

**TOWN OF WEDDINGTON
SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
WEDNESDAY, FEBURARY 25, 2015 - 7:00 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 February 25, 2015 at 7:00 p.m., with Mayor Bill Deter presiding.

Present: Mayor Bill Deter, Mayor Pro Tem Don Titherington, Councilmembers Michael Smith, Pamela Hadley and Barbara Harrison, Attorney Anthony Fox and Finance Officer Leslie Gaylord

Absent: None

Visitors: Andy Stallings, Peggy Stallings, Cathy Killough Brown, Tommy Price, Ed Howie, Ken Evans, Jeff Robillard, Werner Thomisser, Mary Thomisser, Jane Duckwall, Kathie Burns, Michael Burns, Mary Ann DeSimone, Joe DeSimone, Leslie Barry, Tony Rolfes, Mary Knoble, Jim Reichenbach, Ann Marie Q., Eric Anderson, Jody Schill, John P. Cochran, Andrew Moore, Peter Williams, Ben Williams, Kenny Schott, Jerry Fitzgerald, Julie Moore, Rosanne Bongiovanni, Jack Parks, Chris Demaio, Julie Moore, Kelly Levitas, Elton Hardy, Allida Parks, Steve Boynton, Julie Boynton, Craig Hazeltine, Walton Hogan, Brian McCament, Chris Cobb, Nancy Anderson, Catherine Sessa, Chris Duggan, Thomas Archer, Bill Tourtellet, Amy Stewart, Chris Duggan, Daryl Matthews, Travis Manning, Kyle Kling, Andrew Stallings, Sean Helms, Don Conner, Peg Conner, Steven McLendon, Michael Sullivan, Andrew Moore, Robert Filter, Mike C., Joe Dietrich, Charlotte Dietrich, Kim Moore, Bob Stanley, S.E. Craig, Joyce Cochran, Bob Palmer, Toya Allen

Item No. 1. Open the Meeting. Mayor Bill Deter opened the February 25, 2015 Special Town Council Meeting at 7:00 p.m. There was a quorum.

Item No. 2. Discussion of Fire Consolidation Activities to Date.

Mayor Deter – I have a meeting record up on the screen. If you are not aware, we can't get more than two of us together at one time. This is public meeting rules. The Council tasked Councilwoman Barbara Harrison and I to work on this project working with two people from Providence and two people from Wesley Chapel. In the beginning we had an individual meeting with Providence to see if they had an interest in looking at consolidation. The answer was "yes, but...". Then we had a meeting with Wesley Chapel and asked them the same question. The answer was "yes, but...". We got two "yes, buts" so we decided to proceed down this road. The approach that has been looked at is that we need to create a new structure, bylaws, and new names and try to consolidate these two organizations. I want to make a couple of things very clear to people. The Hemby Road Fire Station will not close. There will be 24/7 coverage with 4 qualified fire fighters at the Hemby Road Station day and night. Insurance ratings will not increase to a 9 so everyone that is concerned about their insurance going up it will not happen. These are three critical items I need everyone to understand. The process we are looking at is basically to get the Town out of the fire business. We have no expertise in terms of managing the fire department. The County has expertise. They have people who know and work

with 17 out of the 18 volunteer fire departments in the County. It will allow a broader tax base. Being in the fire business is very expensive. The county tax base right now as it relates to the Wesley Chapel district is .0281. Our Town's current tax rate is .0374. If I factor in capital which means we set aside money out of our savings account for the future purchase of a fire truck, if you count that it would be .043. We have done some preliminary budget work and that could take our fire tax rate in 2016 to .046. That is the reason we are trying to look at this from a financial perspective. From 2008-2012 (before the fire service district was created) the Town, in addition to fire taxes that everyone paid, gave or subsidized Providence Fire Department a little over a million dollars. That is on top of fire taxes people are paying. The fire service district created in 2012 (which was the right thing to do) was created to ensure that the closest fire station serviced our residents. I live a quarter mile from the Providence Fire Station but that is not the fire station that would be coming to my house. It would have come from Wesley Chapel. The Town created a fire service district so the closest fire station comes to all of the Town's residents. As we did that, we changed geography and that brought about \$275,000 of additional revenue into Providence because of the additional territory. In 2013 the Town funded about \$930,000 a year to renovate the fire station. We do not want to be in the fire station business but this was the only way it could be done. We lease the fire station for a dollar a year. \$900,000 is a lot of money. At the retreat the three fire departments that cover our Town presented their preliminary budgets. They were all flat compared to this current year. However, a flat budget for Providence based on the expense assumptions that were made would create a \$71,000 deficit for them. The Council was in a meeting in an Open House at Providence and the presentation that was made was more or less about \$140,000 - \$150,000 in the fund balance. If you look at the \$71,000 deficit, that is going to drop the fund balance down to about \$70,000-\$75,000 probably before the end of the calendar year. I don't think the fire department can function at that level. My concern is we now have the whole Town at risk. That is why we are looking and talking and doing a lot of analysis on this whole issue. Those are meetings we have had discussing financials with Council people, meeting with the County, discussions with the State, with neighboring Towns of Wesley Chapel and Marvin, meeting with the Fire Departments together and individually. Barbara and I have been busy. This is the ground work. I will go around Council and they can make comments.

Councilwoman Pam Hadley – Based on what you said I agree with the majority of it. I want to point out once again, the .0374 rate is based on only ad valorem and not revenue. What I have been hearing and seeing the past week is that the \$71,000 deficit would put Providence back in line which would equal about \$16 per household.

Councilwoman Barbara Harrison – What we are doing will not affect your insurance rates. I have lived here 10 years and every year my insurance goes up and every year I am on the phone with them. I get a whole list of reasons why they increase my insurance. We are not going to increase but I can't guarantee what the insurance company is going to do.

Mayor Pro Tem Don Titherington – Some folks have asked me why undertake this review. I think as the Mayor articulated it's not to address anything that was addressed 5 years ago when we created the municipal fire district. That was to get the lines drawn so the closest fire department responded. This Council agreed to that wholeheartedly. It really is around a revenue conversation and understanding where we are. Would it be easy to say we will kick this down the road another 2 or 3 years and let another Council handle it? That is not the right decision. This process started in early summer with a fire study because so many assumptions are changing as we build out the Town, as more residents come in, more subdivisions get brought into the Town then we will have more tax base. We modeled that out with the 1800 acres that were available in

this Town. If we built that out over 20, 15 or 10 years, it doesn't solve the revenue problem. This is our 4th meeting since the first of the year. We got the fire study back at Christmas. This will be our second meeting out of the normal cycle in an effort to communicate to folks. When we really looked at it, the question that came back is our savings account which allows us to have funds to do the things we need to do - whether it be buy a fire truck or look at putting up new stop lights - is shrinking. We will be out of that by 2021 or 2022 because we will have a zero balance. Leslie is going to spend some time to walk folks through that. The operating income, original 5 year modeling at the retreat had us going negative in 2020. With the funding request around \$71,000 we actually go negative next year. This is not an issue we feel that we can move down the road. We all need to tackle it and take a look at it and come up with the best options. The Hemby station will stay open. The ISO rating will stay 6 or better. I was a resident here when we went from a 9 to a 6 in 2009. ISO rating will stay 6 or better. It will be 24/7 365 at Hemby with 4 qualified personnel. Those are dictated by contracts the Town executes with individual departments. This is an opportunity to understand what our options are and look at those things on the table.

