

# TOWN OF STOKESDALE

## Regular Council Meeting

8325 Angel Pardue Road

Stokesdale, NC 27357

July 24, 2014

The regular meeting of the Stokesdale Town Council was held on Thursday, July 24, 2014, at the Stokesdale Town Hall at 8325 Angel Pardue Road.

**Council members in attendance:** Mayor Randy Braswell, Frank Bruno, William N. (Bill) Jones, Vicki White-Lawrence.

**Others present included:** William B. Trevorrow, Town Attorney; Carolyn L. Joyner, Town Clerk/Finance Officer; Deputy Scott Casey, Guilford County Sheriff's Department.

**Call Council Meeting to Order:** Mayor Braswell called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

**Invocation:** Given by Mayor Braswell.

**Pledge of Allegiance:** Recited by Council members and citizens in attendance.

**Review and Adopt Agenda:** Vicki White-Lawrence said she would like to add the Holiday Parade to the Agenda under New Business.

Frank Bruno said that he would like to propose a rearrangement to the Agenda. He would like to take Vacant Council Seat from under Unfinished Business and move it after the Announcements and before Comments from the Council.

Mayor Braswell made a motion to adopt the Agenda. Vicki White-Lawrence seconded the motion. All Council members voted aye and the Agenda was adopted.

**Comments from the Floor:** There were no comments made from the floor.

### **New Business:**

**Report from Guilford County Sheriff's Department:** Deputy Scott Casey said that from the last meeting until today, there were 14 reports generated from the calls they received. There was a couple of burglaries, a robbery at the Double K, a vehicle theft, and a theft of property and they have suspects in those. Last week there was another burglary and they do not have a suspect in that case.

Mayor Braswell asked Deputy Casey if he had any advice for the citizens. Deputy Casey said that there are some things you can do to secure your doors. The screws that secure your door are small, so you can put longer screws in deeper to help secure it. The problem is that if someone wants to get into your home, most of the time they will cause damage to get in. The door was unlocked through a broken window during the burglary that occurred last week. Most burglaries happen in the daytime when no one is home or burglaries are done by family members. People leave items in unlocked cars and

suspects know this and will walk down a street and check car doors until they find one unlocked. If a suspect sees money in a console, they will break the car window to get it. Deputy Casey rides through neighborhoods and if he sees that something is not right, he will stop and see if he can talk to someone. He said to keep your bushes trimmed, your house well lit, and lock your doors in order to deter thefts. If someone sees something strange, please call 911, so he can check it out.

Frank Bruno said that Deputy Casey does a fantastic job in Stokesdale and the Greensboro Chapter of Woodmen of the World will be presenting him with the Community Leadership Award on August 15<sup>th</sup>. Mayor Braswell congratulated Deputy Casey on a job well done.

**Consider Amendment to the Jani-King Contract:** Mayor Braswell said that the change on the Jani-King contract is just one labor-type service being exchanged for another.

Bill Jones made a motion to accept the changes to the Jani-King contract. Frank Bruno seconded the motion. All Council members voted aye and the motion was approved.

**Consider Water Plans Submitted for Angels Glen Phases 4 & 5:** Mayor Braswell said that an application was submitted for approval of 4,295 feet of water main extension and 700 feet of two inch extension along with all of the necessary hydrants and valves. Carolyn Joyner said that the application was submitted by Hugh Creed Associates on behalf of Combs, Inc., and eventually a contract will be submitted for Council to approve before they start construction. This is just to submit the plans to NCDENR in Raleigh. This application will be returned to Hugh Creed and they will submit it to Raleigh.

Bill Jones made a motion to authorize the Mayor to sign the application. Vicki White-Lawrence seconded the motion. All Council members voted aye and the motion was approved.

**Consider Changes to the Water System Fee Schedule and Water User Agreement:** Mayor Braswell said that the amount of deposit required by renters is being changed from \$100.00 to \$125.00. There is another change which reads: "All commercial (non-residential) facilities (buildings) are required to install a pressure reduction principal assembly backflow preventer. All commercial customers will be charged \$75.00 for an initial inspection of the backflow preventer when it is installed." Another change is as follows: "Bulk Water Sales: hourly labor rate charged by contractor plus cost of water plus 15%." Another change reads: "The undersigned is responsible for water charges incurred through the water meter at the property stated above and agrees to abide by the Town of Stokesdale's Water System Management Policy including Ordinance #54 to Protect and Regulate the Operation of the Water Distribution System which I have received a copy or waived the receipt of the Ordinance as indicated below. I do not wish to receive a copy of Ordinance #54 at this time \_\_\_\_\_  
Date\_\_\_\_\_."

Vicki White-Lawrence asked if there were any inspections required after the \$75.00 charge for an initial inspection of the backflow preventer when it is installed. Carolyn Joyner said that the commercial facility would be required to do an annual backflow test every year and submit a report to the Town confirming that it had been done. The \$75.00 is for an initial inspection after the backflow preventer has been installed.

Vicki White-Lawrence made a motion to approve the changes. Frank Bruno seconded the motion. All Council members voted aye and the motion was approved.

**Soccer Field Maintenance Proposal:** Tommy Cowett from GrowinGreen said he holds a master's degree in Turf Grass Physiology from NC State and has been in this business for about 30 years. GrownGreen has been in business a long time and was built on great customer service and technology. An Athletic Field Division has been added to the business.

