

**City of Saluda
Board of Commissioners**



**Regular Meeting
June 8, 2015 7:00p.m**

The Saluda Board of Commissioners met for their regular public meeting on Monday, June 8, 2015 at 7:00 P.M in the Saluda Public Library.

Mayor Baisden called the meeting to order at 7:24P.M. A moment of silence was observed.

Attendance was taken and present were **Mayor Baisden, Commissioner Cass, Commissioner Oxtoby, Commissioner Ashburn, Commissioner Morgan, Attorney Baily Nager, Finance Officer Julie Osteen, Zoning Administrator Jon Cannon and Assistant City Clerk Jessica Desiano.**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Agenda Additions/Deletions

Mayor Baisden asked to add the Zoning Ordinance amendments to the agenda under old business.

Commissioner Cass made a motion to accept the new agenda. Commissioner Ashburn seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Consent Agenda

Mayor Baisden noted a few changes that are needed to the Budget Workshop minutes from May 27, 2015.

With these changes, Commissioner Oxtoby made a motion to accept the consent agenda. Commissioner Morgan seconded and all were in favor.

Public Comment

Ellen Rogers requested closed minutes from personnel meetings since March 2014. Attorney Nager stated that closed minutes relating to personnel would never be unsealed. She replied with "well, which

ever minutes are no longer relevant.” She also requested to know the amount the city has spent on legal fees for the special meetings and closed sessions concerning personnel since March 2014. Ms. Rogers then expressed frustration over the postcard that was sent to residents concerning the new utility bill policy.

Sonny Pace spoke regarding the new Pace Park. He said he thinks he is going to enjoy being able to sit a while. He also expressed concern for the need of restrooms there and stated that perhaps businesses could help sponsor the restrooms as a nearby town does.

Dorothy Eargle expressed frustration with the current noise ordinance, stating that it didn’t start early enough and that the Police Department wasn’t equipped with the items it needs to enforce the ordinance such as a decibel range and machine to test it.

Will Nelson with the Saluda Community Land Trust asked that the City consider moving forward jointly with plans for the old trash dump. Mayor Baisden asked that the Board be presented with specific plans and ideas so that they may discuss. Mr. Nelson will provide these.

Bruce Campbell spoke about the recent town hall meeting. He expressed disgust and called it a kangaroo court. He said that anyone who was trying to use it as a political stepping stone shot themselves in the foot.

Department Reports

Finance

Mrs. Osteen presented an overview of the current budget and explained some changes in the format do to her firm’s requirements. A copy of the YTD budget is attached. Resident Karen Bultman asked if the Commissioners’ salaries could be a separate line item in future reports. Mrs. Osteen replied that she could do that. Mrs. Osteen also asked the Board to consider two amendments to the budget. The first amendment is to increase the total for professional fees by \$14,700.00 to cover the charge for Crawley Lee. This wasn’t included in the last review. The second request was for an increase in the transportation department to cover costs including repairs and maintenance, street lights and NC Pedestrian Grant.

Commissioner Oxtoby made a motion to accept the amendments. Commissioner Cass seconded motion and all were in favor.

Mrs. Osteen stated that, as requested, she and Mr. Cole have been receiving quotes for a new auditing firm. They sent out 5 requests, of which 2 were answered. The first, Carter PC stated a price of \$15395.00 for 3 years with no increases. The other, Gould Killian Group, was more expensive at \$16400.00 and quoted an increase every year for the next 3 years. Due to these facts, Mrs. Osteen recommends Carter PC.

Commissioner Oxtoby made a motion to accept the recommendation of Carter PC and Commissioner Morgan seconded. All were in Favor.

Zoning

Mr. Cannon reviewed monthly requests for permits. He stated that work had begun with Jason's Tree Service and that they are trying to coordinate a good time to work on the Main Street trees. Mr. Cannon mentioned that the Library roof seemed to be fixed as it is not leaking any longer but with the current rain a new issue was discovered by the windows and he would get to work on that. Mr. Cannon said he spoke with DOT concerning the Sidewalk extension and that the paperwork should be done mid-June with work beginning by the end of summer. He also spoke with DOT concerning the hole in front of Macon Bank and surveying should be started in mid-June with construction beginning by the end of the year. Mr. Cannon explained that the city has had some compliance issues with the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources stemming from the beginning of 2014 that were never corrected. He explained that he is working with the Public Works Department to bring the City into compliance.

Administration

Mr. Cannon reported that the punch list for City Hall was almost complete, that there were only 5 more items to fix.

Police

Commissioner Oxtoby reviewed the monthly calls for service report. He said that the city ordered a Portable Radar sign that not only tells your speed but records time and speed so that areas of need can be targeted.

Buildings

Commissioner Ashburn thanked Mr. Cannon for his update on City Hall as she wants to do some type of open house in the future. She was happy to announce that the Historic Committee's Home Tour this past weekend brought in about \$3400.00 for the Save the Depot project. She said that the Historic Committee has agreed to lease out the back of the Depot to an antique baseball card shop to help with costs. She said Saluda Community Land Trust requested someone from the city be appointed as a Twin Lakes representative. Commissioner Cass asked if Commissioner Ashburn could serve that purpose and she said she supposed so.

