

**TOWN OF WEDDINGTON
SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, APRIL 27, 2009 - 4:00 P.M.
MINUTES**

The Town Council of the Town of Weddington, North Carolina, met in a Special Session at the Weddington Town Hall, 1924 Weddington Road, Weddington, NC 28104 on April 27, 2009, at 4:00 p.m. with Mayor Nancy D. Anderson presiding.

Present: Mayor Nancy D. Anderson, Mayor Pro Tem Robert Gilmartin, Councilmembers L.A. Smith, Tommy Price and Jerry McKee, Finance Officer Leslie Gaylord, Tax Collector Kim Woods, Town Planner Jordan Cook, Administrative Assistant Tonya Goodson and Town Administrator/Clerk Amy S. McCollum.

Absent: None

Visitors: Brian Carlton, Walter Staton, Werner Thomisser, Rob Dow.

Item No. 1. Open the Meeting. Mayor Nancy D. Anderson called the April 27, 2009 Special Town Council Meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. There was a quorum.

Item No. 2. Presentation of Pay and Classification Study by Pat Thomas with The MAPS Group.

Ms. Pat Thomas, representative from The MAPS Group, discussed the Pay and Classification Study with the Town Council. Ms. Thomas advised that MAPS stands for Management and Personnel Services and they are an affiliate of the North Carolina League of Municipalities. The MAPS Group primarily performed a labor market review for the Town's study. Ms. Thomas described the steps taken during the study: position questionnaires, interviews with staff and supervisor comments, then a labor market survey. Ms. Thomas stated, "Because you have jobs that you do not find that same job in the market, we had to look at different components in the labor market and then we developed written recommendations on how each job fits into the market data. Most organizations tend to do these types of studies every three to four years if the job is not changing drastically. You can take the salary schedule that we give you and update with cost-of-living adjustments and that way you are staying competitive with the current market. I collected data from 11 organizations in the area: 9 cities and towns and 2 counties. I looked at their published hiring rates and also the actual average pay if it was available. We also took the North Carolina League of Municipalities Salary Data for Town's 10,000 to 24,999 in population. What somebody is paying in eastern, North Carolina would not reflect what your market within the Charlotte area is. The areas that are shaded are the ones that I particularly looked at in setting the recommendations for that particular job. I was trying to pull what level of position best compared to yours. The shaded ones are most comparable of the various components that your jobs had. I set the market rate for each job at 13.5% over the hiring rate. This rate is what someone would reach if they were hired at the hiring rate and after six months complete a probationary period and received a 5% increase and after that 4 percent for the two next years. If you are only keeping up with living costs, people are not moving ahead within their own organization. Once I got this done, I looked at what individuals were making and looked at what it would cost to move staff to the market rate and then some service options."

Ms. Thomas discussed the Salary Schedule and that she started the schedule at the federal poverty level for a family of four. Each grade is 5% higher and the probationary rate is 5% over the hiring rate. The market rate is 13.5% above the hiring rate and keys off what the market is paying. The maximum is 50% over the hiring rate. Ms. Thomas reviewed what she recommended for each position and advised that there was a class specification developed for each job. Ms. Thomas reviewed the recommended pay plan with the Council. Ms. Thomas stated, "What would it cost to implement? I calculated two different

options. You were fairly close within the market. The first option would be to bring people's salaries up to the new market rate if they have passed probation. Option 2 went beyond that and said what if you had this pay plan in effect for the time that these employees had been working here and granted an extra 2% per year of work so if somebody had been here four years they would not just get the market rate but they would have 2 more percent. That is about 6.67% of the budget to implement. Option 2 is getting people where they should have been."

Ms. Thomas briefly discussed areas that should be considered for revision relative to the Town's benefits.

The Council thanked Ms. Thomas for her work on this project.

