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**TOWN OF WENTWORTH  
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING  
MINUTES  
April 7, 2009  
7:00 P.M.**

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**The Wentworth Town Council** held their regular monthly meeting in the Town Hall meeting room at the National Guard Armory, on **Tuesday, April 7, 2009**, at **7:00 p.m.**

**Council members present:** Mayor Dennis Paschal, Mayor Pro Tem Evelyn Conner, Councilwoman Iris Powell, and Councilman Robert Aswell.

**Council members absent:** Councilman James Belcher was on vacation.

**A quorum was present.**

**Staff Present:** Fred Baggett, Town Attorney / Brenda Ward, Town Clerk / Yvonne Russell, Finance Officer / Deputy Clarence Cheshire

**Article I.** Mayor Paschal called the meeting to order.

**Article II.** Councilwoman Iris Powell gave the **Invocation.**

**Article III.** Discussion / Revisions / Adoption of Agenda

**A. Requests and Petitions of Citizens**

Mayor Paschal noted that no one signed the Speaker Register but said he would like to, "...add Item D. to the Agenda under New Business—Brenda's review. *I make a motion that we add Item D and approve the Agenda for April 7, 2009.*"

Mayor Pro Tem Evelyn Conner seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

**Article IV.** Approval of Town Council Meeting Minutes

**A. Town Council Meeting – March 3, 2009**

Mayor Paschal noted, "Everybody has a copy...are there any changes?"

Councilwoman Powell made a motion, "*That we accept them as written.*"

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

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**Article V. OLD BUSINESS**

**A. Consideration of Interlocal Agreement Draft between  
Rockingham County and the Town of Wentworth for use of the  
Old Wentworth School Ball Field and Gymnasium**

**Mayor Paschal** advised, “Richard Capps (Chairman, Recreation Committee) was going to be here tonight, but it is my understanding he has asked to table this until next month.”

**Mrs. Ward** advised, “Mr. Capps has had a lot going on—his house caught on fire and he had to move to a motel while the house was being repaired, and his mom has been in the hospital. Also, he hasn’t been able to meet with Mr. Wagoner, who has been out with back surgery.”

**Mayor Paschal** made a motion, “*That we table this item until our May meeting (May 5, 2009).*”

**Mayor Pro Tem Conner** seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

**Article VI. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Consideration of Support of 2009 Buy American Resolution (On  
the Spending of Federal Economic Renewal Grants)**

**- Kathryn L. Daniel, Deputy Director of Communications,  
Moore & Van Allen PLLC, Representing NUCOR**

**Mayor Paschal** invited **Kathryn L. Daniel** to address Council concerning the Buy American Resolution.

**Ms. Daniel** thanked the Mayor and Council for letting her speak, and explained that she is a representative of NUCOR Steel, “...the largest steel manufacturer out of Charlotte, and they also have a mill over in Hertford County. They have me out and about visiting the State the past few weeks or so, on a resolution campaign regarding the Buy American portion of the massive economic stimulus package that was recently passed.”

She continued, “We are just asking counties and cities, towns like yours, to go on record and say that if you get any of that money trickled down your way, you will commit to purchasing goods and services that are American made, whenever possible.”

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**Ms. Daniel** added, “NUCOR believes the best way to get us out of this economic rut is to start making things again here at home. I hope you have had a chance to read over the Resolution and if you have any questions, I will be glad to try to answer them.”

There were no questions from Council.

**Mayor Paschal** made a motion, “*That we adopt the Resolution to Buy American whenever possible.*” **Mayor Pro Tem Conner** seconded the motion. There was no discussion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

**Article VI. NEW BUSINESS**

**B. Review / Update of Services Provided by Paychex  
- Jennifer Sapp**

**Mayor Paschal** invited Jennifer Sapp, Human Resource Specialist with Paychex, to address Council.

**Ms. Sapp** apologized for not making the April meeting due to “bad weather conditions.” She noted that the Town Clerk provided Council with the Paychex Human Resources (HR) Assessment, and said she would like to review some of the items briefly.

“This is a part of our services that we provide to you all as a Human Resources consulting company,” **Ms. Sapp** advised, “and we also do payroll, taxes, etc. It is also my responsibility—as far as the Town being an employer—it is my job to keep you in compliance with employment law. You all have to deal with a lot of other things, so I have to make sure you are up to speed as far as employment law goes. We just recently did this review to make sure everything is up to date. We updated the (personnel) handbook because there have been some recent legal changes in the State of North Carolina and we wanted to make sure all that is in your handbook.”

**Ms. Sapp** continued, “There are a couple of things I wanted to bring to light. I know that you have a Personnel Committee, and I thought I would address with you a couple of things I have talked with Brenda about.”

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“I know that you just added Brenda’s review to your Agenda, and I applaud you for bringing that up to date. I like to make sure that everyone is consistent so everybody gets reviewed, ideally, once a year. It is not a requirement by law but it is certainly highly recommended in legal circles that you have some kind of record, ongoing, of performance—good, bad, indifferent—just as long as you are giving feedback. Employees are five times more likely to leave because they don’t know where they stand, than for money.”

