

TOWN OF GRIFTON
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORKSHOP MEETING
August 7, 2018

Present: Mayor B.R. Jackson; Commissioners Will Barnes, Mary Grace Bright, Johnny Craft, Claude Kennedy, Raymond Oakes; Manager Joe Johnson, Clerk Angel Hudson

Absent: None

Mayor Jackson called the meeting to order.

Mayor Jackson led the Board of Commissioners in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

Recognition of Persons to be Heard:

Discussion/Action Items

Commissioner Comments

- Dax Nelson of 331 Barrell Drive in Winterville NC came before the Board. He stated that he is the owner of the cafe' across the street from Town Hall. He would like to know Grifton's interest in housing in the Town. He explained that he come to the Town Hall inquiring about a couple of lots that were for sale. The Town Manager then approached him and told him that the Town had property for sale and if he wanted to make a purchase of the Town owned lots then he would have to get approval by the Town Board. He was told the Board approved the purchase of the property and it would then be advertised and it was. The bid was not upset at that time. Later he was told he won the bid and needed to make a deposit on the property. He tried several times to pay the deposit and no one would accept the money. Manager Johnson explained that Mr. Nelson was paying with cash and we had asked for a certified check. After this, he was informed that the attorney advised that approval needs to be done in an open Board meeting in lieu of email.

Mayor Jackson stated that he was making an exception to the normal public expression rule and explained that this was all news to him. He also explained the way the Town normally done the sale of Town property. Manager Johnson stated that the Board does not have to approve until the final sale of the property. However, the attorney would like to take the additional step for the Board to discuss this in an open meeting in order to protect the buyer and the Town.

Commissioner Bright asked that the agenda be amended and to add this as a discussion item as #4 in order to keep public expression brief.

- Ardathy Spikes of 6748 Pitt Street came before the Board to express her sincere appreciation for what they do and she understands that it is not always easy. She also stated that she understands that during an emergency everyone can't be notified water

is being turned off to do repairs. However, she asked that in the future if it is not an emergency that the apartments, rest home, etc. be notified in advance that the water will be turned off.

- Hattie Marshburn of 6921 Smith Street came before the Board to express her appreciation for cutting the grass as you go across the bridge in the railings. She feels they could have cut the grass on the very edge as well but it looks very nice coming and going.

Discussion Items

Commissioner Bright asked that the amended #4 item be discussed first so if Mr. Nelson has something else to do then he can go ahead and leave.

Mayor Jackson agreed.

4. Sale of Town Owned Property

Commissioner Bright stated that she understood from Manager Johnson that everything was done legally but our attorney prefers that the Board should approve the process in an open meeting. She then asked for the attorney's reasoning.

Manager Johnson stated that the attorney feels this is for extra protection of both parties (the buyer and the seller). The attorney recommended that the Board approve to begin the process in an open meeting so all citizens are aware that everyone had the opportunity to bid on the property.

Commissioner Kennedy made a motion to let the process begin to sale the town owned property in question as recommended by the Town Attorney. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Craft.

Mayor Jackson stated that we usually do not vote on things at the workshop meeting but he would make an exception.

After a lengthy discussion, the motion carried unanimously.

1. CSX Lease

Manager Johnson asked if the Board had looked at the CSX Lease agreement. He asked if they had any questions or concerns they would like to bring forward to CSX. He commented that he, the attorney and CSX would have a conference call tomorrow morning about the lease.

Commissioner Bright asked if this was for all CSX property inside the city limits.

Manager Johnson replied that this is only for the property the Depot sits on from McCrae Street to Queen Street. He stated that CSX is trying to find the lease for the small triangle that includes Mattie's mini park. He commented that he was told CSX does not lease property for parks due to the fact that they do not know what is in the soil. He did advise the Board that if they would like to purchase the property they would accept market value. They will not donate any property.

The Board asked about the property where Shad Festival puts the rides.

Manager Johnson commented that he was advised that barricades would be placed on that property so it could not be used. The CSX representative also noted that permission has never been given to use that property.

2. *Depot Roof Quote*

Manager Johnson presented 2 quotes for the Depot roof repair. He commented that a budget amendment could be done if the Board would like to proceed. However, he recommended that nothing be done until the CSX lease is finalized.