Item No. 3. Review and Consideration of Proposed Pay and Classification Study. Councilmember Price moved to accept the Pay and Classification Study and the Town Council will consider the different options proposed during Closed Session. All were in favor, with votes recorded as follows:

AYES: Councilmembers Smith, Price, McKee and Mayor Pro Tem Gilmartin
NAYS: None

Item No. 4. Consideration of Approval of Resolution Opposing House Bill 950 – An Act Requiring that Annexation and Extension of Extraterritorial Jurisdiction in Union County be Subject to a Referendum. Mayor Anderson briefly discussed the Resolution and House Bill 950 with the Town Council. She stated, "This is a bill before the NC House sponsored by Representative Curtis Blackwood. It only applies to Union County and it would allow for the people who are in the area of annexation or ETJ to be able to vote on whether or not they want to be annexed or be included in an ETJ area. The problem is that this bill is retroactive to 2005. I called five other mayors in our area and none of them knew about this bill before it was filed."

Councilmember Smith moved to approve the Resolution with changes to be made reflecting the Mayor's concern over the fact that the Bill is retroactive to 2005 and there was not a coordinated effort with Union County municipalities prior to the introduction of the bill. All were in favor, with votes recorded as follows:

AYES: Councilmembers Smith, Price, McKee and Mayor Pro Tem Gilmartin
NAYS: None

The following Resolution reflects changes requested by the Town Council:

**TOWN OF WEDDINGTON
A RESOLUTION OPPOSING HOUSE BILL 950
AN ACT REQUIRING THAT ANNEXATION AND EXTENSION
OF EXTRATERRITORIAL JURISDICTION IN UNION COUNTY
BE SUBJECT TO A REFERENDUM
R-2009-07**

WHEREAS, the Town of Weddington agreed upon a list of legislative priorities for Union County local governments for the 2009-2010 Session of the North Carolina General Assembly adopted by Resolution in February 2009, and

WHEREAS, the 2009-2010 Session of the North Carolina General Assembly has HB 727/SB 472 before them that is supported by the Town of Weddington and the North Carolina League of Municipalities recognizing that some changes to municipal annexation authority are warranted, and

WHEREAS, House Bill 950 would require a referendum by the qualified voters of the area to be annexed at a significant cost to Town taxpayers and would have a significant impact on past and future Town of Weddington annexations; and

WHEREAS, there was no coordination with elected officials of Union County prior to introduction of the bill; and

WHEREAS, House Bill 950, if enacted, will have a significant impact on the Town of Weddington since this legislation will also apply to prior annexations made on or after January 1, 2005.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Weddington Town Council hereby opposes House Bill 950 for the 2009-2010 Session of the North Carolina General Assembly.

Adopted this 27th day of April, 2009.

Item No. 5. Discussion with Barry Moose, NCDOT regarding Transportation Issues. The Town Council held a conference call with Barry Moose with NCDOT to discuss transportation issues. The following question and answer session was held:

Mayor Anderson - We have the transportation study and their recommendation for a northern connector road from the Weddington Activity Center to connect Weddington-Matthews Road. There are a couple of options on how we can get that done. It can be developer driven or the Town can assist with that. We have been talking about how to help the shopping center with better access. We are also talking about the traffic circle at the intersection of Highway 84 and Weddington-Matthews Road. Barry Moose and Richard Hancock had suggested to us that there is \$2.3 million set aside by MUMPO for the Rea Road Extension. In 2011, \$100,000 is set side for planning, \$300,000 for environmental in 2012 and the bulk of the money comes in 2013. This suggestion is that we move part of this money to pay for the connector road and traffic circle and NCDOT would pay the Town back in 2013.

Mr. Moose – You may recall several years ago, when Larry Helms was on the Board of Transportation he had gotten \$2 million to have the Rea Road Extension connected for us in connection with the developer. That is not happening now. It is still our plan to build that connector road but I advised the Mayor to let me work with Raleigh to rescope the work to reflect the connector road and the traffic circle. I felt that both of those could be built for \$2 million. If I could get that done, then we can have a project on our Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) that shows those two projects being built. The money is still out several years and the second part is if the Town had the financial wherewithal to be able to advance the State the money they could start working on that fairly soon. We would pay the Town back in the year that the money was going to come online to do construction for the Rea Road Extension. We generally pay back at a nominal interest rate of 2 to 3% per year. It would be paid back to the Town in the year that we were scheduled to spend the money anyway, which is 2013. One thing that has changed since I talked with you is that I have seen the new five year plan and that project has been pushed out a little ways. Raleigh has pushed it out a little bit and I am going to try to push it back in. We can enter into a Municipal Agreement where the Town agrees to pay so much money to the State for this work and the State will agree to build the project and pay back the Town.

