

The Smithfield Town Council held a work session on Tuesday, November 18, 2014, at 6:30 pm. at the Smithfield Recreation and Aquatics Center located at 600 Booker Dairy Road in the Banquet Room. Mayor John H. Lampe, II presided.

Councilmen Present:

M. Andy Moore, Mayor Pro-Tem
Marlon Lee, District 1
J. Perry Harris, District 2
Travis Scott, District 3
Emery D. Ashley, At-Large
Charles A. Williams, At-Large

Councilmen Absent

Roger A. Wood, District 4

Administrative Staff Present

Paul Sabiston, Town Manager
Gary Johnson, Interim Parks & Recreation Director
Mike Scott, Chief of Police
Shannan Williams, Town Clerk

The meeting was called to order at approximately 6:30 pm with a tour of the Smithfield Recreation and Aquatics Center.

Topics of Discussion

1. Hiring of a part-time Police Officer

This item was moved from the Consent Agenda at the November 5, 2014 meeting to the Work Session.

Chief of Police Mike Scott addressed the Council on hiring a part-time Police Officer. Chief Scott explained that it would be a beneficial endeavor for the Police Department, Johnston Community College and for the officer. He further explained that the officer is a tenured employee having eight years of service with the Smithfield Police Department. She has done an outstanding job during her tenure with this agency and holds several certifications. The officer recently tenured her resignation to accept a new position created at Johnston Community College (JCC) as a law enforcement liaison in charge of creating JCC emergency response protocols regarding law enforcement and other emergency services. Her exact work responsibilities are complex and, I think, somewhat fluid at this point.

Because of her position, JCC was interested in the officer maintaining her law enforcement status. This status allows her to be armed on campus, but does not allow her to take law enforcement actions, as a representative of the Smithfield Police Department. A possible solution to this issue was to allow her part-time status with the Smithfield Police Department. Another option was for her to maintain her certification by becoming a part-time deputy with the Johnston County Sheriff's Office. After a review of this possibility, it was viewed as a win-win situation for all involved, should we maintain her certification.

Mayor Pro- Tem Moore questioned the cost associated with hiring the part-time officer. Chief Scott explained that the cost would be minimal because the officer would be utilized at times that are mutually agreeable, to fill manpower requirements that might otherwise cost the city overtime dollars, no new equipment purchases will be required and no new training will be required since she has already completed all Smithfield Police Department's training required of new hires.

Councilman Ashley questioned if the Town would be responsible for any insurance or retirement costs. Chief Scott explained that the officer would have to work in excess of 1,000 hours a year to be eligible for retirement benefits and the officer would be ineligible for insurance benefits.

Councilman Harris suggested that the option of utilizing retired officer be explored by the department.

Councilman Scott made a motion, seconded by Councilman Harris, to approve the hiring of a part-time Police Officer. Unanimously approved.

2. Recruitment Efforts/ Program for hiring in the Police Department

Chief of Police Mike Scott addressed the Council on recruitment efforts for hiring new officers for the Police Department. He explained that the Police Department has a difficult time hiring officers and retaining officers due to being less competitive with other agencies. He requested from Council the latitude to hire someone that would potentially be a good employee and send them to the Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET). Chief Scott further explained that there are potential employees that would be an asset to the department, but they cannot afford to leave their current employment to participate in the BLET.

Mayor Lampe suggested that an employment contract be in place for anyone that is sent through the training while being employed. Chief Scott responded that if an employee is sent to the training then they would be required to work with the Town for 5 years or return any costs associated on a pro-rated basis. He further responded that this would help retain employees and lower the cost associated with employee turnover and hiring new officers.

Mayor Pro-Tem Moore questioned if this was available to any possible candidate. Chief Scott responded that the Town follows Equal Employment Opportunity Commission standards and all are eligible for this program. He stated that he would be responsible for choosing all eligible candidates.

Mayor Pro-Tem Moore made a motion, seconded by Councilman Scott, to allow Chief Scott to proceed with recruitment efforts for hiring in the Police Department. Unanimously approved.