Councilman Michael Smith – I concur with what the Councilmembers have said so far.

Item No. 3. Public Comment Period.

Mayor Deter counted 25 people that wanted to speak.

Ed Howie - I should have dealt with this issue a long time ago. It was on my to do list. We had other pressing issues. My recommendation today is that you consolidate the fire departments. That was the right decision 15-20 years ago and even more so today. Consolidation of these facilities needs to be done. It will provide far better service to the citizens of Weddington. When I was Mayor we had a .02 tax rate. I was focused on keeping it there. It is not a hard decision. It may take some courage because of the pressures.

Tommy Price – Lake Providence – At some point in all of this you will have a Town changing decision to make. Whether it is RCD, a self contained sewage treatment plant or Rea Road extension, all of these things follow the same path that this has. The Town gets blanketed with scary emails that scare people with information that is either skewed or is all one sided to make people think that things are happening that are really not. In this particular case there was a nice little lady that was convinced to secretly tape record a neighborhood meeting that we were having just to present facts to our neighborhood. We probably all know who it is. For years Weddington operated on a 2 cent tax rate. We even built up a big fund balance at 2 cents. We had good public safety policies and the low tax rate was our big plus that made us stand out from the other Towns around here. It made our property values stay high. Now we have a 5.2 cent tax rate and with increasing budget requests and the long term projected cost of this seems a little too ambitious for a Town our size. You guys have all done the homework. You have been through the numbers. No need in me rehashing those things. You know what they are. You have two nonpartisan studies completed and both reach the same conclusion. We have 3 exceptional fire departments that service this Town. The biggest thing you guys have to do is make the best business decision. I am asking that you make that decision with your head and not your heart. I know looking at a room full of people when they get mad and scream and holler is hard. That is your job and I ask you to remember the 11,000 people who aren't here that have entrusted you with running the business of this Town in the most cost efficient way. I do also appreciate the service. I know it is hard. Thank you for everything you do.

Jeff Robillard - Lake View Estates – I agree with everything Council has said. How much of our tax dollars go to support this Fire Department? What percentage are we paying for the budget? How do you run a Town when one small entity of what we do is absorbing 95% of the tax dollars? You can't do it. Our Town is too small to run a Fire Department. I know there are some scary things going around like our taxes will go through the roof. The other night I mentioned something and people jumped on me and said your facts are wrong. I went and checked with some other people. It was less than what was half of what was being reported the other night. A lot of misinformation is going on and that needs to be corrected. We are going to get coverage and insurance is not going to go through the roof. When one of those fire trucks blows up or an engine blows, who is going to come up with all of those dollars to pay for that? A fire truck at a bare minimum, stripped to the bone, is \$500,000. We don't have the money to do that in this Town.

Kathy Killough Brown – Lake Providence – I am a life long resident of Union County. My ancestors have been within a few miles of this spot since 1848. I want to go on record saying I support the Council members who are in favor of consolidation of Fire Departments. I feel they have done their homework and they have it right and they are acting in favor of the Town. My neighbors, residents, friends and myself will continue to support these Council Members.

Andy Stallings – Lake Providence- There has been a lot of misinformation posted, published and vocalized while striking up controversy for those who want to spread fabrications. This is disingenuous and harmful for what is trying to be done here and that is ensuring this community can enjoy sustainable first rate fire and medical protection at an affordable tax rate. Some of these misconceptions have been addressed already. I am on the Wesley Chapel Board. I have been in Weddington for 30 years and I am a taxpayer. Wesley Chapel's books are sound and in good shape as our CPA has addressed in this letter which I brought if anyone would like to see it. Any further Facebook sniping will hopefully cease so we can construct the best possible consolidation for the community.

Werner Thomisser - High Gate- Providence has just achieved an ISO rating of 4. There are 18 volunteer fire departments in Union County and Providence's rating is the highest. If this other fire company is so good why are they not rated as a 4? The Mayor was quoted in the newspaper as saying that this is a financial decision and not a performance decision. Let's take a look at the financial justification. I don't know if everyone in this room is aware but when you break that fire service contract with Providence there is a \$750,000 termination fee. Where is that going to be coming out of? It will come out of the fund balance. I hear rumors going around that it is okay because we will just sell the fire department. It cost us \$915,000 to renovate that fire department and the termination fee is \$750,000. It is a shortfall out of the fund balance of \$165,000. Providence Volunteer Fire Department's building and land is valued at \$1 million. It is even worse. It is a \$250,000 short fall that is an asset to the Town of Weddington and you are throwing it away. It is not good for the people of Weddington. If you go to a merger or consolidation it is an automatic tax increase on the fire service from the 2.2 cents to 3.8 cents and God knows what the County will do next year. The reason this fire department was formed was to give us control of fire service that we wanted and the cost. We will not be able to get that because someone else outside of the Town will control that. I heard the Mayor say don't worry about this increase of \$300-\$750 on homeowners insurance premiums. I don't know who you talked to, Mr. Mayor, but the Board President of Providence called up to Raleigh and he was told that will be the cost when you consolidate. If everybody in this room wants to pay that much more money for homeowners insurance that is not a good deal for us either. This is not a financial decision. It is a public safety decision. In this room last Friday, the Chief of the other department said he was going to put 3 full time fire fighters in the day and 2 at night. Now we

come here tonight and all of a sudden it has changed. There is nothing in writing. You have the number 1 rated volunteer department. There are 18 in Union County and you have the Number 1 rated fire department which is Providence and you are throwing them under the bus. I don't understand why that is. We are not going to save any more money by consolidating or merging or anything else because fire service is expensive. It will always be expensive. The right thing to do is to have the Town and the municipal fire district in control of its destiny as to the cost and type of service that they want and if it is necessary to raise the fire tax then you have to do the tough stuff and raise the fire tax. The County is doing it and so is the other fire department. What are you afraid of? It is not a 10 cent increase; it is probably 1-2 cent increase. It's just the cost of running the fire department.