Mayor Anderson - How can we be sure that we are going to get the money back?

Mr. Moose - That is the reason I would advise a Municipal Agreement. It will be a binding contractual arrangement between the Town of Weddington and the State of North Carolina.

Mayor Anderson - The advantage of having a contract is not just getting our project done early but it ensures that the project is done.

Mr. Moose – Once I have the signed agreement, the date of the TIP will not get pushed back. The only way we would not honor that commitment is if the State goes bankrupt. By having a Municipal Agreement, that money becomes an obligation of the State of North Carolina and the first thing that we fund.

Councilmember Smith - If we have a contract with the State and we hand you the money tomorrow, how long are we talking about before that project will be finished?

Mr. Moose - We have not begun any planning or design work which will probably take us one year. One component that we are going to have to do is get MUMPO to agree to rescope the project. That will be our first step. If MUMPO agrees, then I can start the planning, environmental and design phase. I would not need the construction money for at least a year from now.

Mayor Anderson - Do you need planning money now?

Mr. Moose - I may need a little bit of money for design work. The money that we are talking about here would require some for part of the right-of-way acquisition. If any of the right-of-way can be obtained free of charge, it would help to reduce the overall obligation for the Town and make the overall project less expensive. The agreement does not have to be executed for construction next week or next month. We may have to do two agreements; one for design work and then one for construction. The one for design work may only be \$100,000 and we do the bigger agreement that has the actual construction costs later.

Mayor Pro Tem Gilmartin – What if the study for the traffic circle comes back and it is not feasible?

Mr. Moose - I have not seen anything official on the study yet. I have heard that everything looked good. I took that to mean that everything that I proposed on the drawing was working out based on their analysis. I am waiting to see how strong the desire is from you to do this before I start pushing my folks in Raleigh and here to make the pieces of the puzzle to come together.

Mayor Anderson - I talked to you before about the traffic circle being part of the Highway 16 Widening project and you said that it would not be feasible to do that. As a taxpayer, it looks bad to me to build something and then go back and unbuild.

Mr. Moose - The reason I cannot add the traffic circle to the existing project is that it was not part of the original planning document. To go back and change the planning document this late in the juncture would be difficult and we would not have enough time. I wish I would have thought about this a year ago. What I need to know from you is are you financially able to advance the project? As soon as I know that, the next step is to change the TIP Plan. I do not think it will be a big issue. After that I will need to go to MUMPO. Then we can roll our sleeves up and negotiate how much money we will need and get cost estimates.

Item No. 6. Discussion of Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2009-2010. Finance Officer Leslie Gaylord presented the Council with the preliminary budget for their review. She stated, “Councilmember McKee has approached me about a downtown plan and possibly reallocating the \$100,000 we have in the budget for Town markers, signs, lighting to be used for the plan and move hardware costs to next year. There is nothing in the budget for road improvements, the fitness room at the High School, or the library. They would be capital projects and would come out of the fund balance instead of the operating budget.”

It was questioned what the transportation improvements listed in the budget were for. Finance Officer Gaylord advised that it was for the sidewalks along Highway 84. Mayor Anderson informed the Council that she was not sure if that would be needed this fiscal year or next fiscal year. Finance Officer Gaylord advised that she could move that amount out of the budget if needed. Town Planner Jordan Cook discussed that the Council and Downtown Committee had several options regarding the downtown consultant and plan. The Town Council can choose to take the current ULI plan and have ULI revise that plan which would cost approximately \$10,000 to \$15,000. The Town can send out the ULI plan to consultants to have them revise the plan which would cost approximately \$15,000 to \$20,000. It would cost approximately \$75,000 to \$100,000 for a new plan. Finance Officer Gaylord advised that putting the money in the budget would just be setting aside the money and not approving the spending of the money at this time. A contract for the work would have to be brought before the Town Council for approval. The Council agreed to leave the money in the budget to be considered to be used for either consulting costs or hardware costs for the downtown area.

