
**TOWN OF WENTWORTH
MINUTES FOR
THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
OCTOBER 2, 2012
7:00 P.M.**

The Wentworth Town Council held its regular monthly meeting on **Tuesday, October 2, 2012**, at **7:00 p.m.** in the Town Hall Council Chambers.

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

Council members absent: Mayor Dennis Paschal

A quorum was present.

Staff Present: Brenda Ward, Town Administrator-Town Clerk / Yvonne Russell, Finance Officer - Deputy Clerk / Attorney Tom Terrell, and Lt. Allen Farrar, Rockingham County Sheriff's Department.

ARTICLE I. CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Pro Tem Evelyn Conner

ARTICLE II. INVOCATION: Councilman Dennis Paschal, III.

ARTICLE III. Approval of October 2, 2012, Town Council Agenda

A. Requests & Petitions of Citizens

Mayor Pro Tem Conner advised that no one signed the Speaker Register to address Council and made a motion, "*That the Agenda be approved.*"

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

ARTICLE IV. Approval of Minutes

A. Town Council Meeting: September 4, 2012

Mayor Pro Tem Conner made a motion, "*That the Minutes stand approved.*"

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

ARTICLE V. OLD BUSINESS

➤ **Update on Post Office**

Mayor Pro Tem Conner asked the Town Administrator to update Council on the Post Office.

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Mrs. Ward reminded Council that she and Mayor Paschal met with Postal Service officials in June: “At that time, they mentioned the Town’s previous offer to construct a facility for lease to the U.S. Postal Service.”

She said the gentlemen advised the Mayor to put the proposal in writing and said they would take it under consideration.

“Of course,” said **Mrs. Ward**, “they told us they could not promise us anything.”

Mrs. Ward said she mailed the letter in August, and, “As I was preparing the Town Council Agenda, I realized we had not heard anything since mailing the letter, and decided to send an email asking for an update.”

Mrs. Ward said she received a reply later, advising that Mrs. Tinort, “...the contact person we wrote to initially, had taken a position with another government agency. They gave me the name of an individual to contact, so I sent the inquiry to him.”

“Later, I received a reply which said, “We are very interested in your proposal...we are currently reviewing your offer internally. It will take us at least another 45-60 days to obtain approval. Please check back with me in mid-November.”

Mrs. Ward commented, “You know *why* ‘mid-November’—after elections, I’m sure.”

Continuing, **Mrs. Ward** advised that all persons who have a post office box at the Wentworth Post Office, “...including us (the Town), received a letter advising of a public meeting at the post office on Wednesday, November 7, the day after the Elections, to discuss options for the Wentworth facility. The letter had a copy of the survey and we are to check which option is preferred. I sent all of you that information and asked you to give me an idea as to how you want to complete the survey, since we can only submit *one* survey per box.”

“I heard, prior to receiving the letter, that they planned to have this meeting, and I called them to offer the Town Hall as a meeting place, but they said it was too late to change the venue, because the letters had already been written.”

ARTICLE V. OLD BUSINESS – Continued

➤ **Update on Post Office**

“**Mayor Paschal** is especially concerned about the time of the meeting—2:30 in the afternoon when many folks are still at work—at our little bitty post office where parking is going to be a problem.”

Mrs. Ward asked Council’s permission to send a letter to each (Wentworth) post office box holder, and to the area schools, businesses, government offices, and Rockingham Community College. She said the letter will challenge them to show up for the meeting, to check Option 1 on their survey, and to write under “additional comments” that it is their desire to keep the Wentworth Post Office open, and to mention the fact that the Town has offered to construct a facility to house the post office.

Mrs. Ward said she has received several phone calls from folks wanting to know, “‘What is the Town’s position on this?’ and of course, you had all replied to me that you would choose Option 1, and that is what I told them.”

“Their survey also asks, ‘...if they cut the hours at the post office, what would be your choice of hours to be open?’ That question is bound to receive a variety of answers, because the hours that suit the Governmental Center may not be convenient for the schools or the Judicial Center, or our residents, and vice-versa.”

“I realize that our efforts may be far-fetched with everything going on at this time...they’re closing post offices right and left, but we want them to know that we want to keep our post office.”

