

**TOWN MANAGER**  
Ken Deal

**TOWN CLERK**  
Amanda Eller

**TOWN ATTORNEY**  
Tom Brooke



**MAYOR**  
Don Bringle

**TOWN COUNCIL**  
Brandon Linn  
Charles Seaford  
Steve Stroud  
Mike Upright  
Lee Withers

**TOWN OF CHINA GROVE**  
**A regular & budget meeting of the China Grove Town Council**

**Tuesday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015**  
**7:00 p.m.**

**China Grove Town Hall**  
**China Grove, North Carolina**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Bringle called the regular meeting of June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015 to order and called roll. All council members were present. There was a quorum.

The meeting started at 7:00 pm at the Town Hall.

Mr. Seaford made a motion to adopt the agenda. Mr. Linn seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Mr. Withers made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Mr. Seaford seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**CITIZEN COMMENT**

Mr. Will Bivens was present with the Boy Scouts to earn a merit badge. Mayor Bringle recognized him and thanked him for attending the meeting and for what they do for the community.

There were no other citizen comments.

**NEW BUSINESS**

I) “Hotspot” Wi-fi Update

Mayor Bringle recognized Mrs. Karen Challis, Mr. Russell Gibson and Mr. Michael Tanck with Time Warner Cable. He asked them to clarify how the hotspot program works that has been installed throughout the Town at different locations.

Mrs. Challis reviewed the locations. She stated that anyone who is a TWC subscriber or any of

their partner subscribers, you have twenty-four/seven access to these accounts. She then stated that as a non-subscriber, you have limited access, one hour free every day at the locations with service. She stated that at the parks, non-subscribers receive thirty minutes per device, per month. She stated that users are able to purchase an access pass to stay on for a longer period of time. She stated that purchasing an access pass allows them to use the internet at any location that provides the service. She stated that the Wi-fi hotspots are a value-add to current subscribers and the level of “free” is limited, otherwise the benefit as subscribers would be devalued.

Mr. Withers thanked them for what they received; however, the direction was to help the school system with their 1:1 device program. He stated that this was to provide service to children who cannot afford the monthly cost of internet services. He asked what could be done to further this request to our citizens.

Mrs. Challis stated that they are not able to provide unlimited, free service.

Mr. Withers stated that thirty-minutes a month is far from being accessible.

Mr. Upright stated that they should wait to see how it pans out and if there is a huge need, they could work with the school system to see what could be done at that time.

Mrs. Challis stated that this is strictly complimentary. She stated that there are customizations that could be offered, but it would become a paid-service item. She stated that each device gets thirty minutes per month.

Mr. Linn thanked Mrs. Challis for coming to explain this to them.

Mayor Bringle thanked her as well.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### **D) Southern Rowan Christmas Parade**

Mayor Bringle stated that they have been approached by the volunteers who organized the parade. He stated that they have since decided that they no longer wished to not organize the parade any longer; however, would be willing to work with any new organizers to coordinate the parade. He stated that he approached the Town of Landis Mayor and Councilmen who stated that they were not interested in putting any additional tax-payer money toward the parade. He stated that they are desperately in need of volunteers to step forward to carry on the tradition to carry on the thirty year tradition. He stated that he doesn't feel that the Town needs or wants to take on this project. He stated that costs have been shared between Towns. He stated that it would take at least two people to coordinate the event. He asked the Salisbury Post reporter, Josh Bergeron, to please note for any volunteers to contact the Town.

Mr. Withers stated that there are businesses or people that would be willing to step up to fulfill this item; however, this was the first he had heard about it.

Mayor Bringle thanked the previous volunteers who organized the parade.

## **RECESS**

Mr. Withers made a motion to recess from 7:20 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. Mr. Linn seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

## **BUDGET DISCUSSION**

### **D) What's In This Budget?**

Mr. Deal reviewed the "What's In This Budget" that was prepared by Mrs. Bopp which consisted of Revenue and Expenditure information. He stated that they are advising a \$.02 tax rate increase, which would put the tax rate at \$.58.

Mr. Upright asked how many air packs are included in the purchase price of \$60,000.

Chief Zimmerman stated that they are about \$8,000 per pack, about 8 packs and hopes to get some included within the truck price. He stated that the majority of the bottles are aging out at the end of this year.

Mr. Stroud asked how many firefighters typically respond to a call.

Chief Zimmerman stated that typically twelve respond, with 24 on the roster. He stated that a certain number have to be on each truck.

Mr. Stroud stated that they do not need to buy twenty-four air packs, for mainly training purposes.

