. Grubbs identify the minutes to be approved. Ms. Grubbs stated that the first set of minutes for approval is for the November 14, 2005 special called meeting.

A MOTION by Councilman Dawkins to approve the minutes of November 14, 2005; Seconded by Councilman Gallman and so approved unanimously.

Ms. Grubbs stated that the second set of minutes for approval is for the November 15, 2005 meeting.

A MOTION by Councilman Gallman to approve the minutes of the November 15, 2005 meeting; Seconded by Councilman Dawkins and so approved unanimously.

Ms. Grubbs stated that the third set of minutes for approval is for the December 1, 2005 special called meeting.

A MOTION by Councilman Gallman to approve the minutes of the December 1, 2005 special called meeting; Seconded by Councilman Underwood and so approved unanimously.

Mayor Connelly thanked everyone in attendance for coming and enjoying this special moment in the history of the Town. He stated that it is very gratifying to be holding this meeting in the new Town Center. He also stated that he never dreamed that this facility would look this good. This is not only the Town Council's place of business but it is a facility for the citizens.

REPORT OF COMMITTEES:

Electrical and Fire Department: Councilman Underwood stated that the electrical addition for the new Piggly Wiggly shopping center has begun. This should be completed shortly. He stated that the Utility crew has already started checking the power lines for limbs that need to be trimmed or cleared. This will hopefully help prevent problems for future ice storms or bad weather.

Councilman Underwood thanked the Fire Department for inviting Council to their Christmas party. Everyone enjoyed it.

The Fire Department is getting ready for the construction of their new facility. He stated that he would like to discuss this contract under Executive Session later in the meeting.

Mayor Connelly questioned if Councilman Underwood had a date for the completion of the power installation for the Piggly Wiggly shopping center. Councilman Underwood stated that the weather has held up progress. Mr. Sexton stated that it should be roughed in by the end of December.

Sanitation and Streets: Councilman Dawkins stated that he would like to report on the problem with water flow by Gina May's house. He stated that he had asked Senator Cromer for some help regarding this issue. Senator Cromer apparently made some contacts because someone was down last week to observe the problem and make an assessment. He also pointed out that there was a problem with water retention behind Wightman Church. Councilman Dawkins stated that the two gentlemen stated that they were sure that they could help the Town with these two areas. He stated that he questioned if a terra cotta could be placed underground to help with drainage. Councilman Spotts stated that there is a sewer line that crosses that ditch. Councilman Dawkins stated that he was not aware of this but when they were looking at the ditch they did observe that there was a sewer line there. Councilman Spotts stated that this would probably present some problems with installing a pipe because the sewer line cannot be moved. If a pipe were installed it would have to go under the sewer line. Councilman Dawkins stated that he did not believe they would install a pipe but agreed that if they did it would have to go under the sewer line. They will bring a recommendation back to the Town as to what could be done.

Building, Recreation and Parks: Councilman Gallman stated that it is a blessing to be in this new building. The Town has another new facility on Langford Street. These buildings belong to the Town of Prosperity and to the community. He thanked the community for their input during this construction. He stated that as elected officials this

Council is here to listen to the public. This building was just a dream eight years ago but it is now a reality. The new Town Center and the Public Works facility on Langford Street enhance this Town.

Councilman Gallman stated that after the holidays he would be meeting with the coaches regarding spring baseball.

Councilman Gallman thanked the public for re-electing him to Council. He stated that he is here for the public and encouraged the public to contact him with any concerns.

Police Department: Chief Sease stated that regarding the two used vehicles purchased from North Carolina, one has been painted and is being striped this week. The radios should be put in shortly and it should be on the road in a couple weeks. These vehicles were purchased with funds accumulated over the years through calendar proceeds. Very little Town funds went towards the purchase of these cars. Mayor Connelly asked what the two cars together cost. Chief Sease stated that both vehicles together costs around ten thousand dollars. He stated that one was a year 2000 and the other was a year 2001 with both only having around 70,000 miles.

Councilman Gallman thanked Chief Sease for his dedication and service to the Town of Prosperity.

Water and Sewer Department: Councilman Spotts stated there were two water leaks this past month. The first leak was on Sunday, November 27th at Highway 76 and Newberry Federal Bank. The other leak was in front of the old Swygert's store, which was repaired today.

Councilman Spotts questioned Mr. Sexton regarding sewer right of ways being cleaned. Mr. Sexton stated that they were cleaned about a month ago. Mr. Sexton stated that a few limbs had fallen but they cleared them immediately and everything should be fine now. Councilman Spotts questioned if Mr. Sexton had checked them since the ice last week. Mr. Sexton stated that he had not but would check them again. Councilman Spotts and Mr. Sexton both agreed that the right of ways were to wet right now but as soon as they cleared up they would check them.