Mr. Cowett said the Town Park's fields have a lot of issues. The first part of the proposal deals with sedge removal. Joe Dixon of Parks and Recreation did previously approve sedge removal on the fields. The sedge removal may total \$3,113.50. If the chemicals that they have already researched work, then the Mechanical for \$1,300.00 listed under the Sedge Removal Program will not be needed. From what he understands from Sean Trotter, the facility has a big tournament with over one hundred teams scheduled to play on the fields in November. This soccer tournament will put Stokesdale Town Park on the map because it is a great new facility. There is a trip hazard right now in the fields and the Soccer Association is not going to put their referees on those fields because of it. He hopes to control the sedge with three repeat applications every two weeks. Right now there are four test blocks out in the fields with four different chemicals on each block. Tomorrow, he intends to do their first treatment with a combination of two of those products. Their goal is to kill the sedge grass completely within the next six weeks. He hopes the sedge will go down within the next four weeks. The sedge has been there a long time, is now matured, and is difficult to control, but he plans to kill it. He is willing to work with the Town so the \$1,300.00 mechanical removal to tear it out would not have to be done. Typically, he starts in February or March with their Chemical Maintenance Program doing pre-emergent applications with a product which is very safe for Bermuda and minimizes weeds by 95 percent. In May through September he feeds the fields to make them perfect.

Mr. Cowett said that this fall, he plans to do the second part of this program with the seeding of perennial ryegrass to get the fields in top condition by the time the big soccer tournament happens in November. You get fertilization and everything for the grow-in of perennial ryegrass in order to produce a great field. The maintenance program over the next year will feed the perennial ryegrass through the winter and into spring. If you follow the program, he will kill off the perennial ryegrass and start to push the Bermuda again. There are many dead spots in the center of the field and they are running out of time, because they only have about a month left of Bermuda growth to get anything back. That is why you need to start in May in order to get it real thick. The program is designed for this year and this is not something that you will have to continue to do. He does not recommend the perennial ryegrass ever again. It is just to get the fields ready for the tournament in November. Going forward he would not have to do the September and October applications anymore because they would not be needed. This program is a good as you can get anywhere. The center of the field has an inverse crown or bowl which keeps the water from running off. The third page of his proposal deals with deep tine aeration and top dressing services. This will provide a few inches of sand on the entire field and if done over the next three years it will build the crown back. This year it will be filled in and be flat, but will get better each year. Then you will not have to do it every year. You may just have to do it every three years. This is what he is proposing, which is a total of approximately \$16,000.00, and is very reasonable.

Mayor Braswell asked whether they had to deep tine every year or just this year and two years of top dressing. Mr. Cowett said that he recommends deep tining each year because you want to put the sand down into the roots. The deep tine machine makes holes about twelve inches deep. The top dressing machine throws sand about twenty feet wide and the sand works its way down and fills those holes up. The sand makes a place for the roots to grow. Then the sand heats up and the Bermuda grass grows wild.

Mayor Braswell asked Mr. Cowett when he will know that the sedge grass problem has been conquered. Mr. Cowett said that he might know if he killed it in two weeks. The chemicals used will prevent the sedge grass from coming back. Mayor Braswell asked when the sand would be done. Mr. Cowett said that the sand should be done as soon as possible. The Bermuda needs to grow so the ryegrass may not be needed. First, he needs to see where the fields are at right now. His proposal involves a program that takes care of everything and guarantees that fields will be ready for the soccer tournament. He is not here to push a lot of services that are not needed. Mayor Braswell asked if twenty tons of sand is enough to make both fields level. Mr. Cowett said that this year, the sand will make the fields level. If you do it again next year, it will build the fields a little more. Then, if you do it a third year, you will have a crown. After the third year, you will only need to do it every 3 to 5 years, or you may not have to do it at all, because the sand is not going anywhere. He does believe that organic matter caused it to sink. Bill Jones asked how many inches 25 tons of sand would average out on the fields. Mr. Cowett said that 25 tons of sand would make it one and a half to two inches out on the fields. Mayor Braswell said it would be \$2,500.00 for the labor and \$1,950.00 for the sand. He asked Mr. Cowett if he would handle the purchase of the sand from Morgan Sand and send the invoice to the Town of Stokesdale. Mr. Cowett said he would handle the purchase and get the sand at his cost. Mayor Braswell asked about the top dressing loader. Mr. Cowett said that he does not have a top loader any more so one is rented. If Mayor Braswell knows someone that has a tractor with a loader, it would save him \$550.00. Mayor Braswell said that the sand will be the final finish on the field. The crown needs to be brought back on the fields. As far as the weed killer, fertilizer, and perennial ryegrass, Stokesdale Parks and Recreation has a joint interest in that too. Bill Jones said that part of the reason they changed direction with their contractor last year was so they could make some improvements with the fields.

Bill Jones made a motion to approve the \$6,640.00 portion of the contract for sanding the fields. Vicki White-Lawrence seconded the motion.

Frank Bruno said that he would like to see a contract with only the Deep Tine Aeration and Top Dressing Services portion for the \$6,640.00, and Mr. Cowett also needs to provide GrowinGreen's Certificate of Liability Insurance.

All Council members voted aye and the motion was approved.