“As far as compensation, having some sort of compensation philosophy, I think, and having a pay scale may be beneficial especially in a township or governmental environment where you have to stick to a budget and plan ahead. I strongly encourage you to consider putting something in place. We have looked at some similar size townships in the State, and Paychex also has the ability to pull regional compensation surveys as well, that you can use as a comparison. That is included in your services and is something I would be happy to take care of for you.”

**Ms. Sapp** referred to succession planning and said that it is important to have a plan in place in case someone retires, becomes ill, or has to take an extended absence—“What would you do in that circumstance—It’s a good idea to plan ahead, be proactive instead of reactive.”

**Ms. Sapp** asked Council if they had any questions for her based on the assessment or the services Paychex provides. There were no questions from Council.

**Ms. Ward** commented that she and the Finance Officer are very happy with Paychex and with the human resource assistance provided by Ms. Sapp.

**Mayor Paschal** thanked Ms. Sapp for bringing Council up to date.

**Article VI. NEW BUSINESS**

**C. Consideration of New Policy**

**(A) Flower Policy**

**Mayor Paschal** asked the Town Administrator to comment on the Flower Policy.

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**Article VI. NEW BUSINESS - Continued**

**C. Consideration of New Policy (Flower or Memorial Policy)**

**Mrs. Ward** asked Council if they understood that she offered two separate policies so they could have a choice. She explained, “The Flower Policy actually covers both memorials *and* if someone is in the hospital—death or sickness. The Memorial Policy is just in case you may not want to worry about trying to send flowers when someone is sick, but perhaps you do want to send flowers or a memorial of some kind when someone passes away. But, of course, you can change any part of either policy, if you want to.”

**Councilwoman Powell** said she thought there should be a limit put on the amount that is spent.

**Mayor Pro Tem Conner** suggested Council decide which policy they want to adopt first and then decide on the amount.

**Councilman Aswell** said he thought the first policy (acknowledging both illness and death) would be appropriate. **Mayor Pro Tem Conner** agreed.

**Mayor Paschal** asked about the limit to be placed on the cost—“What do you want to spend, and we can vote on that at the same time.”

Council discussed setting a range, and **Councilman Aswell** suggested a maximum of \$100.00. He added, “You can’t get anything much under \$50.00.”

There was no other discussion, and **Councilman Aswell** made a motion, “That we adopt the Flower Policy (Item A) with a \$25.00 to \$100.00 limit for either flowers or a memorial, and leave it to staff’s discretion.”

**Mayor Paschal** seconded the motion. There was no additional discussion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

**Article VI. NEW BUSINESS**

**D. Consideration of Employee Performance Review for Town Administrator/Town Clerk**

**Mayor Paschal** advised Council that the Personnel Committee met to do an annual performance evaluation on **Mrs. Ward**. He noted, “Evelyn (Mayor Pro Tem Conner) and I conducted a review of Brenda, and of course she has done a good job, and since we brought her on board as Town Administrator, she has continued do a good job.”

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**Article VI. NEW BUSINESS - Continued**

**D. Consideration of Employee Performance Review for Town Administrator/Town Clerk**

**Mayor Paschal** said Mrs. Ward had not received a merit raise since 2006. He added, "Evelyn and I are suggesting a ten percent merit increase this year, and I would like to make a motion to approve that increase."

"It would increase her salary from \$44,668.68 a year to \$49,135.54 a year. We have clerks in the county making almost that much and Brenda is doing a whole lot more for us and using a lot of her time for the Town."

**Mayor Paschal** made a motion, "*To approve the increase presented, as of April 1<sup>st</sup>.*"

**Mayor Pro Tem Conner** seconded the motion. There was no discussion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

**Mayor Paschal** commented, "Also, Evelyn and I talked about increasing vacation benefits. Right now, we have it so that after 5 years you get three weeks. I have asked Brenda to bring it back to Council at the next meeting and we'll take a look at possibly increasing that."

**Article VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**Mayor Paschal** said no one signed the Speaker Register to address Council.

**Article VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Mayor Paschal** made the following announcements:

- ⇒ The Town Clerk & Deputy Clerk will be out of the office on **Friday, April 17<sup>th</sup>**, attending a "**Regional Clerks' School**" in Rural Hall, NC.
- ⇒ The Rockingham County Commissioners have approved the week of **April 20 – 25, 2009**, as the annual "**Clean Up Week**" for Rockingham County. Landfill fees for County residents will be waived so that citizens can clean up around their respective residential properties and dispose of their discarded items at the Landfill **at no charge**. (Call 427-5421 & 342-8371 for more information.)
- ⇒ The next meeting of the **Town of Wentworth Planning Board** will be held on **Tuesday, April 21, 2009**, at **7:00 p.m.** in the Town Hall Meeting Room at the National Guard Armory.
- ⇒ The next regular meeting of the **Wentworth** Town Council will be held on **Tuesday, May 5, 2009**, at **7:00 p.m.** in the Town Hall Meeting Room

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**Deputy Clarence Cheshire** said he needed to make an announcement—“The Clydesdales will not be able to help us out in the Christmas Parade. Anheuser-Busch called me two weeks ago and said they are not making any public appearances right now. The District Manager in Greensboro told me they won’t even send them to the individual plants now.”

