



NORTH CAROLINA
GRANVILLE COUNTY
CITY OF OXFORD

Oxford City Hall – Commissioners Board Room
MONDAY, MARCH 1, 2010 – 5:30 P.M.
OXFORD BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' AGENDA SESSION

The Board of Commissioners for the City of Oxford met at the above-mentioned time and place to set the agenda for the Regular Meeting to be held March 9, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. at City Hall, 300 Williamsboro Street. All members of the Board and local news media were notified of the same as well as the purpose of the meeting.

Present were: Mayor Al Woodlief, Jr., Mayor Pro Tem Howard Herring, Sr., Commissioners Robert B. Williford, Sr., Walter Cantley, Jackie Sergent, Danny Currin, Ron Bullock, and Calvin Harris, Jr. Present also were City Manager Mark Donham and City Clerk Donna B. Hosch. Absent was City Attorney J. Thomas Burnette.

COMMENTS FROM THE MAYOR

Mayor Woodlief referenced a memo from the retreat concerning several annexations. Due to issues needing to be worked out and advertised, according to Planning Director Cheryl Hart, those will be on the agenda for April.

ACIM invited the Board to their grand opening, Commissioner Williford stating that a good job was done on their new location. They are happy to be there, and the rent is not a big expense.

AGENDA SET

The Board set the agenda for the March 9, 2010 Regular Session. MPT Herring requested the revised Mutual Aid Agreement to be placed on the Agenda.

OTHER BUSINESS

The Mayor wished the HPC to be notified about the house on Main and Spring Streets. PD Hart stated the owner has six months to begin working on the house, and she suggested waiting until that time is expired to make any moves. The contractor is valid, and PD Hart has spoken with the owner about tax credits.

The Mayor stated the Annexation Committee will meet this week to discuss new industries and whether or not to go by the old rules or devise new ones. The Mayor stated this issue is not going away.

MPT Herring stated that he wishes to see a revised Mutual Aid Agreement to state that the City will not respond to outside requests for those industries that have not paid their fire protection fee, and that this will occur within 30 days. There is concern over losing \$300,000/year. CM Donham stated that there are four industries not paying; two have stated they will not pay, and two stated they will pay but have not. The Mayor stated it should be discussed whether new industry locating here should be informed they will be annexed. Industry has paid in the past, but are now not doing so. One warehouse has not paid since the property was purchased.

Audience member Harry Wilkins stated that it appears the City is working against the industries. At the February 2nd meeting, the accusation was made that the fire departments solicited funds from industries. Wilkins stated this is not correct; industry contacted the fire departments. A reliable third party told the fire departments that one industry asked the City could the fire fees be negotiated prior to its construction, to which it was told "no". It seems to Wilkins 100% of something is better than 100% of nothing. Mayor Woodlief stated that it would not be a policy if terms were negotiated.

Wilkins asked why other companies are not being charged, to which CM Donham stated these smaller companies are not manufacturing. Wilkins stated that the definition of industry is *any general business activity*. Four of the industries are being singled out while the others are being left alone. Looking at it from a public safety standpoint, Wilkins asked what would be the chances of Oxford being called to a major fire at one of the industries. The Mayor stated the chances would be slim but that there have been fires over the years that took several days to contain. Wilkins asked what would it look like if there is a tower truck three miles away from an Oxford fire and Henderson had to be called in, to which the Mayor answered it would look like the industry made a poor protection plan choice.

Wilkins wanted to Board to remember that life safety is their number one priority. The Mayor replied that the City is a business, and that payroll is a concern. Wilkins stated the more the issue is discussed publicly, the more industries are going to say they don't have to pay. Wilkins stated Oxford had Dill's check at the time of their fire, to which the Mayor and CM Donham replied it did not; their check arrived the week after the fire.

The Mayor stated Oxford has a 100+ year old volunteer fire department which it is glad to have. The City is at a turning point like the State, and everyone has to look under every rock for every dollar. Mutual Aid is a charge only to industries, and their choosing not to pay the fee is simply like choosing not to buy tires on sale. MPT Herring stated that his recommendation will be brought forth at the next meeting and that there will not be negotiation with audience members. It will be up to the Board to decide if the City will respond without the mutual aid fees being paid. The City is equipped with the best equipment, and funding has been available to back this equipment. If the Board does not revise the agreement to exclude industries not paying, then everyone can say they won't pay and the City will have lost that source of revenue. Without revenue, how will the fire department be maintained, asked MPT Herring.

Commissioner Williford asked Wilkins how did he foresee the City paying for its fire department if industry does not pay, to which Wilkins stated that would be a management decision. He stated there are probably a lot of places for savings, like from the ball fields. He asked how much is Oxford Park being used. Wilkins asked what does industry get for their money other than fire protection, to which the Mayor answered they save money on their insurance.

Amos Harris, audience member, asked if the City gets money from the County as does his department. He gets no money from industry, but he is expected to respond only for what he gets from the County. Mayor Woodlief again asked, "what does the County offer industry?"

ADJOURNMENT

WITH THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, COMMISSIONER WILLIFORD MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN. ALL VOTES WERE IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THE MOTION CARRIED.