

ADJOURNED MEETING CITY COUNCIL
April 22, 2008
(Morning Session)

The City Council of the City of Albemarle met in an adjourned session on Tuesday, April 22, 2008, at 9:00 a.m. in the Stanly County Board of Elections Office at Stanly County Commons. Mayor Elbert L. "Whit" Whitley presided and the following Councilmembers were present, to wit: Troy E. Alexander, Martha Sue Hall, Judy Holcomb, Jeanette M. Napier, Jack F. Neel, T. Ed Underwood and T.E. White. Absent, none.

Councilmember Neel began the meeting by describing the issue he has observed that has lead to the meeting. He said that the City voting districts can encompass several voting precincts. This overlapping of boundary lines and intermingling of precincts and City voting districts causes confusions for voters because they are unsure of where to vote. Councilmember Neel distributed proposed local legislation the City Attorney has drafted to make the City voting districts coincide with the precinct boundaries.

Stanly County Elections Director Kimberly Wilson addressed the issues raised by Councilmember Neel. She said there had been a freeze on the alterations to the precinct boundaries by the State, but this freeze has been lifted. She said the manner in which election results must be reported to the State are set up for the convenience of reporting results during State and Federal elections. Doing what the City has requested would lead up to 30 different ballot styles in certain City voting districts. The end result of this would lead to more voter confusion and potential staff error on election day, which is what the City is trying to avoid.

Ms. Wilson did say she has the authority to establish one voting site per precinct for municipal elections. On non-municipal elections, the voting locations would be different. A majority of the City Council did not feel it would be a good idea to do this as it would lead to different polling places each year, resulting in greater voter confusion concerning their polling location.

Ms. Wilson outlined some of the recent steps taken by the Board of Elections to reduce the likelihood of voter confusion and staff error. Specifically, she noted the provisional ballot procedure which will allow a vote to be cast and the eligibility to be determined later. Councilmember White also suggested a more prominent display on the voter registration card about an individual's voting location or even a separate notice about this.

Mayor Whitley felt as though the City Council needed to discuss this issue further amongst themselves in light of the information and issues the Board of Elections has outlined.

Upon a motion by Councilmember White, seconded by Councilmember Hall, the City Council adjourned to Tuesday, April 22 at 5:00 p.m. in the Conference Room of the City Hall Annex for interviews with potential annexation consultants.