**Opening & Closing Times for the Park Gate:** Mayor Braswell said that his concern was closing the gate at 8:00pm, 8:30pm, or 9:00pm. The Park itself is not closed until 11:00pm, so people are moving their cars outside of the gate. Some people are still walking and some people are continuing to play soccer. He does not have a problem with that, but an emergency vehicle could not get down there. Frank Bruno said that he does not like the gate because the Sheriff's Department cannot patrol the Park at night. The gate to him is symbolic because you can drive around the gate if you really want to and you see people in the Park after it is locked, so he has never been a fan of the gate. He also does not like having to pay someone to open and close the gate. Vicki White-Lawrence wanted to know if the Sheriff's Department said not to lock the gate. Mayor Braswell said the Sheriff's Department came out and did a security survey and could not get through the gate. He suggested moving the gate to the crest of the hill so the Sheriff could pull up to the gate and see down into the Park. Bill Jones said that when moving the gate to the crest of the hill was discussed, it was determined that there was no way to turn around. He thought a turn-around on the side of the road could be made but it is not wide enough for that. He and Mayor Braswell asked the Sheriff's Department for a recommendation, but the problem was that the gate is locked 8:00pm, 8:30pm, or 9:00pm, and the Park is still open for a few hours. It could be a liability issue so not locking the gate was recommended. Vicki White-Lawrence asked if there was any downside to

leaving the gate unlocked. Bill Jones said that there are advantages and disadvantages to leaving the gate unlocked. People go into the Park after hours anyway. He would follow the Sheriff Department's recommendation and not lock it. Mayor Braswell said that he was at the Park the other night at 10:00pm and there were lots of families out there with infants and little children, but there were also teenagers. He was surprised that the families were out that late because it was very dark. He does not know why the Park is open until 11:00pm. Vicki White-Lawrence said that Council can decide something now and revisit it if it ever becomes an issue. Frank Bruno said that there are security cameras down in the Park, so the majority of the issues will stop. He thinks the gate should be left unlocked and if there is a problem, they can revisit it.

Vicki White-Lawrence made a motion to leave the gate unlocked. Frank Bruno seconded the motion.

Mayor Braswell said he would like to add something in the motion about closing time. If the Sheriff's Department goes down to the Park after 11:00pm, someone trespassing could be arrested. Frank Bruno said that the Park would still be open until 11:00pm, but the gate would be unlocked. Vicki White-Lawrence said that there is a sign that says the gate is locked at 8:00pm, but the main sign at the beginning of the property says that you would be trespassing after 11:00pm.

All Council members voted aye and the motion was approved.

**Guilford County Schools Hold Harmless Agreement:** Frank Bruno said the hold harmless agreement was already done and suggested that the same letter be used and only the date would need to be changed. It should be signed and sent back to the school for approval. Carolyn Joyner said that the school sent them a letter and wants the Mayor to sign it. Mayor Braswell asked Mr. Trevorrow to comment. Mr. Trevorrow said that the school is requesting that this be done annually rather than Council making any demands. He does not see any reason why the school cannot be accommodated. Guilford County Schools changed some of the language that he inserted in the letter last time, but did not change the intent or meaning of what he intended for the hold harmless portion of the agreement.

Frank Bruno made a motion to approve the hold harmless agreement that was previously approved, sign it, and send it back to them. Bill Jones seconded the motion. All Council members voted aye and the motion was approved.

**Consider Participation in NCLM Joint Action Program – Regulatory Technical Assistance Fund:** Bill Jones asked Carolyn Joyner if this was a rewording of the same thing that was done last year. Carolyn Joyner said that last year it was about electricity and Duke Energy and this year it is about water quality and technical support for water quality and electric regulatory issues.

Bill Jones made a motion to continue participating in the NCLM Joint Action Program. Vicki White-Lawrence seconded the motion. All Council members voted aye and the motion was approved.

#### **Unfinished Business:**

**Separation of Duties Document:** Frank Bruno made a motion to approve this version of the Town of Stokesdale Internal Controls & Separation of Duties Policy. Bill Jones seconded the motion. All Council members voted aye and the motion was approved.

#### **Committee and Board Reports:**

**Planning Board – Expiring Terms of Board Members:** Referring to a list that was given to Council of the November 2012 Planning Board members, Carolyn Joyner explained that these are three-year terms and November 2012 was the last time there were any changes made. Vicki White-Lawrence said that, normally, there are four alternate members and seven Planning Board members. Anybody who was on it, either as an alternate or a voting member, can be called upon to serve based on who was able to attend the meeting at that time. Two more alternates and a new voting member are needed. Carolyn Joyner said that the Ordinance limits Planning Board members to serve two full terms. Another voting member is needed because one of the Planning Board members has served two three-year terms. Frank Bruno asked if this Planning Board member would still be able to serve in the August meeting or not? Carolyn Joyner said that this member can serve until someone is appointed to fill their seat. Vicki White-Lawrence said that there was not going to be an August Planning Board Meeting. Mayor Braswell asked if any applications were received for the Planning Board. Carolyn Joyner said none have been submitted. Mayor Braswell said that the public can apply and applications are available. Frank Bruno said one of the alternates should be moved to that spot and applications taken for three alternates.

Frank Bruno made a motion to move Mitchael Lawson, Sr. to serve as a voting member to replace Jaycee Spruill and take applications to fill the three vacant alternate seats. Bill Jones seconded the motion. All Council members voted aye and the motion was approved.

