

**TOWN OF STOKESDALE**  
**PO BOX 465**  
**STOKESDALE, NORTH CAROLINA**

The regular meeting of the Stokesdale Town Council was held in the Town Hall at 8500 Ellisboro Road in the Stokesdale Business Center on Thursday, November 20, 2008.

Mayor Randle L. Jones called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM. The following members of Council were present: Mayor Randle L. Jones, Mayor Pro Tem Mickie Halbrook, Cheryl Steele, James Attaway, and Norman Cook.

Others present included: Guilford County Sheriff's Deputy Steve Christman, Town Attorney William B. Trevorrow; and Town Clerk/Finance Officer Carolyn Joyner.

After the Pledge of Allegiance, Rev. Jerry Walker, pastor of Oak Level Baptist Church, gave the innovation.

Council considered the proposed agenda. The Clerk said that the maintenance contract for the Town generator was available for Council's consideration. It could be added as #2 under the Finance Officer's report. Ms. Halbrook made a motion to approve the agenda with the one change. Ms. Steele seconded the motion. All Council members voted aye and the motion as approved.

Council considered the minutes from the previous meeting. Mr. Attaway made a motion to approve the minutes as presented and without reading. Ms. Halbrook seconded the motion. All Council members voted aye and the minutes of the October 16, 2008 Council meeting were approved.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Report from Guilford County Sheriff's Department:** Deputy Christman was not available to give a report.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**Consider holding a Referendum for a vote to Allow Mixed Drinks and ABC Stores in Stokesdale:** Mayor Jones said that this was not a determination of whether the Town would or would not have ABC stores or mixed drinks being sold in the Town of Stokesdale. The question was whether or not there will be a referendum. This is one of few times that on citizens can vote for or against an issue. The vote by Council could allow citizens to vote for or against the matter. There are two ways that a referendum can take place. Council can set a special date for citizens to vote or citizens in favor of the matter can petition to have the issue placed on the ballot. Council will be voting on whether to allow a referendum to allow citizens to vote on mixed drinks and ABC stores. Council will not be voting in favor of or in opposition to either position but would only be giving citizens the chance to vote on the issue.

*Those speaking in favor of the matter:*

Kevan Combs, 7400 Hadleigh Court, said that this came up when he was trying to get restaurants to locate in Kings Crossing Shopping Center. He said that he had talked with a Mexican restaurant and when they found they could not serve margaritas they pulled out. He was trying to get a steak house there but it is a struggle in this economy. He said that he was not promoting bars or over indulgence but simply wanted citizens to have the chance to vote on the issue. If the citizens vote no, it will be okay because a restaurant would not succeed if citizens are not in favor of it.

Kurt Kusche, 5912 Tarleton Place, Oak Ridge, said that he is the owner of the property located at 9115 US Hwy 158 in Stokesdale and he has a pending development project at NC 68 and Belews Creek Road. He said that it is a great forum for the whole Town to have input on the matter rather than just the people in the room tonight.

Mary Ann Williams, 8632 Warner Road, Kernersville, said that she felt that it was important that everyone that lives in the Town of Stokesdale has input about what happens in the Town. She said that she had been involved in some other projects and they were not handled in that way and she did not think that the right decision was made. It is important that citizens, rather than just a group or just Council make a decision.

*Those speaking in opposition of the matter:*

Rev. Jerry Walker: 8308 McCrory Road, Pastor of Oak Level Baptist Church, said that he has between 200 -300 names on a petition that reads: "Whereas we the undersigned citizens of the Town of Stokesdale oppose liquor by the drink being

propagated in our Town and are not in favor of establishments offering mixed drink beverages within our Town limits, we hereby request and petition you that the issue of liquor by the drink not be placed on public ballot that you do not allow liquor by the drink within the Town limits.”

He presented the reason why he believed that liquor by the drink and ABC stores are harmful and why it is Council’s responsibility to not place it on the ballot. He said that when he moved here 14 years ago, he was told that this was the best place to live and he had found that to be true. He felt that it is one of the safest places in the nation to live. He said that he liked change and look forward to the new Food Lion but would still shop at the Bi-Rite. He said he did not like the availability of alcohol coming with the city and putting more drunks on the road that will endanger the lives of our teenagers and the elderly whose reflexes are not what they were a few years ago and our citizens in general. He reminded Council of what Stokesdale was like a few years ago with all of the beer joints in the area. There were fights, killings, and wrecks and constantly calling the Sheriff for reinforcements because the one deputy could not handle all of the situations going on at the time. With the availability of alcohol comes a truckload of garbage that we in Stokesdale have not been use to for several years and many things coming in that we have not seen before. He says that people are told that it will bring more tax money for education and transportation but they soon find that adult entertainment, strip clubs, and gay bars. Crime problems will come with the decision to allow liquor. He said that alcohol does not factor into the decision to have a cafeteria style restaurant and seafood restaurants located here. Even if it did, he would rather eat baloney sandwiches and keep the children, teenagers and seniors safe. He asked Council to vote no to allow liquor by the drink in the Town and would be harmful to the family oriented Town.

