

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

A special meeting of the Stokesdale Town Council was held in the Stokesdale Town Hall at 8416 US Highway 158 on Tuesday, May 27, 2008. The meeting was held for the purpose of discussing issues relating to the PARTF Grant Approval for the Town Park Project and Budgeting for the project.

Mayor Randle L. Jones called the meeting to order at 6:02 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: Town Attorney William B. Trevorrow; and Town Clerk/Finance Officer Carolyn Joyner.

Mayor Jones read a letter dated May 20, 2008 from Governor Michael F. Easley announcing the approval of a \$500,000 matching grant for the NC Parks and Recreation Authority. A copy of the letter is hereby incorporated into and made a part of the minutes of the meeting.

Mayor Jones noted that the Town had previously received a grant that was used to build the Town's water system and it should be similar to the grant for the Park. He said that he did not see that Council could do two major projects, a park and a town hall, at one time. He said that he could not see the Town not taking the \$500,000 free grant money. The planning of the Town Hall is almost complete and it can be put on hold until the park project is completed.

Mayor Jones made a motion to move ahead with the Park Project with matching funds and to accept the grant and move forward to begin the process of construction of the Town Park. Mr. Attaway seconded the motion. All Council members voted aye and the motion carried.

Mayor Jones made a motion that when the contract is received, it should be given to Mr. Trevorrow, the Town Attorney, and upon his approval as being a proper contract, the Mayor be given authorization to sign it and start the process. Ms. Steele seconded the motion. All Council members voted aye and the motion carried.

Mr. Attaway asked how the grant would be paid and how the matching grant would work. Mayor Jones explained that the Town will be reimbursed dollar for dollar so that the State will pay for one half of the project. As work is done, bills will come in and there will be a process of verifying that the work has been completed and they will be submitted to the State for payment. He said that it was a competitive grant and it speaks well for our Town and the need for a park.

Jim Flynt asked about the anticipated cost of the project and said that according to the application, the cost of the land could be used for the Town's matching funds rather than a half a million in cash. Mayor Jones said that the Town will match it with Town funds and the project will have a million dollar budget. Mr. Flynt said that he has two concerns: it may, along with the plans for a Town Hall, cause the Town to impose a tax and that the Town should get the maximum bang for their buck. Mr. Flynt asked if the Town planned to build two soccer fields and a football field. He also said that 34 projects have been approved which ranged from \$23,000 to over \$500,000. He pointed out that the Town of Ahoskie was approved for a half million-dollar project and they plan to build three ball fields, eight soccer fields, two concession/toilet buildings, five picnic shelters, three playgrounds and two volleyball courts. He was concerned that Stokesdale would be getting much less than that for a million dollars.

Tim Jones expressed concerns over the maintenance and operation costs of the park and asked if \$200,000 could be set aside for those expenses and he asked how the Town would avoid hiring an employee to operate the Park like Oak Ridge and Summerfield has done to manage and take care of their parks. Mayor Jones said that money that has been set aside is earning interest that provides funds to operate. He pointed out that the operation of the water system is out sourced and it may be more economical for the Park. Costs can be compared for hiring an employee versus outsourcing the work.

Ms. Thiery asked if the State mandates that all of the funds must be spent or if some can be put aside for operation and maintenance. Mayor Jones replied that the money must be spent on the construction of the project as requested and it must be documented that it was spent for those costs.

Mr. Trevorror said that the State wants to preclude that the money will be used for the project purposes and not as an investment fund.

Mayor Jones said that the architects have said that bids are coming in lower at this time because of tight money so it is a more optimal time to build now than it was six months ago.

Ms. Halbrook said that baseballs fields are needed now and she asked Jimmy Landreth to back her up on it. Mr. Landreth said that there are never enough fields to practice on and if the plans could be changed so that the fields could be used for baseball, then the fields would be used 365 days a year. Mayor Jones said that Parks and Recreation had told Council what the demands were and that an area church is planning to build ball fields. He also said that it did not matter to him whether it was baseball, soccer, or football, because his child would probably not use any of them.

Mr. Trevorror said that the application may need to be modified if the needs have changed. Mayor Jones said that the procedure for changing it could be investigated.

Bill Lemmons asked how many responses were received on the survey. The Clerk responded that 548 (33 percent) of the surveys were completed and returned. Of those, 1,367 citizens out of the Town's total population of 3,638 (38%) was represented by the survey.

Mr. Hooks pointed out that the Town could also changed the fields after they were completed if the needs are different at that point in time and it would not affect the grant. This is also Phase I of the Park and perhaps additional fields can be added in the future.

Mr. Flynt pointed out that he felt that multipurpose fields should be soccer, football and baseball. Mayor Jones pointed out that the sketch of the Town's property has been published in the NWO. The Clerk pointed out that the survey listed each sport separately. Mayor Jones pointed out that the grant request was based on the results of meetings with notices posted in the newspapers and surveys that were mailed out to citizens. He noted that ten people were present at the meeting and this was the first time that he had heard that there was confusion and that no one wants soccer fields. He said that if there is a need for baseball fields then they could be built at a later time. He said that notices for meetings about the park had been advertised. He noted that there are similarities with the water system. Services have been outsourced for the water system and they can be outsourced for the park.

The Clerk pointed out that if the Town is builds the park as planned and another phase is needed, the Town can apply for a second grant.

Mr. Hooks asked if there is a timeline for other phases of the park. Mayor Jones said that there is not one at this time.

Tim Jones asked if Stokesdale Parks and Recreation or a separate organization would be operating the programs the organized sports that would be played on the fields. Mayor Jones responded that they would have access to the fields and the football organization would both have access to the fields.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Mr. Attaway made a motion to adjourn. Ms Halbrook seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 6:46 PM.

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Carolyn L. Joyner, Town Clerk

Approved:

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Randle L. Jones, Mayor