
**TOWN OF WENTWORTH
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
M I N U T E S
October 2, 2007
7:00 P.M.**

The Wentworth Town Council held their regular monthly meeting in the National Guard Armory on **Tuesday, October 2, 2007, at 7:00 p.m.**

Council members present: Mayor Dennis Paschal, Councilwoman Iris Powell, Councilman Nathan Hendren, and Councilman Robert Aswell

Council members absent: Mayor Pro Tem Evelyn Conner

A quorum was present.

Others Present: Brenda Ward, Town Administrator / Town Clerk, and Fred Baggett, Town Attorney

Article I. Call to Order

Mayor Paschal called the meeting to order.

Article II. Invocation: Councilman Nathan Hendren gave the Invocation.

Article III. Discussion / Revision / and Adoption of Agenda

A. Requests and Petitions of Citizens

Mayor Paschal reviewed the Speaker Register and noted that **Beverly Wilcox** would like to address Council, but not regarding a particular agenda item.

Mayor Paschal made a motion, *“That we amend the Agenda to add Beverly Wilcox under Requests and Petitions of Citizens and approve the Agenda as amended.”*

Councilman Hendren seconded the motion. There was no discussion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

Article IV. Approval of Town Council Meeting Minutes for September 4, 2007.

Councilwoman Iris Powell made a motion to, *“accept them as written.”* **Councilman Aswell** seconded the motion. There was no discussion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

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Article V. PUBLIC HEARING

- A. Consideration of Revisions to the Town of Wentworth Planning and Zoning Ordinances: To consider adoption of definitions and new zoning districts with design standards for Wentworth's Central Business District and to make necessary revisions to incorporate said changes. This includes additions and revisions to Chapter I - Definitions, and Chapter II – Zoning.**

- Hanna Cockburn, Senior Planner, Piedmont Triad Council of Governments

Mayor Paschal noted that Ms. Cockburn was not present and made a motion to, "*Table the Public Hearing until the next council meeting on Thursday, November 8th, 2007.*" (**Note:** Let the record show that the reason Ms. Cockburn was not present at the meeting was because the Reidsville Review failed to run the Public Notice for the hearing in the newspaper, and therefore Council could not consider the matter.)

Councilman Hendren seconded the motion. There was no discussion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

Article VI. OLD BUSINESS (There was no old business for discussion.)

Article VII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Consideration of Request for the North Carolina Department of Transportation to Develop a Comprehensive Transportation Plan for the Town of Wentworth**

- Hanna Cockburn, Piedmont Triad Council of Governments

Mayor Paschal noted that since Ms. Cockburn was not present, he would like to table this item also.

The **Town Clerk** suggested that Ms. Cockburn, "...may want Council to go ahead and act on this item, since the RTPO (Rural Triad Planning Organization) will be meeting next week to consider the request."

Mayor Paschal said he would, "...like to talk to her about it some...I just feel like if it is going to be a comprehensive transportation plan for the Town of Wentworth, then we ought to be in on it as far as putting it together."

Councilman Hendren made a motion, "to table this until Dennis has a chance to talk to Hanna...until the November 8th Town Council Meeting."

Councilman Aswell seconded the motion. There was no discussion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

Article VII. NEW BUSINESS . . . Continued

B. Consideration of Hiring Surveyor to Establish Property Lines for Clearing of Town Property

Mayor Paschal advised Council, "Robert (Councilman Aswell) and I went to the property and looked around. You have some big trees down on the left side if you're facing the lot. The line is not clearly marked on the backside, so we can't tell where our line is. We would like to get a surveyor in there to run that back line...the corners down the side to the back line."

Councilwoman Powell commented that she thought the lines would have already been marked. **Mayor Paschal** explained that the survey was done "a long time ago...and the flags are gone now."

Mayor Paschal then made a motion, "*That we hire a surveyor to establish the property lines along the north, south, and western borders of the Town property.*"

Councilman Hendren seconded the motion. There was no discussion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

C. Approval of Letter in Support of Public Safety Interoperable Communications Grant for the Purchase of Portable Radios for Responders in the Rockingham County Region

Mayor Paschal asked the Town Administrator if she would like to comment on this item.