Vicki White-Lawrence asked how we let people know about the change and that applications are needed. Frank Bruno said that this information will be on the Town's website and FaceBook page, and anyone is welcome to put in an application. A citizen asked if Patti Stokes from the Northwest Observer could put an article in her paper. Patti Stokes said that she will put an article in the Northwest Observer. Another citizen asked if there was a job description for this position on the website. Carolyn Joyner said there was not a description, but the schedule for the Planning Board is on the website and members are expected to attend the meetings if interested. An alternate serves in the absence of members and would need to be prepared by knowing and understanding the Town's Development Ordinance. Frank Bruno explained that someone interested in serving as an alternate on the Planning Board should do some research on the Ordinance and speak to a member that has served. Mayor Braswell asked Joe Thacker to give a brief description of what would be expected of a member on the Planning Board. Joe Thacker explained that as an alternate, you should attend a Planning Board meeting and observe and understand what was done at the meeting in addition to reading the Ordinance. A citizen asked if there was any training for this position. Mayor Braswell said that the Guilford County Planning Department will send someone out at the Chairman's request. Joe Thacker said that when there are changes in procedures, the Guilford County Planning Department will send someone out to give a training session.

**Parade Committee:** Vicki White-Lawrence said that she wanted to let the Council members know that she has chaired the Parade Committee for several years now and does not plan to chair again. She told the committee last year that she would not be available to Chair. She would be more than happy to work with the committee to help them organize what needs to be done, but she does not want to be responsible for doing it any more. There is a Parade Committee meeting scheduled for August 7<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm at Town Hall. There will be a notice about it in the Northwest Observer and she will be contacting the current members of the Parade Committee as well the participants of the Parade in order to get the word out. She is always looking for new members. You do not have to live in Stokesdale to serve on the Parade Committee. The Holiday Parade will be held on December 13, 2014.

**Departmental and Administrative Reports:**

**Finance Report – June, 2014:** Carolyn Joyner said that the assets in the General Fund did increase over the previous month by about \$72,000.00. Checking Account Transactions included \$3,050.00 paid to Guilford County Finance Department for Animal Control for 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter, Stokesdale Fire District was paid \$276.38 for generator electrical usage for the year, and Council Stipends were paid. Accounts Payable included invoices received for \$5,864.00 from the N.C. League of Municipalities for Membership Fees for the upcoming year, \$468.75 from Guilford County Emergency Services for Fire Code Investigations for 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter, and \$602.00 from The School of Government Foundation for Membership Dues for the upcoming year. In the General Fund Savings Account, the Town received \$81,359.79 for 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter for a Utilities Franchise Distribution and this is the reason assets increased. The Town did have one General Fund Certificate of Deposit #46 that matured and earned \$46.98.

Carolyn Joyner said that in the Water Enterprise Account, CD#22 matured. Checking Account transactions included \$250.00 paid to Redline Data Systems for the Town's Network User License and DENR was paid \$75.00 for an Application for Approval of a Chlorine Booster station. In Accounts Payable, invoices were received from Yates Construction Company for removing a fire hydrant, flushing, reading meters, installing meters, and other maintenance. There were two invoices totaling \$16,271.61 from the City of Winston-Salem for water. The reason two invoices were received was because the period of time the bill covered was for June and July. She needed to divide the bill with June's charges for the last fiscal year and the July's charges for the current fiscal year. Earned Interest included a deposit of \$86.16 for a CD that matured, and it has been renewed. There was also a Water/Sewer Certificate that matured and earned interest of \$43.70.

**Administrative Report – Town Clerk:** Carolyn Joyner said that the 2013 Annual Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) for the Town Water System had been prepared and copies are available at Town Hall and is also on the Town's website.

**Legislative Action:**

**Consider Ordinances Concurring with NC DOT to Set Speed Limits on Seven Roads in Angels Glen:** Carolyn Joyner said that there are seven roads and the speed limit for all of them will be set at 25 miles per hour.

Frank Bruno made a motion to approve Ordinance number 90 through Ordinance number 96, the ordinance to raise the speed limit in the Town of Stokesdale and authorize the Mayor to sign it. Vicki White-Lawrence seconded the motion. All Council members voted aye and the motion was approved. Copies of Ordinances 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, and 96 are hereby incorporated into and made a part of the minutes of the meeting.

**Announcements:** Mayor Braswell read the announcements listed on the Agenda.

Mayor Braswell said that he is on the radio the third Thursday of every month at 9:45am, and the station's call numbers are 1490 for WLOE which is an AM station. Station 1420 covers Madison and Mayodan in Rockingham County and 1490 is Reidsville. He gets approximately fifteen minutes to do an infomercial about Stokesdale. He did the first one last Thursday. He is able to promote Stokesdale businesses and any organizations. It is an opportunity to share what is going on in Stokesdale. If the citizens or Council members have anything they would like him to talk about, please get the information to him. The radio show is also streamed onto the internet so you can go back and listen to it. Carolyn

Joyner said that if you Google Rockingham County Radio, you can find their website and the previous segments are archived on the website.

Mayor Braswell said that the Chairman of the US Highway 158 Committee, Steve Bowie, and the Committee did a remarkable job. The Committee's recommendation to Town Council was to send a letter to several governmental agencies asking that the East-West corridor coming through Stokesdale be taken off the list of projects. Carolyn Joyner sent the letters and Patty Stokes put it in the Northwest Observer. Mr. Bowie sent him an email requesting the following: "Per the attached, which was in the Northwest Observer today, please make sure you go online and let Greensboro MPO know to just say no to the North Carolina DOT Project R-2577. This is the most important impact that the citizens of Stokesdale can have on this project. Even if you were not on the US Highway 158 Committee, the entire Town was represented." Mayor Braswell asked Frank Bruno if he could put this on the Town's website. Frank Bruno said that he could. Carolyn Joyner said that the document is at Town Hall if anyone does not have internet access and wants to read it. It will tell you how you can respond by letter. It is all on the MPO website and links will be put on the Town's website. Mayor Braswell said that Dena Barnes is the Town's representative to the MPO and her email address is dbarnes@summerfieldgov.com. He would like the citizens to send at least 5,000 emails to Ms. Barnes advising her that you do not want NCDOT Project R-2577 to come through Stokesdale. It is very important to do that so NCDOT knows that the citizens do not want the NC Highway 158 widening project to go through Stokesdale.

