

MINUTES

The Holly Springs Town Council met in a duly-called special session on Wednesday, May 20, 2009, in a classroom of the Holly Springs Cultural Center, 300 Ballentine Street. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the proposed FY 2009-10 operating budget. Mayor Dick Sears presided, calling the meeting to order at 6 p.m. A quorum was established as the mayor and four council members were present as the meeting opened.

Council Members Present: Councilmen Vinnie DeBenedetto, Parrish Womble, Chet VanFossen, Tim Sack and Hank Dickson and Mayor Sears.

Council Members Absent: None.

Staff Members Present: Carl Dean, town manager; Charles Simmons, assistant town manager; John Schifano, town attorney; Joni Powell, town clerk (recording the minutes); Linda Harper, deputy town clerk; John Herring, police chief; Gina Clapp, director of planning and zoning; Daniel Weeks, project analyst; Eric Tayler, information technology manager; Luncie McNeil, public works director; Erika Phillips, human resources director; Amy Moore, director of water quality; Stephanie Sudano, director of engineering; Drew Holland, finance director; Jenny Mizelle, director of economic development; Cecil Parker, fire chief; Ricky Blackmon, director of code enforcement; Barb Koblisch, Clerk's Office information assistant; Patty Dressen, finance office staff; Robbie Parrish, police lieutenant; Len Bradley, director of parks and recreation; and Mark Andrews, public information officer.

Mr. Dean reviewed his budget message providing highlights of his proposed budget with the Town Council. Personnel and program needs were discussed, and Mr. Dean and department heads fielded questions from Council members.

Dr. Brent Myers, medical director of Wake County Emergency Medical Services, and Fire Chief Cecil Parker addressed the Council, describing how a \$300,000-plus shortfall in EMS revenues posed a problem for the Town. Revenues are down, Dr. Myers and Chief Parker agreed, due to the economy. With revenues down significantly, Mr. Dean said the Town would need to consider handing the service over to Wake County.

Dr. Myers said that was a viable option and that the county would take over the Town's EMS and there would be no change or interruptions in service. Both he and Fire Chief Cecil Parker said citizens would notice no difference.

Councilman Womble said he did not want to see Wake County assume the EMS service because he and an earlier Town Council had worked so hard to establish it. He said he thought it would be better to keep it locally-based.

The argument that the service was operating at a shortfall of more than \$300,000, however, was a deciding factor for the Council.

Direction: After much discussion, the Council consensus was that the EMS service was suffering a \$300,000-plus revenue shortfall, so it was best that Wake County take over the service, effective July 1, 2009.

In discussions that ensued during the evening, the Town Council requested that the following items be given further consideration. Some of the items would not represent changes to the budget.

- **Action:** A motion was made by Councilman Dickson, seconded by Councilman Sack and carried 4-1 that a graduated travel allowance schedule be assigned for department heads and brought back to the Council. Councilmen VanFossen asked if the motion could be amended to add the mayor to the list of people who might receive a travel allowance, but Councilman Sack said he would not support that amendment, so the motion stood as stated.

Councilmen Womble, VanFossen, Sack and Dickson voted for the motion. Councilman DeBenedetto voted against.

The town manger will return to the Council with a policy on travel allowances that promotes equity and is based on actual driving requirements of the department head.

- The Council discussed the yard waste collection fee. Councilman Womble said he thought the town should eliminate it. Mr. McNeil reported on an alternate disposal site the town could use to realize a savings, but the \$1 per month increase proposed in the budget would be adequate.

Councilman Sack said the amount the Town charges is a good deal for those who use the service.

Direction: The Council consensus was to keep the \$1 per month increase in the yard waste collection fee as proposed.

- Councilman Dickson said he felt like the Town should re-think its contribution to the Holly Springs Chamber of Commerce of \$35,000. He said he feels the Chamber should be more supportive of the Town and that he has been disappointed in the Chamber's silence on issues

such as growth. Other Council members said they agreed with Councilman Dickson on that point, but that they didn't think the Town should hold the Chamber's funding hostage because of it. Councilman Sack also said he felt the Chamber did take a position internally but wanted to remain a-political.

Consensus: The consensus of the Council was to retain its current financial support of the Holly Springs Chamber of Commerce at this time.

- o Councilman Dickson said he was supportive of Parks and Recreation Department and proposed expenses, he questioned, however, why four police officers requested were not recommended for funding.

Chief Herring explained that the four officers would provide one additional officer per shift. he said he has applied for grants for personnel and equipment and that the additional officers may be made possible without impacting the budget.

Adjournment: There being no further business for the evening, the May 20, 2009 special meeting of the Holly Springs Town Council was adjourned following a motion by Councilman Womble, a second by Councilman Sack and a unanimous vote.



Joni Powell, CMC, Town Clerk