

REGULAR MEETING CITY COUNCIL
December 7, 2015

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

Mayor Michael called the meeting to order and stated that this is the City's organizational meeting following the November 3 municipal elections.

The Reverend Jim Yow, Senior Pastor of Central United Methodist Church gave the invocation.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Townsend, seconded by Councilmember Hall, and unanimously carried, the minutes of the November 16 regular session, November 16 closed session, November 23 adjourned session and November 23 closed session minutes were approved as submitted.

Mayor Michael stated that he will miss Councilmember Alexander being beside of him after tonight and it is a sad day losing him and he will definitely be missed.

The Mayor stated that there will be a reception to celebrate Councilmember Alexander's 28 years of service on Monday, December 21 from 4:30-6:30 pm in the Raymond I. Allen Community Room.

Councilmember Alexander stated that he served by citizen approval and thanked the citizens that allowed him to serve all of these years. He said it had been an honor and a pleasure and he thoroughly enjoyed his terms.

Councilmember Alexander named all of the past and present Councilmembers he has served with including former Mayor Roger Snyder, Mayor Elbert L. Whitley, Jr, and former Councilmembers Jack Neel for 26 years, Judy Holcomb for 26 years, Ed Underwood, Tim White, Jim Napier, Jeanette Napier, Wade McSwain, Titus Stanback, Jane Van Sinderen and former City Manager Raymond I. Allen.

Councilmember Hall stated it is sad losing Councilmember Alexander and will be big shoes to fill for a great man.

Councilmember Dry stated that Councilmember Alexander had previously told him if you need me, give me a call and he will come straighten things out. He thanked Councilmember Alexander for all of his years of service to the community.

Councilmember Townsend stated that when he originally came on the Council, Councilmember Alexander told him if you vote for what you believe is right, you will be fine. He also thanked Councilmember Alexander for all of his years of service to the community.

Councilmember Hughes stated that it had been an honor and a pleasure to serve on Council with Councilmember Alexander.

Councilmember Aldridge stated that he knew that if someone ever said something negative about Councilmember Alexander, he knew to run from them because they evidently would not know the man he is.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Alexander, seconded by Councilmember Dry, and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned.

The Honorable Kevin Bridges, Superior Court Judge, came forth to deliver the oath of office to Mayor Ronnie Michael and City Councilmembers Bill Aldridge, Dr. Chris Bramlett, Martha Sue Hall, and Dexter Townsend.

(Oaths and Signatures)

The meeting reconvened with the newly sworn Mayor and City Council. Mayor Ronnie Michael presided, and the following Councilmembers were present to-wit: Bill Aldridge, Dr. Chris Bramlett, Benton H. Dry II, Martha Sue Hall, Martha E. Hughes, Dexter Townsend, and Christopher Whitley. Absent, none.

Mayor Michael thanked his wife and family for allowing him to spend the time to serve and to the public for another term to continue the work that is already in process.

Councilmember Townsend thanked his wife and daughter and he thanked everyone in District 1 for their continued support.

Councilmember Hall thanked her husband who has just retired from US Air and she thanked each one in the audience for their support and being here this evening.

Councilmember Bramlett thanked his wife, Pat who he has been married to for 55 years, friends and Sunday School class that are in the audience tonight. He stated that he could not choose a better Council group to work with.

Councilmember Aldridge thanked God for his many blessings, his wife Martha, his Mom and Dad, and his sisters. He also stated that it had been an honor and a pleasure to serve the people of the City of Albemarle and thanked them for their trust and confidence in him.

Mayor Michael stated that over the past couple years we have worked to improve economic conditions in the community. Council authorized an Economic Development Task Force that initiated with the prior Council and continues with this Council. Goals of the task force included hiring an Economic Development Director, creating a branding process, improving existing business support, improving leadership development, hiring a retail development group to assist the City and expanding the Planning Department. While all of these goals have been accomplished, another large goal is still not resolved. The goal of creating a Business Park is still in the creative stage. The City has reached out to the County and we are asking to partner with them to build a new Business Park. Our community lacks the product required to attract industry to our City. We must have this product if we want to bring new or expanding industry to our community.

Council also authorized a Business Development Task Force to review our development process and help us revise any process that hinders development. Our goal is to help the individual with requirements before they spend any money.

This past year Council held a strategic planning session and established goals for our future. These goals have allowed a direction for staff and Council in planning our priorities. Infrastructure is a major priority and over the past few years, Council has responded by authorizing many construction projects to address aging treatment plants, water lines, sewer lines and an enhancement to our electrical system. While we have priorities in place for the future, Council must now address what we move forward with. He said the current Council should consider and be prepared in the months ahead to address the following priorities:

- Business Park
- Downtown Revitalizations
- Wiscasset Mills Ball field Complex
- Reorganization of Albemarle Downtown Developed Corporation.