Town Administrator: Ms. Cantrell stated she had a report to submit to Council. She stated that it is an Executive Summary (copy attached). She stated that she prepared it along with Mayor Connelly. Copies were presented to Council. Ms. Cantrell stated copies would also be available to the public after the meeting. She stated that the Mayor would summarize this report later in the meeting.

Town Attorney: Mr. Bufkin stated that he wanted to remind those that ran for office, the Ethics reports regarding the campaign would be due by the end of the quarter.

Mr. Bufkin stated at the last Council meeting Councilman Spotts asked that the status of the construction contracts be reviewed. He stated that he has presented all of Council with a memorandum regarding this.

Old School Renovations: Mayor Connelly stated that tonight the public is witnessing the renovations. He stated that renovations exceeded any expectations. The building is very strong and there is definitely room for growth.

NEW BUSINESS

Swearing in of Reserve Officer-Tyrone Atchison: Mayor Connelly asked that Chief Sease and Mr. Atchison come forward for the swearing in. Chief Sease stated that he moved towards implementing the reserve officer program when he became employed with the Prosperity Police Department. The program is a lot of work. He stated that right after he started with the Police Department he hired on an officer and immediately began sending him to classes to become a certified trainer. There must be a certified trainer in your department to be able to have a reserve officer program. Scott Wilson completed these classes and became the department's certified trainer. At that time a reserve officer program had to be submitted to the Academy for approval. Once the approval was received, then the Police Department began taking applications for reserve officers. Several were received and two were chosen to complete the program. The first reserve officer was Jaime Martin and the second was Tyrone Atchison. Mr. Martin has completed the program and has been on the road for several months now. These officers should be held in high regard because they give a lot of time and they work for free. The classes involved to become trained are once a week and take about a year to complete. Mr. Bufkin helped the department with this training.

Chief Sease stated that he would now proceed with swearing in Reserve Officer, Tyrone Atchison. Officer Atchison read his oath (see attached). Council congratulated Officer Atchison.

Adopt Codified Ordinances: Mayor Connelly stated that one thing that the administration has been working on for several years is codifying the ordinances. Council is going to formally adopt the codified ordinances tonight. In the past the ordinances have been unorganized. Councilman Spotts stated that he would like to know what changes were made on the two replacement pages that were presented to Council tonight. Ms. Cantrell stated that these two pages include the Clerk/Treasurer ordinance as it was in the original ordinances. This section was inadvertently left out. She stated that the remainder should be the same.

A MOTION by Councilman Underwood to approve the ordinances as written; Seconded by Councilman Gallman and so approved unanimously.

Ms. Cantrell stated that the ordinances can now be viewed online on the website of American Legal Publishing.

Acceptance of Public Works and Town Hall Construction: Mayor Connelly stated that the public is getting to see the new Town Center tonight and there is also a new Public Works facility on Langford Street. Council has had a chance to walk through both buildings and made requests for changes to both buildings to the contractor. Mayor Connelly questioned Mr. Cantrell, representative of Weathers Contracting, if the changes had been completed. Mr. Cantrell stated that the changes had been completed as requested. Mayor Connelly stated that he would like for Council to accept the Public Works and the Town Hall construction. He stated that each Councilman has been poled individually during the walk through last Thursday.

A MOTION by Councilman Gallman to accept the Public Works facility and Town Hall construction; Seconded by Councilman Underwood.

Councilman Spotts questioned Mr. Cantrell if everything on the punch list was taken care of for both buildings. Mr. Cantrell stated that the only thing that he can think of that still needs to be done is a few paint touch ups in the Town Hall building. He stated that he had spoken with Councilman Underwood earlier and informed him that after everything is moved in that Weathers would come back and make touch ups to the walls at that time. Also there is some hardware on back order and as soon as this comes in it will be replaced. Councilman Spotts stated that everything else has been taken care of. Mr. Cantrell confirmed that it had.

Councilman Gallman thanked Mr. Cantrell for the dedicated service that he gave the Town of Prosperity. He stated that Mr. Cantrell performed additional work at no charge that was not a part of the contract; he thanked Mr. Cantrell for this. On behalf of Weathers Contracting, Mr. Cantrell thanked the Town of Prosperity for the opportunity.

THE VOTE passed unanimously.

