

November 3rd, 2014

At 7:00pm, on Monday, November 3rd, 2014, in the Board Room of the Landis Municipal Building, Mayor James Furr called to order the Town of Landis Board of Aldermen Regular Meeting. Those present along with the Mayor were Aldermen Roger Safrit, Dennis Brown, Tony Hilton and Dorland Abernathy, Town Manager Reed Linn, Police Chief Bob Wood, Recreation Director Andrew Morgan, Deputy Town Clerk Debbie Goodman, Administrative Assistant Heather Wood and Town Attorney Rick Locklear.

A quorum was met.

Mayor James Furr opened the meeting and welcomed all those in attendance.

The pledge of allegiance was led by Mayor James Furr.

Alderman Abernathy motioned, seconded by Alderman Brown, to adopt the agenda with the addition of Items 7-A (Consider Adopting A Resolution in Support of the Thread Trail Master Plan) and 14 (Consider Going Into Executive Session to Discuss Personnel Matters). All voted aye.

Alderman Safrit motioned, seconded by Alderman Abernathy, to adopt the minutes from the September 8th, 2014 Regular Meeting as amended. All voted aye.

The first order was the 2013-2014 of the Town of Landis' financial audit, as presented by Tony Brewer. Mr. Brewer thanked the Board and Aldermen for the opportunity to work for the Town and to present to them tonight. He reminded them that he works for the Town and the Board could always feel free to call him if they had any questions.

Mr. Brewer then went over the 2013-2014 audit. Page one was the Audit Opinion and the Town had received an "unqualified (clean)" opinion. This page represented the books of the Town. Pages 3-12 contained the MD&A (Management Discussion and Analysis). This portion was written in "layman's terms" and details where the Town has been and where it is going. Mr. Brewer reminded the Board that the audit was a public document, and the MD&A was a good place to point citizens to if they wished to see the document.

Mr. Brewer then gave a brief overview of the highlights of the various funds. The General Fund was up from the previous year, showing great improvement and there was some discussion. Both the Light and Water Funds had also increased from the previous year. In the Sewer Fund there was a negative change and there was discussion of what had caused this. The biggest issue in that fund seemed to be the increased costs of treatment. He stated that the issue was known to Staff and was currently being investigated.

Overall, the Town's Fund Balance had increased from 0% the previous year to 7% for the current audit. There was some discussion about this and what a great improvement it was.

The collection rate for taxes was 95 ½ percent, which was comparable to the state's collection rate of 97 percent. Overall, the Town had seen very good improvements and Mr. Brewer encouraged them to continue on the same path and remain conservative. He then thanked Manager Linn, Finance Officer Ginger Gibson and Staff for all of their help during the process.

There were no questions for Mr. Brewer and he thanked the Board for having him.

Mayor James Furr wished to point out that on page 7 of the audit it listed some of the positive points for the Town. Several of those included: conservative expenditures, maintenance of fixed assets, and not filling non-essential personnel positions. He stated that this was good management and he thanked the Board and Staff, stating that Staff was the lynch pin for the Board Mandates. He stated that this was a good report and he appreciated everything everyone had done.

The next order of business a presentation concerning the master plan for the Thread Trail as presented by Randy Gates and Emily Blackwell; Ms. Gates was the Director of Grants for the Thread Trail Project and Ms. Blackwell worked at Stewart, the firm hired to prepare the master plan. The Thread Trail is a greenway and trail system which would connect 15 counties in North Carolina and South Carolina and the project had kicked off in 2007. So far fourteen counties had adopted the Master Plan and Rowan County was the last county needed. The plan included 1500 miles of planned trails and this would be a "legacy project". There was some discussion of the plan and what had been completed so far.

Ms. Gates spoke about some of the areas that had previously adopted the Resolution of Support for the Thread Trail, and Landis had adopted that resolution on July 6th, 2011.

Ms. Blackwell spoke about the planning phase that went into preparing the Master Plan, which included public outreach. There was also discussion of the various phases included in that. They were currently in Phase III – which was the adoption process. They had started this in October, meeting with towns and providing the information.

There was then discussion of the top destination areas in Rowan County that the public had wanted to see connected via the Thread Trail project. Some of the areas included: Catawba College, Dan Nicholas Park, all of the Rowan County libraries and High Rock Lake. They had been successful in connecting all of these points of interest in the proposed Master Plan.

There was some discussion of the Landis portion of the Thread Trail, which would follow Main and then Grants Creek. This plan would connect all ten municipalities in Rowan County.

Ms. Gates then discussed what adoption of the Master Plan would mean for the municipalities. Four counties had signed on so far and the Master Plan would not take the place of any existing documents the Towns had in effect. They were not looking to "reinvent the wheel" and a good portion of this plan "piggy backed" onto planned trails in the various communities.

Adopting the Thread Trail Master Plan would qualify the Town to receive catalytic funding from the Carolina Thread Trail. They were currently doing fundraising and so far they had raised \$18 million in cash. There was some discussion and it was stated portions of this money goes into the communities in the form of grants. They had just received a \$45,000.00 donation from a local group that was earmarked specifically for Rowan County. There was some discussion about the grants.