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Ms. Ward said that **Steve Hale, Rockingham County EMS Director**, called the Town Hall and followed up the call with an email, "...which was included in your packet, and is self-explanatory. They are trying to secure a grant so they can buy more radios for their responders, to improve their communication and response time. As the letter says, we are just showing our support and echoing the need for the radios in our county. Hopefully, this will have a positive impact on the award of the grant to EMS."

Ms. Ward said **Mr. Hale** made it clear, "...that this is not committing the Town to any matching funds...it's just a letter of support."

Councilman Hendren made a motion, *"That we approve the letter in support of the Public Safety Interoperable Communications Grant for the Purchase of Portable Radios for Responders in the Rockingham County Region."*

Councilwoman Powell seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

D. Consideration of Funding Request from Rockingham County Sheriff's Department to Assist in Training for Special Response Team and to Purchase Equipment

- **Deputy Clarence Cheshire; Captain Perry Brookshire**

Mayor Paschal invited **Deputy Cheshire** to the podium to discuss the Sheriff's request for funding.

Deputy Cheshire commented that if everyone reads the news or watches television, they are aware of, "...everything that happens in our schools every day. Columbine is still a bad memory for everybody...the Amish school in Pennsylvania, and the latest incident at Virginia Tech. It seems to me that these things are getting closer to us and thankfully, we haven't had to deal with it yet, but our day is coming. We can't avoid it or stop it. Our SRT (Special Response Team) are some of the most highly trained that I know of...even compared to Greensboro, Winston-Salem or anywhere. Considering our size, we have some really good guys on the team, and smart, too. **Captain Brookshire** is the ranking officer on the Team."

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Deputy Cheshire continued, “We all know how it is with money...and the County does the best they can...money comes and goes very quickly. Some of the training SRT deserves to get and needs to get will sometimes get passed over because maybe a vehicle or something major is needed right away, and training has to be put on the back burner.”

“But in situations concerning institutions like a college and schools...and in our area we have 3 schools and the community college...we hope it doesn’t happen, but if it ever did—an emergency or some tragedy within one of these institutions, we need to have the guys respond who are trained to handle the situation.”

Deputy Cheshire commented that the source of their training is at the Blackwater facility, “...which is what the requested funding would cover.” He added, “I know Blackwater has been the name in the news lately, concerning their contract with the government over in Iraq. But, keep in mind that the Blackwater we mention refers to the actual *facilities* where training is conducted—not the Blackwater personnel involved in the Iraq incident.”

Deputy Cheshire referred Council to the information he provided in their Agenda packets. “You will see that their facilities can be set up to mimic various buildings—schools, hospitals, and even the entire Town of Wentworth if we needed to do that.”

“Of course,” **Deputy Cheshire** continued, “To use such a facility and have it set up for real life scenarios, is not cheap. Even though Sheriff Page does well with the amount of money he receives from the County Commissioners, it comes and goes very quickly, and it leaves us short some of the time. I’m not saying that Wentworth has plenty of money, but I am saying that if you look at the situation in your town—the three schools and the Community College, it is a good chance something could happen here. It may not, but we don’t want to sit back and not get the proper training or not be prepared should something happen.”

“The amount of money we are requesting is \$8,000 and that is to cover the use of the Blackwater facilities and room and board for the guys who will be in training. Also, we will use some of the money to purchase two Tasers for the SRT Team. The Tasers will be equipped with video cameras. That way, if you do have to use them, you have documentation on exactly what happened, and can back up your reasons as to why it was necessary to use the Tasers.”

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Deputy Cheshire said the Tasers are expensive—about \$1300 each. He said he thinks it is important to be prepared to meet situations head on, and that the best way to do that is to train and prepare the personnel who are responsible for keeping the schools safe.

Deputy Cheshire introduced **Captain Perry Brookshire** for additional comments, and said he would be happy to answer any questions Council might have.