Authorization of Final Payment (Public Works and Town Hall): Mayor Connelly opened the floor for a motion to authorize final payment to Weathers Contracting.

A MOTION by Councilman Gallman to approve final payment for the Public Works facility and the Town Hall; Seconded by Councilman Dawkins.

Mr. Bufkin stated that he wanted to clarify that what is being accepted and paid for is the Town Hall portion of this building, which does not include the Civic Center. Mayor Connelly agreed.

THE VOTE passed unanimously.

Civic Center Status Report and Approval of Contract Extension: Mr. Bufkin stated that the work continues on the Civic Center. As in the case with the Town Hall portion of the building, the contractor found items that needed to be repaired that were not a part of the scope of work. Some of these items include: termite damage, the sub floor in the gym portion was bad, additional electrical repairs, walls and ceilings need additional

repairs. The contract states that the Civic Center would be complete by December 31, 2005. In finishing the front portion of the building additional repairs also had to be made and the contractor was given additional time so that the job could be completed correctly. He stated that he does not feel that the Town of Prosperity is being taken advantage of. The contractor is doing what needs to be done and fixing the items that were not anticipated and as a general rule they have not asked for additional funds to fix most items. It is clear that the Civic Center portion will not be complete by December 31st. In addition to what was mentioned earlier there was also a delay in receiving the One Cent Sales Tax funds. This also slowed down this portion of the construction. He stated that it is his recommendation that Weathers be given additional time to complete this project. There is a projected completion date of March 10, 2006.

Councilman Underwood stated that it is his recollection that when the One Cent Sales Tax funds did not become available when anticipated the Town had to pull funds from reserves to cover the first bill on the Civic Center renovations. At that time this project was slowed down until the One Cent Sales Tax funds became available. Mr. Bufkin stated that this is correct. The bond funds became available to begin the other renovation project and therefore construction began. The One Cent Sales Tax funds were also supposed to be available but for some unknown reason they were not. When the funds did not become available the Civic Center project was stopped until the funds became available in October. This has delayed the Civic Center project. Mayor Connelly stated that the One Cent Sales Tax funds were promised in June but did not become available until late October.

Councilman Spotts questioned if the extension on the project would increase the cost of the project. Mr. Bufkin stated that he could not speak for the contractor on that. Mr. Bufkin stated that it is his understanding that there are some things that the contractor would like the Town to look at and make the determination as to whether they would like the repairs done because there will be additional cost. He stated that Weathers Contracting has treated the Town fairly during these projects and there is no reason to believe that they will not continue to do so in the future.

Mr. Bufkin stated that he had some notes regarding additional repairs that needed to be done. Ceiling sheetrock that was originally nailed is beginning to fall and insulation cannot be attached until this is repaired. There are some additional costs of around \$6500.00 to complete these repairs. Some repairs need to be made to two "I" beams and the some cement footings. Mr. Cantrell stated that the County Building Official, David Ashworth, is the one that pointed out the "I" beam issues. He stated that these would have to be corrected. Mr. Cantrell stated that he had received recommendations on how to repair the "I" beams. He stated that it is no problem to complete the repairs but until the problem of flooding in the basement is addressed this problem will occur again. He recommended that the Town obtain some pumps to place in this area to get rid of this water. Mayor Connelly stated that Council as well as the Civic Center committee would have to address this issue.

Mr. Bufkin stated that if these items are repaired and the Town will continue to provide preventive maintenance then the building would remain in good shape. This area of the building was neglected by the school district.

A MOTION by Councilman Gallman to extend the completion date on the Civic Center to March 10, 2006; Seconded by Councilman Dawkins.

Mr. Bufkin stated that he had a note regarding needed repairs to the ceiling totaling \$6500.00. He questioned Mr. Cantrell if this was stopping construction of this facility at this point. Mr. Cantrell stated that it was. He stated that when the air registers were being mounted in the ceiling it was discovered that the sheeting on the ceiling is 3/8-inch drywall on 24-inch trusses. Over time these sheets have warped. Many areas of the ceiling have dropped up to two inches and are barely still hanging. He stated that he felt this would be an endangerment if it is not corrected. He stated that he had consulted with the drywall subcontractor regarding making repairs on the ceiling. He stated that if the Town approves these repairs then Weathers would fasten everything back up with drywall screws, replace boards and trim in need of repair. These will be extensive repairs. Mr. Bufkin stated that it is his recommendation that Council approve the extension of the completion date and approve the \$6500.00 for the repairs on the ceiling.

