

City of Mount Holly

MOUNT HOLLY CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

**Tuesday, February 6, 2007
City Hall**

The Work Session of the City Council of Mount Holly was called to order at 6:38 p.m. by Mayor Pro-Tem Phyllis Harris. The following were present:

Mayor Robert Whitt
Mayor Pro-Tem Phyllis Harris
Councilman David Moore
Councilman Jerry Bishop
Councilman Jim Hope
Councilwoman Pat Hubbard
Councilman Frank McLean
City Attorney Kemp Michael

Interim City Manager Ed Munn
Assistant City Manager Danny Jackson
Assistant City Manager Jamie Guffey
Police Chief David Belk
Fire Chief Dale Oplinger
Utilities Director James Friday
Storm Water Ray Clemmer
Streets Director Mike Santmire
Planner Greg Beal
Richard Griffin

The invocation was led by Councilman Jim Hope.

STATUS REPORT

Development Guidelines

Mr. Bill Gary addressed the council and stated that after much time spent meeting and going on field trips, the Planning Commission has come to a consensus to bring the development guidelines to the council meeting in writing at the next council meeting or at a joint meeting with council, whichever is the preference of the Council.

Mr. Gary reported that the field trips that were taken by the Planning Commission to subdivisions in Gaston and Mecklenburg County were an eye opening experience. Councilwoman Pat Hubbard asked which subdivisions were seen. Mr. Gary answered that the following subdivisions were visited:

1. Westland Farm
2. Hawthorne
3. Eagle Creek
4. McAdenville
5. Old Course
6. Baxter

Mr. Bill Gary stated that the field trips were very informative and showed the results of

real planning, which is the type, level and degree of planning that is needed in Mount Holly.

Mr. Bill Gary as well as Mr. Carlton Broome offered to drive their vans so that the City Council could visit the communities that were visited by the Planning Commission.

Mayor Robert Whitt suggested a joint meeting with the Planning Commission after the scheduled retreat.

Mayor Pro-Tem Harris agrees with the Mayors recommendation and also suggests that the community visits take place prior to the joint meeting.

Mayor Robert Whitt stated that two different times to visit the communities could be scheduled and he asked should the visit be after or before the retreat.

Councilman David Moore stated that it would be pushing it to do the visit before the retreat.

Mayor Robert Whitt suggested February 27, 2007 at 6:30 pm or February 26, 2007 at 6:30 pm as tentative dates for the joint meeting to take place. The date will be confirmed at the next Council meeting. Interim City Manager, Ed Munn stated that material will be given to council prior to the joint meeting.

Mr. Bill Gary added that he will have the written information ready for Council to take to the retreat. The field trip will be scheduled for the week of February 19, 2007.

Councilman David Moore suggested at Saturday morning trip.

Two firm dates will be set at Monday's meeting.

Strategic Vision Plan - Advisory Committee's review

Mr. Danny Jackson addressed the Council and passed out a handout of the Draft of the Strategic Plan Phase 1. The hand out tells what has been done and what will take place. The Draft will be in the paperwork this week. Urban Institute is looking for the possible call for a Public Hearing from Council to take place in March. He requests that a date be set on Monday or at the retreat for the hearing. The staff will need time to get notification in the paper.

Mayor Robert Whitt asked what the purpose of the Public Hearing would be? Mr. Jackson responded by saying to adopt Phase 1 and also a possible adoption of standard scope.

The date for the Public Hearing will be set on Monday or at the Retreat.

DEPARTMENT PRESENTATIONS - ISSUES FOR 2006-2007

Interim City Manager Ed Munn stated there will be 4 departmental presentations at the request of the Mayor and the Council which will address issues pertaining to the specific departments and their budget needs. The Administrative and Land Planning Department presentations will be at the retreat. The presentations will be based on a 3-5 year vision/plan of each departments needs and desires and then prioritized.