Council commented that it must be due to the economy and the costs involved to transport and feed the horses.

**Town Attorney, Fred Baggett**, advised Council that **Ms. Frankie Legaux**, Assistant Planning Director, would be bringing some ordinance changes to their next meeting. He explained, “You may remember, we discussed changing the development ordinance to go away from the quasi-judicial to make it a simpler procedure. I am in the process of reviewing the draft.”

**Article IX. R E C E S S**

**Mayor Paschal** called for a brief recess prior to the Budget Work Session.

**Article X. BUDGET WORK SESSION**

**Mayor Paschal** called the meeting back into session and asked the Finance Officer, **Yvonne Russell**, if she would review the budget worksheet and go over any changes made since the last work session.

**Ms. Russell** advised council that there were only a few changes since the last work session. “We did appropriate fund balance to balance the budget, adding \$18,000 to Debt Service. What we originally budgeted was the payment for Debt Service. This (amount) has the interest added to each payment.”

“Under the Town Property line item for Utilities,” **Ms. Russell** continued, “You asked that we increase that and I did. I spoke with Dana Rucker with First Citizens Insurance and he got the underwriters to look at what our property and liability insurance would be at the Town Hall. He still says it is \$8,000. That is what he originally quoted and we just wanted to make sure it was right.”

**Ms. Russell** concluded, “That’s about it. We took care of everything else at the last work session.”

**Mayor Paschal** asked Council if they had any questions.

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**Article X. BUDGET WORK SESSION - Continued**

**Councilwoman Powell** asked, “Are we going to need to add anything somewhere to take care of the flowers?”

**Ms. Russell** replied, “We usually take the flowers out of Administration under Miscellaneous. We have \$300.00 budgeted right now.”

The **Town Administrator** added, “We’ve always had something in there to use for flowers but we really didn’t have a policy to guide us.”

**Mayor Paschal** said, “We may need to increase that line item...it would be a pain to have to do a budget amendment, so we may need to put some more in there now.”

The **Town Administrator** noted that a certain amount of money may be moved from one line item to another without a budget amendment.

**Ms. Russell** agreed, “We can make an adjustment to that if we need to.”

She also pointed out that \$6,500 has been budgeted for Office Furniture and Equipment, and explained, “I think that was done at the last work session. It is for file cabinets, bookshelves and tables—things we can get after we move in.”

**Ms. Russell** added, “I hope we won’t have to use Fund Balance next year, thinking that we may actually receive more revenue than we have budgeted, since we have been so conservative in our estimates. We may get more than we are budgeting for.”

**Mayor Paschal** asked, “We will approve this at the May meeting or the June meeting?”

**Ms. Ward** said it would be presented at the May meeting along with the Budget Message, “...and advertised in the newspaper the next day as being available for public inspection. Then it will be voted on at the June meeting after the Public Hearing.”

**Mayor Paschal** asked Council to be sure to look over the budget again and let the staff know if they have any questions or if anything needs to be changed.

**Mayor Pro Tem Conner** asked about the “salaries” line item—“Did we need to increase that since we have changed Brenda’s?”

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**Article X. BUDGET WORK SESSION - Continued**

**Ms. Russell** replied, “Yes we have increased the line item five percent. Y’all said you wouldn’t do COLA this year, but would do five percent merit.”

**Ms. Ward** commented, “That’s not five percent each, is it?” **Ms. Russell** replied, “No, two and a half (percent), a total of five percent.”

**Councilman Aswell** asked, “So there is enough in this year’s budget to cover Brenda’s increase?”

**Ms. Russell** said she would move some money to cover the increase for the rest of this year, but said she would have to refigure next year’s budget to include the change in salaries.

**Mayor Paschal** told Council, “Just let her do the calculations and we’ll have the figures for the next meeting.”

There were no other questions or comments concerning the new budget.

**Mayor Paschal** said he had already made the announcements but asked if he had missed anything.

**Ms. Ward** said she would like to ask a question. She explained that she would like Council’s permission to, “...host a meeting of various groups who are all interested in trying to get walking trails and maybe greenways throughout the area. Fletcher Waynick with the Tourism Authority, and T.Butler with the Dan River Basin Association thought it would be a good idea to bring everyone together to discuss the possibility of securing some grants for a master plan. Presently, all these different groups have been meeting separately but all talking about doing the same things. It was suggested that the Town host a meeting to get everyone to focus as one group.”

**Ms. Ward** said she told them she would like to get Council’s opinion and blessing before moving forward.

**Mayor Paschal** said he thought it, “...would be a good idea to get everyone to the table.” The rest of Council agreed.

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**Article XI. A D J O U R N**

**Mayor Paschal** made a motion, "*That the meeting be adjourned.*"  
**Councilwoman Powell** seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the meeting adjourned.

**Respectfully Submitted By:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Brenda Ward, Town Clerk**

**Approved By:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Dennis Paschal, Mayor**