Ms. Grubbs pointed out that Councilman Gallman still has a motion on the floor to extend the completion date of the Civic Center to March 10, 2006.

THE VOTE passed unanimously.

Mayor Connelly stated that Council now needs to consider the approval of the \$6500.00 to repair the ceiling. Councilman Underwood stated that he was in approval of letting Weathers move forward with doing the repairs on the ceiling. Their crews are already in place to move forward.

A MOTION by Councilman Gallman to allow Weathers Contracting to complete the repairs on the ceiling in the Civic Center totaling \$6500.00 with the funds to come out of reserves; Seconded by Councilman Underwood and so approved unanimously.

Establish Date for Special Called Meeting to Swear in Newly Elected Officials: Mayor Connelly stated that the Mayor Elect needs to set this date. Councilman Spotts stated that the called meeting would be January 3rd at 7:00 p.m.

A MOTION by Councilman Underwood to go into Executive Session; Seconded by Councilman Gallman and so approved unanimously.

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

Charges to NCW&S for Lagoon Upgrades: Mayor Connelly stated that this was discussed in Executive Session. Council will take this as information at this time.

Councilman Underwood and Councilman Spotts will be meeting with representatives from NCW&S to discuss options regarding these charges. They will be reporting back to Council.

Mayor Connelly stated that the other item discussed in Executive Session was the location for the new Fire Department. This will also be accepted as information. Council will take this item to the public for their input. Council did express a great desire to work with the Fire Department.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Mayor Connelly made the following remarks:

Before adjourning there are some people that I would like to recognize. None of the many accomplishments that you have witnessed over the last eight years would have been possible without the dedication, honesty and devotion from a lot of people to this Town. There are a few accomplishments that I would like to read.

Eight years ago when Councilman Gallman and I were elected we were called into Council session, in fact Councilman Spotts and Councilman Dawkins were on that Council, to meet with Council in December before taking office. In this meeting we were told that two key people in the current administration would have to be replaced immediately. I questioned why and was told it would become very obvious. Today this Town is in good shape and I do not recommend replacing anybody. This Town has some extremely good employees and I urge you to keep them all.

I want to read you a list of things that have been accomplished. This list is just a summary and does not nearly cover everything.

Brand new pavers on the streets downtown, which have all been paid for. This improved the look of the Town. All underground wiring was installed and new light poles, which also has been paid for. All of the water meters were replaced. Some were as old as seventy-five years. Fred and his men should be commended for this. A brand new substation totaling \$250,000.00 was added. New retail restaurants and a down business, Dollar General, were added to the Town. It took a lot of time and hard work to get these businesses up and running. And another new shopping center is coming soon. Three new ballparks were constructed. A one hundred seat picnic shelter complete with restrooms and a concession stand. A wonderful children's playground was added, which is always in use. An event was added called Prosperity's Hoppin'. This was designed to bring people to Prosperity to shop.

As I stated earlier when I took office I was told I would have to replace two key people. In that December I asked for a copy of the budget and checking account, this could not be produced. This is one reason that personnel had to be changed. Council at that time did not know how much money the Town had or what was being spent. Today each Council member receives a copy of the bank balances, which tells them ending November 2005

the bank balance is \$44,032.15. This was the balance after the bills were paid in November of this year. The Town had a safety emergency reserve fund also. This is not a part of the budget. It is designed to be available when there is an emergency, such as a major ice storm or other catastrophe. The State Government requires that ten percent of the operating budget remain in this reserve fund. The Town's balance in reserves today is \$595,931.62. I want these figures recorded in the minutes for future use. I am proud of this as well as the Town's budgets. Mr. Bufkin as well as Margaret Pope stated that we have a very efficient Town. We have a budget for the Utility department as well as the Town. Every month this budget shows total revenue for garbage, electricity, water, sewer, fire department, etc. Every revenue that comes into the Town is recorded and shown on this budget. Any Council can look at these budget reports within thirty days and see if the Town is making money or losing money. This report is also available to the public.

The ordinances adopted tonight are something that this Town has been after for many years. It was not easy. It took a lot of work. A new Utility facility was constructed on Langford Street. The Town just witnessed the renovations of the Town Center. In addition to these seventeen acres, four acres were added to the west of this property, which run to the railroad. And also four acres were added in the back, which go all the way to the railroad. Prosperity is changing right before our eyes.

The new Piggly Wiggly shopping center will be a great addition. This is the most sought after item in my eight years of being Mayor. And just last week the Town has been approached to annex eighty-five acres into the Town for housing. This is adjacent to the new shopping center. This means so much for this Town.