Mayor Braswell made a motion to recess. Frank Bruno seconded the motion. All Council members voted aye and they recessed at 8:40pm.

Mayor Braswell reconvened the meeting at 8:50pm.

**Vacant Council Seat:** Mayor Braswell said they had three people that were interested in being appointed to the vacant Council seat. He said they are Eric Lowe, Tim Jones, and Joe Thacker.

Eric Lowe said he has lived in Stokesdale since 1987. He loves living in Stokesdale and it is a great Town. He is happy with the Town government and it has changed a bit in the last few years but he is happy with the way the Town has been going, so he does not have a whole lot of complaints. He has run in several elections and has never won a seat, but he does have a core base of voters that consistently vote for him every time he does run, so he must appeal on some level to some of the citizens of the Town. He would appreciate it if any of his supporters out there would like to email the Town Council recommending him for this position. He does not want Stokesdale to become another Oak Ridge or Summerfield. He likes living in Stokesdale and it is a great place to raise a family. Whether or not Council decides to appoint him to finish out Mayor Braswell's expired term or not, he has no hard feelings. He does care about this Town and he has demonstrated that over the years by running for Town Council even though he never won a seat. He has motivated other individuals that would not have normally run for election to participate in the process. The more people he can get involved in the process of politics, the better. He talked to his children and his wife. His wife votes now and never did before. He tries to do the voting process every time there are elections so that his wife has a reason to vote, which is the most important thing. He would appreciate everyone's consideration and would do a good job on the Town Council. He loves this Town and he loves this State and would like to see it stay the same way it always has been. There are good people here and he appreciates everyone's time and thank you very much. If anyone has any questions, he would be glad to answer them.

Mayor Braswell opened it up to the floor for the citizens and Council members to ask questions.

Frank Bruno said that he appreciates that Mr. Lowe has run in the past and shows his willingness to participate in the process. One thing Mr. Lowe needs to understand is that this is not a one meeting per month job, and he just wants to make him aware of that. He asked Mr. Lowe if he was willing to participate in more than one meeting a month. Mr. Lowe said that his children are grown and moved out and he only works part-time so he has a lot of free time. He will do whatever it takes to do a good job.

Bill Jones asked Mr. Lowe if he sees any services that he thinks Stokesdale needs to provide that they do not already provide and would he be willing to impose a tax to provide them. Mr. Lowe said that he sees no extra services that need to be provided and would not be willing to impose a tax until all other avenues were exhausted.

Patty Stokes from the Northwest Observer asked Mr. Lowe if he has served on any public boards or committees over the years. Mr. Lowe said no, he has not, but he believes in his ability to serve on Town Council and he will do what it takes to do a good job.

Eileen Thiery asked Mr. Lowe if there were any other committees that interested him or that he was familiar with and thought that he would like to serve on and was qualified to serve on. Mr. Lowe said that he is familiar with the committees he has applied for such as planning or zoning committees. Ms. Thiery said to Mr. Lowe that it is a learning experience by attending Planning Board meetings and asked if he has attended any Planning Board meetings. Mr. Lowe said no, he has not. Ms. Thiery asked Mr. Lowe if he has attended any Town Council meetings. Mr. Lowe said that he has attended some meetings, but not a lot of them. Ms. Thiery said that this may look easy because of the way Council does it and it seems to come natural, but there is a lot more to it. There are different meetings that the Council members attend and he seems like a wonderful gentleman and his heart is in it, but it takes a little more than that. She congratulated Mr. Lowe for stepping up.

Ms. Stokes asked Mr. Lowe that along with all of the issues that come before the Town Council, there are budgetary issues. This Town is unique because of the water system and the Council meets almost weekly. Council is trying to get a lot done with the water system planning and zoning. She asked Mr. Lowe if there were any of those areas in which he feels that he has a something to offer. Mr. Lowe said no, other than his dedication to do what he can to honestly try to make Stokesdale a better Town. He is just a normal guy and he does not attend a lot of meetings, but he does care about this Town. He understands that running in an election does not qualify him for the job but he is sincere and Stokesdale would be his first priority.

Tom McCoy asked Mr. Lowe if there were any ordinances he would like to see enacted that would make Stokesdale a better place in his opinion. Mr. Lowe said that he would like to see them address in some way the ease with which small family businesses could thrive in Stokesdale. He drives to Oak Ridge and every building on NC Highway 68 looks the same. He does not like that because he likes a little variety. The Crossfit in Oak Ridge had to jump through hoops to finally get their business open. It should not be hard for a small local business that has been there all of their lives to open up a business. You have to weigh it against everything, but at the same time, it should not be that hard to start a business and he would like to do what he can do to make it easier to open a business in Stokesdale. He is not a big business guy, but he has met some guys with businesses and it is crazy what they have to do to open a business, so maybe there is something he can do.