Councilman Dennis Paschal, III, commented, “...with the shorter hours they are proposing...this concerns me because this will limit the window of time that the courthouse and schools and all these other organizations that have post office boxes there...it limits the time that they can go. They are going to be more likely to say, ‘Well, we’ll just move our P.O. box to Reidsville. Why should we keep our boxes at Wentworth, although it is closer, when we don’t have access to them?’”

“This will make the post office less and less valuable,” **Councilman Paschal** added, and my own personal opinion is that this is part of their plan—to reduce the use of the post office so they can ultimately close it.”

Councilman Paschal added, “I do hope people will go to the meeting...I wish I could go but I can’t get off work...and people should contact Kay Hagan’s and Richard Burr’s office and let them know that it is ridiculous for them to hold public meetings at 2:30 in the afternoon on weekdays. That is just a slap in the face as far as I’m concerned.”

There were no further comments from Council, and **Mayor Pro Tem Conner** moved on to the next item of **Old Business**.

➤ **Update on Land Purchase – Town Administrator**

Mrs. Ward advised Council, “I think everything has been signed...we have returned the signature pages to Brian Byrd at Smith Moore. We sent the good faith money that we were supposed to provide, and they sent us the Environmental Assessment.”

“We were looking at a closing date sometime in late November. We are still trying to work that out with Mr. Campano, because he does live out in Colorado, but we should be able to close in November.”

Article VI. NEW BUSINESS

**A. Presentation of Audit Report for Fiscal Year 2011-2012
- Mr. Rex Rouse, Rouse, Rouse, Penn & Rouse, LLP / Eden NC**

Mayor Pro Tem Conner asked Mr. Rouse to give the audit report.

Mr. Rouse thanked Council and noted, “I believe all of you have a copy of the financial statements, and if you will turn to Page 1, the Independent Auditor’s Report...it states that we have audited the accompanying financial statements of the governmental activities... and the various funds of the Town of Wentworth for the year ending June 30, 2012.”

“In the second paragraph, we state we’ve conducted our audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards, and in the third paragraph, ‘In our opinion, based on our audit, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the governmental activities...’ and the various funds of the Town of Wentworth for the year ended June 30, 2012.”

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Mr. Rouse continued, “So, it’s a clean opinion, and next, if you’ll turn to Page 29, we have a comparative balance sheet of the General Fund. The cash at the beginning of the year was \$734,000 and at the end of the year it had gone up to \$822,000.”

“The Accounts Receivable were about the same—they were \$105,800 at the beginning of the year and \$104,800 at the end of the year—so your Total Assets were up from \$840,000 to \$927,000.”

“Your Liabilities were up a little, from \$5,681 to \$12,642 and your Fund Balance was up from \$834,637 to \$914,081, a fairly significant increase in your Fund Balance.”

Mr. Rouse asked Council to, “Move to the next page, the Revenues... the Revenues are just about the same as they were last year. Last year they were \$599,884 in the last column, and in the second column, the actual for this year was \$602,735. So they were up \$3,000 from last year, and up \$12,000 over the budgeted amount.”

“Starting at the top of the page, the Sales Tax was up from \$467,800 to \$474,310. The Beer and Wine Tax was down a little from \$13,092 to \$12,137 and the Franchise Tax was down a little from \$111,000 to \$108,000. Interest on Investments was down from \$904.00 to \$528.00. Your Other Revenue was up from \$6,691 to \$7,619, mainly from the Rental Income on the building over here for a full year.”

Mr. Rouse asked Council to turn to Page 33 of the Audit Report, commenting, “Your net change in Fund Balance—last year you had a loss of \$198,000, this year you had a net income of \$79,444 so you had a significant difference and a reduction in your expenses in this year’s compared to last year.”

“On Page 31, you have the General Government expenditures... roughly \$214,800 to \$215,447. The salaries were up just a little from \$87,950 to \$89,084. Probably the biggest difference in there was the Town Property Maintenance. Last year, you had completed the building and had more maintenance on the property. Last year you spent \$15,529...this is about the fifth item from the bottom of the page, and this year you only expended \$8,565. But overall, in General Government Expenditures, they were just about the same, up just a little bit.”

