

November 7th, 2011

At 7:00pm, on Monday, November 7th, 2011, in the Board Room of the Landis Municipal Building, Mayor Dennis Brown called to order the Town of Landis Board of Aldermen Regular Meeting. Those present along with the Mayor were Aldermen James Furr, Roger Safrit, Tony Hilton and Craig Sloop, Public Works Director Steve Rowland, Police Chief Bob Wood, Town Manager Reed Linn, Deputy Town Administrator Debbie Goodman, Recreation Director Andrew Morgan, Finance Officer Ginger Gibson, Administrative Assistant Heather Wood and Town Attorney Rick Locklear.

A quorum was met.

Mayor Dennis Brown opened the meeting and welcomed all those in attendance.

The invocation was led by Reverend Beverly Coppley

The pledge of allegiance was led by Mayor Dennis Brown.

Alderman Safrit motioned, seconded by Alderman Furr, to adopt the agenda as presented. All voted aye.

Alderman Sloop motioned, seconded by Alderman Safrit, to adopt the minutes from the October 3rd, 2011 Regular Meeting as amended. All voted aye.

The first order of business was the 2010/2011 audit, as presented by Eddie Carrick, the Town's auditor. He thanked the Board and stated that he works for them and if they ever had any questions, they should not hesitate to call him. He also stated that in the audit, good reference pages for citizens were pages 3-12 in the management discussion and analysis. These pages were written in "layman's terms". He stated that the audit is public record and citizens could come to Town Hall to request a copy of the audit.

Mr. Carrick stated that the Town had had a very good year. The General Fund was showing a \$56,000.00 profit, whereas last year there had been a \$127,000.00 deficit. Revenues had been down this fiscal year, which meant that the Town had done a very good job controlling its expenses. Mr. Carrick stated that the Town may not be where it wants to be, but things were looking very positive. The Electrical Fund had also had a good year, showing a \$123,000.00 profit, after transfer. The revenue was up \$400,000.00 but the cost of power had gone up even more. There was also a surplus in the Water Fund of \$220,000.00; it had been \$132,000.00 the prior year. The Sewer Fund showed a surplus of \$225,000.00 versus \$22,000.00 the year before. The Enterprise Fund was up \$175,000.00.

Mr. Carrick reiterated that it had been a very good year. He stated that the Town had cut costs as thin as they could and they were showing a positive surplus. His advice for the future was to remain conservative in spending.

There was some discussion about sales and franchise taxes, and how it was possible the Town could be seeing smaller income from those sources.

Mr. Carrick said that one of the toughest things for a small municipality could be when an agency like the EPA sends down mandates, but with no monetary support to implement them. He commented that he didn't foresee things getting any better in that regard.

There were no questions for Mr. Carrick.

Mr. Carrick reminded the Board that he works for them, as well as thanking staff for how quickly they had gotten things ready for the audit. The Board thanked Mr. Carrick.

The next order of business was a request to declare certain property as surplus. On the list were four police patrol vehicles and 15 bicycles (which would be donated to Nazareth's Children's Home).

In regards to the 1992 Ford Mustang, Alderman Furr stated that he didn't think the Town had ever kept a car for more than twenty years and he had done some research. The Kelley Blue Book listed the value of the Mustang at \$1,100.00. He felt that they would be letting a piece of the Town's heritage go if they got rid of the Mustang. He wondered if maybe they should save it to restore some day.

Mayor Brown inquired if there was a place to store the vehicle. Chief Bob Wood stated that there was not a place indoors. Alderman Hilton commented that it would take a lot of money to fully restore the Mustang. Chief Wood stated that the vehicle was not safe, it was worn out and it will not be out on patrol. Alderman Furr clarified that he was not suggesting the car remain in service. Alderman Hilton stated that he didn't think we needed to keep the Mustang. Alderman Furr commented that he just wanted to introduce the idea. Chief Wood stated that it was a good idea "in theory" but there was simply no place to store the vehicle. Alderman Furr stated that he was not a big advocate either way; he just wanted to put the idea out there.

Manager Linn stated that the vehicles would be placed on Govdeals.com. The Town had gotten \$1,420.00 out of the last vehicle that was placed there.

Alderman Hilton motioned, seconded by Alderman Safrit, to declare certain items as surplus, as requested by Chief Wood. All voted aye.