Council will have to prioritize what comes first. This is where we are asking the members of the community to let us know your wishes. Please take

the time and contact any of the members of Council. We need to hear from you, when we are trying to address the goals of this Council for the next few years and how we should spend the revenues available to the City. I encourage you to go to the City website and send emails, make calls or write to us. We want your input.

Mayor Michael recessed the meeting to allow the newly appointed members to converse with their family and friends that were in attendance.

Mayor Michael brought the meeting back in session at 7:41 pm and stated that Council had a copy of the municipal calendar in their agenda packets and asked if anyone had any questions.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Hall, seconded by Councilmember Townsend and unanimously carried, the City Council re-appointed Michael J. Ferris as City Manager.

Councilmember Dry moved to dispense with the written ballot as the method to select the Mayor Pro-Tem. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Whitley. Upon a vote, the motion was unanimously carried.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Townsend, seconded by Councilmember Whitley and unanimously carried, the City Council moved to appoint Councilmember Martha Sue Hall as Mayor Pro-Tem.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Dry, seconded by Councilmember Aldridge, and unanimously carried, the City Council re-appointed David A. Beaver City Attorney.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Hall, seconded by Councilmember Townsend, and unanimously carried, the City Council voted to

leave the appointment of the Finance Director – Colleen Conroy, Tax Collector – Lindsay Carter, City Clerk – Paulette Bowers, and Deputy City Clerk, Michael Ferris and Christina Alpin to the discretion of the City Manager. The City Manager indicated that it was his intention to make the following appointments:

Finance Director – Colleen Conroy
City Clerk – E. Paulette Bowers
Tax Collector – Lindsay Carter
Deputy City Clerk – Michael J. Ferris
Christina Alpin

Upon a motion by Councilmember Bramlett, seconded by Councilmember Dry and unanimously carried, the City Council reappointed the following:

Centralina Council of Governments.
Delegate Councilmember Hall
1st Alternate Councilmember Townsend

Rocky River Rural Planning Organization -Technical Advisory Committee
Delegate – Councilmember Whitley
Alternate – Councilmember Hall

Rocky River Rural Planning Organization -Technical Coordinating Comm.
Delegate – Michael J. Ferris
Alternate – Nina Underwood

North Carolina Municipal Power Agency One
Commissioner – Michael J. Ferris
1st Alternate – Mayor Michael
2nd Alternate – Councilmember Hall

North Carolina Municipal Power Agency One
Rate Committee
Delegate – Public Utilities Director Michael Leonas
Alternate – City Manager Michael J. Ferris

Upon a motion by Councilmember Hall, seconded by Councilmember Aldridge and unanimously carried, the City Council appointed Councilmember Hughes as the Albemarle Downtown Development Corporation Ex-Officio member.

The Reverend Michael Stovall came before Council to request an update on hiring practices. Pastor Stovall attended a recent meeting to discuss the diversity of the City's workforce. At that meeting, information was provided concerning what the City was doing at the time and the City also asked Pastor Stovall for suggestions of getting the information to potential candidates. At his suggestion, the City provided information on vacancies in the Fire Department to Pastor Stovall and he indicated he would work to help find candidates. Council reviewed statistics compiled by Human Resources Director Robert Whitley of people hired since the first of 2015, number of jobs advertised, applications received and information about the candidate selected for the positions.

Pastor Stovall came before City Council and spoke of six men that he requested the Fire Department test as job applicants for job openings with the City and that all those who followed through and took the test failed and were not given their test scores.

Human Resources Director Robert Whitley came forward and stated that this test is a national accredited and validated test for the hiring of Fire Department personnel. The Mayor asked that Mr. Whitley review and make sure of the validity of this test in question and bring information back before Council. The Mayor also asked that Mr. Whitley bring back information on the adjacent towns or cities that are using this test.

Upon questioning, Fire Chief Shawn Oke came forward and stated that on a normal basis, we do not release the test scores to the applicants but he is willing to if Council so chooses. Chief Oke said there is a written test and a physical abilities test that the applicants are administered.

Pastor Stovall asked Council to review the entire process and validity of the tests given and that Council consider having Chief Oke release the test scores to the applicants.

Upon questioning concerning sponsorship, Chief Oke stated that the City sponsored two people to attend the rookie school through the Concord Fire Department. This is a new program and the City worked with the City of Concord on how to do this. This program consists of the volunteer attending 16 weeks of all day training in Concord.