Layton Spencer, 8280 Colgate Road, said that he opposes liquor by the drink. He has lived in larger cities where it was offered and he would not say that every siren was caused by liquor but there were a lot of them that were. He asked Council to carefully consider the options. It is not about money but about the community. Not having alcohol here will not prevent citizens from getting it. Having it here will not make people drink but here is opposition to it.

Ann Walker deferred her time to Mr. Walker.

John Flynt, 5305 Perrou Court, Greensboro, said that he owns properties in the Stokesdale including his home place which he would like for his children to enjoy the same quality of life that he and his family has for a long time. He said it wasn’t just getting good restaurants. There are ABC stores in Oak Ridge and Summerfield and they are not that far away. He said that with liquor by the drink there could be sports bars. He said that he had previously lived across the street from the Corner Lounge and the Whistle Stop for about 18 years. They had called in complaints to the Sheriff’s office every weekend because of drunks and drugs and one man was killed there. He said that there are lots of good family restaurants that do not serve liquor by the drink. He said that the Town would have to pay about \$3,000 for a special election to have a referendum. He suggested that it should be postponed until the next general election.

Tim Jones, 8402 Southard Road, said that many times politicians run as Christians and vote as pagans and he hoped that was not Council. He said that his mother had lived fairly close to the Corner Lounge and many times he had frantic phone calls from her at 1:00 or 2:00 am and he would respond to find people passed out in the yard or wounded by knife wounds or gunshots. Response times from deputies varied as they did the best they could. He said that if it was allowed that he hoped Council would understand if he called them to come and help him at 3:00 in the morning. He said that Stokesdale has not done well with alcohol. He said that it will not make money for the Town because it will cost more for law enforcement.

Jim Flynt, 7743 NC 68, said that citizens can vote on other things such as charter amendments in addition to things being discussed tonight. He invited citizens to stay to the portion of the meeting when the ROADS group, Revitalizing Our Ancestors Dreams in Stokesdale, when some things that would be brought to their attention. He said they wanted Council to start listening and responding to citizens and he doesn’t think they have done a good job of that. He said they were going to suggest some changes in the Town Charter that will bring a Council that will listen whether the issue is on alcohol or wasting two million dollars on a new Town Hall in the middle of nowhere or renting space. He said that citizens could go to the ballot box to change things in Stokesdale. He questioned whether it was a measure of progress for the community if liquor by the drink was adopted. He said if it was approved and placed on the ballot and the people chose to have an ABC system, then Council would not have regulation, control, or power over those things. He said that if Mr. Combs wanted to go out and get about 1,000 signatures, he could have it placed on the ballot. Mr. Flynt said that he did not think that you

Book 10 Page 1758

could find 1,000 people who would sign a petition. He said that it was not progress to bring alcohol to Stokesdale since it has destroyed families and filled dozens of cemetery plots from the abuse of alcohol and it has translated into spousal and child abuse. He felt that Stokesdale does not have to be like everyone else and that we do not have to build a two million dollar magnificent edifice to the Mayor and walk down the road to the slippery slope where citizens are imposed with a tax. We should be proud that we don't have a tax. He suggested that someone should try to get the 1,000 signatures on a petition to have it placed on the ballot. He encouraged everyone to stay and hear the ROADS presentation about another thing that is almost as dangerous to the future and that is taxes and they are on the way unless we can get this group of people to listen to us.

Marty Beavis, 8607 Rocky Lane, said that he is the house parent for Malachi Boys Home. He said that he has 2 grandchildren and his son and daughter live here. He knows all of the children at Oak Level. He would not want anyone to pay the high price of being killed by a drunk driver who had been drinking at a restaurant because of the decision that is made tonight.

Tony Silva, 8515 Field Stream in Rachel's Landing, said that he has lived here five years and he has had three drunken rollovers in his yard from the bar down NC 65. He said that he has a 6 month old and a 3 year old who play in their yard. He cringes when he thinks of drivers who may be impaired and driving at high rates of speed. He said that he is a nurse at the emergency room at Moses Cone Hospital and says that he had recently worked on a 9 year old who was hit by a drunk driver who has not been caught. The child is still in the hospital. Everyone handles alcohol differently. He said that people go to the bar on 65 or to Oak Ridge and sometimes they do not make it through Town. Law Enforcement, the Fire Department and EMS go racing past his house to the bar to pick up someone who is injured. He moved here because it was nice, quiet and friendly. He said not to bring Greensboro to Stokesdale.