Charlotte Dietrich – Willow Oaks – I have been here for over 15 years now. I have used the fire department on many occasions. I am standing here today because of our expert EMTs. They have saved my life twice now since 2014. I had a heart attack and it was your expert EMTs that recognized my problem. It wasn't a regular heart attack. It was a run away heart. They didn't think I would make it to the hospital. I am here today because of them. If you take our expert fire department away from us what are our people going to do? I don't want some volunteer to be called out of bed in the middle of the night to come to my house and be 20 minutes away from getting some person, not just me but anybody in our area, medical attention. I was always told time is of essence to anybody that is having a problem medically. We need to keep this fire department. We voted you people in. You have the responsibility to act for the better of the people. Not for your own benefits. The people of this town put you in office now stand up and do what is right by us.

Jerry Fitzgerald – Willow Oaks – I fully support the independent and autonomous Providence Volunteer Fire Department. Our fire department currently has quality management, quality fire fighters and, it is debt free. It has a 60 year tradition of an autonomous fire department. The quality of that facility offers us a symbol that gives the residents of Weddington a superior rating for insurance. Mayor Deter provided a presentation at our HOA meeting. It appears that revenue is a problem. Mayor Deter said consolidation is the answer. Is it? To maintain a first class, high quality facility at Providence Volunteer Fire Department - it costs. I realize that. No one at my HOA meeting resisted paying more to maintain this superior facility. Is that more in tax rate, is that more in fire service fee, is that more in financial support? Is consolidation the only option? We are interested in how much. The increase in revenue must be documented. I understand that all supported financials are not in. Why do we have to decide this now? The consultants report won't come in until December. I ask that you compile supporting data, certified supporting data to tell residents how much the deficit is. Our rental deadline is 2020. These costs go up. Councilwoman Harrison just made the comment that her insurance goes up every year. Give the Weddington residents all options. Consolidation or a fee increase. Let the residents decide how to maintain and support our first class fire service that we presently have. This is a first class, first rate operation. Please give Weddington residents all options not just consolidation to maintain and support this facility.

Nancy Anderson – Hunter Farm - I thank you for addressing this difficult situation. What I have heard from every conversation with each of you is that everyone is in favor in keeping the fire service excellent as it is, 24/7 4 staff and keeping the fire station open. We are looking for the most cost effective way to do that. I have never heard anyone complain about paying for public safety. As I understand, the action you are taking tomorrow is that you are proposing a resolution to dissolve the newly formed municipal fire district. By default that would kick us back into the county. If you are trying to figure out to make this cost effective, so are they. If we put ourselves back into the county pot then we are going to get the standard Government Issue fire service. In

the past, we decided that wasn't good enough, not just in fire service but everything. Two decades ago we decided that we needed more public safety officers and a 45 minute response time wasn't good enough so we started hiring our own deputies. We started subsidizing our fire service because we wanted to pay people who were trained in expertise and since our response time for ambulance service was so poor we actually bought an ambulance and gave it to the County which has now been taken back. The Town of Weddington citizens have never settled for mediocre. We always wanted excellence. My fear is we will get back into a situation and the county is going to say something like this: "If you want anything over 5 you are going have to pay for it yourself." Isn't that where we came from? I don't want to go back there. When you do the resolution it is important how you word it. It is important that you say all the things that we said in the very beginning. This is just another tool to complete your analysis. You happen to know that. It may come back and you may say not good enough. We are going to trust you on that.

Eric Anderson – Hunter Farm – We have 18 volunteer fire departments in this County. Providence has level 4 ISO. I heard about this from watching the news and Channel 9 showed it and they said when they rode around the fire department they noticed the paint was peeling off the truck. That tells me that Providence Volunteer Fire Department is spending the money very wisely. You don't know what the County will do. I would rather spend a little bit more and have better fire service than what the rest of the County has. Fifty years ago Providence Volunteer Fire Department dismantled the silo, towed the ambulance out of the mud. They have always been an excellent fire department. I hate to see them go.

John Cochran – Willow Oaks – I will willingly pay more for taxes for fire coverage because this is a health and safety issue. They have come to our home when we needed help with an invalid grandmother. I have zero problem with paying more taxes. I am giving you an open budget from my point of view. You can raise the taxes because if you look at the deficit you are talking about a Burger King whopper and fries five years out. I think any family can afford a whopper and fries in five years.

Joe DeSimone – Willow Oaks – I believe the vote to instruct the Attorney to draft the resolution that would dissolve PVFD and the municipal fire district would be a travesty to the residents of Weddington. The whole takeover is being done under the guise of saving taxpayers money. The Council doesn't seem to want an increase in taxes at all. As Pam said, we are looking at an increase of \$16 per homeowner. PVFD could continue to provide the current level of service to our residents which is 24/7. Because it is here I believe the following will happen to the residents of Weddington: (1). Weddington taxpayers will be responsible for \$750,000 penalty for the Town to break the existing contract. (2). The taxpayers of Weddington will lose the fire protection that fire station provided and \$1.5 million. In the past, we spent thousands of dollars to upgrade to this current code. We will be sent to an organization that is not even located in Weddington. Wesley Chapel currently owes approximately \$4.5 million. Add the \$1.5 million for the fire station and \$750,000 penalty.... I believe the residents of Weddington will be assisting in paying off the \$7 million debt. The new department, I believe will still be given a rating of 8 or 9 in spite of what I heard earlier today. I did some checking with the state and it will not receive a rating of 6. The end result will be an increase of insurance of \$450 to \$800. We need the tax increase in order to maintain the status. I find that hard to understand. Why are we trying to dissolve PVFD when just two years ago the previous administration rejected a merger with Wesley Chapel at the insistence of the people of Weddington? It was then that we opted to form the municipal fire district under the guiding hand of PVFD.

Bob Stanley – Willow Oaks – I was told this was a cost issue. I attended the meeting on Sunday at Providence and was told that this consolidation and merger would save \$185,000 a year. I trust that issue to find out where my dollars are involved in that and where those dollars are coming from. I asked that question 4 times and did receive an answer. This fire department at Providence has been a blessing to everybody in this city and it will remain that way as long as we don't consider consolidation. We have done the same thing before two years ago. We need to continue where we are today. Your mission in life is to make sure of the safety of the people of the city of Weddington.