Councilmember Dry stated that the City needs to allow applicants the opportunity to review their test scores and the department to review the test results with each one of them. He also stated that the six applicants should consider reapplying.

The Mayor and City Council received an update on the status of the unopened alleyway between Church St and NC Hwy 73. The last action by City Council authorized the City Attorney to draft an agreement for the consideration of each property owner. The agreement would allow the City to undertake the needed work to address the drainage issue, including the removal of vegetation in this area and the construction of an earthen berm to address the water run-off issue. This solution would also allow the City to avoid conflicts with the underground gas main and service taps.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Dry, seconded by Councilmember Townsend and unanimously carried, the City Council approved sending a letter to all the property owners involved stating that there is nothing the City can do until the last two property owners decide to sign the hold harmless agreement for the City.

The Mayor and City Council considered setting a public hearing for a map amendment to rezone 503 Old Charlotte Road from LID/Light Industrial District to HID/Heavy Industrial District. On November 24, 2015, the Planning Board recommended approval of a request of Yett Millwork Corporation to rezone 503 Old Charlotte Road (Tax Record 26613) from LID/Light Industrial District to HID/Heavy Industrial District in order to accommodate a new business at this site. A public hearing can be set for Monday, January 4, 2016.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Hall, seconded by Councilmember Aldridge and unanimously carried, the City Council approved setting a public hearing for Monday, January 4, 2015 for a Map Amendment to Rezone 503 Old Charlotte Road from LID/Light Industrial District to HID/Heavy Industrial District

The Mayor and City Council considered setting a public hearing for a Text Amendment to § 92-110 through § 92.116 Related to Duties and

Responsibilities of the Board of Adjustment. On November 24, 2015, the Planning Board recommended approval of a text amendment to § 92-110 through § 92.116. This is regarding City regulations governing the Board of Adjustment for the purpose of incorporating recent changes made by the North Carolina General Assembly to GS 160A-388. A public hearing can be set for January 4, 2016.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Hall, seconded by Councilmember Dry, and unanimously carried, the City Council approved setting public hearing for Monday, January 4, 2016 for a Text Amendment to § 92-110 through § 92.116 related to duties and responsibilities of the Board of Adjustment.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Hall, seconded by Councilmember Hughes, and unanimously carried, the City Council approved a budget amendment to appropriate insurance proceeds in the amount of \$7,406 in September and \$2,222 in November and for staff to appropriate these funds to Vehicle Repairs & Maintenance in the Police Department.

(Ordinance 15-36 - Budget Amendment to Appropriate Insurance Proceeds.)

The Mayor and City Council considered approval of write-offs of Public Housing tenant accounts for the period January 1, 2015 to June 30, 2015 in the amount of \$1,932.45 and reviewed amount collected during this same time period. Staff will continue to try to collect these bad debts through the debt set off program.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Townsend, seconded by Councilmember Hall, and unanimously carried, the City Council approved write-offs of Public Housing tenant accounts for the period January 1, 2015 to June 30, 2015 in the amount of \$1,932.45.

The Mayor and City Council considered designation of a City Councilmember to review and sign elected official travel expense reports. Mayor Michael and Councilmember Alexander were designated by the City Council to review and sign the travel expense reports for elected officials. City Council

should consider appointing a member to serve in this capacity to replace Mr. Alexander.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Townsend, seconded by Councilmember Dry, and unanimously carried, the City Council appointed Councilmember Whitley to review and sign elected official travel expense reports.

The Mayor and City Council reviewed Municipal Ethics requirements and upcoming training opportunities for Mayor and City Council. The City Manager noted that all newly elected or reelected officials should consider attendance at one of the upcoming seminars and advise staff which opportunity you would like to be registered. The Essentials of Municipal Government Course (designed for newly elected officials) is the closest session which takes place in Hickory on January 8-9. The cost to register is \$425 per attendee. LeaderShop for Veteran Elected Officials also takes place in conjunction with the Essentials course in Hickory. This is a one day course that takes place on January 8. Registration cost is \$225 per attendee. Otherwise, the ON DEMAND and LIVE webinars that will take place in the summer of 2016 will suffice for the requirement as well.

The Mayor and City Council discussed a date for a joint meeting with the ADDC Board of Directors. The ADDC Board of Directors has proposed a meeting for January 21 at 6:00 p.m. between the ADDC and the City Council to be facilitated by Liz Parham, Executive Director of the North Carolina Main Street Program. The purpose is to review the findings / recommendation concerning the future structure and focus of the ADDC. The purpose of the joint meeting is to hear the findings and recommendations and begin establishing a path forward with a clear understanding of the purpose and expectations.

