

**TOWN OF WEDDINGTON
SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, MAY 6, 2013 – 6:00 P.M.
MINUTES**

The Town Council of the Town of Weddington, North Carolina, met in a Special Meeting at the Weddington Town Hall, 1924 Weddington Road, Weddington, NC 28104 on May 6, 2013, with Mayor Walker F. Davidson presiding.

Present: Mayor Walker F. Davidson, Mayor Pro Tem Daniel Barry, Councilmembers Barbara Harrison, Werner Thomisser and Pamela Hadley, Finance Officer Leslie Gaylord and Town Administrator Amy S. McCollum

Absent: None

Visitors: Bill Price, Judy Johnston, Jack Parks, Steven McClendon, Steve Carow and Stephanie Belcher

Item No. 1. Open the Meeting. Mayor Walker F. Davidson called the May 6, 2013 Special Town Council Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. There was a quorum.

Item No. 2. Presentation by Wesley Chapel VFD. Chief Steven McClendon reviewed Wesley Chapel VFD's 2012 Annual Report with the Town Council. He discussed the following items that were in the report:

- Mission Statement and Core Values
- Message from the Chief
- History of the Organization
- Department Information and Service District Area
- Geographical Information
- Operating Budget for 2012 was \$1,466,826 and an explanation of how those funds were received
- Chart of 10-year call volume showing the expansion of the organization and how calls have increased
- Chief Officers and Command Staff
- Accomplishments
- Community and Public Service Work
- Community Service Events
- Responded to 1,360 Calls for Service
- Fact Sheet and Description of Apparatus for Station 26
- Fact Sheet and Description of Apparatus for Station 31
- Information on Service Delivery Models
- Focus for 2013

Chief McClendon - One of the things I spent a lot of time on in 2012 was evaluating and analyzing our response times and trying to improve those. We took our comparison data from January 1, 2011 – December 31, 2011 and broke it down by call to dispatch, call to en-route, call to arrival and travel time. We took a whole year's numbers and ran a 90% percentile average. These were raw data that came from CCOM. Our travel time was 6 minutes and 24 seconds during our paid staffed hours and 9 minutes and 59 seconds during our volunteer hours. This is for all emergency calls within the fire district. Immediately I noticed there is a difference between the daytime hours and the volunteer duty schedule

hours. What we started doing over the course of 2012 was we slowly started trying different programs and adopting new things. We were able to lower that response time nearly 2 ½ minutes during the last percentage of the year from August 1, 2012 to December 1, 2012. We are very proud of that and we think the service level has improved drastically. An integral part of how we lowered our response time over the past year was that we formulated a new program. Typically in years past during the non-staffed hours our volunteers would respond from their house. There was not a designated sign up for them to be at the station. In October we made a change where volunteers had the opportunity to sign up at the station as well as being able to have service logs to sign up at their house. We have a mixture and a combination of both. That has helped lower our response time nearly 2 ½ minutes and also keep our volunteer program strong and thriving.

Councilwoman Hadley - What is your goal for staffing?

Chief McClendon - Our staffing model now consists of six people during the day - three at each station - which are paid. Our volunteer duty schedule offers two shifts at each station as well as two on call shifts. There is the possibility to have six during the day and six at night. At night we have two positions at each station as well two on call positions. On call positions is essentially the same program as we have done in years past where designated members sign up to respond from their homes and those are volunteers. They are not paid an hourly rate. But we do compensate for a call or to sign up for the shift. One of the things we are thinking about doing in 2013 is adding an Associate Membership Program. Traditionally to be a member of our organization you had to reside in our fire district or in close proximity of our district. We want to continue to build our volunteer force and continue to add to our volunteer duty shift programs. What we have done is develop a program that is still in the planning stages to where if members that live in various areas of the county want to volunteer we would allow them to volunteer for exchange of a commitment that they will help so many days per month for the volunteer program.

Councilwoman Hadley – How do you operate the two stations? Are they operated independently of one another?

Chief McClendon – No, Station 26 is chartered as the main station and Station 31 is considered a substation. The State says that you have to have so many personnel for a main station and so many for a substation and have certain pieces of apparatus. In that aspect they are independent but from a management and a resource standpoint they are one. One of the things that I would like to talk about is that last year we had some difficulties with the contracts and we had some discrepancies with some maps in different areas. Chief Dye, Ms. Hadley and I worked together to get some of those issues addressed. One of the things that I noticed was the Town of Weddington still does not contract with the closest fire department for service. There are still areas where fire stations are over a mile closer. That is one thing that I would like to point out if the Council would consider as we move forward in the future. Mayor Davidson, when we had our meeting last year in the conference room one of the things that you mentioned to me was there was nothing we could do about it now because the contracts were already signed but the Council was open to hear discussions in the future. I would like to point out that we have been evaluating our operations. I have made a big interest to make sure that our organization is becoming more transparent. We are interested in continuing our efforts with the Town of Weddington but we also want to make sure that all the citizens are being treated equally and being served in the intentions that the Council passed a resolution on. Right now the data does not prove that and there are discrepancies with the maps. I would like to get that back on the table for a future time.