Councilman Gallman, Councilman Underwood and myself have been working on a project that would completely eliminate all property taxes in Prosperity. It will also eliminate business licenses in Prosperity. Some businesses pay hundreds of dollars a year to the Town. This is a struggle. NEC only pays \$83.00 per year to the Town for a business license. This is why I am hoping that these two guys and the rest of Council will continue to pursue servicing the new shopping center. The citizens of the Town deserve no property taxes and the businesses deserve no business license.

In 1998 when Councilman Gallman and myself took office the Town's portfolio was around 1.8 million dollars. Today it is over five million dollars. The building we are in tonight and these grounds have increased the Town's net worth. This shows you what can be done with a little bit of money and a great staff.

All of this mentioned has been done during a time when taxes were actually cut two mills. Nearly all municipalities are doubly what the Town is in taxes. Prosperity is a great place to live and a great place to have a business.

Prosperity has the fourth best electrical rate in the whole Pee Dee region. Prosperity's garbage rate is \$25.00 per month, just out of Town the garbage rate goes to \$85.00 per month. This Town has utilized every resource available and it has worked well.

Now from the bottom of my heart and on behalf of all the citizens of Prosperity, I want to say thank you for a job well done. Individually I would like to recognize some people. The first is Mr. Henry Bufkin. When I started eight years ago we met numerous times. Prior to my taking office the Town had a telephone attorney. Mr. Bufkin has been a major part of this Council. Everything that we do is pre-approved by Mr. Bufkin therefore we know it is legal, regardless of what you read in print. Mr. Bufkin I want to thank you personally. You have meant so much to this Town. Thank you for coming to the meetings. The advice that you give this Town is good. You even led the Town through court trials. Thank you.

Next Mr. Fred Sexton with the Utility department. I would like to thank Fred and his Utility department. These people come out anytime day and night and you as citizens should thank each one of them. During the ice storm Fred and his people worked thirty-six hours without taking a break. That is dedication and loyalty. That is the kind of people that Prosperity has on its staff. I have never called Fred and his crew out for anything where they did not come. I thank you for that Fred.

Chief Benji Sease, what a great job. You, Craig and Brad, what a fantastic job. I want to thank you for your work habits. Since the Chief took over we have had almost no complaints, only compliments. I wish I could tell you what a great job he has done and I wish I could show you the appreciation that the Town is due to him. I want to thank you personally and publicly for what you have done.

Michelle Bundrick and Becky have done an outstanding job in the administrative department. I wish I could explain what all they have done. What a great job.

At this time I would like to ask Councilman Gallman to come forward and help me present some plaques of thank you to some people. The first one is with the Recreation department, Ms. Sabrina Manning. A lot of people do not realize what Sabrina has done. She only brings about a thousand kids to Prosperity each week. If you look at the ballparks they are overflowing with people. People sometimes ask why we want to bring people to Prosperity but the merchants will tell you why. We do not spend money on billboards or advertising but we have the best Recreation department in the County. Those one thousand children bring parents, grandparents and friends with them. This is the cheap way of bringing people to Prosperity to shop. They eat at our restaurants and shop at our stores. I thank you so much Sabrina. She is compensated less for her time than anybody I have ever been associated with. Some weeks she puts in sixty hours a week. On a lot of days she is at Town Hall before I get there in the morning, when I leave in the afternoon and at Council meetings. She puts together a program with volunteer coaches. She has done an awesome job for this Town and I appreciate it so much. Councilman Gallman read the plaque to Sabrina Manning and presented it to her. She thanked everyone.

The next person that I would like to recognize is Missy Grubbs. Missy has done an outstanding job with the Town's books. When I took over in 1998 there were no books

to speak of. You can not get where you need to go without knowing where you are coming from. This plaque is nothing but a token of appreciation for what you have done. She had taken the Town's books on two occasions and straightened them out. This was no small job. The last time it took almost a year of very hard work. She is a very devoted employee and this Town is so fortunate to have her talent. I do not care how many people you interview you will not find better than Missy. Thank you so much. Councilman Gallman read the plaque and presented it to her.

And now I would like to ask Andrea Cantrell to come forward. They are not words to describe what she does. She has been the leader of this very successful organization for almost eight years now. Andrea has not cost the Town even a penny. She paid her way with the Town by collecting more in two grants than her total salary in eight years. The streetscape downtown was paid for by grant funds obtained by Andrea. The children's playground equipment was paid for by a grant obtained by Andrea. These two grants alone more than paid for her salary in eight years. These two grants totaled \$181,000.00. She did not just get those two grants. She has gotten over a million dollars in grants for this Town. If you divide a million dollars by eight years this totals \$125,000.00 per year. To replace this with taxes, the tax base would have to be raised 73 mils. Andrea is why we have accomplished so much in this Town these past eight years. It has been an honor and privilege for me as Mayor to have been such a small part in your day to day programs. Councilman Gallman read the plaque and presented it to her.