It was the consensus of City Council to have a joint meeting with the ADDC Board of Directors on January 21 at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall.

The Mayor and City Council considered rescheduling the January 18 City Council Meeting due to conflict with a City Holiday. City offices will be

closed on January 18th in observance of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday and City Council has typically rescheduled their meeting.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Hall, seconded by Councilmember Townsend, and unanimously carried, the City Council approved rescheduling the Monday, January 18 City Council Meeting due to conflict with a City Holiday to Tuesday, January 19 at 7 pm.

The Mayor and City Council reviewed information concerning an award from the Parks & Recreation Trust Fund Grant for improvements at Morehead Park in the amount of \$130,500 with the City matching these funds. The Mayor noted that planned improvements include resurfacing of the park's six tennis courts, construction of a dog park, and construction of an ADA-accessible walking trail, renovation to the filtration system, installation of shade structures at the park swimming pool, resurfacing park basketball court, construction of a second picnic shelter, and installation of two outdoor corn hole courts.

The Mayor and City Council were reminded of the 2015 Employee Christmas Luncheon to be held on Wednesday, December 16 at the EE Waddell Center from 11:30 - 1:30. City Council is invited to help serve the employees.

Mayor Michael stated that Council needs to schedule a time for their group photos.

It was the consensus of City Council to meet before the Monday, January 4 regular session at 6:15 pm for group photos.

Mayor Michael stated that with the Wiscasset Park Ball field project coming up and the auditorium at the Old Central School, Council needs to amend our naming rights policy from a small scale to a larger facility and sponsorship scale.

Mayor Michael also stated that we have to decide on an architect/engineer for the Wiscasset Park Ball complex and request for qualifications and proper procedure for applications. Then Council can make a choice of the one preferred.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Dry, seconded by Councilmember Hall, and unanimously carried, the City Council approved moving forward with request for qualifications and proper procedure for proposals.

Councilmember Townsend asked if Public Housing Director Cedric Baldwin could give an update on the rebidding for Phase III of the HVAC project. Mr. Baldwin stated that the City has already advertised for bids and the pre-bid conference with potential vendors is setup for December 17 at 10:30 am and the bid opening is set up for January 7 at 2:30 pm, both at City Hall.

Councilmember Townsend also asked for an update on the sidewalk project for Leonard Avenue. Public Works Director Nina Underwood stated that the City will go out for bids in January 2016, construction authorization has been made with NCDOT and bid documents will be drafted, reviewed and advertised in February 2016. On the US Hwy. 52 sidewalk project, award of the contract was made to Little Mountain Builders, LLC. Awaiting design quote from Teaque Engineering and possible discussion of design quote and engineering contract.

Councilmember Hughes asked about the City's performance review process. Human Resources Director Robert Whitley came forward and stated that the contract has been signed and received by the North Carolina League of Municipalities (NCLM). Mr. Whitley stated that he was contracted by Springsted to begin gathering information and as of last week, all requested information has been sent to Springsted. The City is waiting on the next step from Springsted but it will probably be after the holidays.

Councilmember Aldridge congratulated Interim Police Chief Danny Bowen on a job well done.

Councilmember Dry thanked newly appointed Interim ADCC Director Dana McDow on a great job putting together the Downtown Christmas event.

Councilmember Whitley stated that he also attended the Albemarle Downtown Christmas event on Friday and there was a lot there to see.

Councilmember Whitley welcomed Dr. Bramlett to the Council.

Councilmember Whitley stated that he is glad to the PARTF grant has been awarded to the City for the needed improvements at Morehead Park.

Councilmember Whitley stated that the Board of Education gave a presentation recently at North Stanly High School on Plan B. He said that he and Dr. Bramlett attended. The PowerPoint presentation is on the Stanly County Schools website with a note from Superintendent Dr. Terry Griffin.

Councilmember Hall thanked the Police Department and Fire Department and the community on their recent efforts to help the Jeremy Cleaver's family after their house fire.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Hall, seconded by Councilmember Dry and unanimously carried, the Mayor and City Council adjourned to a Closed Session pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3)(6) - To Consult with the City Attorney and Personnel.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Hall, seconded by Councilmember Bramlett and unanimously carried, the Mayor and City Council reconvened to open session. Mayor Michael announced that a closed session was held pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(a) (3) (6) - To consult with the City Attorney and Personnel Matters and there was nothing to report at this time.

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