Mayor Davidson - Have you submitted your budget request?

Chief McClendon – For Weddington, yes. As far as the overall budget, no. I wanted to come to the Council and have the discussion. I do not think it is right for me to come to the Council and demand or

want \$80,000. I think what has been published in minutes as well as discussions as the service areas are added or deleted, the contract prices will change. Last year after the contract was approved, we had a significant change in our area. We took a large percentage of the area that was originally assigned to the Stallings VFD and that was after the contract had been approved by the Council and we had already signed the contract. I think that was because the initial maps were not right and Ms. Hadley identified that and came back to me. She asked me if I was going to come back and ask for more money. I told her no. I told her that this year we would agree to this; it was a good faith effort that Ms. Hadley told me that the Council would entertain going back through and making sure that all the contracts were being treated equally.

Councilwoman Hadley – It is my intention to point out exactly what you are talking about out for discussion. Is there any way that you can break down your calls just for Weddington?

Chief McClendon - We do not have the ability to do that in house however CCOM does have the ability through their coding to be able to pull out the calls that are strictly in Weddington. I can make that request. It will be at their will and timeline when they will get us that data.

Councilwoman Hadley – Can you and I work on that and possibly set up something quarterly so we could see what the calls into Weddington are?

Councilwoman Harrison – What is your tax rate?

Chief McClendon - 2.41 cents.

Councilwoman Harrison - Did that go up?

Chief McClendon – Yes, last year. We have requested a slight increase but we do not know what that will be yet. Our total request was roughly \$150,000 that goes to cover our new air packs as well as we requested some additional funding for staffing. There has been some new construction and we are not sure how that comes out but I would say it would be probably a tenth of a cent or less.

Councilwoman Harrison - You have a loan on both stations. Are there any plans to become debt free?

Chief McClendon – That is correct. We are not looking to incur any more debt. Station 31 has six more payments on it until we have that paid off.

Councilmember Thomisser - How long of a period did you take the debt out for Station 26?

Chief McClendon - Station 31 was 15 years and Station 26 was 20 years.

Councilmember Thomisser - The statement you made about the closest station - how much of a problem is this? Is it 10% of your area?

Chief McClendon - I do not know the percentage of the area. One of the things for going to the Municipal Service Model was that you wanted to improve the level of service and you wanted the closest fire department to respond to each house. Through that process and last year's contract negotiation, we failed to do that in certain areas. If we want to continue to fulfill the overall obligation of what I believe was the intention of the Council, I would like to have those discussions and look at the map and try to come up with areas that all the citizens of Weddington are serviced by the closest fire department.

Councilwoman Hadley - We have made changes after the contract was signed but I know what he is talking about. I want to show you on a map. We are basically talking about Walden on Providence and a few parcels in Stallings.

Chief McClendon - Probably 90% of the Potter Road corridor and Walden on Providence.

Mayor Davidson – The contracts are perpetual. I think there is an agreement that Councilwoman Hadley will look at this map prior to the budget.

Councilwoman Hadley advised yes.

Councilmember Thomisser - People should be paid for what they do and if there is an area that is being covered and one of our fire departments is not getting paid for it that is not good.

Councilwoman Hadley - Absolutely.

Item No. 3. Review and Discussion of Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2013-2014. Finance Officer Leslie Gaylord discussed the proposed budget with the Town Council. She stated, “Councilwoman Hadley asked me to come up with a revenue balanced budget. It looks like based on the items that we are talking about that a 6 cents budget would be appropriate. That is what is prepared here just for discussion purposes. On the last page are all of the items up for discussion. If they are all approved we would be in a deficit of \$137,000 and that varies depending on what we decide on for the funding of the Providence VFD. I have it as a one year repayment on a loan. That is the \$80,000 that is highlighted.”

Items discussed by Council:

- Council asked that the title on the budget of Fire Department Subsidies be changed to Fire Service.
- Finance Officer Gaylord advised that there is a \$31,000 projected surplus for this year. Part of the surplus is \$9,000 for expenses due to the roundabout that has not occurred yet.
- Deputy increase of \$6,388 due to personnel and benefits costs.
- Request from Turning Point for \$1,000. Finance Officer Gaylord advised that the Town does not typically give to non-profit organizations.
- The process for how the Town receives Motor Vehicle Taxes is changing.
- Councilmember Thomisser requested to increase the landscaping maintenance from \$1,000 to \$10,000 because there was additional work that needed to be completed. Mayor Davidson suggested taking the money out of Rea Road for this item. Councilwoman Harrison advised that they were considering having our current landscaper plant knock out roses in the remaining areas. Mayor Pro Tem Barry recommended that part of the surplus from this year’s budget be used for the remaining landscaping of the medians and be included in the May budget amendment for FY2013.
- Councilwoman Harrison questioned when NCDOT was going to transplant the lilies near the Weddington Church Road area and asked that Town Planner Cook discuss with NCDOT.
- Finance Officer Gaylord will prepare a budget amendment for FY2013 the Council’s consideration at their May meeting.
- Finance Officer Gaylord advised that she was not sure if the \$220,000 for Providence VFD’s rear building renovation was going to be partially in this year’s budget and partially in next year’s budget. There was discussion that the work would be done in June.
- Keep Urban Forester expenditure in the budget.