Danny Beeson, 8444 Haw River Road, Oak Ridge, said that the 300 signatures were not from one church. He said that he wanted to reiterate the reality of this decision. He said that the evils of alcohol, the rough shod places that used to be in Stokesdale had been talked about and it is true. He said that as a governing body, Council's role is to protect the citizens of the Town. He sited precedence's of the votes of governing bodies to protect the citizens. He said that he would not equate the previous places that once existed in Stokesdale such as the Corner Lounge, Henry's Danceland, and the Whistle Stop with a restaurant serving liquor by the drink such as ones being proposed. He said that Stokesdale had the reputation of being a rough place and people came here to pick a fight but Stokesdale no longer has that reputation. The question is whether on site consumption of alcohol will be allowed in Stokesdale. Stokesdale has changed its reputation and has become an attractive bedroom community where people want to live and it is growing because of it. He said that no one would debate the fact that if a person after consuming alcohol, their blood alcohol content is up, that their judgment and driving ability is impaired, the concern for how are they going to get home. He said in the recent past, he did a funeral for a young lady who consumed alcohol and never made it to her home in Stokesdale. On site consumption does have a price. He said again that Council's job was to protect the citizens of Stokesdale, and their children and grandchildren because the decision will go down in perpetuity.

Jim Amick, 8326 Mayo Court in Oak Ridge, said he came out to support turning it down. He has lived in Oak Ridge for 30 years and came out here to get away from Greensboro and all of the drinking and things like taxes. He said that he and his wife eat out everyday and they drive for many miles to get a decent meal at a family style place that was not at a bar. He said that Oak Ridge had incorporated to keep Greensboro and taxes out. He said that they have a Town Hall that they need like a hole in the head. He said that he respected Stokesdale because they have stayed independent and have done what they had to do without taxes. We don't need liquor by the drink. It is a bad thing to do.

*Rebuttal for those in favor of the matter:*

Kurt Kusche, 5904 Tarleton Drive he said that people have made really good points on both sides. He said that it is an important issue

and since those present represented only a small sampling of the population. Because we live in a democracy, it is evident that Council should let the people decide. He said that he felt that it was a little unfair for Council because some of the people are holding Council responsible for allowing a decision to be made by the people.

Michael Starr, 7702 Haw Meadows Drive, said that he had listened to both sides and was not really for or against the matter. This happens to be one of the few items that citizens can vote on. He felt that the voters should vote on the matter.

*Rebuttal for the opponents:*

Jerry Walker, 8308 McCrory Road, said that it had been pointed out that there was no support here tonight for allowing the voters to decide and if two or three people are going to be a democracy, then maybe they should get a petition with 1,000 or more signatures to present to Council saying that there is support on this issue. He said that he had spoken to many people in Stokesdale including businesses, and they are not in favor of it. He said that Council had only heard from a very few people. He said that there was no show of support of this significant event. It had not been presented as a morality issue. It is not good for the safety of the people. It will cause the Town to digress rather than continue forward. It is not whether alcohol is right or wrong but whether it is right for our community.

Mayor Jones asked if there were any petitions to be entered into the record. Mr. Walker presented the petition with signatures to Mayor Jones. Council members reviewed the documents. A copy of the petition is hereby incorporated into and made part of the minutes of the meeting. He asked if the proponents had anything to present. They did not.

Mayor Jones said that some of the comments made said that Council was promoting this. Mayor Jones stated again that Council does not promote or discourage the matter. It was here because a citizen came to a Council meeting and asked that it placed on the agenda. Every citizen has the right to be heard. He noted that people had spoken about the direction that the Town is going and reminded everyone that some know how the Town got to this point as well. He said some have just heard the stories of yesteryear while some have lived it. He said that he was a deputy in those years and knows what went on in the bars since he had answered calls there. There was no backup for the deputies and they did not have radios like they do now. Back-up had to come from Gibsonville. Mayor Jones pointed out that Captain Caliendo, who was present at the meeting, was the first Town Deputy. He pointed out that he was on Council when the first deputy was hired for Stokesdale. He said that he did not know how Council got the designation of having already made a decision. He said that he had been on Council for 18 years and he did not know of any time that the vote was decided before coming to the meeting. He said that it was improper for people to think of Council in that way. Council had heard both sides of the issue and Council would take a vote on it. If it is not placed on the ballot, then proponents can gather signatures on a petition. There has been no discussion as to it being a revenue making project. He pointed out that the Town has over five million dollars in the bank and in the past, the Town had much less than that in the bank and did not levy a tax.

Mayor Jones pointed out that there are two separate resolutions for Council to consider. One resolution was requesting that the Guilford County Board of Elections to call and conduct a special election on a specified date to place on the ballot a referendum to vote to enable the location of an ABC store within the boundaries of the Town of Stokesdale. The second resolution is to request the Guilford County Board of Elections to call and conduct a special election on a specified date to place on the ballot a referendum on liquor by the drink with the boundaries of the Town of Stokesdale.