Mary Ann DeSimone – Willow Oaks – Mr. Deter, you and the members of the Town Council have heard many reasons why this swift move to dissolve the Providence VFD is not in the best interest of the residents of Weddington. What is the real reason that this Council is moving so quickly? It is fiscally irresponsible and a morally unacceptable action to dissolve a department that has served us so well without performing the due diligence necessary to warrant such action. Why are you just giving away a building and land worth over \$1 million to the Wesley Chapel VFD? That is like throwing a baby away with the bath water. We have heard the feeble attempts by the Mayor and some members of the Town Council attempting to clarify the issues. I have another word for the use of clarify. It is called mendacity which translates to half truths, untruths and lies. Are any of our comments really being heard by you and members of the Council or is this just an effort in futility on our part because this administration has no intention of giving the residents the clarity and transparency it deserves? Why are you so hell bent on dissolving a department that the previous Town Council voted to maintain only two years ago and spent several hundred thousand dollars to bring the building up to code so that our firefighters and EMTs could have a functional and comfortable building? If your intentions are to direct the Attorney to draft this resolution to dissolve the Providence Volunteer Fire Department tonight and then to pass this same resolution tomorrow night let it be known that this Council is betraying the wishes of the very people who put you in those chairs. There is only one thing that needs to be dissolved here and it is not the Providence Volunteer Fire Department.

Travis Manning – Providence Place – I have a unique perspective of these mergers. I have to be candid and say that I am very disappointed in how transparent everyone has been. There are a lot of questions that I don't understand that haven't been answered. The most important one that I have is if this merger were to take place what happens to all of the fire fighters that have been working at Providence for 10 years + and that have saved many of our residents lives? I have the utmost respect for Wesley Chapel and I don't have an objection to a merger. However, I don't consider this a merger. I consider this a takeover. If we have an ISO rating of 4 and its not good enough... I am trying to figure out what is the legacy of this Council to take away a station of 60 years over a few dollars per resident. The station will be staffed by Wesley Chapel as it is now- tonight is the first time I have heard in public where that was said by the Mayor. However, if this is a funding issue for the department, as tight as we run our department and as many times as we have been audited by your guys, how is that saving any money? Our biggest expense is our personnel. I don't understand where you guys are getting numbers. I am in charge of the grant committee for my department. I have never been asked by Council if I have applied for grants. I just don't think all homework has been done. To date we applied for almost \$100,000 in grants. What happens to those grants? Do they go away? We lose out on that opportunity? I just think there are a lot of questions that have not been answered. I respectfully ask you not to kick the ball down the road but let's keep the discussion open.

Catherine Sessa – Weddington Woods – I want to thank the men and women at the Providence Volunteer Fire Department for all of your service. I have only lived here with my husband and 3 children for 2 years. On our second night here we had to call Providence Volunteer Fire Department. They rushed right over and put out a fire on our deck where our grill had caught on fire. Everyone has such good valid points. We never get response about answering those things. Why are we giving it up after having to pay the \$750,000? These residents have valid points but we don't get to hear back why you don't agree with that. I would like a response, maybe an email to the residents. I went through the whole water tower thing and did not get any rebuttals either.

Ben Williams – Captain of Matthews Fire and EMS and Lieutenant with Providence Fire – The amount of training that Providence Volunteer Fire Department has - their personnel come from all over. From Charlotte Fire Department to Monroe Fire Department to members of my Fire Department in Matthews to Idlewild Fire Department. Mecklenburg County currently has the highest save rate for sudden cardiac arrest. Providence Volunteer Fire Department is a member of the Mecklenburg County group and every one of their members is trained in CPR. If one of you dropped tonight I guarantee you would want one of us working on you. I have fought fire with these men and women. They are some of the very best. I am not here to disrespect Wesley Chapel or their chief or anybody else. What I am telling you now is you stood behind Providence Volunteer Fire Department before and I think you need to continue to stand behind them now. You have already spent money to renovate the station. You have already spent money to keep their personnel in the house. You don't understand the amount of time it takes to get people to work that cardiac arrest. Those four people can work it and they save a life. The life they save may not be yours but it may be your mother, father or sister. The Providence Volunteer Fire Department saved a 5 year old child from drowning in Kings Manor Subdivision. I was there. I witnessed it. How long would it have taken had it not been the four people on the truck that was needed? Will that child have died? Would some of your family members have died had these people not been where they are now? I hope you think about this. Yes, this is a public safety issue. I come from a fire department where I have to stand in front of Town Council because Matthews Fire EMS is run by a Town Council. We have a Town Manager. We are one of the only municipal fire departments in all Mecklenburg County other than Charlotte Fire Department. You say you don't want to be in the fire business. You think my town wants to be in the fire business? They are in the fire business for the reason of the protection of their own town. They felt that the County system was broken and from what I have seen from this County system it is just as broken. This County years from now will attempt to get out of the fire business. I guarantee you. I have been in the fire service 12 years. I have seen a lot and it will happen. A fire truck does not cost \$500,000. You can get one for as cheap as \$400,000. I hope you all thank these members no matter what you decide to do for their service and their time. If you go with the merger, I hope you make sure that they are your number 1 and they are taken care of afterwards.

Andrew Moore – Michelle Drive – I am proposing a plan that was suggested by the McGrath report which you paid for. The plan to continue that the Town of Weddington is in control of home fire service. The plan allows the service provider to achieve a 4 ISO rating which is the best in Union County outside city limits. Continuing as a fire municipality is not an easy solution but is worth it. We are fortunate that Mecklenburg County paid for most of our fire station. That is why surrounding stations are incurring substantial debt and Providence almost has none. The challenge we are facing is with the current shortfall for the Fire Station. In order for them to continue to provide a class 4 rate service they need money. My numbers are from the minutes and from the survey they took \$50,788 taken from October 2014 Council meeting minutes. \$50,788 divided by 4350 household is \$11.68 per household per year to maintain. We

keep our current household service and our paid for fire station. If you decide to dissolve our fire service and go with a single service provider option of the McGrath study you, the current Weddington Town Council, will undo all that was agreed upon by the former Town Council. You will breach a 10 year contract and we incur \$750,000. This is an option the McGrath Study termed volatile and did not recommend unless other options prove unsuccessful. How can you not further explore other options? How do citizens of Weddington benefit from your proposal: (1). Their reputation with the Town will be tarnished? (2). The Citizens will then be responsible for financial obligations and a loan would have to be taken out to do this. The Town would then be faced with the possibility of having to provide equipment to the fire station as the current equipment is the property of the Providence Volunteer Fire Department. We are going to have to pay more than what we currently pay for fire service since Wesley Chapel is rated higher. While receiving a 6 rating instead we are under a superior 4. In addition, the citizens will have to cover the legal fees involved in breaking the contract with PVFD. The Fire Marshal will have to do a new inspection. This information came from a conversation I had with the assistant marshal in Raleigh who said it would take a minimum of 6 months to schedule an inspection and at least 90 days to get the results which will cause your homeowners rates to go up to rating 9 which means an increase of \$200 a year per household with some being quoted an increase of \$750. There will be a period of time during the transition when our fire service may not fully function as pointed out in the McGrath Study. What if you have an emergency during that time period? We would lose control over anything including our fire service. Are we prepared to enter into a contract with Wesley Chapel, an organization that is debt ridden and unwilling to fully disclose their financials? Why are we even considering it? It doesn't seem to be with all of the extra unknown cost incurred by the breaking of the contract and the lack of information from Wesley Chapel that we are saving anything at all. I am sure Wesley Chapel is a fine fire department. I am not throwing them under the bus. My interest is about the people of Weddington. I believe that it is in the best interest that the Council chooses the option that allows us to keep Providence Volunteer Fire Department. Households will only pay an additional \$11.68 per year to maintain our top notch fire service. The Town Council and PVFD will have to work together in the best interests of the citizens of Weddington to continue to improve upon our already great service while tackling the problems and cost that would be involved. This option is more concrete in ensuring both our current level of service and offering a more foreseen price for citizens of Weddington thus giving us more control. Isn't that where it all started three years ago?