Tim Jones said that he is a life-long resident of Stokesdale and has traveled and worked in many places, but Stokesdale is home, although it is getting a bit crowded for his taste. He has numerous friends and relatives that he has known all of his life and he is concerned about what happens to them. He is willing to volunteer to serve the Town and do the best that he can to his ability. He does have some time constraints on him with his work and is concerned about meeting here in the middle of the day, but he will do the best that he can. He was very opposed to the construction of the Town Hall building. It was too much, too far, and too fast for Stokesdale and it is straining the budget. He is absolutely opposed to a property tax in Stokesdale. He knows that taxing and spending is an easy road to start down and is what every other town does. He feels we have just about enough government between Federal, State, and County government and he does not think that Stokesdale should be doing anything that is not necessary. The Town Council should think twice before imposing a regulation or imposing a tax or charging a fee which are things that should be thought of very slow. He realizes that growth is coming to the area and certain things need to be done to accommodate that. He feels like Stokesdale is a village instead of a town. A big government in Stokesdale with a lot of employees and property tax to him is not a good fit. Stokesdale has been compared to Oak Ridge and Summerfield and there are certain differences that make Stokesdale unique and he would like to see things remain that way.

Vicki White-Lawrence asked Mr. Jones if he has served on any committees. Mr. Jones said that he has attended Ordinance Review Committee meetings and has also attended Planning Board Committee meetings and Town Council meetings.

Patti Stokes said that the Town has recently formed an Ordinance Review Committee and it is good that he has attended some of those meetings. She asked Mr. Jones if there were any particular ordinances the Town has that he would hope to revise or delete, or does he intend not to add any more ordinances. Mr. Jones said that is probably correct because he tends to like the concept of keeping things simple. He can remember a period of time when Stokesdale was not incorporated and did not have a Town government, and he does not remember having as many problems as there is now. Things are managed and micromanaged and thinks that a lot of things happen to keep the State of North Carolina and Guilford County happy. He does not see the growth of government in Stokesdale because of the high cost of living that comes with it. There are people with a limited income who might object to a property tax because it impacts them. If there has to be change, he hopes that it is slow instead of overnight, so it gives people an opportunity to get used to it.

Tom McCoy said that growth is happening on US Highway 158 through Stokesdale and wants to know what Mr. Jones thinks we should do to prepare for that. Mr. Jones said to put in gates or toll booths because the Town needs the money. Stokesdale is a nice place to live, it is economical and that is what attracts people. What confounds him is that people move to a Town and some people may want a swimming pool, an equestrian facility, a vibrant area, or some of the things that Stokesdale does not have and cannot readily afford and then we have a conflict with the purse. He does not have a good answer, but slow and steady would be his answer. Mr. McCoy asked Mr. Jones what he thinks about the US Highway 158 expansion. Mr. Jones said that he is not exactly for it. If he looks at a map of the whole State of North Carolina, Virginia, and South Carolina, he can see why planners are looking at that as a route to get people through the region. The Town should concern themselves with trying to help those people that are going to be displaced. He is not so sure that the State of North Carolina or NC DOT will pay as much attention to Stokesdale as we would like them to.

Eileen Thiery asked Mr. Jones if he was against some of the residential development that was going on in the area since he is feeling suffocated, and would that affect his voting on the Town Council as to

what developments may be proposed and benefit the Town. Mr. Jones said that he believes that the individual property owners have the right to get the best use of their property. It concerns him that this battle goes on back and forth. He sees this in Summerfield a lot where a subdivision is built around farms and then years later the owner of a farm chooses to sell their land but the people living in the subdivisions are opposed to this because they like seeing the fields and the deer. There is no easy solution to this. He believes that people have the right to do what they want with their property and would be opposed to telling a property owner that they cannot sell their property. Ms. Thiery said that she was referring to residential development because he feels crowded by the residential developments but believes in property rights. If she comes before the Town Council after going to the Planning Board and wants to build fifty homes on one acre lots, would he look at her request logically or as a personal thing where he would feel like it was getting over crowded? Mr. Jones said that he would not want to see the Town totally change its character and start building houses on quarter acre lots, just as an example. He would want the developments to be consistent with what is already here in Stokesdale.

Joe Thacker said he lives at 7936 Lester Road in Stokesdale and is a graduate of Northwest High School. He said he has lived in Stokesdale for forty years and has lived within the city limits since 1996. He has owned and operated a small business since 2000, and tries to support Stokesdale by advertising Stokesdale on his truck and doing business with the local retail businesses. He feels inspired to fill this position and being efficient and good at it, and it takes more time than a lot of people realize. He is a small business and does not have any employees. He does have some friends that help him out from time to time, but he is his own boss and he makes his own schedule. He does not work a forty-hour week and might work twenty hours a week or sometimes ten hours a week, or sometimes thirty hours a week. He does have ample time to deal with the issues that come with this Council seat. By doing business with the local retailers, it gives him a chance to talk with some of the residents in Town, and he listens to them. He has been on the Planning Board for more than seven years. The reason he has seven years on the Planning Board is because the first year and half he was finishing the term for a member that had resigned. He has been on the Ordinance Review Committee and has attended meetings on the water system, the budget, the Park, and Council meetings. He is particularly interested in the water system because he is a water user and he does not want to see his rates skyrocket. He would like to see Stokesdale have a balanced growth for business and in residential areas. He would like to see more residents take part in growing the economy by investing in business opportunities and supporting businesses already in Stokesdale. He does not like to see all the traffic on NC Highway 68 or NC Highway 158. He would like to see people invest in the Town and start a small business that would give them the opportunity to stay and make a living and give their children an opportunity to follow along and stay in the Town. While he was on the Planning Board, he heard a lot of people say that they want to keep Stokesdale a small Town, and the only way to do that is to have small businesses. He knows it is hard to keep out big box stores but if you have a good economy and a lot of small businesses in Town, it is harder for them to come in. He feels strongly about the people in Town going to those small businesses and using their services. One of the duties of the Town Council is to see that the Town business runs smoothly and efficiently. The Town Council should set some goals for the future growth and development of opportunities. He said that the water system is very important to this Town. He was glad to see it coming when it first came in and it is a great opportunity for the Town's growth. He wishes the Town Council, past and present, had some plan or goal to expand the system and make it available to everyone in Town. That way it is fair for everyone to have an opportunity to hook onto it, and it can be a good tool to use to regulate growth and get people interested in living here and doing business here. Council is also responsible for spending and investing in the Town to run it efficiently and wisely and need to listen to the Town's residents about their concerns and ideas. Council should be familiar with the Town's ordinances and government procedures. He thinks the Town Council should seek other