The Board agreed to table this matter until further decision has been made with the CSX lease agreement.

3. *Pitt County School Grant for School Resource Officer*

Manager Johnson stated that Pitt County Schools has received a grant that will pay the salary and benefits for a School Resource Officer in Grifton. They have asked that we provide a letter of commitment to the program in order to get it to the attorneys to start the contract. The grant will fund the position for 2 years. At the end of 2 years, if there is not another grant available, the Town would pick up the cost for the position or it would be eliminated. He added that this officer would be able to assist another officer if needed outside the School. We would also have this officer for 2 months during the summer when school is not in session. The only thing we would have to provide is uniforms and equipment and a vehicle would be needed as well.

Mayor Jackson asked the Chief of Police and the Principal of Grifton School if they had anything to add.

Chief Silva stated that he does not want to hire an officer and then have to lay said officer off in 2 years. He would like for the Board to consider a commitment to keep this officer after the 2 year term of the grant. He stated that a vehicle would be required and explained the reasons why it was needed.

Commissioner Kennedy wanted verification that at the end of 2 years it would not be the Town's responsibility to continue the officer's employment.

Chief Silva and Manager Johnson verified this statement.

Mayor Jackson stated that when the officer is hired that they are hired with the understanding that it may only be for 24 months.

Commissioner Oakes asked about the purchase of a vehicle and the cost.

Chief Silva stated that if we bought a new vehicle and equipment it with police equipment it would be around \$30,000. However, the Village of Simpson has a 2017 Police Interceptor that is completely equipped that we can purchase for less.

Commissioner Bright asked for verification that the contract with the School says that it is a 2 year term agreement and there is no obligation after 2 years.

This statement was verified again by Chief Silva and Manager Johnson.

Mayor Jackson stated that the hiring of an Interim Manger be added to next week's agenda, as well as, appointing the Interim to the CMSD and NRWASA Board.

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Oakes asked where we are as far as cleaning the areas where we had problems during the excessive amount of rain we have had in the last few weeks. He also asked if we are trying to remove the blockages.

Manager Johnson stated that the biggest issue we have is that the pipes are not large enough to handle that amount of water in a continuous heavy rain. He commented that a study was

done in 2012 that talks about the need to increase the pipe size. However, this would be an expensive project.

Manager Johnson stated that he talked with the Solar Farm people about giving the Town a key to the gate so we can access the canal. The solar farm agreed to do so. He stated that we can bush hog the canal.

Mayor Jackson asked Billy Raynor to keep an eye on all ditches inside the city limits weekly but to also periodically watch the Buckleberry Canal.

Commissioner Bright stated that she received a call during all the rain that Lewis Drive was not draining either. She also commented that McCotter Drive had water and that was unusual. She feels there is a blockage somewhere.

Mayor Jackson stated that a lot of rain came and a lot of rain moved during this time.

Commissioner Oakes noticed that the ditch behind Carolina Vinyl has grown up and asked if this could be part of the problem.

Mayor Jackson responded that it could catch a limb.

Commissioner Oakes thanked Billy Raynor for what he done at his house. He said it fixed 35% of the problem. The water did flow but did not back up.

Commissioner Oakes stated that he went across the creek when we were having all the rain and he does not understand why when the culverts were put in they were put in above ground.

Commissioner Oakes asked if we had received anything on the interstate upgrade from the SW Bypass to Felix Harvey. A citizen is concerned with the speed limit increasing.

Mayor stated that a piece of correspondence from a citizen would be in their boxes.

Manager Johnson stated that DOT has said that in the next year they would be holding public meetings concerning the bypass.

Commissioner Kennedy stated that he understood that the property he is about to discuss is outside the city limits. However, he feels a letter should be sent to the former golf course property owner concerning the liability of the pool on that property. He is concerned that a child may fall in and get hurt or worse. He feels it should be filled in.

Mayor Jackson stated to make sure that if we have to fill it in that the property owner will be responsible for the cost.

Commissioner Bright stated that the Depot underpinning looks good and so does the landscaping.

Commissioner Bright would like to see the Town start a litter campaign. She stated that we need some signage with fines listed.

Chief Silva stated that he will start targeting litter.

There being no further business Commissioner Bright made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Barnes. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted

Angel Hudson

Town Clerk