Mr. Attaway said that after hearing the comments that were made tonight, he did not see why it should be voted on since there were only two or three people here that are proposing it and there was a room full of people who don't want it. With the cost of the election being about \$3,000, he said that it would not best serve the people and he would vote against it being put on a referendum at this time.

Ms. Halbrook said that she has been on Council for eight years and that she has always listened to the voice of the people. She said that she tries to do the right thing and goes to Church and believes in God.

Mr. Cook said that he felt that it should not be up to the five people on Council and he felt it should be put on a referendum to let the citizens decide.

Ms. Halbrook said that she thought that Council should give itself some time to think about the issue and Council should not do anything on the spur of the moment.

Mayor Jones said that Council should make a motion and if there is a second, then take a vote on it. Mr. Trevorrow said that Council could continue the public hearing if that was their desire. A motion, if made, should be to adopt or to not adopt the resolutions for ABC and/or mixed beverages. Mayor Jones said that he felt that a vote should be made on the matter tonight and if there is a group that wants to be heard on it at a later time, but it would be finished tonight. Ms. Steele asked if the proponents could be given the opportunity to present something. If they can't get enough signatures on a petition, then there would not be the cost of an election.

Mr. Trevorrow clarified that a petition requires 35% of the registered voters in Stokesdale. A vote by Council on holding a referendum does not prohibit someone from using a petition. The petition option is available regardless of the vote by Council tonight.

Mr. Cook made a motion to adopt both resolutions. Ms. Steele asked if there is a requirement that an ABC store be considered. Mayor Jones said that it was "judicial economy" to consider both at the same time. The motion failed for the lack of a second.

Mr. Attaway made a motion that Council deny the request on both counts. Mayor Jones seconded the motion. Mayor Jones clarified that the motion was to not adopt the two resolutions. Aye would be not to adopt the resolution. Nay would be that you are for it. Nay would mean that you are against the motion to not approve the resolutions. Ms. Steele said that she had questions and there had been information that she was not aware of. She said that she did not know that you could have adult establishments if this was approved. She also was not aware of the cost of holding a special election. Ms. Steele made a substitute motion to continue the matter for one month to the next regular meeting. The substitute motion failed for the lack of a second.

Ms. Steele said that she does not drink and she praised God that her family was free from drinking. She said that she was elected to represent everyone and she did not feel that she had the right to prevent citizens from voting on something and that she felt that she was supposed to put it out for the voters to decide. She said that her personal vote would be against it but she felt that as a Council person, she had to be bigger than herself and represent others and allow them to vote on it. She said that her vote was nay. Council voted 3 to 2 to not adopt the resolutions. Mayor Jones said that the vote does not mean that someone cannot make another request or someone can present a petition.

|                 |         |            |          |            |
|-----------------|---------|------------|----------|------------|
| ROLL CALL VOTE: | Jones   | <u>Aye</u> | Halbrook | <u>Aye</u> |
|                 | Attaway | <u>Aye</u> | Steele   | <u>Nay</u> |
|                 | Cook    | <u>Nay</u> |          |            |

Mayor Jones took questions from the audience. Ms. Thiery questioned whether the two resolutions could be voted on together or if they had to be voted on separately. Mayor Jones said that they could be voted on together. Ms. Hommel asked if there were people in the community that wanted this, could they collect signatures on a petition so it is not like Council is denying them altogether. Mayor Jones said that people could use a petition. Someone asked how soon it could come up again. Mayor Jones said that generally when people asked to be placed on the agenda, they are placed on it. This decision was to not place it on the ballot. Ms. Steele said that if enough signatures were placed on a petition, Council would not have a choice and the matter would be placed on the ballot for citizens to vote on it. Pastor Walker said that he was told by some businessmen in the area that Council had already made a decision and he apologized for his comments. He thanked the three that voted for not putting it on the ballot.

Mayor Jones said that he has been on Council for 18 years and he has seen various votes but he has never seen members with a pre-determined response. Council members anguished over their vote and they see both sides of the issues.

Jim Flynt said that the audience was uncomfortable tonight as well as Council as they were looking for leadership. He said he hated to pick out one Council member but the matter had come up months before and Ms. Steele had time to discuss the matter. Mayor Jones said that he could take up the matter with Ms. Steele at another time and they would move on with the next matter on the agenda.

Mayor Jones said that Council would take a 10-minute recess.

