

ADJOURNED MEETING CITY COUNCIL
February 9, 2013

The City Council of the City of Albemarle met in an adjourned session on Saturday, February 9, 2013, at 8:00 a.m. in the Executive Conference Room of the City Hall. Mayor Elbert L. Whitley presided and the following Councilmembers were present, to wit: Troy E. Alexander, Martha Sue Hall, Judy U. Holcomb, Ronnie Michael, Jack F. Neel, Dexter Townsend and T. Ed Underwood. Absent, none.

The Mayor and the City Council held a Fiscal Year 2013/2014 Planning and Budgeting Work Session in the Executive Conference Room of the City Hall with the City Manager, Assistant City Manager, and City Clerk.

Mayor Whitley brought the meeting to order and the City Manager stated that there were some items that he would like to present first concerning signatures for an appreciation letter to the ED Task Force and the conflicts to the existing scheduled budget work sessions.

The City Manager stated that he will need signatures from all Councilmembers on the letter of appreciation to each ED Task Force member from City Council.

Councilmember Hall stated that they will be honoring Dr. William R. Purcell on February 21 and we need to think about rescheduling our budget meeting scheduled that day. Also, Ms. Hall stated that she has a conflict with the time of the May 9 budget work session.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Hall, seconded by Councilmember Underwood and unanimously carried, the City Council agreed on changing the February 21 meeting at 5:30 to Wednesday, February 27 at 5:30 pm. The meeting scheduled for Monday, February 25 at 5:30 will not change.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Hall, seconded by Councilmember Townsend and unanimously carried, the City Council agreed to change the May 9 budget work session from 5:30 pm to 9:00 am. The May 7 budget work session will stay the same and be held at 5:30 pm.

Councilmember Hall asked that a resolution be prepared and signed by Council for the Mayor to present to him on Thursday, February, 21.

The Mayor stated that the first item to be discussed will be the Economic Development Task Force recommendations. Mayor Whitley stated that he, the City Manager, Chairman Russ Sharples and Vice Chairman Tracie Sells had a meeting with County Manager Andy Lucas, Commissioners Gene McIntyre and Tony Dennis and the EDC Director Paul Stratos on Friday, February 8. He also stated that at the meeting on Friday he recommended being a partner in the EDC and possibly the City could put money into a long time partnership with the County to produce a product such as land and buildings. He continued to state that the County was receptive to a great degree. The County asked if we could hold off from a response until after their February 22 budget meeting.

The Mayor also mentioned to the County EDC about them having Duke Power in their service areas and that the City of Albemarle has the NC Public Power in our service areas and maybe both could work together.

Councilmember Judy Holcomb came into the meeting at this time.

The Mayor continued to state that he feels the County will come back with some type of offer. The Mayor answered any questions that Council had.

Councilmember Michael asked about the City investing in the land behind Wal-Mart on Henson Street. We will probably have to extend Leonard Street all the way to US Hwy 52 at some point.

The Mayor also stated that we have requested that City Council, the County Commissioners, EDC and the ED Task Force meet together and hopefully we will be able to do this at least quarterly.

Councilmember Townsend stated that we may need to consider Cal Maine Foods property on Henson Street and maybe the possibility of purchasing for economic development.

Upon questioning, Councilmember Hall looked up the Cal Maine property on the Stanly County GIS and stated it is in the City limits. Upon

questioning of other properties to consider, the Mayor mentioned Pinehurst Manufacturing which use to be part of Metal Forge and there are other buildings to consider on West Main Street for economic development.

The Mayor stated that as soon as we hear from Stanly County, we will continue our conversation on partnering with the EDC on economic development.

The City Manager stated that Stanly County has not had a new property reevaluation in 8 years. Property taxes are the largest source of revenue for the General Fund. Four years ago there was a reevaluation done but the County went to the legislature and made the reevaluations null and void. We should have the results of this reevaluation by March 1 to determine what repercussions this may be on the budget for the coming fiscal year.

The City Manager reviewed the City's current financial position and future forecast. He talked about the General Fund Fund Balance at the conclusion of the most recent fiscal year, sales tax revenues, the electric fund, water/sewer, landfill, etc. Also, he reported that the sales tax revenues continue to be sluggish, but noted they are close to the same as last year. The sales tax revenue is the City's second largest source of revenue for the General Fund. Also, the City Manager reviewed the debt service for the periods ending June 30, 2012, June 30, 2013 and June 30, 2014.

The City Manager noted that the County implemented the new revaluation which started January 2013. Stanly County is assuming a County wide overall increase or decrease of 5% in property values but, we do not know how much the City's valuation will go up or down at this point.

Also, Senator Bob Rucho on Thursday was laying out plans on income tax and he mentioned lowering or eliminating income taxes to be more competitive with other states.

The City Manager covered the unemployment insurance which the City would now be responsible for. The City will have to place 1% in escrow (up to \$100,000) and then money will be drawn from that percentage amount and spread between all City funds. The City Manager covered the City's debt burden which continues to be low, but which is increasing due to water and sewer projects.

The City Council members were each asked which priorities are most important in the City's economic development strategy. Overall, it was determined that the following are most important strategy points.

- 1) Branding
- 2) Marketing
- 3) A position either in City Manager's office, ADDC, or the Planning Department for Economic Development.

Hall – Branding and continue to use the ED Task Force members in the City's endeavors going forward.

Michael – Branding and to create a staff position possibly in Administration or ADDC. We need to make sure that the Wiscasset property will allow for 3 ball fields.

Alexander – Branding and to create a staff position possibly in ADDC not the Planning Dept.