sources of revenue to provide the residents with the items they need or want to have, like a library, the water system, water updates, and other things that might come along. He said by other resources, he means grants, volunteers, or gifts. He is certainly against taxes, but everyone knows that there is no free government and Stokesdale has no property tax. A few years ago, the Guilford County Commissioners took the sales tax away from Stokesdale and that cut deeply into the Town's revenue. Hopefully in the years to come, we can try to figure out a way to put off needing a property tax or at least keep it to a minimum. That is all he has to say.

Vicki White-Lawrence said that Mr. Thacker had the advantage because he already addressed some things that the citizens and Council had some questions about, so she does not really have any questions. Mr. Thacker seemed very prepared with his statements.

Mr. Thacker said that the citizens and Council asked about ordinance changes and he thinks that ordinances need to be reviewed from time to time and some may need changes. An ordinance that needs to be changed is the ordinance about the Land Clearing and Inert Debris (LCID). There seems to be a problem with them in a certain area in Town that brought them in. There needs to be a change in the number of LCIDs or the location of some of the LCIDs to avoid that situation. A few people he has talked with think LCIDs should be done away with altogether, but that is not his decision. Council needs to hear what people think about LCIDs. At a Planning Board meeting, the cell tower ordinance and getting poles up are discussed. The ordinance on the water system which currently says that anybody within 1,000 feet has to hook up to the water system needs to be discussed too. He would like to see if those lines could be extended. The water system needs to expand and grow with the Town so he would like to see if that ordinance could be changed.

Patty Stokes said that Mr. Thacker spoke about growth and wants to know if he meant the water system specifically. She has been coming to meetings for over 18 years and the most difficult thing for Town Council is to try to balance the rights of the property owners with the wishes of the neighbors who do not want the land to change. She asked how he envisions Stokesdale when he is looking at re-zonings in front of him. She wants to know how he would handle that. Mr. Thacker said that he looks at the ordinances that he has to go by and he also feels very strongly about a property owner's right to develop their property as long as it does not depreciate the value of their neighbor's property and does not put a hardship on anybody next to them and the ordinance does not say that they cannot do this. You have to allow for development and he hopes that he sees even growth for both residential and commercial. He does not want to see big box stores but would like to see small businesses open up and give local residents a place to work and that is his vision for Stokesdale's growth.

Eileen Thiery asked Mr. Thacker if he considers her a property owner because she owns a home on one acre of land. Sometimes she feels there is a conflict of what a property owner is. She is a property owner whether she owns one acre or one hundred acres. A landfill discussion does have to go a little further because there are some people that are being impacted in a very negative way. Her feeling is that if the land there is only suitable for a land fill, do we compromise the adjacent development and say we are sorry, the gentleman speculated on this property and there are too many ravines in it and now we have to let them have a land fill. There are some really dangerous situations and she has visited in that one area when it was being discussed. She asked Mr. Thacker if he considers her a land owner. Mr. Thacker said yes, he absolutely does consider Ms. Thiery a land owner. Anyone who owns a tract of land regardless of the size is a land owner as long as you are inside the city limits of Stokesdale. Ms. Thiery said that she thinks a balance in the Town can definitely be achieved. Mr. Thacker's idea of small businesses is great because she does not want to have to drive down to Battleground all the time. If

there was a small local craft store in Stokesdale, she would love it, because she does not want to have to drive to Mayodan either, so she is in agreement with that. The Town Council should consider that a land owner that owns a one-acre piece of land has the right to develop it. We should try to find a common ground that would allow the land owner to develop his land without hurting other people. Mr. Thacker said he wanted to go deeper into her question about the LCID. They looked at the LCID on the Planning Board. A land owner wanted to develop and improve his property but could not build on it or do anything with it, because of its bad condition. Then you have a land owner next door that has a nice house, and all the traffic that would come with the LCID would interfere with his way of life, so you have to look at it both ways. The Ordinance Review Committee reviewed the ordinance last time and made a change to that particular ordinance so an LCID could not operate before 8:00am and had to close at 5:00pm for all operations. That was because the biggest complaint they had was that neighbors could hear bulldozing at 9:00pm and 10:00pm at night, so the ordinance was changed to remedy that situation. Another thing needing change was the size of the buffer between the top of the land and where the actual landfill goes, so it was increased. All you need to do is go to the meetings, and if someone comes along with a problem, then you go back to the ordinances and invite them to the ordinance meetings to discuss it. If you can come to a consensus on what to change, then a recommendation to make a change can be made. He would like to see more participation in committee meetings.