Captain Brookshire said he would like to thank the Town of Wentworth for, "...assisting us last year in going to Blackwater. The benefit the SRT Team was able to get from that was tremendous. The biggest thing is that Blackwater has a 4100 square foot multi-level house that you can shoot in 360 degrees. A person doesn't realize how important that is, to see what our guys will do if someone is standing right beside them with a rifle. We have to know, when the time comes that they are in a situation like that, how they will respond. In June of last year, we had one of our own to get shot in serving a warrant. After that, we went to Blackwater for the training in September and we got to see how our guys responded, as they were put in the same situation in training, with their buddies right beside of them. Again, the thing about this facility is all the different scenarios they can set up. Last year we bought a door package where you can actually do the breaching on the doors, as you can't practice that everywhere."

Captain Brookshire continued, "We are also looking for an urban training range this year. That will help us...as Deputy Cheshire said, they have a facility set up as a school. We have worked with RCC (Rockingham Community College) to look at their plan in case of an act or shooter there. We just trained for three days last month on that...all training is very important, and we certainly appreciate the Town looking at it and I'll be glad to answer any questions."

Councilman Hendren asked, "So, will this training be different from what they received last year?"

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Captain Brookshire replied, "It won't necessarily be one hundred percent different, because part of what we're asking to go to is the same 4100 square foot facility...it's the largest one on the grounds. Those skills are perishable...if you don't practice, you lose them. We are looking at trying to go sometime in the Spring of 2008, and we would be going to the urban training range and we are also looking at possibly trying to get one of the distance ranges for our snipers to fire at. They only have the opportunity here to shoot at a hundred yards at the Eden range."

"Again," **Captain Brookshire** added, "I know Blackwater has been in the news, but we are not being trained by Blackwater personnel. We have one person on our SRT Team, a 22 year veteran of the Army who was in Special Forces for fifteen years. He taught those tactics for all the armed forces at Ft. Bragg, not just the Army, and he goes with us and we do our own instruction. We are not taught by any Blackwater personnel. When we lease the grounds, it is ours."

Councilman Hendren said he was, "glad to hear that." He added, "The news doesn't look good...and if they (Blackwater) are found guilty, the people in the Town of Wentworth aren't going to care if we were just using their (Blackwater) facilities or who trained who, but that does make me feel better knowing that we are going to have somebody from here train our guys."

Captain Brookshire said he understood Councilman Hendren's concern.

Councilwoman Powell said she thought Council should fund the training.

Mayor Paschal asked the Town Clerk how much money is budgeted for Public Safety. **Mrs. Ward** replied, "Only \$4,000 is budgeted under 'Miscellaneous', but more is budgeted in other Public Safety line items, if you want to move funds from one to the other."

Mayor Paschal asked, "So we can approve it and you can move the money around?" **Mrs. Ward** confirmed, "...as long as the money is being moved *within* the Public Safety line items, we can do so without a budget amendment."

Councilman Aswell made a motion, *“To approve the funding request for \$8,000 for the Sheriff’s Department training.”*

Mayor Paschal asked if the request for \$8,000 included the purchase of the Tasers. **Deputy Cheshire** confirmed that the \$8,000 includes the two Tasers.

Mayor Paschal seconded Councilman Aswell’s motion. There was no further discussion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

Article VII. NEW BUSINESS – Continued

E. Consideration of Applicants for Planning Board and Town Committees

Mayor Paschal referenced the applications from various individuals who are interested in serving on Town Committees and the Town Planning Board. He advised that the Town Clerk recently ran another advertisement in the Reidsville Review, and suggested that Council may want to wait and see if other applications come in.

Councilwoman Powell asked why Council could not make a decision on the applications already in hand.

Mayor Paschal said if Council wanted to approve the ones they have, they could, but added, “I have some concern about a couple of them.”

Councilman Aswell made a motion, *“That we table it until the next meeting.”*

Councilwoman Powell asked, “Why do y’all want to keep tabling it?”

Councilman Aswell said he wanted to make some other contacts.

Councilwoman Powell asked, “Why are y’all so slow and dragging your feet? It’s been months now.”

Mayor Paschal seconded the motion and asked for further discussion. There was none. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

Mrs. Ward reminded Council that it would be good to get the appointments taken care of at the November meeting, since December is the Organizational Meeting and reception.

F. Consideration of Annual Performance Evaluation & Recommendation of Personnel Committee Regarding Finance Officer / Deputy Clerk.