Commissioner Morgan made a motion to appoint Commissioner Ashburn as Twin Lakes Representative. Commissioner Cass seconded and all were in favor.

Water/Sewer

Commissioner Cass thanked the Mayor and all other home tour participants for opening their homes and overall generosity.

Commissioner Cass reported that the Public Works work order software wasn't serving the needs of the city. Public Works Supervisor Bill Obermiller said they were just reverting back to paper until a new system was found. She then explained that the post card that was sent out was just an FYI concerning the new policy changes. She reported that bricks would begin to be laid in Pace Park in the next day. Bathrooms and landscape would take longer because the City is waiting on grants and other events to help fund these items. She said there are still plenty of opportunities to purchase a brick. Blank ones will be replaced with personalized ones in batches of 50.

Parks

Tangie Morgan updated everyone on Coon Dog Day and upcoming events. She said we are still getting many vendors, sponsors and donations, including prizes. She mentioned that she is trying to get Norfolk Southern involved in upcoming Railroad Day. She will be contacting DOT to get permission for road closure for the upcoming Cruise In.

Commissioner Morgan reported that some paving was being completed around town as requested.

Old Business

Item #1. Sign Ordinance Amendment

Commissioner Morgan had a few concerns with the purposed changes. He was worried about the residents being able to display their crosses in their yards. Mr. Cannon explained that most would be allowed under one category or another. Commissioner Morgan's other concern was disallowing political signs in the CH district. Attorney Nager said this was potentially a problem because there were some residents in that district and they were entitled to freedom of speech rights as everyone else is and that the city would need a way to distinguish between the businesses and residents. Commissioner Oxtoby asked about the thought process for that change. Mr. Cannon explained that the Planning Board didn't feel that the clutter of those signs were conducive to the character of the city. Commissioner Cass agreed with Commissioner Morgan stating that it is only for 60 days every other year and residents expect it.

Commissioner Morgan made a motion to accept the purposed changes as long as Page 12, item 8, 2nd sentence pertaining to political signs not being allowed in the CH district is struck from the changes. Commissioner Cass seconded motion and all were in favor.

Mr. Nager suggested that the Board motion to find that the amendment is Consistent with the plans and policies of the City of Saluda.

Commissioner Oxtoby made the motion, Commissioner Cass seconded and all were in favor.

New Business

Item #2. Approval of Sign at corner of Ozone and Rt. 176-Lynn Cass

Commissioner Cass explained that the sign was designed by a committee within the Saluda Downtown Foundation that she, Mayor Baisden and Commissioner Ashburn all served on. Since the majority of the board was there for these decisions she mistakenly thought that was considered as approved by the Board. To make matters clear she wanted to bring it before the whole board at a Commissioners' meeting.

Commissioner Cass made a motion to approve the marquee sign at the corner of Ozone and Hwy 176. Commissioner Ashburn seconded and all were in favor.

Item #3. Changing City charter to council-manager form of government.-Lynn Cass

Commissioner Cass said that this topic had been mentioned before and she would like to revisit the idea. She said Attorney Nager looked into the process and it can be done by changing the charter.

The change can be accomplished by the Board passing an ordinance amending the Charter. First, the Board must approve a resolution of intent to consider amending the charter describing the proposed change and must set a public hearing, to occur within 45 days. Not earlier than the next regular meeting after the public hearing, nor later than 60 days from the public hearing, the Board may adopt the charter amendment.

Alternatively, the Board can make its approval of the ordinance subject to approval of a voter referendum on the issue.

Finally, the public has the right to call for a referendum by submitting a petition signed by 10% of the registered voters. If the Board receives such a petition, then the matter must be decided by referendum.

Attorney Nager stated that the other two towns in Polk County use this form of government and that the only real difference is the authority given to the City Manager to hire and fire employees. He stated that the Board could still be as involved as they wanted to be and all governing decisions were still their responsibility. Commissioner Cass asked if it had worked well for Columbus and Mr. Nager said he thought it had. Commissioner Ashburn asked if they could have time to review everything and put it on the next meeting's agenda.

Action Item

Review and consider change of charter to council-manager form of government. It will be added to next agenda.

Item #4. IT Upgrades for City Hall-Jon Cannon

Mr. Cannon explained to the Board that the city cannot effectively or safely operate with current software. He stated that these recommendations follow loosely with Polk County's system. His recommendations and potential costs are attached.

Mayor Baisden stated that a couple different IT professionals have recommended these upgrades for the city but that our current IT provider does not. Commissioner Cass asked if there were any other IT professionals capable. Mr. Cannon said there are many.

Commissioner Oxtoby made a motion to allow IT upgrades. Commissioner Ashburn seconded motion and all were in favor.

With no other business to discuss, Commissioner Cass made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Morgan seconded motion and all were in favor.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Jessica Desiano, Assistant City Clerk. Adopted this _____ day of
_____, 2015.

Fred H. Baisden, Mayor

Jessica D. Desiano, Assistant City Clerk