Julie Moore – Providence Woods – Providence has been servicing the Town of Weddington for over 50 years and its mission has always been to provide the best fire emergency service possible and help our community. I decided to go back and find out what transpired. I read all of the published Town Council minutes and all 83 pages of the McGrath Fire Study report. I found you working together with Providence until just recently. You see the results from the Fire Study in late December when it suggested three possible solution options. I am not sure how in over just a month the Council can have explored all of those options and allowed for adequate time for Providence to respond to that. Instead you have rushed to adopt a proposal calling for a consolidation which was one of the options proposed in the study but instead terminology has been used and appears to be carrying out another option which the study option stated would be a volatile one and felt should be used as a last resort. I don't understand how we can be at the last resort stage after only a few weeks. Many of you were elected recently on the platform of saving Weddington which emphasized preserving our Town as recorded here in this newspaper article. As you are looking to change one of Weddington's long standing institutions - that same newspaper article discussed the Mayor's desire to bring harmony to the Town and to the Council - I don't think you can say there is a lot of harmony in this room tonight. There has definitely been a lack of information getting out to the public. What has been out has been so

variant that no one knows what the truth is. The citizens of Weddington may hear that they want our Town to have a municipal fire department. The minutes did not record anyone having researched how we can better implement on this fire department or reaching out to someone to come and help us. I didn't even know Matthews had a municipal fire department. We could be asking them for help. Instead we ordered a fire study commission to offer you alternatives to the municipal fire department. The people of Weddington love their Town and their fire department and the unparalleled service that it provides. Given the facts, I believe they would spend the extra \$20-\$30 to ensure that level of fire service continuing and the entity which provided that and so much more is preserved.

Walton Hogan – Lake Providence - I think we all agree that the fire service folks themselves have been very professional. If I recall, Stallings and Wesley Chapel contribute to Weddington. The fact that the group there is Providence doesn't cover entirely Weddington but they can defend their properties. All the folks are professional. They are not going away. The equipment and building is not going away. The Town should never have been in the fire business in the first place. We should be able to take advantage of the economies of scale by being a larger group. It has been my experience over the years that organizations tend to be self-serving because they tend to want to reserve the status quo or provide advantage to one group or another.

Craig Hazeltine – Foxmeade – I do commend you on taking a look at that from a business perspective. One of my concerns is the confusion that has come out of this. I don't think anyone is real clear on what is going on. I will give you some examples. Every example I have is between Sunday and today. That is four days. I have been told that Wesley Chapel is \$5 million in debt. Three minutes later I was told they have a healthy balance sheet. I have been told that insurance will go up. If it goes up to 9 or 10 rates go up. Anything below a 7 it doesn't really affect. I checked this afternoon on this. That information is not good. I have heard we are at .0424. I heard we are going to .032. I have heard we are not going to .032. I heard we are staying at .04. I don't think anyone is really clear on that. I have been told we have to payoff \$750,000 to break the contract. I have been told we won't have to do that. I heard that we have already come to an agreement with Wesley Chapel to sell the fire department for \$750,000. I don't think the information coming out is very clear. I have always had an issue with the way the Town of Weddington communicates with the citizens. I do think this Town Council does a much better job. I don't understand why we can't get down and get these things answered very clearly and then proceed forward. If I can get the same level of fire protection I have today and I can do it cheaper, I'm all for it. I don't think the things I have said is any more than an hour meeting between Wesley Chapel, Providence, Town Council, the Attorney and maybe an insurance agent. Once this is done I think you can move forward and get it out to the citizens of the community. We can better understand what is going on. As I sit here today I would lean more towards favoring a consolidation that is based on the long term financial health of Weddington. There is still too much information out there that needs to be communicated. I don't think there are ulterior motives on this Council.

Chris Duggan – Hunter Lane – It seems to me that there is a lack of knowledge at least with your constituents. There is a craving coming from your constituents for additional knowledge. I have read the emails back and forth. I don't doubt you are all looking into this issue and have studied it. The Volunteer Fire Department put in the time, sweat and energy to keep this Town at the level of fire service that it has. I don't see the urgency to have a meeting today or tomorrow. If it costs \$750,000 to break the contract, it will cost that next year. The amount of information requests coming from your constituents, you are our representatives. That is what they are asking for. I urge all of you to consider postponing the vote, holding larger meetings. This is a difficult process but it is a difficult decision. I am hearing tonight from your constituents that they are

willing to spend a couple of extra bucks if they have to. That is a big step. I have also heard in the past that only those who oppose any resolution come out to speak. I see this as a representation of your Town. Your Town is speaking. Where are the people who are opposed to the status quo? I for one have always been concerned about passing our local decisions on to a larger government. When you take local decisions away from a local body and pass them on you lose control. I ask you to pause, postpone the vote for tomorrow, and make a resolution for tonight.

Jack Parks – Willow Oaks – I am the President of Providence Volunteer Fire Department. I applaud you tonight. I heard you say there will always be 4 fire fighters at Providence day and night. I have not heard that on some occasions. I have heard as low as 2. That is what has caused a lot of the apprehension with the citizens in this town right now. I also want to echo what Chris said. I don't see the urgency at all either. There is not a financial problem that causes us to have the meeting tonight and a vote tomorrow and have something in place by June for an implementation in July. It just does not exist. You can spin the numbers any way you want to try to make it look like it does. The thing about insurance rates going up by ISO there is definitely an opportunity if you do the wrong thing for the ISO rating of the Town of Weddington could go to 9 or 10. I talked to the ISO inspection supervisor again today. He and I have become very good friends working through our past inspection. I know him very well and he tells me what we need to know. If you were to form one company today there would not be an ISO rating associated with that company. If we were to try to frame one of the two fire departments into the other area there is no guarantee that either ISO rating would be in effect for that. It is very important what you do, how you do it and the timing you do it in. I have a personal guarantee from David Summey with the state in talking with him today that he will work with us as long as we devise a schedule that makes the most sense to work with the state. What I propose to you tonight if you want to go forward with the merger, I suggest that you ask that the two fire departments to work together arm in arm and let us put a plan together that we can bring back ready to go by January 1, 2016 with an implementation date of July 1, 2016. That is the start of the fiscal year for all of our government activities. There is no financial reason not to let the due diligence be done over that time frame and let us find out if this is the best thing to do or if there are other alternatives that make more sense.