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“On Page 32,” said **Mr. Rouse**, “the biggest difference here was the Home and Land Acquisition that you had in the prior year, it was \$222,195...that is the main reason the expenditures were down so much.”

“The Economic Development was the same—\$6,000 last year and \$6,000 this year.”

“You expended more for Special Events this year. Last year it was \$5,539 and this year it was \$9,849.”

“Last year you bought a patrol car and equipment—this is under Health and Public Safety—\$33,854, and you spent \$86,350 on water improvements that you didn’t have this year. Last year you expended \$201,939 and this year \$96,000.”

“The Planning and Zoning was the same as last year.”

“One area where you did expend more this year was your Debt Service, because you made an extra payment on your loan for this building. Your Debt Service payments last year were \$65,796 and this year they were \$125,327.”

“Your Total Expenditures last year were \$776,800 and this year your Total Expenditures were down to \$511,291. You budgeted \$578,000 so your actual expenditures were \$66,805 less than what was budgeted.”

Mr. Rouse continued, “You transferred \$12,000 to the Capital Projects Fund. Last year you transferred \$25,000 and at the end of this year you have a little over \$37,000 in the Capital Reserve Fund for your future recreation needs.”

“As I said, your net change in Fund Balance—last year you had a loss of \$198,652 and this year you had an increase in your Fund Balance of \$79,444, increasing your Total Fund Balance from \$834,600 to \$914,081.”

Mr. Rouse asked Council to turn to Page 7 of the Manager’s Discussion and Analysis, commenting, “We talked about the Current and Other Assets, the increase from \$865,000 to \$963,000. Your Capital Assets decreased because we did not expend anything on Capital Outlay this year and we claimed a year’s depreciation. So, that reduction in Capital Assets from \$1,816,000 to \$1,775,000 was the result of depreciation for the year.”

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“The Total Liabilities went down from \$352,000 to \$245,950 and that was primarily the result of paying the extra payment on the building note.”

“Your Total Assets were up from \$2,329,000 to \$2,493,000. So the Town continues to be in a very sound financial position.”

“There are two letters here,” said Mr. Rouse. “The first one I’m going to discuss talks about Our Responsibilities Under U.S. Generally Accepted Auditing Standards, and the Planned Scope and Timing of the Audit, and Significant Audit Findings; but to me, the main paragraph is in the middle of the second page, and I state, ‘We encountered no significant difficulties in dealing with management in performing and completing our audit.’”

“In fact, I would like to say that Yvonne was very helpful in writing a lot more of the report this year, which increased my independence. We are supposed to be *auditing* the Financial Statements, so when she writes the report to this extent and we review the report, that increases the independence of the CPA.”

Mr. Rouse added, “The only finding that we have this year, which we have on all small units of governments and not-for-profits that we audit—reading from the second letter, fourth paragraph, Item 1—‘Because of the limited number of personnel employed by the Town, it is not practical to have an adequate separation of duties. The same employee makes the deposits, posts cash receipts and disbursements to the general ledger, and reconciles the bank accounts. Although this is a material weakness in internal control, the internal controls for the disbursements are somewhat stronger because of budgetary controls.’”

Mr. Rouse explained, “There were no items of non-compliance as far as the budget was concerned, and you have an independent dual signature check-signing requirement.”

“Also, the Mayor Pro Tem, ‘...reviews the bank statements and bank reconciliations. The weakness in internal control relative to receipts is greatly mitigated by the fact that nearly all of the receipts of the Town of Wentworth are directly deposited by the N.C. Department of Revenue.’”

Mr. Rouse concluded, "I just want to give thanks to Yvonne and Brenda for all the help again this year. If you have any questions, I'll try to answer them."

There were no questions from council regarding the Audit and **Mayor Pro Tem Conner** thanked Mr. Rouse for his report.

ARTICLE VI. NEW BUSINESS – Continued

B. Consideration of Funding Request from Rockingham County High School's Renaissance Committee - \$2,500

- Martha Carroll, Media Specialist

Mayor Pro Tem Conner invited **Martha Carroll, Media Specialist** at Rockingham County High School, to discuss her funding request.

Ms. Carroll began, "At Rockingham County High School, we try to encourage students to have good grades, and good behavior, and as a result of that we formed a committee called the Renaissance Committee."