Items discussed:

- Chairs for Council Chambers would cost approximately \$2,500.00
- Cost for removing berm at Town Hall is \$900.00. To clean out brush and take down berm would cost approximately \$2,000.
- Trash pick up on major roads in Weddington would cost approximately \$4,680 for 26 miles of roadway or 52 curb line miles for one time pick up. Mowing and weed eating of all the same roads would be \$6,500.00. Mayor Anderson advised that she is fine with NCDOT mowing the sides of the road twice a year and then the Town to spend money on mowing the grassy medians.
- The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board has asked for \$15,000 again this year. Mayor Anderson stated, "I have been a big proponent for a reason to gather. We may get more for our money if we partner with the schools on fundraisers and events that they are holding."
- Painting of Town Hall will occur in the fall.
- Continue funding for the Catawba Lands Conservancy at \$1,000.
- WCWAA - \$10,000. Councilmembers felt that any money spent by the Town relative to the violations at the Optimist Park should be deducted from the donation to the park.
- Leave Fire Department funding the same as last year.
- New sound system for council chambers.
- Upgrade lighting for the council chambers.
- The Town will be going out for bids for a Banking Request for Proposals this coming year.
- Council agreed to not fund transcript costs associated with the Woods Conditional Use Permit hearings. The Town did pay \$2,700.00 to receive the transcripts for the Town's use.

Mayor Pro Tem Gilmartin advised that he had spoken with the Union County Facilities Manager regarding a possible loan for the fitness room at the Weddington High School. He stated, "They said it could be five to eight years from now before the Town would be paid back. My recommendation would be to give them \$100,000 out of fund balance."

Mayor Anderson – Our signature is our schools. We could consider a matching grant.

Finance Officer Gaylord – If you are considering doing that, we just got \$145,000 back from the Library, maybe you can take out of that and give to the school.

Councilmember Price – Why do we not give \$100,000 and then take the other \$45,000 and give for fundraising, events, etc.

Mayor Anderson - I am reluctant to give away all the library money even though we do not have any prospects.

Councilmember McKee discussed the money that he pays in taxes to benefit the schools already.

Councilmember Smith - My concern is that we are giving a lot of money to a small portion of the school body.

The Council advised that they would vote on the fitness center funding at the next Town Council Meeting.

Town Administrator/Clerk McCollum read the following statement from Walter Staton: I ask you to lower the tax rate for Weddington citizens from 3 cents to 2 cents. Currently, we are in the worst economic decline since the Great Depression, and some of our residents have lost their jobs. Lowering taxes at this time simply is the right thing to do with Weddington families struggling to meet financial ends. Our county taxes were raised in 2007 by 11% and 22% in 2008. There are indications that Union County may raise taxes again this year. Do the right thing and give Weddington residents some tax relief during this deep national recession.

Mr. Werner Thomisser provided an article to the Town Council which reported about a Weddington family whose father has lost his job and they have four children. He stated, "We live in a very affluent community and do not realize that there are families in Weddington that are struggling and people losing their homes. It does help if you will consider lowering taxes. Consider reducing taxes from 3 cents to 2 cents. The fire department is much more important than the fitness room for the high school."

Item No. 7. Closed Session pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11 (6) – Personnel. Councilmember Price moved to go into Closed Session pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11 (6) Personnel. All were in favor, with votes recorded as follows:

AYES: Councilmembers Smith, Price, McKee and Mayor Pro Tem Gilmartin
NAYS: None

Item No. 8. Adjournment. Councilmember Price moved to adjourn the April 27, 2009 Special Town Council Meeting. All were in favor, with votes recorded as follows:

AYES: Councilmembers Price and McKee
NAYS: None

The meeting adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

Nancy D. Anderson, Mayor

Amy S. McCollum, Town Clerk