**Consider Soil Borings Bid Proposals:** Mayor Jones said that the Health Departments required certain things to be done before the Town Park Project can move forward. Soil borings must be done and test pits must be dug. Council has bids from different contractors who can provide these services. Trigon was the lowest bid proposal for the soil borings and Thomas Stanley Grading and Hauling was the low bid for the backhoe work on the test pits. Mayor Jones made a motion to adopt the low bids on the two proposals. Mr. Attaway seconded the motion. Mr. Cook asked what the soil borings were done last December. Mayor Jones said that these are for the septic service for the park. Ms. Steele said that this was for

Book 10 Page 1761

the backhoe to dig pits for the site evaluation for the septic service. All Council members voted aye and the motion carried.

**Consider revised Water Line Specifications:** The Clerk noted that the matter was continued from the last meeting and copies had been distributed to Council for their review at that time. She also noted that some changes have occurred since the water specifications were first adopted. Town Engineers, Marziano & McGougan have reviewed the document and Yates Construction has reviewed it as well since they are generally contracted to install waterlines for the Town. These are guidelines for engineers and others who may be designing extensions to the water system so that they know what the Town requirements are for the water system. Mayor Jones said that this helps maintain consistency in the system. Mayor Jones made a motion to adopt the revised specifications. Ms. Halbrook seconded the motion. All Council Members voted aye and the specifications were adopted.

**ROADS (Revitalizing Our Ancestors Dreams in Stokesdale):** Pam Lemmons, 8306 Newberry Street, said that ROADS is a revitalization group that she and her husband have started. She said that they have dedicated themselves to improving downtown historic Stokesdale. She said that they have purchased a building downtown and wish to develop some sort of community building and possibly a co-op for the arts. As an update to other things that they have done, she said they had made an application to the NC Mainstreet and even though they were denied that, they will be looking at whether it would be feasible to them to apply in the future. Even with the denial, Lew Holloway, who was on the Mainstreet team, says that he will meet with them to help with items such as street calming and signs. She said that they are holding markets on the first Saturday of each month and have local produce, flea market, arts, and crafts. On December 13, they will hold the next market and coordinate with the Parade. It will be held at 8428 US Hwy 158. For Christmas, they decided to light up the downtown and have asked other businesses to join in. They have started lights across the top of the buildings and hope to have them partially solar powered. The 501-c-3 for the non-profit that they have started is in the hands of the IRS who has cashed their \$300 check. She said that ROADS has other ideas for Stokesdale such as possibly working with the Friends of the Mountain to the Sea Trail which could feasibly pass through Stokesdale. Kate Dixon will speak to ROADS about the Trail. They are working with Lane Hall on some things. She said that we want the people of Stokesdale to have their vision of it and that is their main goal. They are usually at their building in downtown from 4-6 on Tuesdays. She asked for people to email her if they have questions about the organization or when their meetings or markets and anything else that is going on. She said that she knows there is a lot of debate about what is going on in Stokesdale. She wants us to find common ground in this community and try to do what is best for the majority of the people here. She feels that it is a beautiful community and she feels fortunate to live here. She feels that most everyone is very fearful of economic forecast. They have some tentative plans and proposals and Council has received those plans. Tim Jones would like to speak on them.

Tim Jones said he wanted to share a letter that is signed by himself and others in Town with most of them representing the business community in Stokesdale. Most of them are deeply troubled and their business is down 10 to 20%. With all the things going on in the Federal, State, and County government, and while it is true that the Town is in good shape, the concern is that we want to keep us that way. He said that the letter is not a petition. There are deep concerns that Stokesdale will over commit itself. He read the letter, a copy of which is incorporated into and made a part of the minutes of the meeting.

Mr. Jones noted that page 3 was missing from copies that were handed out in order to conserve on copying costs but it was available if anyone wanted to see it. He said that he does not have all of the answers but wanted to express a deep concern. He said that no one has offered any costs projections of what the cost to maintain the new Town Hall in the coming years, the cost to operate it and who will be hired. He said that the Town takes in \$200,000 and spends \$200,000 per year. He felt that getting rid of the Sheriff's deputy would take a big cut out of the budget but he was not sure that anyone was prepared to do that and interest rates are going down. He said he would like to see us back off and carefully think about what we are doing.