Bill Jones said that Mr. Thacker mentioned that he wanted to see a library and wanted to extend the water system. Two million dollars was used to build the Town Hall building and Park which depleted the budget. Now that the Town has depleted its resources, he wants to know where Mr. Thacker would get the money to build the library or extend the water system. Mr. Thacker said that the first thing he would do is apply for grants to extend the water system because he knows that there are a few grants available. As far as the library, he thinks there should be a library in Town Hall. The Town Council needs to manage what people would like to have and see how it is used, who uses it, and determine whether it is worth investing more money into. Council needs to handle the water system the same way. He attended a budget meeting and someone had suggested that a small tax for a service be charged. He has been thinking about this for a long time since the sales tax was taken away, and Council needs to come up with a plan to get some of that back.

Mayor Braswell said that everyone has had plenty of time and things need to be wrapped up now. Final comments can be made now.

Joe Thacker said that with his experience on the Planning Board, he learned two things. One thing that sticks in his mind is that after a meeting someone is going to be mad at you.

Eric Lowe said that he just wanted to thank everyone for taking the time to give him the opportunity to talk to them. He is willing to step up and feels very confident that he can do the job.

Ms. Stokes said that the candidates spoke about small businesses and she is a small business owner and wants to know if they have any concrete ideas about how the Town can attract new businesses.

Mr. Lowe said that by making the process to open a business simpler and cheaper in order to encourage developing instead of when someone comes in front of Town Council that wants to build something and throws up fifteen road blocks that need to be done to get a business opened up. He is not speaking specifically about Stokesdale. He does not think that the Town is anti-business, but there are things that can be done to change ordinances to make it easier for small businesses. He would like to start a small

business and does not know how difficult it would be for him. He has a couple of properties. There are some smart and innovative people here from a lot of different places that he is sure would like to start a small business. People like a small community but also want a place to shop besides Greensboro, High Point, and Winston-Salem. He does business in Town whenever he can, but he wishes there was more of a selection. Council needs to make it easier to open a small business like a craft store or a landscaping business. It is a good place to live and people are going to spend money here. He likes the small town feel but he would like to make it so that people who live here can work here.

Tim Jones said that he did not address small businesses but he does certainly support small business and that is where he spent most of his life working. We need to consider that there are certain things that we have no control over. The biggest thing we can do is keep our ordinances user friendly and simple and not have complications, because it is tough out there. He does believe that small businesses have a unique opportunity to create jobs. We need to separate what we can do and what we cannot do. He said that there is one other thing he would like to say in the interest of full disclosure. He and Bill Jones are related and are cousins in case they need to know. Bill Jones will tell people that they disagree as much as they agree.

Mayor Braswell asked Patty Stokes if this process has been fair and equal.

Ms. Stokes said that she appreciates allowing the citizens to ask questions and she would have liked to see more of them because there are so many issues. She always likes to hear concrete answers with a little meat on them. It is awesome when people have been around the Town and they know what is going to be involved.

Mayor Braswell said that it seemed to get all tangled up with the application process. A lot of people just did not understand what was going on and it was all new to him. He thinks it was done the way it was supposed to be done. It does not mean that someone cannot come up tomorrow. Ramon Bell wanted an opportunity to speak but could not make the meeting.

Ms. Stokes asked Mayor Braswell if anyone else expressed an interest in this vacant Council seat besides Ramon Bell. She also asked about a time frame for when Council will make their decision. Mayor Braswell said he does not have a time frame and Council said there was no time frame that had to be complied with. He does not personally know of anyone else that is interested and he has not received any more emails from anyone else who may be interested. When Council said to fill out an application, it confused a lot of people because an application was never necessary before in order to be considered. Stokesdale has some great candidates and he is still struggling with the whole appointment thing. When he applied, he paid five dollars and had to sign that he had never been convicted of a felony. As far as background checks, he is confused about that. He would like to put it on a ballot and see the people vote. Ms. Stokes said that more than half of the year is already gone from a two-year term. She is not a citizen of the Town but if she was a citizen of the Town, she would clearly want to know what the process is. She asked if the other people that expressed an interest will come back and speak and need to subject themselves to what the other candidates did and have the people ask questions or is Council going to say thank you and might decide on someone else tomorrow. If she was a citizen, she would want the process explained and a time frame put on it. Ms. Thiery said that she thinks closure is needed as a Town because this could go on and on. There were three gentlemen that stood up and answered questions, and to say that there might be someone else out there could make this go on forever waiting for that perfect person to come along. Three people presented themselves honestly and openly, and she

appreciates that the citizens were allowed to ask questions. Legally, if there are supposed to have five Council members, she thinks that Council has had enough time to come up with that member.

**Comments from Council:** Bill Jones said that he appreciates everyone that came to the meeting and their honesty and candor. He knows the process seems like it takes a long time and he is trying to do the best that he can to find someone he thinks represents the majority of the people in the Town of Stokesdale, and the majority of the people in Stokesdale vote Conservative, so he is looking for someone that votes Conservative like the majority of the people in Stokesdale. That is why Council makes an appointment instead of having a special election. Whoever they appoint is going to be up for election in a year.

Frank Bruno said that a new Advanced Auto business is opening in several weeks and asked the Stokesdale Chamber of Commerce to do a dedication when Advanced Auto opens. Council needs to get involved in order to promote Advanced Auto as a small business.

**Adjournment:** Vicki White-Lawrence made a motion to adjourn. Frank Bruno seconded the motion. All Council members voted aye and the meeting adjourned at 9:51pm.

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Diana Marcus, Deputy Clerk

Approved:

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D. Randall Braswell, Mayor