Elton Hardy – Providence Place – I want to thank the fire people and fire women for the job they do. It is a challenging job. As Weddington grows there are and will be more job opportunities. With the additional houses that are coming in there are additional incomes so we would hope that there would be efficiencies that would drive down the cost per house. We don't have additional land mass. We will have more houses within the land mass. Dan Barry said last year the agreement was for Weddington taxpayers to select the level of service that they will pay for. Last year, I heard Jack Parks say that there would be cost savings. I have read all the emails that have been bouncing around. The point I am not clear on is the what is the fire protection for. I know it's great for commercial. Weddington is not a commercial zone nor do the citizens of Weddington want it to be. I have been very hopeful that the Town of Weddington has a fire department but mostly because it could be seamlessly integrated in a safe manner. The thing that was the low point for this Town over the last 5 years is the composers of the fire contract, Providence Volunteer Fire Department attorneys, leadership. They do the efforts. They screwed the Weddington taxpayers. They built the contract and they knew Scott Robinson was running for Mayor by placing a unilateral \$750,000 penalty on the taxpayers of Weddington. It wasn't necessary. If we can work together, we can do something. By the contract being in that fashion it guarantees attention that you would not want in your fire contract. I negotiated multiple contracts for the last 30 years. I have never seen one start off with a unilateral penalty and hope to have a

future. The contract needs to work in conjunction with all the parties to get the best service possible. I thank the Council for pragmatically approaching this.

Chris Demaio – I am not a resident in Weddington. I want to point out the fire station will be there no matter what happens. Who is going to be in the fire house? Who is going to come to an emergency in the Town of Weddington? Providence has a lot of pride and we have worked hard. I can't speak for the men and women but I can tell you that if the consolidation does go through let me put you in my shoes with the decision I have to make. What I understand is the Wesley Chapel Chief will become the chief of both. Now I have to decide whether I want to continue working at Providence on Hemby Road or not. I can tell you that because of my pride and my service of 10 years at Providence I am not going to work for Wesley Chapel. I just can't do it. I have 13 years experience in Charlotte. We have fire fighters from Charlotte, Monroe, and Mecklenburg County. We bring all of our experience to Providence and we teach all of our members. That will probably go away if this consolidation goes through. Who do you want in your fire house? Want to take a chance? We want to stay. We want to stay and give you the best service we can.

Chris Cobb – Rose Hill – I travel a good bit and my wife and kids are at home a lot and I take great comfort in knowing if something happens in my home those guys are right down the street. I come home from traveling and I get an email. I am concerned that people on this board are making decisions like this. I have lived in Union County for 8 years. We moved here because of how great the schools are. Those guys do a lot and they deserve a lot. This is over \$16? I have a problem with your thought process here. How are you helping me in the future when my kids are going to be raised up here? They are going to move to another Town because it's not going to be about schools. It's going to be about who has the best fire department. If these guys have a level 4 rating I am asking you to take a step backwards here. You can't make decisions like this and be successful. I read this in one email and I could not comprehend what I was reading. There are so many facts going around here. You have not done your diligence in providing us the real facts. It concerns me. If you are moving this fast how can this be good for this community? This is a great community. You took an oath and we elected you to do what is right for us. The people coming here represent how we feel about this. If you go ahead and make this move and do what you want for your personal reasons you are setting a precedent for the next 50 years. We are going to see you guys out and we are going to know these are the guys that instead of investing in our fire department we are not in the business now. Let's not get out. \$16 more is not going to break this community. Everyone is talking about they want it. I urge you to really think about what you are doing here. It is not just about the next 5 years. It is about the next 40 years. That is what I am thinking about for my kids.

Mike Calzaretta – chose not to disclose address. As other people have mentioned I don't think you understand the sacrifice that goes into what we do everyday. You say goodbye to your kids, your wife and think nothing will happen. We put our lives in danger everyday to help the people of this community. People are standing here behind us. Look at the turnout. They are here to tell you how they feel. Your job is to stand behind your Town and your people. Let them pick and tell you what they want. I stood here a month ago and was told by Council that we are going to take our time. This is not going to be a quick decision. All of a sudden tables turn. People sitting in front of us right now looking at me right now 6 months ago were fully in support of Providence Fire Department and the municipal fire district. All of a sudden it changes. You owe it to the Town. You owe it to the 48 members that we stand side by side with to tell us why, how, and what is going to happen. I have never heard a taxpayer say they want to pay more taxes. You owe it to us for the 50 years of service the department has put in. What do you want your legacy to be?

Kenny Schott – Chief of Providence Volunteer Fire Department. Ever since August 10th when I took office as Chief of Providence I was interviewed for all of my goals and intentions. I told the Board then I will do anything I can to protect each and every citizen in this Town and community. That is what I am here to do. Ever since this fire study came back ... You pay \$10,000 for a study to tell you that you are underfunding the fire department. We have been screaming that for years but you don't listen. You say you are not fire experts. We are. We have told you we need more funding. There have been some questions raised about Providence's reserve funds and why we don't have any. Ever since 2004 Providence has staffed that station with increased staffing at the station. We didn't build a big station or buy fancy trucks. We staffed the station with people to protect each and every one of you 24/7. We are asking for our funds so we can keep staffing our station and keep supporting this community. Yes, we have goals of increasing our staff. You want a 10 year plan. We are trying to work on it in writing for you. We can't work on it when we are having to stand up here and do this. We can't do it when we are doing everything else. Providence has always said we are willing to do what is best for the community and best for the citizens. Each and everyone one of you say this is all a financial issue. Where is your public service, your protection? We have never said 100% we would not merge. What we said is to know the facts and to push a merger within 2 months is absolutely ridiculous.

Item No. 4. Council Discussion on Fire Service.