The next item of business concerned a resolution requesting the NC-DOT to repave Main Street. This had been a request from Mayor Brown and Alderman Safrit. Mayor Brown stated that he had contacted Representative Fred Steen and he had suggested first drawing up a resolution to begin the process. Representative Steen felt he could get it "pushed through". The resolution requested repaving from city limits to city limits on Main Street. It may have to be broken into phases. The first step in the process was to pass the resolution.

Alderman Hilton motioned, seconded by Alderman Furr, to pass the resolution requesting the North Carolina Department of Transportation to pave Main Street. All voted aye.

Manager Linn then brought the annual request before the Board to pay for ½ of the cost of the Santa Float in the annual South Rowan Christmas Parade. The Town did this every year. The cost for the Town would be \$225.00.

Alderman Safrit motioned, seconded by Alderman Sloop, to pay for half of the cost of the Santa Float in the annual South Rowan Christmas parade in the amount of \$225.00. All voted aye.

Alderman Safrit motioned, seconded by Alderman Sloop, to close City Hall at 12:00pm on Tuesday, November 22nd, 2011 for the annual South Rowan Christmas parade. All voted aye.

Department Head Comments

Town Manager Reed Linn: reminded everyone that all voting for Landis would now take place at the South Rowan Public Library. There would now be one voting location for both precincts.

Public Works Director Steve Rowland: stated that they had ordered materials for the electrical project and the contractors would be here the 1st of December. The transformers may come in later. He stated that they were also gathering a list of streets with pot holes and he would be getting quotes for the repairs. Mayor Brown inquired as to what some of the roads were. Director Rowland stated that so far on the list was Third Street, Round Street, Church Street, Woodfield Drive and Sixth Street. They were hoping to do a few per year. There was some discussion of this matter.

Alderman Hilton stated that he would like to see the street signs replaced, as some were deteriorating badly, especially in the south end of town. Director Rowland stated that it was a very expensive process, but he thought he could possibly start with the main roads and then move to the side streets. There was some discussion on this. Alderman Hilton stated that Rowan County has a sign shop, and he wasn't certain if they would do it, but perhaps if we bought the materials they would produce the signs. He suggested Manager Linn speak to the county manager. Director Rowland stated that they had also been talking to Kannapolis City, who makes their own signs as well. There were further discussions.

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

- 7 accidents
- 11 calls for assistance
- 11 disturbances
- 18 property crimes
- 1 violent crime
- 8 arrests due to warrants
- 102 stops with 58 citations issued

The department had handled a total of 273 calls and violations. Chief Wood stated they were in the process of applying for several grants. He stated that he currently had two officers at the GREAT program training this week and they would be in the training until next week. Chief Wood also explained that the Town had received \$4,000.00 due to Federal seizures of funds due to drugs. Because Landis was a member of the Charlotte Area ICE Task Force, any time Landis was involved in any seizures a portion of the value would be sent to the Town. The involvement had been at no cost to the Town.

Chief Wood stated that Operation Medicine Drop was held on the 29th of October, which involved the FBI and DEA, and that close to 8,000 dosages from 30 citizens had been collected.

Detective Hosey had attended an ID theft meeting and he would be scheduling a training session on November 18th, 2011 on ID theft. There was some discussion.

Lieutenant Benfield, Detective Hosey and Officer Safrit had worked on their own time with the Counterfeit Task Force and they had helped seize \$75,000.00 in goods. A bill was in the process of being passed that would allow the agencies involved to receive some of the value of the seizures back, as is done with drug related seizures currently. Chief Wood stated that this was done on their own time and allowed them to make good contacts.

Alderman Hilton stated that he appreciated the response from the Police Department Monday night, someone had rattled on his door and Officer Linn had responded very quickly.