Jim Flynt 7743 NC Hwy 68, said that he would appreciate being allowed to make one comment about the last issue. Mayor Jones stopped him and said that comments could be made at the appropriate time which would be under "Comments from the Floor." Mayor Jones said that he would like to stick to the agenda. Mr. Flynt said that Ms. Lemmons may want to join him or make comments. He said that for over a year he has been coming to the meetings and talking to people in the community, and that Council is supposed to be the leadership for the community and part of the requirement of leadership

Book 10 Page 1762

there is communication between citizens and Council and he felt that we are hurting. He said that Pam has conducted a very informal poll and no more than a handful of people, 10 or 15 people, want a \$2M Town Hall over in the middle of what he considers as the boondocks. (Mayor Jones corrected him to \$1.6 M) He said that it was his frustration that Council does not understand this. He said that he personally feels that there has never been any convincing evidence that has been produced by Council to show that it can be built without a tax. Council has said that citizens cannot vote on whether they want a Town Hall. He said that according to the polling that Ms. Lemmons did on Election Day, people do not want Town Hall. He said that the Town has spent \$120,000 or more on architects to design the building. He said that there are other things that citizens can bring forward and citizens do not have to have ask Council's permission. A petition initiative was the way the Mayor of Stokesdale was changed to be elected by the voters rather than by Council. This method could be used to change the number of Council members from five up to twelve members or until we can get the right number of people on Council who will listen to the people of the community. The terms of Council members could be changed from four to two years. The vote of the Mayor could be changed so that he could only vote in the event of a tie vote. It could be changed to a district system.

He asked what would have to be done to get Council to abandon plans for the \$1.6 M, 7,000 square foot town hall which includes a mayor's office. We could find no better location than the current one. He said that he would bring in accountants and take on any one as far as the experts and will desecrate, dissect, and deny any arguments to be made that this will not ultimately lead to a tax. He said that is what Pam Lemmons and Tim Jones are hearing. ROADS has continued to grow and he invited everyone into the group. He asked Pastor Walker to have Pam to come to his church and discuss it since it is consistent with the church plans for growth. He said that he has gone to Pam's house when 60 to 70 people were there and they say they do not want a \$1.6 M edifice built for the ego of the mayor with a mayor's office built on Angel Pardue Road. He said they would be happy here at Blue Bell (Stokesdale Business Center) for \$18,000 a year in rent. He said that he believed he could go to Pastor Walker and his Church and a few others and get the number of signatures to change the leadership who is taking us in the wrong direction. He asked Council if they ever go to downtown except to ride in the Christmas parade.

Pam Lemmons asked if Council was going to take any action on a proposal that was given to them several meetings ago. Mayor Jones said that Council was still researching them. He had a report from one property owner this week. Mayor Jones noted that after the Town received the park grant, it was decided that Council would not go forward on Town Hall. That was Council's decision yet it continues to be brought up at every meeting although Council has said that they will not do both projects at the same time. Council will not do anything that will result in a tax. Mayor Jones said that the Town has gone through periods of low interest rates before when the Town had less in the bank than we do now and we were constructing a \$3.5 M water system and it was done without a tax. He said that he has an office in High Point and did not need an office in Town Hall. He felt that every Town Hall has an office designated for the Mayor. The offices and Town Hall were designed to meet the needs now and in the future and it was designed for multiple uses such as town hall meetings, public meetings, and other groups. It can be used as an emergency shelter if there was a need. Mayor Jones said that he may not be the Mayor when the Town Hall is built. Council has a record of 18 years and a tax has not been levied and even when the other Towns levied a tax when the sales and use tax was lost, the Town felt like citizens could not afford it. I don't know that there are any plans to hire other employees but there may be a need in the future and the Town could hire one if needed. The Town has contracted for the Town Deputy and there has been a drop in crime. We don't have the places mentioned in earlier arguments because the Deputy is here. Stokesdale is the first Town in about 25 years to build a water system from scratch. The Town paid for a part of the Fire Station, bought a fire truck, helped the ball field with lights, fields, bleachers, gave \$10,000 to the schools for computers and it was done without a tax. If someone asked to be heard on an issue, like liquor by the drink, it is placed on the agenda and they are heard. Council members are elected to make some decisions and sometimes they are hard decisions

Mayor Jones said that he could not afford a tax and he did not know of anyone else that could. More importantly than that, there was not a need for a tax since everything it is being paid for. The budget is for more than we spend each year.

The Finance Officer noted that the annual audit will be presented soon and the Town has, except for one year, had an increase in fund balance and the one year was the year that the water system was built. The Town is required to have a balanced budget. Budgeting an income of \$200,000 does not mean the Town will spend \$200,000. Mayor Jones said that the General Fund Balance would be declining each year if the more money was being spent than the revenues coming in. He said that Council had \$200,000 when he first came on Council. Mayor Jones said that that Council entertained the idea

of building a Town Hall because people came forward wanting a facility that was better than what we had and there was a need for it. We are not looking to build it for no reason. He said that he thought the question was if there was a referendum or if there was a petition put to the people and my response to that was that it depends on the questions that are asked. If people say they do not want a Town Hall that is one thing, but if they say we don't want a Town Hall because we have to levy a tax, then that is a different situation. The Town Hall is not going to be put up as a symbol but it is because we need the space for a number of uses other than for Council. We are not moving forward on it right now so it is a mute point.