It was also pointed out that adopting the Master Plan tonight does not commit the Town to funding implementation, they understood that budgets were tight everywhere and the Master Plan was simply a blue print. There was some discussion. It was reiterated that there was no funding commitment tonight, this would be a project that the Town partnered with the Thread Trail to work on and it will take a long time to happen.

Alderman Hilton inquired if the Foundation of the Carolinas was one of the donors. Ms. Gates stated that they were and there was some discussion. Alderman Hilton stated that the Landis section of the Thread Trail was on the State Transportation Improvement Plan (through the MPO) and that the Cabarrus-Rowan improvements were one of the highest priorities on the list if the money becomes available. There was some discussion.

Alderman Abernathy inquired if they were running into issues with people not wanting to put land in the land conservancy since they could not longer take tax credits for it. Ms. Gates stated that there was some issue with that, yes, but they still had a lot of people coming forward to help and that people could still write off donations. She stated that they were constantly working to get those tax credits back. Alderman Abernathy confirmed that they were not advocating eminent domain. Ms. Gates stated that as a non-profit they did not have the authorization to do anything of that nature; that power resides with the local communities. However, they can control funding that is received and they have made it clear that they would not fund any projects that involved unwilling land owners or anywhere property had been seized. There was some discussion.

Ms. Gates thanked the Board for their time.

The next order of business was to consider adoption the Resolution for the Thread Trail Greenway Master Plan. Alderman Abernathy inquired what the difference was between this proposed resolution and the resolution of support the Town had adopted in 2011. Ms. Gates stated that the resolution in 2011 simply stated that the Town supported the concept; now that the planning had been completed, the new resolution would state that the Town adopted the Master Plan itself, allowing the project to continue to move forward. Mayor Furr also reiterated that since this resolution did not commit any funding from the Town and they could discuss it in the future.

Alderman Brown motioned, seconded by Alderman Safrit, to adopt the Resolution for the Thread Trail Greenway Master Plan. All voted aye.

The next order of business was the discussion of changes to the existing Business Expansion and Job Creation Policy of the Town. Manager Linn stated that last month he had the privilege of meeting with several different developers who wanted to come to Landis. Both had asked questions about the incentive program and what the Town could offer them to come here. The current policy had been established in 2002 and he would like the Board to review the current policy and come up with ideas to update it and ideas for incentives. Tonight he was simply providing them with information for their consideration.

Alderman Abernathy inquired if the Planning Board had seen this information yet. Manager Linn stated that he would provide it to them as well. Mayor Furr inquired if Manager Linn had examples of what

other local communities were doing as far as incentives go. Manager Linn stated that he would get copies and place them in the Board's box.

Alderman Abernathy inquired about which parts were the most out of date. Manager Linn stated the tax rate, the water and sewer taps, electric service, fees associated with construction and zoning permits, etc. He stated that the Board might also wish to consider the initial investment required to qualify, as it had been set in 2002 at a minimum of \$2 million and that may be low now.

The next order of business was to close City Hall at 12:00pm on Tuesday, November 25th, 2014 for the annual Christmas Parade. This was something that has been done every year to prepare for the parade.

Alderman Brown motioned, seconded by Alderman Safrit, to close City Hall at 12:00pm on Tuesday, November 25th, 2014 for the annual Christmas Parade. All voted aye.

Department Head Comments

Recreation Director Andrew Morgan: stated that the Fall Festival had been great and a lot of people had attended. Central Avenue had been full. He also updated the Board on the PARTF Grant, stating that he had spoken to the Recreation Resource Services and Gary Mills in Kannapolis. They had called various companies to get bids for the actual projects so they would have hard numbers. They were waiting on bids currently and would then move forward.

Deputy Town Clerk Debbie Goodman: stated that they would be starting budget billing enrollment in December and were in the process of sending out letters for uncollectable debts.

Town Manager Reed Linn: stated that the sewer bonds had been sold – Wells Fargo had purchased with a .97% interest rate.

Assistant Fire Chief Ron Miller: went over the monthly fire calls and the training hours for October.

- 9 fire alarms
- 16 calls for standby
- 1 hazardous
- 4 accents
- 40 EMS
- 6 gas leaks
- 2 brush fires
- 12 alarms/structure fires

There were 258 training hours.

Public Works Director Steve Rowland: stated that the water project had been completed. Last week the water tank had been drained and cleaned, which was normal maintenance for it. The sewer project was now underway and they were currently at the substation and replacing lift stations. The electric

department had moved the lines that were in conflict with the railroad on Central. There was a bit of work still remaining on West 22nd Street. There was some discussion. Also, they were about to begin the 12kv conversion project again. There was some discussion about receiving reimbursement for the moving of the lines due to the railroad. Director Rowland stated if they keep good records, there should be no issue with that. They were also monitoring the sewer meter that had been installed at the outtake to Salisbury and they were waiting on reports from Salisbury to compare.