Councilwoman Hadley – I am taken aback from all of the emotion. I think it is incredible to see the support of your fire department. One of the questions I put here is...What was spent out of the budget is fire? I think it was 95%. That is true. It is 95% of the ad valorem. It is actually 53% of the total revenue. I keep making that distinction because I feel like it is necessary for total transparency. I have been telling previous Council and this Council when I ran for this position and I went door to door my main thing was the current situation of the fire district and it being within a quarter of a mile from Hemby Road. I have been telling the previous Council and this Council the people don't mind paying a little bit more. Thank you for validating what I have been saying for three and a half years. Why are we doing this after six weeks of negotiations? Why are we rushing into this resolution that could have unintended consequences that could hand over the keys? I personally think that we do need to disseminate more information and in a much more concise and transparent way. In other words consequences of each option 1, 2 and 3. I think it should be held in a public hearing with lots of input and building up to the public hearing. I can assure you that when the vote goes tonight I have heard your voice.

Councilwoman Harrison – I also thank everyone for coming out. I took a lot of notes. I am really happy whether it is \$16 or \$50 or \$40 you are all willing to raise your taxes. I live on the southern portion of Weddington so I went and talked to a couple of people to see how they felt. There is a couple out there that I am trying to work with to get them financial support. They live in a home that has no air conditioning and no air conditioning unit. They live in a home that has no furnace. They have a wood burning stove. They are in their 80s. He still cuts his lawn. I asked them how they are doing. They said with the 11% increase for Union County this is tough on me. I said people keep saying this is just a couple of pizzas. He said he doesn't get to go out and have pizza. There are some financial ways I am trying to work with the County with some subsidies. You have to understand there are people in this Town on a fixed income that between Union County and us can not afford to pay those kind of taxes. I have heard a lot about public safety. There are all kinds and forms of public safety. Back in the summer the people off of Antioch Church Road came in front of us because we were having a public hearing because of a

new development going on. Each and every one of them said “raise taxes up \$100 and pay \$1 million to fix Antioch Church Road. It is extremely difficult and dangerous for anyone trying to make a left or right hand turn out of their development.” They too will pay \$100 to widen Providence Road. Now we are up to \$300. We can’t afford to widen Providence Road or widen Antioch Church Road. I keep hearing about how we are not communicating. I can go into a lot of detail. I voted for the municipal fire district. On January 9, 2012, our former Mayor said “We got to do this and do it in 6 months.” Nobody protested yet I got 150 emails saying “Don’t do it. We should vote for it. We should be the ones to say whether we should do it.” We are getting the opposite now and I am getting as many emails about “don’t do it”. It’s not like we are doing anything different than was done 2 years ago. We are trying to look at all of the data and listen to all of the people. Kenny, I am not singling you out. You said \$10,000 Wow what could you do with it. The additional \$26,000 that we have to pay in legal fees because the postponement of a lease agreement and closing of the fire station we pay \$38,000 in legal fees. I asked if there were grants; you said no one asked. I asked that question. I gave a lot of different suggestions about getting fundraising. How many people have written a check to Providence as a donation? You want to do the \$16 then give it to Providence. I went to the March 18, 2011 minutes that was at a retreat for the former Council where Jack said “If we don’t get funding we are going to go out of business in 2013.” Everyone was upset with that. There was other planning that was done in May. A new council came in and the decision was a new municipal fire district I was asked to trust Councilwoman Hadley and the Mayor. I did that. I think we hurried and we did not look at all of the consequences of a small town taking over trying to run a fire department. I said this is in September. I am saying it now. It is very hard to sustain it. When you talk about fund balance Jack in a presentation said if we get 3.6, which is what the rate is for Providence, we will have enough money to put in our fund balance. And yet, that is not the case. What is the \$ amount? Does it become 4.5 or 6 cents? I hear that they still want to meet and discuss. I sat in this room with you on Friday. I did not get that impression that you wanted to continue any discussions. We could have a vibrant, sustainable, best of service and best of class fire department if it was a Western Union fire department. I heard the gentleman that was the fire fighter for 10 years and he is from Fort Mill. Wesley Chapel and Stallings (ISO 5 rating) have professional fire fighters from Charlotte, Fort Mill, Rock Hill, Monroe, Wingate and Concord. Whether it is Providence or Wesley Chapel or Stallings, all of our fire fighters are wonderful. I have always said that. If there is a fire, feet don’t fail me now. I am running in the opposite direction. These men and women run into the fire. Think about 9/11. For me it does come down to what is the most viable option that is sustainable. I heard the last gentleman say we need something sustainable. Yes we do. Are you willing to put more money into your fire department and in two years have them come back and say well we need a truck or this or that? I’m looking and going when do I get another call and another rally that if we don’t get more money “we are going to throw the keys on the table,” which is a direct quote from May of 2011, and we will have to walk away. That is not giving public safety the right and the ability to maintain itself. That is what I am concerned with. I am not for or against any. I resent when it has to be an us or a them. I heard the word brotherhood of fire fighters but I guess that is not the case. I want to preserve the history of Providence but I also don’t want to dis Stallings and Wesley Chapel.

Mayor Pro-Tem Titherington – It is important that everybody realize that we do have three wonderful departments. They do a tremendous job for us. Providence services about 65% of the Town, Stallings services part and Wesley Chapel. As you talk to the residents of the Town of Weddington they are all very pleased. Realize they are backing each other up. If there is an issue in this section, you have Wesley Chapel. These folks all work together. If you look at the total general fund that we bring in and if you add the police in – it’s about 62% -63% of our total budget goes to public safety. Our budget in 2016 fire expense based off of the latest information

is going to be \$923,608. That is what we have budgeted. I have talked to the Chiefs and the Council and they all agree. We approve \$100,000 out of that savings fund. To us that has to be looked at. That is an ongoing expense to replace your equipment. That \$923,608 incorporates that. If you were to look at that, our Town has a \$2.1 billion tax base. That is what all the homes in the Town of Weddington represent. We bring in \$1.8 million. All of this will be on the website. The scary part for us are the two unknown parts when we go through the process. Right now there was an analysis done to run the Town takes about 1.65 off that report. If you convert that \$923,608 to a tax rate, that is 4.6. I thought it was very helpful to have the open house Sunday. Jack said the average in the County is 4.2; we are budgeted to spend 4.6 this coming fiscal year. The Town is spending your money in the area that it needs to be. If you take that 4.6 and we add that 1.65 to run everything else including the deputies you see here that is 6.25 cents. The tax rate is 5.2. We are upside down when you look at it from that perspective. We are going into our rainy day reserve fund. That is the concern. You can only draw down your savings account towards 0. Now the options do become – do we take our taxes up? That one penny is not \$16 per house. On a \$400,000 home that is \$40. We are trying to put this in easier format. Leslie would tell you the way you have to run your balance sheet through county government is not GAAP accounting. The numbers are significant. It is a serious issue. This is not a takeover. Thank you for your time.

