

REGULAR MEETING CITY COUNCIL
July 20, 2015

The City Council of the City of Albemarle met in a regular session on Monday, July 20, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall. Mayor Ronnie Michael presided, and the following Councilmembers were present, to-wit: Mayor Pro Tem Troy E. Alexander, Bill Aldridge, Benton H. Dry, II, Martha Sue Hall, Martha E. Hughes, Dexter Townsend, and Chris Whitley. Absent, none.

Mayor Michael called the meeting to order.

The City Council considered approval of the July 6 regular session and July 6 closed session minutes.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Hall, seconded by Councilmember Aldridge, and unanimously carried, the City Council approved the July 6 regular session as submitted.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Dry, seconded by Councilmember Townsend, and unanimously carried, the City Council approved the July 6 closed session minutes as amended.

Reverend Michael Stovall came before Council to discuss the City's hiring practices. Councilmember Townsend received this request from Reverend Stovall. Council reviewed a document prepared by Human Resources Director Robert Whitley of an overview of what the City does to advertise the positions we have available.

Reverend Stovall stated he is coming before Council on behalf of South Albemarle Ministerial Alliance which involves twelve churches with employment concerns for the minority in our City. He said that the last 5-6 months he had compiled data to present and that minority applicants seemed to not have as fair of a chance at jobs with the City. He commended Chief Halliburton for what he has done the past two years since he came on board with the City and he has made good progress in hiring minority personnel.

Reverend Stovall stated that one of his biggest issues is in the Fire Department and ask that City Council use their authority for these considerations. He said he felt obligated to come before Council to give the minority applicants a voice.

Reverend Stovall thanked City Council for listening to his comments this evening.

Human Resources Director Robert Whitley came forward and stated that there were two primary changes in the recently adopted Personnel Policy; one significant change is that all City positions will be advertised externally. This change will allow more positions, at all levels of the organization, to be made available to the public. Also the application process has been revised but not in use as of yet. The City will have an optional sheet with the application form. If the applicant chooses to fill this out, it will give added information for statistical purposes relating to sex, race, etc. of the applicant. Job openings are posted on the City website, the Stanly News and Press, sometimes the Charlotte Observer, and the Employment Security Commission. Specialized jobs may be posted in a trade magazine. Most of our positions are open for two weeks for applicants to apply for.

Upon questioning, Mr. Whitley stated that the job openings can be placed on the City's Facebook page if requested.

Fire Chief Oke came forward and stated that the Albemarle Fire Department is working with Concord, Monroe, Kannapolis, etc. in creating a regional hiring process where applicants can apply to anyone of these cities and be considered for any of the participating cities job openings.

Reverend Stovall asked to come back before City Council in three months to see what progress has been made. He stated that if he is made aware of the openings with the City, he will be glad to distribute applications to interested individuals within the twelve churches in the ministerial alliance in South Albemarle.

Councilmember Dry stated that the City could look at having a Career Day with all City departments participating with criteria for jobs available and to answer questions the public may have.

Mayor Michael asked about having an event at the EE Waddell Community Center. Councilmember Townsend stated that the City could also partner with Stanly County for the Career Day event.

Councilmember Hall stated that the Employment Security Commission is doing a job fair.

The Mayor stated that Council had a copy of the monthly departmental reports in their agenda packets and asked if anyone had any questions.

Upon questioning, Public Utilities Director Mike Leonas came forward to explain some causes of the delay in the CKA waterline project is somewhat due to the manufacturer of the pumps waiting on skids to place them on before shipping and they also ran into rock during the digging process.

Councilmember Hughes stated that there was no Rock Creek Park report as there was a report on all the other parks in our city.

The Mayor and City Council discussed the Governor's Highway Safety resolution for year number three of the Traffic Grant. The Federal match is \$33,913.00 and the local City of Albemarle match is \$33,912.00. This is the fifty/fifty match and the final year of the Traffic Grant. Funds start October 1, 2015

Upon a motion by Councilmember Dry, seconded by Councilmember Whitley, and unanimously carried, the City Council approved the Governor's Highway Safety resolution for year number three of the Traffic Grant where there is a federal match of \$33,913.00 and the local City of Albemarle match is \$33,912.00.

The Mayor and Council considered the relocation of the flagpole at Courthouse Square Park. Due to the growth of the trees over the years, the flagpole is in a location where the flag cannot be seen. The trees would have to be severely pruned to make the flag visible, so a solution is to relocate the flagpole. Courthouse Square Park is managed by the ADDC, and if approved, the City would be providing the labor and materials to relocate the flagpole.

Mayor Michael stated that this will allow the moving of the dedication monument and pole out into the walkway away from the trees.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Aldridge, seconded by Councilmember Hughes, and unanimously carried, the City Council approved the relocation of the flagpole at Courthouse Square Park, providing the labor and materials.

The Mayor and City Council reviewed a request of Piedmont Natural Gas for 275-foot gas Main Extension on Badin Road. PNG has provided the documents reviewed by Council. The extension will cross the road via a bore to serve the Westminster Presbyterian Church.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Alexander, seconded by Councilmember Hall, and unanimously carried, the City Council approved a request of Piedmont Natural Gas for 275-foot gas main extension on Badin Road.