Police Chief Bob Wood: went over the calls received by the Police Department during the month of October:

- 11 accidents
- 10 calls for assistance
- 26 disturbances
- 13 property crimes
- 1 violent crime (a fight at South Rowan with minor injuries)
- 11 arrests from warrants
- 27 citations issued out of 96 stops

The Police Department averaged a response time of 1.47 minutes for emergency calls and 2.25 minutes for non-emergencies.

Chief Wood stated that Officer Barlow's nephew, Aiden, had passed away from cancer. He was nine years old and had been made a Lieutenant with the Landis Police Department. On October 26th the Police Department had held a memorial in Town and it was a very good service. The officers were currently wearing mourning bands on their badges until November 23rd. The family wanted to express their appreciation and thanks. The PD would continue to sell raffle tickets, with all proceeds going to the family to help pay medical bills and expenses. The raffle would be held on November 22nd, 2014 for a Glock. So far they had raised over \$3,000.00 through donations.

Also, there had been a fatality in a house fire in China Grove. Officer Johnson had assisted China Grove Police with that case and helped to evacuate people out of homes. Law enforcement had also helped man the hose and fight the fire because initially only two firefighters responded.

This week the PD had also started distributing toy boxes for Toys for Tots and they hoped to have an even more successful toy drive this year.

The Turkey Shoot was still being held every Saturday until November 22nd and this was to raise money for the Landis Police Foundation, which helps those in need within the community. He encouraged everyone to attend, stating that they have a good time.

Chief Wood reminded everyone to vote.

Mayor Furr stated that the Police Department had done very good work for Lieutenant Aiden and that anyone should be able to recognize the effort for what was done to make the boy's last days joyful ones. Chief Wood stated that it was something small they could do that meant a lot.

Town Attorney Rick Locklear stated that he was running for County Commissioner and for the last couple of months he had been asked multiple times what benefits he gained from the Board meetings. Mr. Locklear stated that what he had gained over the last eight years was that the Town Board had managed to turn the Town around with conservative practices. He stated that he had never envisioned being able to come off the “watch list” and ending the fiscal year with 7%. He stated that the Board had provided sound fiscal management and had been very conservative and you did not see that in many governments. Mr. Locklear discussed briefly some of his previous schooling, which had included business management and planning and that he had a mentor once who told him that public service is a privilege and private gain is a sin. He stated that he wanted to give back to the community at the county level and that he knows the process can be cynical and felt that there should be less concentration on who is to blame. He stated that the Landis Board does that, they don’t blame and understand that progress can be a gradual thing. He stated that Landis is a good example for the county and asked for everyone’s support. Mayor Furr thanked Mr. Locklear for his kind words and wished him luck.

Board Comments

Alderman Dorland Abernathy: stated that he was proud of the Fire and Police Departments, that they had gone beyond the call of duty to give care (at Lieutenant Aiden’s memorial) and that he was proud and humbled. It was his privilege to be part of the service and he was impressed with the chaplain. He stated that he had been in Greensboro for the League of Municipalities meeting and that people had asked where Landis was. He hoped to be in Raleigh in December and hoped to represent the Town well.

Alderman Tony Hilton: echoed what Alderman Abernathy had to say; he said they were not perfect but this was a good town. The Board tries and works together.

Alderman Dennis Brown: stated that he enjoyed the Fall Festival, he had attended with his wife and her assistant’s daughter and everyone had a lot of fun. He thanked the PD for inviting him to the memorial and that he was glad to be there.

Alderman Roger Safrit: stated that it was his honor and privilege to be a part of the memorial ceremony and that he was proud of the PD as a whole, stating that they had helped to realize Aiden’s dream. He stated that he wanted to be a Landis police officer like his uncle and his dream had come true.

Mayor James Furr: echoed everyone’s words, stating that they have good people and a good town.

Citizens Comments

John Derhodes: stated that one thing that had been discussed tonight was an incentive program (for developers) and that he felt it was fantastic; he had stated months ago that the Board needed to encourage businesses to come to Landis. However, he urged the Board to have caution, stating that they need to tie them into some kind of investment. There was some discussion. He also stated that he knew Director Morgan had been getting started on the physical logistics (at Lake Corriher) and he wanted to know if they had considered talking to citizens about their opinions on the placement of the cabins and

bathroom. He was requesting that they do that as part of the process. Mayor Furr stated that if it was up to him there would be a Federal amendment outlawing incentives, however it was currently a necessary evil as it stands. There was some discussion. Mr. Derhodes also stated that while the Thread Trail was a great idea, he thought that the cost per mile that was estimated was too much money. Alderman Abernathy stated that a lot of that actual cost took into account the value of the Landis. Mayor Furr also pointed out that a huge part of the funding was private money.

There were no more citizens' comments.

Alderman Abernathy motioned, seconded by Alderman Hilton, to go into Executive Session to discuss legal matters and to then adjourn the meeting. All voted aye.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45pm on Monday, November 3rd, 2014.

Heather Wood
Administrative Assistant