Since **Mayor Paschal** and **Mayor Pro Tem Conner** (on vacation) were unable to meet to review the Personnel Evaluation, **Mayor Paschal** made a motion, *“To table that until our November meeting also.”*

Councilman Aswell seconded the motion. There was no discussion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

Article VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mayor Paschal reviewed the Speaker Register and invited **Beverly Wilcox** of NC Highway 65 in Wentworth, to address the Town Council.

Ms. Wilcox said, “I’m really here on a happy note...no Tasers, no gang violence, nothing. For a couple of years now some of us have been talking about having some events that *collect* Wentworth more, that gives us more of a sense of community. We talked about how other communities have five-mile-long yard sales and raise money for whatever cause anybody wants to work for.”

She continued, “So, we have decided to do it. We are going to have, on the first weekend in November (Friday and Saturday) we want to have a “Wentworth Treasures” day along NC 65, which is known to us as Main Street. We have asked folks to join us and do whatever they want...yard sale, bake sale, churches, youth groups, social organizations—whoever wants to join in. (There are) No rules, no sign-up, no real structure, just everyone participating as they can.”

“Mostly I’m just here to pass out some information about this,” **Ms. Wilcox** said. “We will put up some posters and have some press. So, really, I’m only here to ask you folks to join us...if you don’t live on 65, you can come and use somebody else’s yard.”

Mayor Paschal asked about refreshments...**Councilman Hendren** asked about parking...and **Councilman Aswell** said he didn’t think it should be limited to NC 65.

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Ms. Wilcox explained that anyone could participate and park wherever they could find space, but that the group organizing it, due to limited funds, was only able to concentrate on NC 65 as far as flyers, and advertisement was concerned. She said there may be some refreshments, baked goods, or hot dogs...“you never know what people may end up selling.”

The **Town Clerk** suggested this would be a good thing to do again during the week of the Town’s 10th anniversary celebration next summer.

Mayor Paschal thanked Ms. Wilcox for coming and encouraged everyone to come out and see what kind of *treasures* will be available.

The **Town Clerk** advised the Mayor that **Mr. Dave Hokeland** of University Estates arrived late for the meeting, but wanted to address council.”

Mayor Paschal asked Mr. Hokeland to sign the Speaker Register and to indicate what it is he wants to talk about. **Mr. Hokeland** said he would be asking Council to consider lowering the speed limit on his street.

Mr. Hokeland introduced himself to Council and thanked them for allowing him to speak. He said he lives in University Estates on Timberwood Trace and is new to the area.

Mr. Hokeland said that three of his neighbors welcomed his family to the neighborhood and, “...made it clear that there were traffic issues and hazardous driving, especially dangerous for the children and also the elderly. It wasn’t long before I witnessed this to be very true. I contacted the Sheriff’s Department as well as the State Police, **Sgt. Rutledge** here, and we spoke with him for quite a long time. Upon his recommendation that I meet with the Town Council...that’s why I’m here. I also spoke with **Councilman Aswell** about this.”

Mr. Hokeland said Sgt. Rutledge made several suggestions such as a Neighborhood Watch. “But the problem we are faced with on our street,” said **Mr. Hokeland**, “is the 35 mph speed limit by default in the Town of Wentworth as in other municipalities. That may be practical on some streets but it is not prudent or practical on our street and a lot of streets, especially with children and the elderly. Some neighbors say they have been run off the road, even though they are on the side of the road.”

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Mr. Hokeland said he understands, “as Sgt. Rutledge pointed out, that the road is for cars, but it hasn’t been safe for people to walk even on the sides of the road in the grass. There was a vehicular assault, virtually, in my driveway about three weeks after we moved in. Someone tried to run over my neighbor, who had to jump into the back of his pickup truck, and I believe that is going to court.”

Mayor Paschal asked, “So this was intentional?” **Mr. Hokeland** replied, “Yes, and I witnessed it and so did another neighbor.”

Mr. Hokeland continued, “We are trying to make our son aware of the situation on the road, so he can be protected as much as possible, but actually, I think a 20 mile-per-hour speed limit would be prudent in that area...I’m not sure about the actual approach, what the proper channels are, but I am asking for Council’s support in whatever way you can, to bring this into a reasonably safe traffic area...unfortunately, there are some children in adult bodies who drive, and prudence and common sense and responsibility is not part of them...they just didn’t get that somewhere along the line.”

“I think the 20 mile-per-hour speed limit needs to be posted, and they have to know there are consequences. I’m not the only one in the neighborhood who feels this way, I’m just the one who jumped right on it. Ben Dominick, who has lived on that same street for 30 years, had other obligations tonight, but he is concerned about it, as well as the three neighbors who approached me about it before I ever closed.”

“Personally,” said **Mr. Hokeland**, “I don’t have time to get a petition...I don’t think we really have time to wait. As I said, we have had an assault, and the Sheriff’s Department did come out, which sent a little bit of a message, but because the speed limit is 35, they really can’t do anything. I’m thinking 20 (mph)...”

Mayor Paschal said, “But even at that, you’ve still got to catch them. You have to have the Highway Patrol or Sheriff there to catch them going over the speed limit.”

Mr. Hokeland said, “But the law enforcement people’s hands are kind of tied when they don’t have a speed limit other than 35 mph. And the Sheriff’s car doesn’t have radar.

Mayor Paschal asked, “How fast are these guys going?”

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Mr. Hokeland replied, “Well, after the sheriff’s department came down, they were behaving themselves and laying low, but they were probably in excess of 25 (mph). The guy involved in the assault was well over that.”

Mayor Paschal said the Town Council would have to make a request to the Department of Transportation, asking them to take a look at it and consider changing the speed limit to 25. He added, “We could do it for that one particular road, but we wouldn’t want to make it applicable to every road over there, because somebody might complain about that.”

Mayor Paschal asked how many homes were in that area? **Mr. Hokeland** said he would be guessing...“maybe 30 or 35...you turn off Cedar Lane onto Tall Trees, a very short street that T-bones into Timberwood Trace to the right and Kilmer to the left.”

Mr. Hokeland said, “There is a sheriff’s deputy, Sgt. Dean, who lives down there. Before I forget, too, there are black skid marks where someone was burning doughnuts at the end of the cul-de-sac and the Sheriff’s Department is aware of that. As I said, 25 is pushing it, but 35 (mph) is ridiculously high.”

“We can request that something be done on that particular road,” said **Mayor Paschal**. “I will go over there and look, and some of the other folks on council may want to go also.”

Councilman Hendren asked, “Is it the same household...that’s causing the trouble?”

Mr. Hokeland replied, “No, there is more than just one...it’s both sides of the street. I’ve heard stories up and down...the worst that I’ve seen, of course, is down on my end on Timberwood Trace. The other side is Kilmer Lane.

Councilwoman Powell suggested that a few speeding tickets, “might bring a stop to it.”

Mr. Hokeland said that 35 mph on his street is race-track speed.

Councilman Hendren commented that if the drivers were doing doughnuts, they were probably going faster than 35 (mph).

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Mr. Hokeland said he didn't like being the bad guy but that he would rather be the bad guy than to see his child or someone else in the neighborhood, "get run over."

Mayor Paschal explained that Council could make a recommendation at their next meeting for NCDOT to change the speed limit, "and after that, someone would have to probably make multiple arrests before it would sink in."

Mayor Paschal asked **Sgt. Rutledge** with the N.C. Highway Patrol if he had any comments concerning Mr. Hokeland's request.

Sgt. Rutledge introduced himself to Council, and said that Mr. Hokeland was correct, "...in that the speed limit is not posted at all at the moment."

Sgt. Rutledge said that the Wentworth Town limits, "...have not always been out that far...and some of the folks may think they are still living in the country where the speed limit is 55 miles per hour."

Sgt. Rutledge said there had not been any reports of traffic collisions or problems, other than the County responding to a civil matter or some other complaint, until Mr. Hokeland brought it to their attention.

"That's not to say we haven't been up and down the roads that intersect with the entrance to the development," said **Sgt. Rutledge**. "It is unfortunate, but most law enforcement concentrates where the largest problems are and not in one specific area. But, I think he does have a legitimate complaint and if it (speed limit) is posted and we are working that area, we have something to go on."

