

ADJOURNED MEETING CITY COUNCIL
March 1, 2011

The City Council of the City of Albemarle met in an adjourned session on Tuesday, March 1, 2011, at 9:00 a.m. in the Stanly County Board of Elections office of Stanly Commons. Mayor Elbert L. Whitley presided and the following Councilmembers were present, to wit: Troy E. Alexander, Martha Sue Hall, Judy Holcomb, Jeanette M. Napier, Jack F. Neel, Dexter Townsend and T. Ed Underwood. Absent, none.

The Mayor and the City Council held a meeting with the Stanly County Board Elections to discuss redistricting and the polling locations for the 2011 municipal elections.

Mayor Whitley called the meeting to order.

Ms. Kimberly Wilson, Elections Director, Stanly County Board of Elections, discussed the election process. She indicated that in 2009 the municipal elections polling places were moved from the way they had been to allow voters to vote within their City electoral district. This was at the recommendation of the City Council and the Board of Election agreed to try it. She said there was a great deal of voter confusion about polling locations in that election that the Elections staff had to address.

Ms. Wilson also discussed the effect City of Albemarle redistricting process will have on 2011 elections. She noted the Board of Elections have pushed back the filing date for City elections to the end of July in order to provide more time to address the redistricting process and possible adjustment of City voting districts.

Ms. Wilson indicated that in 2009, as a result of the trial to have one polling place within each City voting district, approximately 6,200 City voters changed polling places from the previous election. This is approximately 2/3 of all City voters and this created a great deal of voter confusion. She did say that in the future, it may be possible to have four polling locations within the City with voters having the option to vote at any of them. State authorizing legislation has not yet passed to allow this and it will take some time to organize and make happen once it does.

Councilmember Holcomb concurred that the trial of having voting locations with voting districts was confusing and created a lot of problems and is in favor of changing it back to the way it had been.

Councilmember Neel said to have voters vote outside their City electoral district is confusing and districts and precincts need to be coterminous. Ms. Wilson suggested investigating the possibility of during the redistricting process to have the City Council districts moved to coincide with the precinct boundaries. Councilmember Neel said there are population and demographic considerations when establishing these City districts and this is not feasible. He suggested getting a special act of the North Carolina General Assembly to have the lines coincide. Ms. Wilson said the precincts lines need to be where they are based on State reporting requirements and due to the fact these lines are used in non-City elections, it has a broader impact. Ms. Wilson said in the 2011 municipal election that the Board of Elections will send information to voters to reduce confusion. This information will include sample ballots, maps, and a list of candidates. Councilmember Holcomb reiterated that she felt consistency in polling location is the key.

The Stanly County Board of Elections voted to go back to the previous polling location arrangement.

The Stanly County Board of Elections left the meeting at this time.

Mayor Whitley said he was upset about the agenda for the meeting last night with the NCDOT and Stanly County Board of Commissioners. He said he did not know or see an agenda until the meeting was underway. He said that as Mayor, it is his duty and responsibility to facilitate the meeting and to welcome those in attendance. He said the printed agenda did not provide him this opportunity and he was embarrassed by the process that he was not aware of. He said he does not want to see this happen again.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.