Councilman Smith – I was around and involved with the fire service. One of the things that concerned me was it did seem rushed. I didn't see any information supporting the fact that why it was good and how it would benefit us. I went out and I interviewed and I did my homework for the next several years. This is not a conclusion I came to lightly. This has been a long road for me. I was a fire fighter and I was a police officer for 33 years as a career in the emergency services. I am very passionate about public safety. We are not doing anything that would put this Town at risk. I have spent my life in public safety. I continue to do that now. Your comments are very important. I encourage you to continue to come out and tell us what you think. We are trying to move forward with the most effective public safety program.

Mayor Deter – Thank you all for coming out and remaining calm during your presentation. I understand. I live over in the part of town that was covered by Wesley Chapel. It has been said over and over again this has nothing to do with the quality of service. We are blessed to have three very strong, well trained, and dedicated fire departments service this Town. Why are we giving a fire station to Wesley Chapel? Why are we taking on their debt when we don't have any debt? If you think about it, if we do a consolidation, the us and them at the end of the day is us. We are still thinking in terms of two different companies. When you step back look at this holistically. We are focusing on two local fire departments. We see a vision of two strong, robust and regional fire departments. That is where I see our vision. We are not down on Providence Fire Department. They run very tight budgets. The problem is their revenue base has shrunk over the years. Charlotte has grown and they lost some area. That is the crux of the problem. The Town is looking at we don't feel we can make that up. I don't think we will lose quality. We have quality in all three fire departments. There is a big concern about insurance rates going up to a 9. I don't know how we can assure that. I appreciate everyone coming and the input.

Town Attorney Fox – It is my opinion Councilwoman Hadley has no financial interest in Providence Volunteer Fire Department. Under N.C. Law if you do not have a financial interest then Councilwoman Hadley has to participate in the vote as a part of your duty as an elected official.

Item No. 5. Review and Consideration of Motion to Direct Attorney to Draft Resolution Regarding Fire Service.

Town Attorney Fox will be drafting a resolution. The crux of the resolution is to dissolve the fire service district and move the taxing authority back to the County.

Councilwomen Hadley – Under any and all circumstances? The resolution is full autonomy to the County?

Councilman Smith – These are private companies. The County is the taxing authority. People are under the assumption that the County has total control over these companies and they don't. The fire chief has control over the fire company. They will decide how much staffing is there. The County doesn't indicate that. They do have some say.

Town Attorney Fox – In 2012, the former Council asked me to develop a resolution. At that time the resolution was to withdraw the consent that the former Council in 2003 had given to Union County for the Providence, Stalling and Wesley Chapel Volunteer Fire Departments to be included as a corporate territory of Weddington within the districts that were created. In 2012 in order to create a municipal fire service district, the council sought to withdraw that and revoke that approval to put the control back into the City for incorporated territory. I would assume then at this point there are a couple of things on the table. One, review the options that have been identified in the McGrath study - one of which was possible consolidation of the Wesley Chapel and Providence Volunteer Fire Departments. I would assume the action to deal with Union County would not affect that one way or the other. The other thing I heard is to get the Town out of the fire protection service business and put that back in Union County's control as was the case prior to 2012. I would assume the resolution would express an intent of this body that it would consent to Union County for Union County to include the incorporated territory within Weddington that is serviced by Stallings, Wesley Chapel and Providence back into the fire districts that have been created in Union County.

Councilwomen Hadley – Has the County been asked or could there be a provision in the resolution that the County accept the Weddington district as opposed to having the autonomy part? I am fearful of putting the lines back where they were. It was a very simple thing. The line in 2011 obviously did not serve public safety. The least resistance would have been for the County to have moved those lines but they did not. Has the County even been asked specifically to take the Weddington district as it is and have them to be the taxing authority of that district?

Mayor Deter – We met with the County to see what the implications and issues would be. They would not make a definitive answer. They did indicate the Town had to first make a decision. If the Town makes that decision then we would send that resolution to the County Commissioners. They would then act on that favorably or unfavorably. They would then direct the Union County staff to assist to get that done.

Town Attorney Fox - What I hear is Councilwoman Hadley is asking if the resolution incorporated an expression from the Town the way the district is maintained and what is created by Union County.

Mayor Deter – We did not talk specifically on the County but the general idea is no.

Councilwoman Harrison – We said specifically we do not want to have the lines moved.

Mayor Deter – The County is receptive under a combined approach. It is paramount the lines can't change. The premise we had was we don't want fire lines going back to where they were. Because we got indications from both fire departments that they were interested in pursuing this, that is the approach we took with the County. We asked "What are the issues?" They said it was a timing thing to truly capture consolidation savings you can't do it as two stand alone fire districts. We got that from Jeff Yates. He said as two separate entities you can't capture the savings.

Town Attorney Fox – It sounds like everybody is in agreement that there was to be a consolidation to the departments. The lines are not an issue and they will be preserved. That will be a mandate. However, if consolidation does not occur then you still have 2 or 3 service providers and there the language will be the Town seeks and encourages the County to preserve the existing lines.

Mayor Pro-Tem Titherington – From my perspective it is a mandate on both. If they choose not to come together then it still needs to be a mandate on those lines.

Town Attorney Fox – What you will be doing is authorizing by your consent to put Providence, Stallings and Wesley Chapel back into fire department districts as created by the County. The question is when they do that do they preserve the lines that we currently have. It is a statement of intent and desire is what a resolution is. It is not final. Dialogue can still go on about consolidation.

Town Attorney Fox – The Town intends to cease providing municipal fire services. Tentative to that will be the equivalent fire tax incorporated in tax rates will be possibly changed. You are asking the County that contingent upon a consolidated fire service model with the consolidation of Wesley Chapel and Providence that the County will recognize the existing lines that exist within the Weddington municipal district and the Town will consent to the inclusion of the incorporated territory back into the County.

Councilwoman Hadley – The County knows they need to improve their model for fire. It is my opinion we would be better served to slow down the process and work with the County as far as communicating with them whatever options they are looking at instead of rushing to judgment.

Councilman Smith moved to direct the Town Attorney to draft a resolution regarding the fire service.

AYES: Councilmembers Smith, Harrison and Mayor Pro Tem Titherington
NAYS Councilmember Hadley

Item No. 6. Adjournment. A motion was made to adjourn the February 25, 2015 Town Council Meeting. All were in favor, with votes recorded as follows:

AYES: Councilmembers Smith, Hadley, Harrison and Mayor Pro Tem Titherington

The meeting adjourned at 9:41 p.m.

Bill Deter, Mayor

Attest by: Peggy Piontek, Town Clerk

Transcribed by: Tonya M. Goodson