Ms. Carroll referenced a letter of explanation about the committee, in Council's Agenda packets, commenting, "Several times a year we have what is called 'Classic Cougar Celebrations'. We do two a year, one each semester, and the teachers get to choose someone who has been in their class who may have displayed an act of kindness, especially good grades, or something that may stand out for which they would not otherwise be recognized for."

"In the past, we had parents...and got lots of donations...but that has fallen to the side now, and in order to continue our program, we are going to need some additional financial help."

"We also offer scholarships, and depending on how many students apply for the scholarships, we try to do four per year for a total of \$1,000.00. If we only have two people to apply, then we give each one \$500.00."

Ms. Carroll continued, "We also sponsor a 'Semester Awards Assembly', where we provide students with certificates and T-shirts. We have an art contest where students draw a piece of art that goes on the T-shirts we print, and recognizes them. These students maintain a 3.0 GPA during the first semester of school."

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Ms. Carroll concluded, “I think the most important thing that we wanted to emphasize to you is the fact that...we want to keep them in the community. They are volunteers in our organizations, they have jobs in the community, and so we want to do what we can to try to keep them here, and recognize them in any way that we can.”

She asked Council if they had any questions.

Councilman Paschal asked, “You made a funding request of \$2,500...how immediate are the needs...do you have something coming up in the near future that the funds are going to be needed for?”

Ms. Carroll said she did not have the dates for the first ‘Classic Cougar Celebration’, but said she believed it would be the “first of November”.

She added, “We have students tell us that they are just so thankful for this...it gives them recognition and is one of the few things they get to do...like I said, that maybe they would not have been recognized for otherwise.”

Councilman Paschal mentioned that all of the things listed on Ms. Carroll’s list total above the amount requested, and asked, “What would you say is the most needed, as far as what you guys have to spend money on right now, probably the Classic Cougar...?”

Ms. Carroll agreed...

Councilman Paschal noted the \$800.00 amount and **Ms. Carroll** said, “That’s a high estimate.”

Councilman Paschal had a question for the Finance Officer— “I know that when we give money to SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions), it comes out of Public Safety funds so this would have to come from...?”

Ms. Russell replied, “This would probably be ‘Cultural and Recreational’ or ‘Miscellaneous Other Operating (Costs)’ since we don’t have a school / educational line item.”

Councilman Paschal asked, “The ‘Cultural and Recreational’, is that where the football scholarship comes from?”

“Yes,” **Ms. Russell** replied.

ARTICLE VI. NEW BUSINESS – Continued

B. Consideration of Funding Request – RCHS Renaissance Committee (\$2,500)

There were no other questions from Council, and **Mayor Pro Tem Conner** said, “I think we should get with Yvonne and look at the budget and take all of these options into consideration and get back with you in another week or so, if that’s okay.”

“That sounds good. Thank you for your time,” **Ms. Carroll** replied.

C. Adoption of 2012 Municipal Records Retention and Disposition Schedule Resolution

Mayor Pro Tem Conner asked the Town Administrator to discuss the Records Retention and Disposition Schedule.

Mrs. Ward said, “You will remember that we adopted this schedule in 2009, but the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, a Division of Archives and Records, has made some changes to this for both municipal and county governments.”

“If we adopt the new schedule and sign the signature page that you have in your packets, in essence we are saying that we agree to establish internal policies setting the *minimum* time that we will keep records. They are not saying that we *have* to get rid of any records, but they want us to take a close look at things and fill in the blanks that are to be filled in, as to the minimum retention period for various records...they want us to put something in those blanks.”

“The Resolution you have is just confirmation that we have adopted the new schedule for 2012. We will fax them the signature page so they will know that we are on record as supporting and trying to follow the schedule.”

Mrs. Ward commented further, “I don’t think we have ever disposed of any records yet, in fourteen years.”

Councilwoman Powell asked, “Does their schedule go along with our schedule?”

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Mrs. Ward replied, “Their schedule just tells us when, by law, we can dispose of certain records...the earliest time-frame, but if we choose to keep them longer, we can. This is for the Town’s protection—if someone comes in to ask for a record that we no longer have, we can point to the Retention Schedule and show that we had permission to dispose of the record.”

“We probably do need to begin looking at this because we are already running out of space,” **Mrs. Ward** added.