Mr. Deal stated that they have to have a certain number available and operational to meet standards.

Chief Zimmerman stated that they would like to get on a revolving replacement schedule so that they do not having to purchase them all at the same time.

Mayor Bringle stated that the truck needs to be outfitted at purchase as to receive the best price available. He encouraged the Council to keep that in mind as they move forward.

Mr. Deal stated that the budget is balanced at the current tax rate. He stated that putting the extra one penny would provide a payment for the purchase of a fire truck.

Mayor Bringle pointed out that the Salisbury-Rowan Utility customers will experience a 12% decrease in water/sewer rates if their presented budget is approved.

Mr. Deal stated that the Council has done a great job of not imposing fees like all the other communities have done. He stated that they are completely operational by the tax rate.

Mayor Bringle reviewed fees from a neighboring town. He stated that Mrs. Bopp sent out information concerning fees among other municipalities in our area.

Mayor Bringle opened the floor to discussion by the Councilmen.

Mr. Upright stated that Mr. Deal and Mrs. Bopp have done an excellent job with the budget.

Mr. Withers stated that he is not a fan of a COLA but is a fan of rewarding employees who do their job above and beyond, which is the purpose for the merit pool. He stated that he would agree to lump the funds from COLA and merit. He stated that employees who do well based on their performance appraisals, would be rewarded as opposed to those who do just enough to get by.

Mr. Linn stated that he can agree to an extent, but if you looked at the Public Works department with employees who are only making \$23,000 a year, it is hard to justify this.

Mr. Withers stated that this should be done as a salary adjustment.

Mr. Upright stated that he worries that there is not enough subjectivity between departments to do an effective merit plan.

Mr. Withers stated that he feels Mr. Deal is capable of handling this with his experience.

Mr. Deal stated that the arguments are valid. He stated that there has only been a 1% adjustment since 2009. He stated that employees are making less now than they were making nine years ago.

Mr. Withers recommended a true cost of living increase for 2015. He stated that the merit is a great incentive for employees.

Mr. Withers stated that he would like to see downtown beautification addressed and added to the budget.

Mayor Bringle stated that there is \$10,000 allocated and they could consider a budget amendment could be considered at a later time.

Mr. Withers stated that he would like to see reorganization within the Administrative Department and rename certain positions to have an event coordinator. He stated that he wasn't sure if it was something that you asked the employees, but there could be someone to be a community organizer for events in Town. He stated that he would like to look at this viable option for the future.

Mr. Deal stated that there has been a request to stain the brick on the Town Hall.

Mr. Stroud stated that there is a sample where they stained the brick. He stated that the building is very nice, but the Ketchie Street side looks terrible. He stated that this needs to be part of the downtown beautification. He asked that this be addressed.

Mr. Linn thanked Mr. Deal and staff.

Mr. Deal stated that Mrs. Bopp did a good job preparing the budget.

Mayor Bringle stated that the Town only has a small amount of debt yearly. He stated that the Town is financially sound.

Mayor Bringle set the next budget Public Hearing for June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Withers stated that he would like to shift funds from COLA to merit. He stated to change the COLA to 2% and a 5.5% merit pool for employees.

Mr. Withers made a motion to adjust the proposed budget with a change to COLA 2% and Merit Pool to 5.5%. Mr. Stroud seconded the motion. The motion carried 4-1 with Mr. Upright casting the opposing vote.

## II) Community Building Tennis Courts

Mayor Bringle stated that he contacted someone concerning the tennis courts at the Community Building. He stated that water has gotten under the fiberglass membrane and refinishing the courts would not serve for long. He stated that the age and history of this type project would not lend to holding up long-term.

Mr. Upright stated that he has not heard anyone complain about not being able to use the tennis court. He stated that he would like to see the courts removed.

The Council agreed that staff should be able to complete this project.

Mayor Bringle tabled this item until the next meeting.

## III) Railroad Update

Mayor Bringle gave an update to the Town Council concerning the railroad project and closing of Centerview. He stated that they had a meeting and were told that the crossing would be open but it is likely that it will not be for Farmers Day.

Mr. Deal stated that staff has met with NCDOT and the Rail division concerning their using Town streets and causing damage. He stated that they are considering a resolution that would reduce the load capacity for trucks through these streets.

Mr. Upright asked the date for the 5K race.

Lt. Deal stated that the race will be Friday, June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

Mr. Stroud requested to send information to the Board of Trade concerning this street closure.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Stroud made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Linn seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

---

**Amanda A. Eller**  
**Town Clerk**

---

**Don Bringle**  
**Mayor**