Board Comments

Alderman James Furr: stated that the events of tomorrow (the election) had nothing to do with the subject he was about to bring up. He stated that the events of the past few months had come to a head this morning for him. He handed out an article to the Board and then stated that a vehicle should never be reversed up a street if there is a way to proceed forward. He asked Chief Wood what he would do if he routinely saw a vehicle backing up 1-2 blocks. Chief Wood stated that he would inquire as to why they were reversing. Alderman Furr stated that it was unsafe. The first incident had been with the recycling truck, it had backed up two blocks (Zion, Highland to 29-A). Alderman Furr had contacted Director Rowland and he had called Sharks and they claimed it would not happen again. Alderman Furr went on to state that the same thing had happened several weeks later, in the blocks of Sixth Street, Highland Avenue and Main Street. He stated that when Sharks was contacted, they responded that they thought the instructions had been not to back up more than one block at a time. Alderman Furr stated that this morning, he had seen the garbage truck backing up Sixth Street and he had said to himself, "Enough, someone is going to get killed". After he contacted Director Rowland and Director Rowland spoke with Crash Morrison, he reported back that the intersection at Sixth Street and Airport Road had been blocked at the time. Alderman Furr stated that yes, there was a crew there, but he had not seen why the truck would not have been able to get through without needing to reverse. He went on to state that if there was a problem, the contractors should have asked the crew to move, he was certain they would have. Alderman Furr commented that what startled him further was that they stated that they had known it was a problem, but they had a man on the back of the truck and the backup alarm was working. Alderman Furr stated that he had opposed this since the beginning and he would not "sit idly by and watch them kill someone".

Alderman Furr stated that since management had been "ineffective at solving the problem" he wished to make the following motions:

Alderman Furr motioned to direct Mr. Locklear to begin investigation of –DUE TO THE CARELESS AND RECKLESS OPERATION DURING THEIR NORMAL OPERATIONS, THEIR REFUSAL TO CEASE SAID BEHAVIOR AFTER MULTIPLE NOTIFICATIONS BY THE PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR, AND THE RESULTING ENDANGERMENT TO THE CITIZENS OF LANDIS – the immediate cancellation of the garbage / recycling collection contract with Crash Morrison Garbage Services. Legal counsel shall report to the Board of Aldermen at the regularly scheduled December meeting of his findings as to the suitability of this cancellation.

The motion died due to lack of a second.

Alderman Furr motioned that since this “contractor has been found to be likely to continue in these reckless/careless operations, I move to request the Public Works Director to place a trustworthy Town of Landis employee to monitor (by direct observation) all operations of Crash Morrison Garbage Services at all times while operating in performance of their contracts with the Town of Landis. This action taken to prevent any likelihood of the dangerous behavior continuing.”

The motion died due to lack of a second.

When neither motion received a second, Alderman Furr stated, “Gentlemen, you are warned, the blood is on your hands.”

Citizens Comments

Charles Lawing: stated that he was involved with a department in the VA that was partnered with RCCC Motor sports, and if the Town would like to donate the Mustang it would be to a good cause. He went on to state that he had 15 acres at Corriher Lake and that he had read in the newspaper about the parks and trails. He stated that the pathways for the park came right up to his house and encroaches on his property and that he had people “all over his property”. He had been told that his property ended at the lake. He commented that he had ATVs, bicycles, motorcycles and strangers and that he was fearful. Before he had to deal with illegal fishing and he had been told to call the police if he saw anyone there. He wanted the Town to take a look at this issue, as he had had his stakes torn up and his no trespassing signs torn down. Mr. Lawing stated that he had been reading the articles and that previously he had been told he could not even put a canoe in the lake and now the Town was talking about allowing people to put “all kinds of things” in the lake and to allow camping. It was an issue that he planned to pursue.

Susan Shirley: stated that she had pictures of Woodfield Drive and the condition that it was in (in regards to pot holes). She commented that she had been told three years ago that it would be put on the list for repairs and now the hole had gone from 10 square feet to 100 square feet needing repair. Ms. Shirley also mentioned to Chief Wood that in regards to the ID Theft session, she’d like to see the Town do a “Community Shredding Event” for the same reason. There was some discussion on this.

Nadine Cherry: stated that she “wholeheartedly agreed with Alderman Furr about the garbage and recycling”. She commented that before the trucks even stop, someone jumps off of them to go get the cans.

She stated that they reach into the cans, unless they are full or half full, with bare hands to take the bags out. She stated that it was an OSHA violation and she had witnessed it for the last several months.

Mayor Brown informed the Board that they may be having a special joint meeting with the Planning Board in December on the 13th (the regular meeting day of the Planning Board). Bill Dustin from COG, who was seen as the annexation “guru”, was retiring and the meeting would be to go over the recent changes in the annexation laws in more detail. There were some “donut holes” that the Town might want to “close up” through annexation.

Alderman Sloop motioned, seconded by Alderman Safrit, to adjourn the meeting. All voted aye.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45pm on Monday, November 7th, 2011.

Heather Wood
Administrative Assistant