The Mayor and City Council received an update on the branding initiative which is a joint venture between the City and Stanly County. Each jurisdiction will have its own tag line, logo and implementation options; there will be similarities in the brands that help establish a community-wide feel and concept. North Star Destination Strategies is recommending that the final presentation be made at a joint meeting with the City Council and Board of County Commissioners on Wednesday, August 19 at 5:30 p.m. This will fit the consultant's schedule and possibly allow them to avoid an overnight stay, which would increase the cost.

It was the consensus of City Council to meet with the County Commissioners and North Star on the branding initiative on Wednesday, August 19 at 5:30 with location to be determined at a later time.

The Mayor and City Council were reminded of the City of Albemarle National Night Out, Tuesday, August 4 from 6:00-9:00 pm at the Roosevelt Ingram Memorial Park.

The Mayor and Council discussed the groundbreaking ceremony for the Central School Project that was held at 6:00 p.m. this evening on the North Third Street side of the Property.

The City Manager stated that the budget books for FY 2015-16 are ready and were placed at each Councilmember's location at the dais.

The City Manager thanked Councilmember Dry and his business for helping in a water issue recently at the City Annex. His company was very helpful in taking care of the water and he thanked Councilmember Dry for the use of his equipment and employees in the cleanup which saved the tax payers money.

The City Manager asked that the Economic Development Director Mark Donham come forward and give a status report on the Albemarle Hotel.

Mr. Donham stated they are still looking for the State Historic Tax Credits to be reauthorized to facilitate the development of the Historic Albemarle Hotel. DFI is continuing to look at alternative ways to structure the development of the property should the North Carolina Senate does not approve the continuation of the Historic Tax Credits.

He also stated he will be meeting with a group next week that is looking at the hotel to evaluate if they may have an interest in developing it. Mr. Donham and Planning and Community Development Director Keith Wolf presented the Landmark Designation Report to the Albemarle Historic Resources Commission. They approved sending it to the North Carolina Office of Archives and History in the Department of Culture Resources for review. Keith Wolf sent the report. They will have 30 days to review it. We continue to wait and hope that the Senate will approve the Historic Tax Credits.

Councilmember Townsend thanked Planning and Community Development Director Keith Wolf and his staff on the demolition of four houses.

Councilmember Townsend recognized NC A&T State University and twelve students from Albemarle in an event there on Saturday.

Councilmember Townsend reminded everyone about the concert featuring David Leathers, Jr. sponsored by the Youth in Action Organization on July 30th at the EE Waddell Center.

Councilmember Aldridge thanked the City Fire, Police, and Public Works Departments for all their help on Saturday during the heavy rain storm which created a lot of flooding.

Councilmember Aldridge asked about what occurred north of the City on Sunday creating a power outage. Public Utilities Director Mike Leonas came forward and stated that the City was moving voltage around to compensate extreme energy usages. Councilmember Aldridge extended thanks to the Public Utilities Department.

Councilmember Alexander mentioned a car parked on the street at a section of E. Cannon Avenue that is an eyesore and should be removed from the street.

Councilmember Dry mentioned that the desks, chairs, and tables will be thrown away at the Old Central School building. He would like for the Landmark Group to be contacted to see if they will allow a day to give away those items and allow people who are interested in these items, come by and pick them up.

Mayor Michael stated we will have the Landmark Group set up times for people to pick up tables, chairs, and desks if interested.

The City Manager stated he will call the Landmark Group and report back to Council.

Councilmember Whitley stated it was great to see the groundbreaking today by the Landmark Group of the old Central School, the branding meeting to be setup with North Star in August with the County Commissioners and City Council, and Mark Donham's report this evening on the old Albemarle Hotel.

Councilmember Hall reiterated thanks to the City Fire, Police, and Public Works Departments for all their help on Saturday during the heavy rain storm which created a lot of flooding.

Councilmember Hall stated that the house on NC Hwy. 73 at Church Street that was taken down by the owner looks so much better but still not complete. The City Manager stated that this house was taken down by the owner voluntarily and he will check with the owner tomorrow concerning the clean up of the lot.

Councilmember Hall reminded everyone of a pancake event on August 8 for the Esther House at Applebee's.

Councilmember Hall stated that she received an email from Kathy Almond, President, Stanly County Chamber of Commerce concerning the NC Business and Economic Development Summit meeting in Washington, DC called "Taking Care of Business" on Tuesday, September 8 and Wednesday, September 9. Ms. Hall stated that Council may want to appoint a member to attend this meeting.

Councilmember Hall reminded everyone of the Elite Social Club event for a community clean up on Saturday, July 25 at the EE Waddell Community Center from 8-12 pm.

Councilmember Hall reminded everyone of the downtown Albemarle Blood Drive Tuesday, July 28 from 11 am – 2 pm sponsored by the City of Albemarle.

Finance Director Colleen Conroy came before Council concerning Reverend Stovall's presentation this evening concerning the City's hiring practices. She said that Council had voted to exclude Mecklenburg County residents from being hired due to it not being an adjacent County to Stanly. We still advertise some of our job openings in the Charlotte Observer. By excluding Mecklenburg County residents, we are losing out on thousands of qualified applicants.

Mayor Michael stated that any county that adjoins Stanly County can apply. He also stated that Council can revisit this issue if they would like at

any time if they fill the policy should change and come back with recommendations.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Townsend, seconded by Councilmember Aldridge, and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned.