

TOWN OF STOKESDALE
PO BOX 465
STOKESDALE, NORTH CAROLINA

The regular meeting of the Stokesdale Town Council was held in the Town Hall at 8416 US Highway 158 on Thursday, March 19, 2009.

Mayor Randle L. Jones called the meeting to order at 7:32 PM. The following members of Council were present: Mayor Randle L. Jones, Mickie Halbrook and James Attaway. Council members Cheryl Steele and Norman Cook were absent.

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, Council considered the proposed agenda. Mr. Attaway felt that the committee selections should be placed on the agenda for consideration. Mayor Jones suggested that Council should make the selection next month when a full Council is present. Ms. Halbrook made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented. Mr. Attaway seconded the motion. All Council members voted aye and the agenda was approved.

Ms. Halbrook made a motion to adopt the minutes as presented and without reading. Mr. Attaway seconded the motion. All Council members present voted aye and the minutes of the regular meeting of Town Council held on February 19, 2009 were approved.

NEW BUSINESS:

Report from Guilford County Sheriff's Department: Deputy Christman reported that things had dropped off since the last meeting and compared to the last year. There was one theft of property which was a Part 1 crime. Drug arrests have more than doubled compared to the same time last year. Part 1 crimes are down this year which is good especially with the downturn of the economy.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Town Park Project: Mayor Jones said that the Town is waiting for the final approvals from NC DENR and the County. When they are completed, the Town will go to the next step.

Disposition of patrol car: Mayor Jones said that a new patrol car has been ordered. Deputy Christman said that the new car should arrive in May. Mayor Jones said that the last few times the County has sold the Town's cars at auction through the County. He made a motion to do the same with this car. Mr. Attaway seconded the motion. All Council members present voted aye and the motion carried.

Mayor Jones noted that Councilman Cook was still recovering and Ms. Steele was unable to attend the meeting. Council does have a quorum and they make their apologies for not being present. Sometimes there are unavoidable circumstances that occur so that Council members cannot attend.

COMMITTEE AND BOARD REPORTS: Mayor Jones said that applications have been submitted and interviews have been done. He had hoped to have a full council but with only a quorum and in selecting people for committees, he wanted to make sure that all Council members had a full voice and to get everyone's opinions. Next month, hopefully all members will be present

Appointment of Budget Officer/Budget Committee: Mayor Jones noted that Ms. Joyner has served as Budget Officer for a number of years and usually a couple of Council members are appointed to serve on the Budget Committee. Mayor Jones said that he would volunteer to serve again this year. Mr. Attaway made a motion for Mayor Jones, Ms. Halbrook, and himself to be appointed to the Budget Committee. Mayor Jones seconded the motion. All Council members present voted aye and the motion carried. All Budget Requests must be submitted to the Budget Officer by April 30.

Mayor Jones noted that there has been a reduction in the number of planning and zoning cases due to the economy. It is affecting larger cities as well as smaller ones. This has caused a reduction in planning fees collected as well.

Departmental and Administrative Reports: Finance Report: February, 2009: The Finance Officer reported that assets had decreased by about \$5,500 since the previous month. General Fund Checking Account transactions included the payment of \$2,700.00 to Cannon & Company for the final billing for the audit and \$22,166.02 to Guilford County Finance Department for law enforcement. Accounts Payable includes an invoice from Hostway Corporation for the domain names for the websites and an invoice from Guilford County Finance Department for \$12,500 for planning fees. Certificates of deposit earned \$8,172.76 in interest which was deposited into the money market savings account. The General Fund Savings Account reflects the deposit of \$1,803.61 which was 4th quarter ABC Profits.

Two invoices were paid from the Park Capital Account. Vaughn Surveying Company was paid \$150.00 to locate and map the septic field on the park property. Stewart Cooper Newell Architects were paid \$4,769.94 for construction documents.

Checking Account transactions for the Water Enterprise Checking accounts are routine transactions. Water Enterprise Accounts Payable includes two invoices from Yates Construction Company, one for \$155.62 for the installation of water meters and another for \$3,151.00 for the repair of water lines at the Belews Creek Road – Ellisboro Road intersection. The reason for the break is not known but the extremely cold temperatures could have contributed to the problem.

The Finance Officer reported that the Parade Income for the year totaled \$1,340.00 and expenses to date are \$1,102.19. The parade committee may use the remaining funds to purchase additional radios, magnetic signs for Council to use on parade vehicles, and make racks for the wreaths so they will not be crushed. It costs the Town \$715.00 to have the Christmas banners put up and removed. This expense was not included with the Parade expenses.

Mr. Miller asked if the Town had insurance to cover breaks in the water system. Mayor Jones said that the Town does not have insurance to cover that type of occurrence. The Town does have liability insurance.

Ms. Hommel asked who hangs the banners and how many banners were there. Ms. Joyner replied that Angel Electric hangs them and there are 20 of them.

Mayor Jones noted that the Town has received a letter from the Guilford County Health Department regarding animal control/shelter fees. They will be reinstating the fees this year because of the budget shortfalls and will be using the same formula which is based on population as before to determine those fees. Part of the fees will go toward the animal shelter and the remainder is for animal control. Mayor Jones said that in the past, the issue of the towns working together to provide the service was considered but with the expense of a vehicle and salaries, it was not cost effective and the cost of the shelter would have to be paid.

Administrative Report

Solid Waste Update: Ms. Joyner reported that a public meeting was held on March 16 for citizens to comment on the proposed update of the Solid Waste Plan Update. A draft of the update is now available on the County website. Susan Heim, Guilford County Environmental Services Coordinator, will make a presentation about the update at the April Council meeting. Council will need to adopt a Resolution in support of the plan.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION: Consider a Resolution in support of Oak Ridge ETJ: Mayor Jones noted that ETJ was extra territorial jurisdictional and towns can request ETJ for a distance of 1 mile outside of their the city limits and if it is granted by either the County or through the legislature, then they will be responsible for the planning and zoning in the designated area. Oak Ridge is pursuing this. Stokesdale sought this some time ago to protect the Town's interest in this area but the Town did not have enough

support from the County Commissioners at that time to establish the ETJ. Oak Ridge is attempting to establish ETJ in an area between Oak Ridge and Stokesdale near the Forsyth County boundary that was shown on a map included in Council's packet. A resolution was included for Council's consideration. Mayor Jones noted the ETJ would give Oak Ridge control of planning and zoning for the area rather than the County if it is passed by the legislature. He felt that it would be beneficial for Oak Ridge to control the area rather than the County or another city in another county making the zoning decisions. A decision needs to be made since the legislature is moving forward with the matter. Mr. Trevorrow said that normally when an issue such as this comes before the legislature, they like to see uniformity and agreement and that is the purpose of the resolution. They need to know that Stokesdale and the County Commissioners agree with the matter. If they get objection, then they may hold it. It is the usual process when you have the legislative delegation involved. Mayor Jones said that if something were planned for the area in the ETJ, Stokesdale's ideas would be more akin to those of Oak Ridge rather than Guilford County. Ms. Halbrook asked if Stokesdale would ever want to annex the area. Mayor Jones said that the Town has enough to look after. The people that live in the area probably feel that they are a part of Oak Ridge more than Stokesdale. Mayor Jones said that in order to annex property, it has to be voluntary or you have to meet density requirements and provide services which can be difficult in rural areas at times. Oak Ridge has a moratorium on annexation for 18 to 20 years. Mr. Trevorrow said that annexation was prohibited at the time that Oak Ridge incorporated and now it has been modified.

Ms. Thiery asked about the progress on the issue of the Town annexing areas near Hwy 220. Ms. Halbrook said that letters had been sent out and some property owners were interested and some were not. Some did not reply and others said they had questions. Ms. Halbrook said that more letters would be going out soon.

Mayor Jones read the proposed resolution. He made a motion to adopt the resolution. He said from the standpoint that it is mutually beneficial to our Town to have the area controlled and planning and zoning done by a local municipality as opposed to being done by others and it would be of benefit to Stokesdale. In the past Stokesdale has joined in with Oak Ridge on issues that concerned Stokesdale. Mr. Attaway seconded the motion. All three Council members present voted aye and the resolution was adopted. A copy of the resolution is hereby incorporated into and made a part of the minutes of the meeting.

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

COMMENTS FROM THE FLOOR: Thearon Hooks said that in light of the recent announcement regarding the loss of Lowe's, was there any vehicle or committee in place that would promote the Town as far as other businesses moving into the Town should there be the loss of other businesses.

Mayor Jones said that there was not anything in place because it had never been needed. The Town has worked with County representatives in the past because it benefited them to have something in place to fill the tax base. Mayor Jones noted that the Town does not have a property tax and it is an excellent facility that is in good condition. Most companies are looking for a good workforce and good area schools. It is strategically located near major roadways and it is a short distance from the airport. Ms. Halbrook said that she had talked with one of the owners of the building and he was very positive that they would find another tenant. Mr. Hooks said that he thought there should be a committee to put together brochures or a website to promote the Town. Mayor Jones said that he felt that the best thing would be let the owners find another tenant. If they want the Town's help, Council would probably be willing to work in conjunction with them. Ms. Halbrook pointed out that the asphalt plant has been closed all winter. Mayor Jones suggested that Mr. Hooks should put together a proposal for Council to consider and include people that are willing to serve and then Council can consider it at the next meeting when other committees are chosen. There has been a business and development committee before and there is a merchants association group that has been successful in promoting the area. They have been aggressively recruiting businesses and they hold ribbon cuttings for new business. Ms. Halbrook said that the owner said that the closing of the plant was not the result of the economy. Mayor Jones said that Lowes had opened the facility in 2004 when it was needed to ship lighting to the west coast. They have changed their structure with more strategically located centers and necessity of this location has diminished.

Mr. Miller said that he felt that the private sector should promote businesses and it was not Council's responsibility to do marketing for businesses.

Mr. Hooks asked about applications being made for fund being dispersed by the federal government. Mayor Jones said that the funds are not being dispersed but they are loans which can be applied for and that must be paid back with interest on projects for local governments. It is not free money. Most of the projects that are applicable for the Town would require money to be invested up front for engineering, development and design fees and then you have to apply of the funds and repay them plus interest.

Eileen Thiery said that Kirk Kusche and Mr. Combs should be approached for bringing businesses to their business developments. Mayor Jones said that he has spoken with some commercial bankers that lend money on commercial projects and they said that rates are not favorable now and many are not making loans unless it will be owner occupied. Down payments for commercial as well as personal property are greater now.

Mrs. Halbrook said that she had contacted the postal authorities about a new post office and nothing has changed.

Ms. Hommel asked if the Town has a plan in place to remove some of the unsightly signs that are everywhere. Mayor Jones said that the Town's Ordinance is virtually the same as the County Ordinance and that Zoning Enforcement should be contacted. Ms. Hommel said that they would not come out as there is only one person working. Ms. Hommel said that they had told her that she could remove the signs but she said they were not sure about what should be done with them. She said that the real estate signs should be placed on property that is being sold. Mayor Jones said that proper procedure in the past has been reporting it to zoning enforcement. If that is not the case, County representatives can be contacted and there has not been that response in the past. They would send out letters to the person in violation.

As to signs on the road right of way, Eileen Thiery said that she had contacted Lane Hall with NCDOT and he said that the signs do not belong there and that he would turn the other way. She said that Duke Power says that signs are not allowed on the poles and citizens are allowed to take them down. She said that she was concerned about the signs at Hwy 158 and NC 68. She felt that all of the signs speak poorly of the Town. Mayor Jones said that the Clerk could contact Planning and check on the enforcement since the complaints are being made and he could speak with County representatives as well about the enforcement of the Ordinance. He said that if citizens want the signs down, the Town might have to pay someone to do it which could result in the Town having a tax. If there are zoning violations, the Town will ask for enforcement. There may be more cutbacks from the County and there may be more instances of not enough people to provide enforcement as before. If the Town has to hire someone, it does cost money.

Ms. Thiery expressed concerns that the paving that was done at the Food Lion. She had expressed her concerns to Lane Hall who said that the paving was a sloppy job and the developer would have to resurface it. She was concerned that this is in the scenic corridor and what has been done there is unbelievable. She said that the road is patchy and she did not how long the cones would be there because the cement was put there. She said that when paving was done in other new development, such as the paving at Bell Architectural Windows and it was fantastic. She asked if the Town has any approval authority over the paving or does it come from DOT. Mr. Trevorrow said that he felt it would have to be built to both planning and DOT standards. Mayor Jones said that DOT sets the standards for the type of lanes and if they said it would have to be redone, then DOT would enforce the standards. Mr. Trevorrow suggested that Mr. Nuttall should be asked if the site plan requirements are being met and perhaps he could work with Mr. Hall. Mayor Jones said that usually Guilford County is very strict on zoning enforcement issues. He said that we could check on the status of the project and see what the holdup is with the project.

Ms. Hommel thanked Council for allowing the informal forum that had just taken place.

COMMENTS FROM COUNCIL: There were no comments from Council.

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Jones made a motion to adjourn. All Council members present voted aye. There being no further business and no other persons to be heard, the meeting adjourned at 8:48 pm.

Carolyn L. Joyner, Town Clerk

APPROVED:

Randle L. Jones, Mayor

[Back to Minutes](#)