Townsend – Branding and we need information on the possibility of a joint position with County

Holcomb - Branding and to create a staff position in the Planning Dept.

The Mayor stated that ElectriCities could give a lot of input toward a marketing plan.

The City Manager stated that he feels Albemarle's niche is outdoor leisure activities which include our City parks, greenways, jogging and running events, The Uwharries, Lake Tillery, Badin Lake, and Morrow Mountain.

The Mayor and City Council discussed the impact of the Affordable Care Act on the City's Health Insurance. Assistant City Manager Michael Ferris talked with Human Resources Director Robert Whitley and he stated that there is only one provision that requires something from the City and that is the reporting of the cost of coverage provided to the City employees on the w-2 forms beginning with calendar year 2012 which are furnished to employees in January

2013. If there are any changes from continued discussions on the federal level concerning this act, we will act accordingly.

The Mayor and City Council reviewed the completed and in process Capital Improvement Projects. The City Manager pointed out the capital projects by department completed and in process. Some projects were completed as of June 30, 2012 and some are anticipated through June 30, 2013 and beyond.

The City Manager stated that the Assistant City Manager is currently coordinating with the department heads the 2013-2017 CIP projections. Councilmember Hall asked that the information provided today continue to be provided each year at budget time for Council review.

Assistant City Manager Michael Ferris reviewed some of the features that the City is looking at when considering only one web provider such as CivicPlus, that offers a variety of consolidated features. We are considering taking a comprehensive approach with one company for all services needed. Some of the features covered in the handout were agenda preparation, alert system, archive center, bid postings, blog, resource directory, community voice, document center, e-payment center, facility reservations, forms development, job postings, live streaming video, etc.

Mr. Ferris answered any questions that Council had.

City Council decided to move forward with a RFP on this item for the 2013-2014 fiscal year.

The Mayor and City Council discussed a facility tour of projects in process and future projects. Some of the sights demanding a tour were the Tuckertown Water Treatment Plant and the Niven Center. The City Manager stated that these tours could be scheduled at any time desired by City Council.

The Mayor asked that this item be brought up on the agenda at the April 1 Council meeting to choose a date for the tour. It was determined to do one tour and see all project sites at once.

Councilmember Underwood left the meeting at this time.

Councilmember Alexander stated that his top budget priority would be to concentrate on the recommendations of the ED Task Force involving a planning and cost study. Second, continuing the work of the Gang Task Force here like the one in Statesville. The City Manager stated that a second grant has been applied for to continue this task force.

Councilmember Michael stated that the City Council should pick up the cost if this grant is not approved for this initiative.

Third, Mr. Alexander stated he would like to see a pay increase for employees included in the budget.

Councilmember Holcomb stated that her top budget priority would be to make a ball field complex at the Wiscassett property. She would also like to buy the small parcel across the street to use as a parking lot. Second, placing sidewalks on Leonard Avenue between NC Hwy 24-27 and East Main Street.

It was stated that the City does not have the right of way past the curb on Leonard Avenue. The City Manager stated that we will need the right of way first before NCDOT would be able to do this project. He also stated that he has Public Works Director Michael Lambert investigating this possible project and others.

Mayor Whitley stated that Groves Avenue should also be considered for sidewalks from NC Hwy 24-27 to East Main Street.

Councilmember Holcomb left the meeting at this time.

Councilmember Michael stated that his top priority would be a salary increase for employees. Second, he would like the City to start working on a 401k % match for all employees' contributions.

Councilmember Hall stated that in the short term she would like to see City Council recognize Larry and Barbara Bowers on their Main Street award. Next, she would like to see City Council stay in contact with the ED Task Force and not lose the energy level and continue engagement with them. Also, Ms. Hall stated that Second Street is the worse street surface near the hospital all the way from Hawthorne to City Hall.

Councilmember Neel stated that Salisbury Street north is a State road.

Also, Ms. Hall stated that the Mayor of Richfield asked that when we go in to place the water line on Floyd Street, he would like to be a liaison. He would like to see sidewalks and curbing in Richfield. He asked to be kept informed.

Councilmember Hall stated that there are still old campaign signs up near the intersection of Church Street and NC Highway 73.

Mr. Alexander stated that there are two signs near Dr. Pasterini's home near 9th and 10th Streets. Both were pertaining to the register of deeds office.

Councilmember Townsend stated that a top priority for him would also be adding sidewalks on Leonard Avenue. He stated that he would like to look at sidewalks in general and concerns of if they are handicap accessible. He mentioned the newspaper article by David Morgan some months ago. Third, to consider a dog park which would not be a major expense. He asked that Toby Thorpe continue to look at this in his 2013-2014 budget.

Next, Mr. Townsend stated that in creating a residential park, we may be able to consider purchasing the vacant land near the EE Waddell Center as a capital project by buying this adjoining land for growth possibilities. The City Manager stated if the City could buy the property near the EE Waddell Center then build a multi-field facility on the Wiscassett property, we may not have to build a park on the NE Connector.

Councilmember Neel stated that a PIO would help in talking about the things that the City is doing since we do not do a good job of selling ourselves. He also asked that the City not cut the street paving program at all.

Mayor Whitley stated that this has been a good work day and a lot will come forth from today's discussions.

Mayor Whitley also stated that he and City Council always brag on the City Manager's performance which is always true but he would like to add to this. He stated that Assistant City Manager Michael Ferris takes up a lot of slack for the City Manager and he also stated that Paulette Bowers aids both of them and he would like to thank everyone for their hard work.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Michael, seconded by Councilmember Townsend, and unanimously carried, there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.