“So this just gives us some guidelines,” **Mayor Pro Tem Conner** said.

“Yes, because we don’t even have a lot of the records mentioned, since we don’t have law enforcement personnel or water and sewer bills, and a lot of other things that some of the larger towns have. We would just pay attention to the records that apply to us.”

Councilman Paschal asked, “So, what do we have now...is it just the State’s schedule or do we have to revise our own...?”

Mrs. Ward replied, “No, they have done the revisions, as to how long you *must* keep certain records before you can dispose of them, but they want us to look at our own records and put a time limit in the blanks, as to when we specify that we will purge certain records, once the *minimum* time has passed. For instance, correspondence, once it has lost what they refer to as ‘its administrative value’, we are no longer *required* to keep it.”

“And we’ve never gotten rid of anything here?” **Councilman Paschal** asked.

“No,” replied **Mrs. Ward**, “just come and take a look in my office.”

“Do we not have a system, a schedule, as a Town?” **Councilman Paschal** asked.

“They have established the *minimum* time that you must keep records and they are asking us, when we sign that signature page, to agree to establish what a good minimum retention period should be...for us. Whether it is longer than their minimum, is up to us, as long as we don’t dispose of records *prior* to the minimum time they have set, but no, we have never set our own schedule.”

There were no questions from Council, and **Councilman Robert Aswell** made a motion, *“That we adopt the Resolution and 2012 Municipal Records Retention and Disposition Schedule.”*

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

ARTICLE VI. NEW BUSINESS – Continued

D. Consideration of Application for Membership on the Town of Wentworth Historic Preservation Committee.

**- Margaret A. Perdue / 1123 NC 65 / P. O. Box 63
Wentworth NC 27375**

Mayor Pro Tem Conner acknowledged the application from Mrs. Perdue and made a motion, *“That we accept the application for membership.”*

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

E. Consideration of Proclamation Proclaiming October 23 – 31, 2012 as Red Ribbon Campaign Days

Mayor Pro Tem Conner discussed the proclamation for Red Ribbon Campaign Days, and answered these questions:

“What is Red Ribbon Week?” “It is an ideal way for people and communities to unite and take a visible stand against substance abuse. Show your personal commitment to a drug-free lifestyle through the symbol of the Red Ribbon, Oct 23rd - 31st.

WHY? The Red Ribbon Campaign was started when drug traffickers in Mexico City murdered DEA agent Kiki Camarena in 1985. This began the continuing tradition of displaying Red Ribbons as a symbol of intolerance towards the use of drugs. The mission of the Red Ribbon Campaign is to present a unified and visible commitment towards the creation of a DRUG-FREE AMERICA.

WHO? National Family Partnership is the sponsor of the National Red Ribbon Week Celebration. We are helping citizens across the state come together to keep children, families and communities safe, healthy and drug-free, through parent training, networking and sponsoring the National Red Ribbon Campaign.”

Mayor Pro Tem Conner added, *“I would like to proclaim October 23 to October 31 as Red Ribbon Week.”*

The **Clerk** noted that mayors can do proclamations without a vote of the board, and that Mayor Paschal, although he was not present, had no problem with the proclamation.

ARTICLE VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mayor Pro Tem Conner noted that no one signed the Speaker Register and moved on to the Announcements.

ARTICLE VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The **Wentworth Planning Board Meeting** is scheduled for **Tuesday, October 16, 2012, at 7:00 p.m.** in the **Town Hall Council Chambers**.
- The next regular meeting of the **Wentworth Town Council** will be held in the **Town Hall Council Chambers** on **Thursday, November 8, 2012***, 7:00 P.M.
**Change in date due to Election Day on Tuesday, November 6th.*
- The Town of Wentworth **Christmas Parade** will take place on **Saturday, December 8, 2012, at 11:00 a.m.**

(Note: Parade Entry Forms are available online at www.townofwentworth.com or at the Town Hall.)

ARTICLE IX. A D J O U R N

Mayor Pro Tem Conner made a motion, *“That the meeting be adjourned.”*

Councilwoman Powell seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Respectfully Submitted By: _____
Brenda Ward, Town Clerk

Approved: _____
Dennis Paschal, Jr., Mayor