- Council asked that the amount that was in the budget for staff salaries last year be put in the budget for a placeholder and for the Town Council to discuss further in Closed Session on Monday night and it may be adjusted after that meeting.
- Councilwoman Harrison asked that \$3,000 be added to Council salaries to be discussed Monday night as well.
- Council discussed the costs for new Council chairs. Councilwoman Hadley advised that seven chairs would be needed and requested up to \$900 per chair and asked that the amount be \$6,300 in the budget. Mayor Pro Tem Barry thought the amount was high. Councilwoman Harrison recommended \$35,000 in the budget for painting, fixing the floors and purchasing new Council Chairs. Finance Officer Gaylord will also maintain the \$10,000 for ongoing maintenance of the Town Hall and Council asked for a Fund Balance assignment of \$15,000 for future Town Hall capital expenditures.
- Consider having a capital item for future sidewalk maintenance.

Mayor Pro Tem Barry asked that \$752,623 be put under operations for Fire Service and \$80,000 for capital costs. He stated, "That amount is assuming that we are borrowing \$750,000. Just say the building is \$1,000,000 and we use \$250,000 of our surplus. We enter into an agreement with them to fund the balance of the loan whether we do it or they do it. We would end up with the asset at the end of the loan."

Councilwoman Harrison – What if the appraisal is higher than what we are actually paying them on the loan?

Mayor Pro Tem Barry - You are buying in its current condition.

It was advised that the Providence VFD building is worth \$1,025,000 based on a recent appraisal.

Mayor Davidson - That is market value. The market is made up of buyers and sellers. I am not sure it is worth \$1,000,000 where somebody is going to go in there and not be able to use the building and there is going to be a lease in perpetuity for zero dollars. The appraisal price really does not matter here. If they get a million dollars on their own they can use that to renovate the building. We do not need to get involved. One million dollars on the open market to be able to not use the building for zero dollars in rent – that is the objection that I have in using the appraisal.

Councilwoman Harrison - I understand that but I am not where you are. We have not gone into how we are going to structure that contract for the money that we are going to spend. I am looking at fair market value.

Mayor Davidson - You own the building and you need revenue for a renovation to stay in business. You have no other means of generating revenue for your renovation so what do you do - you sell equity, right? A market appraisal of \$1.1 million for the property would assume that a person is going to get it and get full control over it and that the tenants are leaving. If you have less than full control the market value goes down because they are going to stay in there and run the place and we are going to charge them zero rent.

Mayor Pro Tem Barry – You want to discount the value?

Mayor Davidson – Yes, it is not \$1 million. If they put a sign in the yard and said here are our terms of our agreement, we are staying here and we are not paying you rent – give us \$1 million. Then they would probably say it is worth less than \$1 million dollars.

Mayor Pro Tem Barry - What do you think it is worth?

Mayor Davidson – Something less than \$1 million. I like the \$700,000 number.

Council asked to add a capital reserve fund for Fire Service in the amount of \$100,000.

Mayor Pro Tem Barry asked to leave the meeting and be excused. All were in favor, with votes recorded as follows:

AYES: Councilmembers Thomisser, Hadley, Harrison and Mayor Pro Tem Barry
NAYS: None

Councilwoman Harrison asked for the following relative to events for the Town:

- Easter Egg Hunt - \$500.00
- Festival - \$5,000 since it is the Town's 30th Anniversary
- Tree Lighting - \$6,240.00
- Litter Sweep - \$250.00
- Historic and Meetings with Local Groups - \$200.00

Councilwoman Harrison also asked that the title be changed to Events instead of Parks and Recreation.

Finance Officer Gaylord advised that the budget proposed has a \$150,000 shortfall and an assignment for capital reserves in the amount of \$115,000 (\$100,000 for Fire Service and \$15,000 for the Town Hall).

Mayor Davidson - Can you take this capital spending program and extend it out to tell us when we will run out of money?

Finance Officer Gaylord advised that she will do that.

Item No. 4. Adjournment. Councilwoman Harrison moved to adjourn the May 6, 2013 Special Town Council Meeting. All were in favor, with votes recorded as follows:

AYES: Councilmembers Thomisser, Hadley, Harrison and Mayor Pro Tem Barry
NAYS: None

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Walker F. Davidson, Mayor

Attest:

Amy S. McCollum, Town Clerk