St. Rutledge said the Highway Patrol is currently working the area for a period of 30 days and documenting what they find. "But, as I explained to Mr. Hokeland, on a given morning or afternoon, there may be only 3 patrolmen covering all of Rockingham County. All it takes is somebody turning their head or someone else acting foolish, and we're like ping pong balls scattered all across the county."

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“When that happens,” said **Sgt. Rutledge**, “his individual problem at that particular time would not be our priority. Our priority would be the motor vehicle collisions, taking care of them. Our constant priority is the five main collision roads in the county, but as I told Mr. Hokeland, and I wasn’t passing him off, collectively you can accomplish more. If he was a constant, barking dog, then eventually he becomes the nuisance. I told him that if he would collectively gather up his neighbors and would approach y’all in a civil way, I thought y’all might work with him. If you will help him, then I think we can help him, too. But, he is correct in thinking there probably is a misunderstanding as to what the speed limit is out there.”

Addressing Councilman Hendren, **Sgt. Rutledge** commented, “You are correct...it is a possibility that it may take more speed than 35 mph to create that kind of driving, or it may not. Sometimes it is just our perception. You have probably been sitting on your porch or out in your back yard, and heard a car go by with loud mufflers and thought, ‘he must be flying’...when in fact he may have been running only 25 or 30 mph. On other occasions, you have also seen them go by with quiet mufflers and you knew they were running 55 or 60 mph. All it takes is a reasonable person to be able to judge the speed of something.”

Sgt. Rutledge continued, “He and his family have been out walking, just as all of you have the right to walk at or near a public road, mornings or evening. I stressed to Mr. Hokeland that it might not be prudent to walk in the road ever, because the road is designed for vehicular traffic, not pedestrian traffic; however, you and I both have observed it...people like to walk on that hard surface because they don’t want to step in a hole or have some critter reach up and touch them on the shoulder.”

He added, “There are a lot of things going on out there, but again, he is one hundred percent correct—the speed limit is not posted in any way. I do think that would be the first step in helping us—the Highway Patrol, Sheriff’s Department, and if there is ever a county unit working in the capacity for the Town of Wentworth—to enforce the speed limit in that area. It is enforceable now, but it would be a whole lot more enforceable if it were a regulated speed and not an interpreted speed.”

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Mayor Paschal said, "Right now, because it is in the Town limits, that area would be interpreted as 35 miles per hour unless otherwise posted. But we'll look at it and see about a request to NCDOT. Sometimes they will change a speed limit for us, but they have the last word. We will take a look out there and take it up at our next meeting."

The Mayor thanked Sgt. Rutledge and Mr. Hokeland for their information.

Article IX. A N N O U N C E M E N T S

- ⇒ **Bricolage Arts Festival at Chinqua Penn
Friday, October 5, 2007 / 6:00 – 10:00 p.m.**
- ⇒ **Hospice of Rockingham County, Inc.** cordially invites the public to join them for an **Open House** to celebrate the opening of their new "**Hospice Home**" Residential & Inpatient Facility at 2150 NC 65, Wentworth, NC on **Sunday, October 7, 2007 / 2:00 – 4:30 p.m.** Dedication will be held at 2:10 p.m.
- ⇒ The next regular meeting of the Town of Wentworth **Planning Board** will be held on **Tuesday, October 16, 2007, at 7:00 p.m.** in the Town Hall Meeting Room at the National Guard Armory.
- ⇒ **REMEMBER TO VOTE! Tuesday, November 6, 2007
Wentworth residents vote at the Whitcomb Student Center at
Rockingham Community College on County Home Road.**
- ⇒ The next regular meeting of the **Wentworth Town Council** will be held on **Thursday, November 8, at 7:00 p.m.** in the Town Hall Meeting Room at the National Guard Armory. (**Note change in date!**)

Article X. A D J O U R N

Mayor Paschal made a motion that "*the meeting be adjourned.*" **Councilman Hendren** seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Respectfully Submitted By: _____
Brenda Ward, Town Clerk

Approved By: _____

Dennis Paschal, Mayor