I would like to thank Mayor Pro-Tem, Allen Gallman. I have never been around a more dedicated, hard working, Christian member of Council. He has always put the Town first. His vision has helped move this Town into another dimension. It never did cross his mind for him to get personal gain. This Town is fortunate to have a Council member like Allen Gallman. Thank you.

Mr. Billy Dawkins, thank you on behalf of the citizens for your vision. This Town has come so far in eight years and the future looks very bright. Your vote has always been for the best interest of the people of Prosperity. Mr. Dawkins I thank you for that.

Derek Underwood, thank you for your honesty and hard work. Derek has always put the Town first and I appreciate this.

I would like to congratulate Larry Spotts on being elected as Mayor. I wish you nothing but good luck.

Last I would like to thank my wife and my family for their support and encouragement. So many times they had to put up with a lot of criticism, falsehood and for all the visits I had at my house at 7:00 in the morning. People coming by complaining because they did not use any electric that month and they still got a bill. People telling me that they were not going to pay a bill that was past due. And also for putting up with the serious points in life. We had to put up with, in some situations, the threats of personal harm because I was not willing to sacrifice my integrity. And I still won't today, for nobody, for no vote, nowhere. My integrity means a lot to me and I will stand by it.

Councilman Gallman asked to address the Mayor. The Mayor recognized him to speak. Councilman Gallman stated that out of the eight years working with the Mayor, he was a man with integrity, good humor and not for self gain. He stated that Mayor Connelly always came to Council and asked what should we do. His door has always been open to Council as well as the citizens in this community. He always asked for their support. Councilman Gallman stated that he has enjoyed working with Mayor Connelly. He stated that the Council always came together to work out problems. This Council has worked well with other communities and Councils. He stated that he hoped that the new Mayor, Larry Spotts, and Council would get along as well as this Council has with Mayor Connelly. He stated that we would miss Mayor Connelly and wished him well.

Mayor Connelly thanked Councilman Gallman for his kind words. He stated that it had been a pleasure working with everyone.

A MOTION by Councilman Dawkins to adjourn the meeting at 9:25 pm; seconded by Councilman Underwood and so approved unanimously.

Toni Melissa Grubbs
Clerk/Treasurer

ATTACHMENT

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
1998-2005**

**Submitted by Mayor Bruce A. Connelly
and
Andrea Cantrell, Town Administrator**

Mayor Bruce Connelly took office January 1, 1998. Upon taking over as chief administrative officer for the Town of Prosperity a review was made into the Town's operations and how the Town could best be administered. Each department was studied separately:

ADMINISTRATION

The finance was handled by the Town's Clerk Treasurer, with some checks and balances in place by using the Utility Billing Clerk as a second signature and manual recorder of all receipts. A part-time position was added to assist the Clerk Treasurer with daily filing and receptionist duties. In June of 1998, the Mayor and Council agreed to hire a Town Administrator. This position would act as an extension of the Mayor and perform daily administrative duties, act as the grants administrator and manage special projects. By the hiring of this position additional checks and balances were added to the internal security of the Town's finances. To date, administration continues to be organized in this manner.

PUBLIC WORKS

The Public Works Director oversees the operations and maintenance of the Town's water system, sewer system, electric system, sanitation collections, streets and public facilities. In 1998 these departments operated with the Director and seven employees. This continued until 2005, when council eliminated two vacant positions.

POLICE

The police department was operated with three full-time officers reporting to the Mayor and then to the Town Administrator. Beginning in 1998 a goal was set to only hire the most qualified officers, preferably with 2-year degrees if not a 4-year degree. An incentive program was initiated to include take-home patrol vehicles, ranking system and increased pay. By 2003 the Town was able to provide 24-hour police coverage to its citizens and business owners. Since then the Chief has developed a reserve officer program.

