

## **AUGUST 14, 2012, CITY COUNCIL MINUTES SPECIAL MEETING**

The City Council of the City of Clinton, North Carolina, met in a special meeting at 7:00 PM on August 14, 2012, in the City Hall Auditorium. Mayor Starling presided. Councilmembers Strickland, Turlington, Stefanovich, and Becton were present. Mayor Pro Tem Harris was absent, due to a prior engagement.

Also present were City Manager Connet; Assistant City Manager – Finance Director Shawn Purvis; City Clerk Elaine F. Hunt; City Attorney Dale Johnson; Interim Fire Chief Robert Swiger; new Fire Chief Adon Snyder; Timothy Boykin and Keshawn Evans, of the Recreation Department.

Chris Berendt, of the Sampson Independent; Albert Kirby, Sampson County Board of Commissioner; and Timothy Boykin's son were also present.

### **INVOCATION**

Councilmember Becton gave the invocation. Mayor Starling asked for a moment of silence in memory of Former Mayor Aaron Emsley Kennedy, Jr., who passed away on last week.

### **SAMPSON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

The appointment of a City Council member to the Sampson County Comprehensive Transportation Committee was continued from the August 7, 2012, regular city council meeting.

Upon a motion made by Councilmember Strickland, seconded by Councilmember Becton, it passed unanimously to appoint City Manager John F. Connet to represent City Council on the Sampson County Comprehensive Transportation Committee.

### **CLINTON RECREATION DEPARTMENT**

City Manager Connet opened discussion regarding the Clinton Recreation Department by announcing the vacancies within the Department. He expressed his displeasure that the Department has not been providing the service that he would like to see, as well as, the fact that many compare the present Recreation Department to the Recreation Department during Mr. Walker Bellamy's tenure. Mr. Connet told the group that he realizes the Department cannot be as it was during Mr. Bellamy's employment for various reasons to include, buildings and equipment are older. He stated that at this time, the City should step back and develop new partnerships.

Mr. Connet asked for guidance from the City Council and brought forth concerns:

- Wants to serve all children—not just top athletes
- Wants to reshape and relocate ball fields
- Wants to improve the tennis courts, as well as, the soccer fields
- Wants to eliminate smaller programs that are being duplicated; such as the wellness program. He stated that we now have a Wellness Center.

City Manager Connet stated that he met with the Soccer Club on last week and resolved some concerns. He stated that some of the baseball coaches approached him and suggested selling sponsorship and placing signs on the fences. He stated that approximately \$30,000- \$40,000 could possibly originate from this endeavor.

Mayor Starling questioned the quantity of tennis courts and the necessity of the courts. Mayor asked what City Manager Connet's intentions were regarding Newkirk Park and Sampson Center.

City Manager Connet stated that presently, there are eight tennis courts and he feels that four tennis courts would be enough for now. He stated that Newkirk Park and Sampson Center will continue to exist. Also, he stated that he will meet with Mr. Tim Boykin to enhance the Center more.

City Manager Connet stated that he would like to sit down with Sampson County recreation representatives and align the City's programs so that opportunities are present for interplay.

It was the consensus of Mayor and City Council to promote strengthening and improving our recreation. Also, they were in agreement that the citizens come first and we need to be mindful of what they want.

Councilmember Stefanovich questioned the cost to repair the fields and bring them in compliance. Assistant City Manager-Finance Director Purvis stated that it will cost approximately \$5,000 to move the lights and poles per field. Mr. Purvis stated that if coaches volunteered their assistance, it will be less. Councilmember Stefanovich was adamant regarding the City supporting the coaches in their endeavors. Mr. Stefanovich suggested a specific company perhaps sponsoring a field. He asked about playgrounds, building a soccer field, and organizing a baseball club.

Mr. Purvis stated that playgrounds are very expensive. He stated that Public Works Director Vreugdenhil could tell City Council what it takes to build a soccer field. Mr. Purvis stated that a baseball club might be an option for the Clinton Recreation Department.

It was the consensus of the Mayor and City Council to allow City Manager Connet to proceed with his recommendations which included: developing new partnerships, looking at opportunities to reshape and relocate the fields, eliminating smaller programs that can be handled in other areas, improving

tennis courts, meeting with Sampson County representative(s) to align programs so that interplay might occur, etc.

**RESOLUTION—CLOSED SESSION**

Upon a motion made by Councilmember Strickland, seconded by Councilmember Turlington, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

RESOLUTION TO ENTER CLOSED SESSION

Be It Resolved that the special city council meeting of the City Council of the City of Clinton, North Carolina held at 7:00 PM on August 14, 2012 entered closed session as allowed by G. S. 143-318.11(a)(3)(5) to discuss a litigation matter and the acquisition of real property.

Council re-entered regular session at 8:06 PM. Mayor Starling reported that City Council discussed a litigation matter and the potentiality of acquiring real property; however, no action was taken.

Upon a motion made by Councilmember Strickland, seconded by Councilmember Becton, and unanimously passed, the meeting was adjourned.

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Elaine F. Hunt, MMC, City Clerk

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Lew Starling, Mayor