Ms. Lemmons asked how could she let Council know that the people would rather have a community building than a formal town hall and that an overwhelming number of people are saying this to her. Mayor Jones said that it can be taken into consideration as Council is not looking to build anything at this point. Mayor Jones said that a number of public meetings were held when the design of the building was being discussed. Mayor Jones said there is a need for a community building here and the Town Hall building was designed to be used for various uses but he was not forcing anyone into a Town Hall. Mr. Flynt, in May, had indicated to Council that he would come back to them within 30 days with other properties that would be for sale that would be suitable for a Town Hall. This information has not been received. Ms. Lemmons said that Council had been given a proposal. Mayor Jones said that it was not for properties that are for sale but Council would consider proposals that are presented to them. Mr. Flynt recalled that a motion had been made to grade the pad for a Town Hall when the grading was being done for the park. Mayor Jones said that Council had been advised that it would be cheaper to do it at the same time so it saves tax payer money. Mr. Flynt said that he felt the building that the meeting was being held in would satisfy the citizens as a Town Hall. Mayor Jones said that Ted had been asked for a written proposal but it had not been received and there are a number of questions that must be addressed such as the length of the contract or what would happen if the building were to be sold. Mr. Flynt asked if Council was not paying the architects \$120,000 and continuing to pay them for the Town Hall. The Finance Officer confirmed that the architects are not being paid by for any work on the Town Hall at this time. Mr. Flynt asked how much has been spent and what stage the plans are in. The Finance Officer did not have the information available but Mayor Jones said that it was public record.

Theoron Hooks said that he sat on the Long Range Finance Committee, along with Ms. Steele, for approximately two to two and a half years and the original design was a community building to be used for Scout meetings, birthday parties, family reunions, or any of a number of other uses in addition to the office space for Town government and business meeting space. The design included a kitchen and the payment for the use of the building and the cleaning of it was also discussed. He said there needed to be some direction given or a consensus of what the citizens and special interest groups are looking for in a community use facility versus a formalized Town Hall which was going to be 50/50 with half office and half that could be used by anyone who came in and made arrangements to use the facility. He said that the committee tried to think of ways that it could be used by everyone in the Town. Is that needed at this point? He said that there were lots of uncertainties (stock market, unions, car dealerships) at this time. He said that in five years you would not be able to build it because you will not be able to afford it. He suggested that another committee should be formed to look at the options of leasing versus building and to poll the community on what they wanted. He said that the meeting room that was being used tonight would have to be renovated to being used as a community building and to function as a Town Hall. He said that the committee met for many nights and listened to many proposals from different architects and he recalled that there were two citizens on the committee along with Council members and they were the only ones that came to the meetings. That was the time for community input. He said that a community building with a park was designed on property that was one block off of the main road.

Mayor Jones said that the land was designed so that the school would have access to the facility as well. He said that Council was not discounting anything that the ROADS group has said and that Council would keep an open mind. He said that Ted's proposal would be considered and that there are other facilities here and everyone would be given a fair chance. Maintenance and unfitting costs would have to consider. The length of the lease would be considered. Council will focus on the Park now since we have the grant. He said some people have questioned why Council would move to this location when the larger meeting room would only be needed once or twice a year.

Claude Parrish said that he has a house and two acres of land with a 24X28 garage that is located right around the corner from the Town property. He said that he moved out two years ago when 65 homes were going to be built there. He said that he would sell it to the Town for an office for the money they were paying for the architect. He would take that the place. Mayor Jones said that if he would send the Town a proposal with the asking price and what it entails on the property that Council would consider that as well.

Eileen Thiery, 8101 Meadow Spring Place, said that by sitting tight, we have to let the economy do its thing and maybe that will be the answer. What we want here may become a mute issue down the line. We may have to adjust. As long as you are willing to sit back and I think that is about all that we can ask right now.

Mayor Jones said that with the water system, the Town could have gotten a low cost loan but people did not want it. A month or so later, contamination was found and people wanted the water system. The advantage was that the Town had the plans for the system which were good then or would have been good in ten or twenty years. He said that it had been good for the Town both healthwise and by bringing in business. He said that Council would look at any proposals that are submitted to them.

Pam Lemmons asked if there is a desire for a different type of community building, would it be consider or was it was a done deal. Mayor Jones said that there is 25 acres and there is space for the things that are needed. She asked if a community building that would be multi-purpose would be considered before building a formal Town Hall. Mayor Jones said that he did not have a personal preference. He said that they should tell Council what was wanted in Town Hall. He said that Council would review any information presented to them. Mr. Cook said that he did not think that Council had looked at the figures that Tim Jones had presented. He said that they showed \$1.6 M and how that is going to relate to paying for it. Mayor Jones Said that Council had looked at that number because they wanted to make sure that it could be paid for without a tax. Mayor Jones said that he cannot encumber a future Council.