RECREATION

Until 1998, a volunteer committee managed Town recreation, at which time recreation was brought under the administration of the Town. Management of the existing programs (t-ball, coaches pitch and soccer) was originally outsourced to a private entity. In an effort to be more cost efficient, a volunteer director was placed over the program. By 2002, the program grew and additional sports were added and a part-time position was created to manage the program's most basic needs (field maintenance; field, team and official scheduling; sponsorships). Because the Town's program was opened to any youth wishing to participate, the program grew and afforded the Town's citizens the ability to play competitive sports where on their own they would not have sufficient numbers to maintain a program. By 2003, the Town offered t-ball, coach's pitch, Dixie Girls softball and soccer along with seasonal camps. As of 2005, team sport spaces were afforded to 491 participants and camp opportunities were afforded to 62 youth.

In addition to the Town's recreation program, in 2001 a group of volunteers organized the Town's first festival - Prosperity Lakefest. This name was changed in 2002 to Prosperity's Hoppin' for the next year's event. This festival grew quickly as events were added to included a U.S. Track and Field certified 5K course, tractor show and pageant to name a few of the popular events. Though the public supported the events, there is to this day very little support from citizens in organizing and planning the festival. Additional support from the Town's citizens must be obtained to make this event a success.

CAPITAL ADDITIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS 1998 - 2005

LAND - In an effort to increase actual land holdings within the Town's limits, the Town acquired six parcels of property totaling 17.71 acres. These parcels included the present Town Center site where the old Prosperity Graded School and Prosperity High School were located. The Prosperity Graded School was not salvageable and was removed in 2000.

ADMINISTRATION - In 1998 the Town purchased municipal software to manage all Town and Utility finances, accounts payable and payroll.

PUBLIC WORKS -

1. In 1998, a fully automated billing system (CSI of Easley) was purchased to track all utility billing activity.
2. 1995 Ford Bucket Truck added to the Town's fleet in 2000.

3. The Town's substation was upgraded from a wood structure to an all-metal structure in 2002.
4. In 2003, a Windows based billing system was purchased from Nicholson Business Systems of Florence.
5. In 2004, an electronic folder/stuffer was purchased to expedite the billing process.

POLICE -

1. In 2001 the Town received grant funds to purchase two computers with printers for the Police Department.
2. Later that year the Town received an additional grant to purchase law enforcement software to manage all tickets, fines, warrants and court reports. This purchase not only benefited the Town, but shortly thereafter both the County and City of Newberry switched to this software.

RECREATION FACILITIES - Due to the increased participation of children in the Town's recreation program, several recreation facility improvements were made during this period.

1. Langford Street Dixie Youth/Dixie Girls regulation field was constructed in 2000.
2. Phase I and phase II of Town Center playground was constructed between 2000 and 2001.
3. Town Center Recreation Complex (Youth baseball, softball, soccer and multi-purpose court) was constructed in 2001.
4. Bleachers added to both Langford Street and Town Center sites in 2002.
5. Langford Street restrooms built in 2002.
6. Town Center Concession Stand/Recreation office constructed in 2002.
7. Town Center Picnic Shelter was constructed in 2004.

STREETS - In 2001, the Town carried out a streetscape project to beautify the core commercial district of the Town. This project included the removal of all above ground electric/phone lines and the installation of decorative streetlights and trees.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS -

In 1999, the School District of Newberry deeded the old Prosperity School to the Town to be renovated as the new Prosperity Town Hall. In 2000, B.P. Barber & Associates was contracted to prepare as renovation feasibility study and to design renovation plans. Pursuant to these plans being prepared, the Town enlisted the assistance of George Reimlinger, Town citizen, to oversee the external repairs. During his tenure, Mr. Reimlinger assisted in having the Town

Hall windows, the metal roof and the fascia replaced. This helped to secure the building from further weather damage. Unfortunately from the time the windows were installed until further renovations could begin, 13 interior panes out of the 28 windows were broken/cracked due to building settlement and/or extreme weather.

In 2005, Council voted unanimously to begin renovations on the old school for a new Town Hall. This decision was perpetuated by the Fire Department's request to utilize the existing Town Hall property for a new fire station and Council's awareness of the existing Town Hall disrepairs and safety issues. Seven significant areas of the Town Hall leaks and according to a report by Diversified Environmental Consulting 5689 square feet of asbestos was detected and 25 square feet of lead paint within the building. On June 23, 2005, a contract was let to Weathers Contracting to renovate the old school and to construct a metal public works facility on Langford Street. In addition to the renovation, and a 2800 square foot office/warehouse and 4000 square foot equipment shed was constructed on Langford Street to serve as the Town's Public Works Facility. As of this date both facilities are completed and both Town and Utility employees are preparing for the move. In addition to improved business facilities a historical building was preserved for years to come.