3. Website re-design discussion

Town Manager Paul Sabiston discussed with the Council the need/ desire to re-design the website.

Mayor Lampe suggested that the Town consider something simple, inexpensive and easy to maintain.

Councilman Harris stated that someone should be responsible for maintaining it on a daily basis. Mr. Sabiston responded that we currently have an IT staff person that does maintain the website on a daily basis.

Councilman Scott suggested that one employee be dedicated to social media outlets since more people are turning to social media for news and updates. Mr. Sabiston responded that the HR Director/ PIO is responsible for maintaining and updating all social media outlets.

Mayor Lampe suggested to Mr. Sabiston that the Council be provided with a clear direction on the needs of the Town's website.

4. FY 2015-2016 Budget Goal Setting Session

Mayor Lampe suggested that each member of Council e-mail Mr. Sabiston their ideas/changes to the budget and to use this fiscal year's budget as a starting point.

Councilman Harris stated that he felt preserving the fund balance and maintaining the water treatment facility were high priorities. He further stated that the Town should consider renegotiating the contract that is currently in place with Johnston County. He suggested that the

County could potentially assist with maintenance of the facility if they could purchase more water from the Town.

It was the consensus of the Council to hold the Budget Goal Setting Session on Tuesday, December 16th at 6:30 in the Town Hall Council Chambers. This meeting will take the place of the regularly scheduled Work Session.

5. Consolidation of certain services with Selma

Mayor Lampe suggested that it could be a mutually beneficial partnership to consolidate some services with the Town of Selma. He further suggested that a committee be formed to meet with officials from the Town of Selma to explore this endeavor.

Councilman Williams, Councilman Harris and Councilman Scott volunteered to serve on this committee.

6. Truck/bus parking prohibition in cul-de-sac near Golden Corral/ Sheetz

Mayor Lampe informed the Council that there has been some discussion about prohibiting truck and bus parking in the cul-de-sac near the Golden Corral.

Councilman Harris questioned why the Town would regulate parking in this area. Mayor Lampe stated that the developer is now ready for the Town to take possession of the road. Once this is completed, the Town will be responsible for maintaining it. Mayor Lampe stated that the Golden Corral uses that area as over flow parking and to accommodate trucks and buses. Mayor Lampe suggested that "no parking" signs be installed.

Councilman Harris suggested that the developer and the owner of the Golden Corral be contacted to discuss this issue.

7. Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment

Town Manager Paul Sabiston discussed with the Council the Parks and Recreation assessment of all Town Park Facilities. He explained that staff has reviewed all parks and has determined all repairs or maintenance needed.

Mayor Lampe stated that in the past, it was discussed that the Town should close all of the smaller parks to focus its attention on the Community Park.

Mayor Pro-Tem Moore stated that if the park is needed then the Town should maintain it. He further stated that Parks and Recreation doesn't just serve children and young adults. More people are living longer active lives and they too are utilizing park services. Mr. Moore explained that government should supply services that are not going to recoup the cost of providing and that park and recreation services are good for the community as a whole.

Councilman Ashley requested an honest assessment of all programs to include the amount of in-town and out of town participants.

Mayor Lampe suggested that a committee be formed to review all parks and programs.

Mayor Lampe, Mayor Pro-Tem Moore, Councilman Harris and Councilman Lee volunteered to serve on this committee.

8. Other Issues

- **Condemnation of the Old Town Hall Building**

Mayor Lampe stated that he is ready to begin condemnation proceedings. Mr. Sabiston explained the condemnation process to the Council. He further explained that property owners should not be permitted to have property that is unsafe and unsightly to remain intact.

Councilman Harris stated that the owners should at least maintain it to a point where it is less of an eyesore. It is an unsafe building that needs to be repaired to even minimum standards.

Councilman Ashley suggested that the Town meet with the owners to discuss the property. He stated that the Town should look at its own property that has been neglected and devise a plan to deal with it.

There being no further business, Councilman Ashley made a motion, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Moore, to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 8:41 pm

John H. Lampe, II , Mayor

ATTEST:

Shannan L. Williams, Town Clerk