John Flynt, 8325 Perrou Court, said that Mayor Jones was a gentleman to have taken some of the comments that have been made. He said that Mayor Jones was being singled out as the only person that had input in the Town Hall plans or the cost etc. He said that both he and Bobby Richardson had served on the committee and all of the meetings had been properly advertised and announced in the Northwest Observer and they were open to everyone in Stokesdale. Citizens cannot be forced to attend meetings but Council catches the abuse when they don't. He said that the costs are speculative numbers of \$1.6M. Yet some are saying to build a gym and a community center. He said that when he was Mayor, he, Mayor Barnes, and Mayor Ray Combs met with YMCA officials and they had discussions about a YMCA that would serve all three communities. They looked at the cost for building a facility and it was between \$5 and \$15M at that time so the cost of a gymnasium is higher than the cost of a Town Hall. It has been an ongoing situation and it has been in the budget and everything has been honest and open. He said that increasing the number of Council members usually results in an inefficient Council. He said that he has been on the Council and was mayor and people do not understand how many phone calls the Mayor gets and how much time is spent on a part time job that is really full time hours. He said that he would put his money on this group and that you could meet them on the street and express your concerns to them and they would consider your opinion.

Mayor Jones said that Council would recognize that there are two different opinions on the matter and that all proposals would be considered.

#### **COMMITTEE AND BOARD REPORTS:**

**Consider Applications submitted for Committee Members:** Mayor Jones noted a number of applications have been submitted for committees and he asked how Council would like to proceed. Mr. Attaway made a motion to address the applications at the next Council meeting. Ms. Halbrook seconded the motion. Mayor Jones said it was that he felt that it was worthy to give all of the applicants sufficient consideration and to not work in haste since there are a number of good applicants.

Mr. Hooks, as Chairman of the Public Safety Committee, asked if he would be allowed to review the applications that were submitted for that committee. Mayor Jones said that it has been the tradition for Council to review the applications and make those decisions. If Council should want to change that, they can take it under advisement and consider it at the next meeting. Mayor Jones called the question. All Council members voted aye and the matter was continued to the December meeting.

**Departmental and Administrative Reports: Finance Report: October 2008:** The Finance Officer noted that in order to present current Accounts Payable information to Council, the report is generally prepared the day of the meeting. The report was not completed due to a waterline break that occurred during the day. Mayor Jones noted that a utility company had drilled thru a major waterline today causing an emergency situation with repairs having to be made.

Book 10 Page 1765

**Purchase Additional Fire Hydrants Bands:** The Finance Officer noted that the Fire Department had ordered bands to place on the fire hydrants to number and identify them. Since additional hydrants have been added to the system, new bands need to be ordered.

The Fire Department paid for half of the bands on the first order. Their proposal was to order 15 additional bands at a cost of \$280. The Town would pay \$140. Mayor Jones noted that the bands make the hydrants visible at night. Water Technology also has a list of the numbers and locations as well. Mayor Jones made a motion to pay one half of the cost for fifteen bands. Ms. Steele seconded the motion. All Council members voted aye and the motion carried.

**Covington Diesel Proposal:** The Clerk noted that previously the Town has contracted with Covington for maintenance checks of the generator. The checks would be include one annual and one semi-annual servicing of the generator at a cost of \$600. Mayor Jones noted that during a hurricane, an emergency shelter was opened with people from as far away as Pamlico spending the night at the shelter. Mayor Jones made a motion to maintain the maintenance agreement with Covington. Mr. Attaway seconded the motion. All Council members voted aye and the motion carried.

**Parade Participation by Council:** The Clerk noted that the Parade Committee is always seeking convertibles for dignitaries to ride in on Parade Day. For planning purposes, she asked if all Council members planned to participate in the parade and whether they needed a car. Mr. Attaway, Ms. Halbrook, and Ms. Steele indicated that they were planning to attend. Mayor Jones said that he planned to attend unless he had an emergency.

**LEGISLATIVE ACTION:** There was no legislative action coming before Council.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Mayor Jones read the announcements listed on the agenda.

**COMMENTS FROM THE FLOOR:** Tim Venable announced that the Fire Department will be cooking a Brunswick Stew on Saturday, November 22. He asked if Council had been contacted by Mr. Garland Rakestraw from Rockingham County. He said that he is trying to change the construction dates for I-73 from 2020 to 2010. He said that Mr. Rakestraw will be contacting Summerfield and Oak Ridge about the matter and asked if he could contact Mayor Jones about the matter. Madison and Stoneville are in favor of the change.

**COMMENTS FROM COUNCIL:** There were no comments from Council.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Mr. Attaway made a motion to adjourn. Mayor Jones seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 10:50 PM.

---

Carolyn L. Joyner, Town Clerk

Approved:

---

Randle L. Jones, Mayor