GRANTS 1998-2005:

In an effort to improve the operations of the Town without major financial impact on the Town's reserves, the Town Administrator was tasked with obtaining grants in areas of need (and many times where funds were readily available). It is important to remember that most grants require a percentage match, therefore, requests were limited to amounts that could be easily matched without undue burden on the Town. Since 1998, the Town has obtained approximately \$345,000.00 in grant funds and an additional \$62,965.00 in County Recreation funds. In addition to grants, the Town has been allocated a total of \$597,000.00 in Capital Sales Tax Funds.

The bulk of these grants were used to obtain current law enforcement technology for the police department and to improve facilities for recreation.

In addition to these funds, the Town utilized a grant from the SCDHEC to produce a water system business plan to guide in the operations of water distribution.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT 1998-2005:

Until 1998, the Town's finances though properly maintained lacked automation and many accepted Governmental Accounting Standards' checks and balances needed to protect public funds. In 1998, all finances were moved from a small business software system (Peachtree) to a government software system capable of managing governmental budgeting practices. Budgets were created based on actual previous year's revenues and expenses. General ledger accounts were established utilizing Governmental Accounting accepted numbering systems, so that all expenditures and revenues could be tracked in a manner consistent with other municipalities and governmental entities. Payroll, which had been previously outsourced, was made an internal process. In 2001, a new purchasing policy was adopted setting tiered limits of spending and appropriate approval processes for each level.

In 1978 minutes reveal the Town's milage was 68 mils. At some point the milage was reduced to 51 mils, where it remained until reassessment in 1999. For budget year 1999-2000, milage was reduced to 49 mils in compliance with State law, since at that time no additional expenditures for normal operation were warranted. As of 2005, the tax milage has remained at 49 mils.

In 1999, the Town actively began participating in the MASC Setoff Debt Program. This program allows agencies to file claim to a portion of an individual's State tax return for prior debts owed. To date the Town has received approximately \$10,000 on prior utility debts owed to the Town.

All financial actions: checks, adjusting journal entries and utility account adjustments are processed by the responsible party (treasurer or billing clerk) with prior approval from the Town Administrator. These additional checks add protection to the public's funds.

EMPLOYEE IMPROVEMENTS:

In 1998, with the interest in overall improvements, one area that was seriously considered was employee satisfaction. Though the Town was and is not in a position to pay average wages/salaries, the administration did want to encourage longevity through improved pay scales, benefits and other incentives.

With this in mind several improvements were made:

1. The leave policy was amended, so that leave could build over time.
2. Family sick leave was added so that a portion of leave could be taken to assist during family need.

3. Two paid holidays were added, giving employees the day after Thanksgiving and Christmas Eve. Though the Town does not recognize all State holidays, this addition was an improvement.
4. July 1, 1999, became a member of the S.C. Police Officers Retirement System. This program specifically for officers, allows them to retire with less years of service.
5. Established payroll deducted savings accounts for the employees.
6. August 1, 2000, became a member of the S.C. Office of Insurance Service's State Health Plan. This change gave employees more plan flexibility and additional coverages.
7. Department Heads were allowed to receive compensatory time in lieu of additional pay for work performed after normal working hours.
8. A program was established with Continuing Education to assist any employee without a GED to complete their coursework and take the GED exam at no cost to the employee.
9. Where appropriate, funds were set aside to send employees to much needed training or seminars in their particular area of responsibility. This type of training has always made the Town the end benefactor, since the knowledge they bring back improves the Town's operations.

ADMINISTRATION-Since 1998, efforts have been made to hire only well trained and/or educated staff that the administration believed would grow in the position for which they were hired. Though, some employees have overstated their abilities, overall this has benefited the Town.

POLICE-Efforts have been made to hire only applicants with a 2-year or 4-year degree, preferably already certified through the S.C. Criminal Justice Academy. Since our officers are required to work alone, it is important to have well trained officers that can exercise sound judgment. To accomplish this task the Town has worked hard to increase its pay scale for entry-level officers in order to attract the most qualified for the position. According to 2005 Compensation Survey for Towns Population 1000-5000, Prosperity is still about \$4000/year short of the State average for entry-level officers.

SUMMARY:

In summary, during the period of 1998-2005 the Mayor and Council made many strides to improve infrastructure, modernize Town facilities and provide services that enhance a community's quality of life. This does not mean the job is complete. As technology evolves, the demographics of the Town transforms and utility systems age Council's focus must be on the future. Specifically, Council's attention needs to be on cutting-edge technology; improved distribution of

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utilities and services that will attract citizens to the Town of Prosperity over a rural county setting.