

MINUTES OF THE WHITSETT TOWN COUNCIL
June 14, 2016
Whitsett Town Hall Building

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

The regular meeting of the Whitsett Town Council was held on Tuesday, June 14, 2016 at the Whitsett Town Hall. The following members of the Town Council were present: Mayor Richard Fennell, Mayor Pro Tem Andy Brown, Council Members Jerry Rice, Cindy Wheeler, and Lee Greeson.

Also present were Town Administrator Gary Deal, Planning Board Chairman Bob Maccia, Planning Board Member Craig York, *Creekside Chronicle* reporter Tomas Murawski, and three area residents.

Following the public hearing, Mayor Fennell called the Council meeting to order at 7:08 p.m., and noted that a quorum was present.

SPEAKERS FROM THE FLOOR

Mayor Fennell asked for any speakers from the floor; and no one asked to be acknowledged.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Adoption of the Minutes

Mayor Fennell asked for any changes to the minutes from the May 10, 2016 regular monthly meeting; and hearing none, asked for a motion to adopt the minutes as written. Council Member Jerry Rice made a motion to adopt the minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Council Member Lee Greeson; and by unanimous vote, the May minutes were approved.

2. Adoption of Whitsett Town Budget for FY 2016-2017 and Budget Ordinance

Mayor Fennell asked for any further discussion or comment on the proposed operating budget for 2016-2017. With none offered, Mayor Fennell asked for a motion to approve the budget and adopt the budget ordinance as presented. Council Member Jerry Rice made a motion to adopt the operating budget and budget ordinance; motion seconded by Council Member Cindy Wheeler. The motion carried by unanimous vote from Council.

3. Adoption of Modifications to Sections of the Zoning Ordinance

Mayor Fennell asked for any further comment on the proposed development ordinance on fences, and hearing none, asked for a motion to adopt the ordinance as presented. Council Member Jerry Rice made a motion to accept the fence ordinance; motion seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Andy Brown. The text amendments to the zoning ordinance were adopted by unanimous vote.

4. Any Other Old Business

Mayor Fennell asked if there were any other old business to be discussed; there was none.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Planning Board

Planning Board Chairman Bob Maccia reported that the Board had undertaken the task of addressing solar farms regulation with the onset of the mega-sites becoming prevalent across the state. He explained that Planning Board member Craig York had researched the subject, and Maccia invited York to the floor to expound on his research and findings. Board member York had worked up a talk sheet, which had been included in the mailed Council packages, and is also part of the official file.

York described the three categories of solar energy systems, with levels 1 and 2 limited to ½ acre plots usually for single-family purpose or specific-purpose projects and not considered a threat to the landscape of the Town. Level 3, however, is a vast-land system typically on large tracts of AG property used for generating a plethora of solar energy for profit. This level is the focus of concern with an objective of ultimately banning level 3 systems within Town boundaries, which was the aim of York's presentation.

During and following his presentation, discussions among Council Members involved what the Town's stance should be and what to put in place to protect Town properties and residents from potential negative environmental impacts caused by massive solar farms. Mayor Fennell directed the Planning Board to continue its endeavor of developing an ordinance to contain and/or ban level 3 solar farms, and during that process consult the Town attorney on the legality of prohibiting such operations.

2. Enforcement Committee

Enforcement Officer Gary Deal stated that there had been no committee activity this month.

3. Enforcement Officer

Enforcement Officer Deal reported that since last Council meeting, two Development Clearance Permit Certificates had been issued to: (1) Canter Power Systems out of Greensboro to install a 14kw generator at the home of Robert and Pat Handwerk at 801 Woodard Drive, and (2) P. Marshall and Associates, LLC on behalf of T-Mobile for installation of a 50kw diesel generator at the cell tower on Gusenbury Road.

4. Town Administrator

With the Town Administrator on an extended vacation in May, there was no administrative activity to report on.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Approval of Five-Year County Contracts for Tax Collection and for Animal Control Services

Council Members had earlier been provided with a set of two five-year county contracts for tax collection and for animal control services, first implemented in 2011 and now up for renewal. The annual fee for monthly tax collections would increase, while conversely the quarterly fee for animal control services would decrease, resulting in a net increase of \$215 for the 2016-2017 budget.

Mayor Fennell asked for any discussion about the contracts, and hearing none asked for a motion to approve and execute the two contracts for further processing by the county. A motion was made by Council Member Lee Greeson to approve the two five-year service contracts; motion seconded by Council Member Jerry Rice. The motion carried by unanimous vote of Council Members.

Contracts would be forwarded to Town Attorney Bill Trevorrow for his perusal and signature and then final submission to the county law office for completion.

2. Any Items from Council Members

Mayor Fennell asked for any items from Council Members; and there were none.

3. Announcements

Mayor Fennell asked for any announcements and no one had any.

5. Speakers from the Floor

Mayor Fennell asked if there were any speakers from the floor; and there were none.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Council, Mayor Fennell invited a motion to adjourn. Council Member Jerry Rice made the motion to adjourn; motion seconded by Council Member Lee Greeson. Motion passed by unanimous vote; and the June 14, 2016 Town Council meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:24 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the Whitsett Town Council is scheduled for 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, July 12, 2016 at the Whitsett Town Hall.

/s/

/s/

Jo Hesson, Town Clerk

Richard Fennell, Mayor

APPROVED: July 12, 2016