Police Department Presentation - Chief Belk addressed the Council stating this is the first opportunity that he has had to speak to them as a full Council. Chief Belk presented Budget Projects and Future Projects with a priority ranking. (See handouts)

Budget Projects

1. In- Car Camera System - Priority 1 - Chief Belk attached a grant application to his hand-outs. He stated this request is for 9 vehicles and will increase safety for officers, help in collecting evidence and assist in analyzing complaints. The estimated cost is \$55,000. A Grant with Governor's Crime Commission 25% matching grant \$14,000. The first year budget impact will be \$14,000. The second year maintenance cost is estimated at \$2,000 depending on integrity of the system. Mayor Robert Whitt stated that he was told that the recording part of current cameras is not working. Chief Belk confirmed that the cameras are old and not in working order, but he will check to see if the current cameras can be repaired rather than replaced. Mayor Robert Whitt asked if all cars will be equipped with the new cameras. Chief Belk stated that there are 14 total vehicles on the street and this project will be for 9 of the vehicles.
2. Mobile Data Terminals - Priority 1 - Chief Belk presented that the grant application is being drafted for this project. The data terminals will provide automatic DMV information, driver's license info and instant access of criminal history to officers. The request is for 9 vehicles at an estimated cost of \$6,000 per vehicle. The Grant is with North Carolina Governor's Highway Safety 50/50 grant. The first year budget impact is \$27,000. The second year impact is the on-going cost for CJIN use per Mobile Data. This figure is to replace the entire system.
3. Department Structure Change - Priority 1 - The department restructuring would allow the current staff to all stay on with the department with additional training. It would merely (1) flatten out the organization and (2) assign new function/redefine the following: Internal Affairs/Evidence, Recruitment/Selection, Telecommunications, Records, Evidence (by securing storage facilities). Councilman Jerry Bishop asked how much the storage facility would cost and if this is a short term fix. Chief Belk replied that the budget impact would be \$5,000 for the Evidence storage and training and that it is a short term fix until moving into the new building. Per Interim City Manager Ed Munn, the flattening out of the department would be an immediate action because it does not affect the budget.
4. New Building Requirements - Priority 1 - Chief Belk presented that the new building requirements will include either (1) moving the existing Radio Tower and Communications Center with the cost undetermined at this point or (2) installing a new Radio Tower and replace antiquated Communications Work Stations. According to Chief Belk, the height of the existing tower may be an issue. The decisions is left opened and to be determined until after a meeting on the tower scheduled for

February 7, 2007. In addition, the Movement of the Computer System and Hardware was presented by Chief Belk. The goal is to move the hardware (mostly 911 Hardware) without disruption of service to the community. Mayor Robert Whitt asked if the 911 calls come directly to an operator in Mt. Holly. Chief Belk confirmed that they do. Mayor Robert Whitt asked if Mt. Holly is the only city in Gaston County that has its own 911 system?. Chief Belk asked Captain Harris to respond to this question. According to Captain Harris, Belmont, Ranlo and Cherryville all have their own 911 system. Mayor Robert Whitt requested that the budget proposal break out the cost difference for how much it costs Mt. Holly to maintain their own system versus the calls going to the county. Councilwoman Phyllis Harris stated that she remembers that it was just as cheap for the city to maintain their own system instead of using the county system and that is why they decided to go with the 911 system previously. Councilman Jerry Bishop added that the 911 system pays for itself because the city gets a credit for hard line phone service.

5. Police Vehicles - Priority 1 (see handouts - there was no discussion)
6. Gas Masks - Priority 1 - There is a need for gas masks for 35 sworn officers because there are currently no masks in Mt. Holly. If there is a chemical spill, the Mt. Holly Police Department would be unable to respond. Chief Belk added that this should actually be changed to a High Priority.
7. Tasers and Motorola handheld radios - Priority 1 - (See handout for need and budget impact). Purchasing 5 tasers would outfit the remaining officers. In addition, Motorola hand held radios are needed to outfit the rest of the patrol officers. Councilman Jerry Bishop asked if we have officers getting out of the car without communication. Chief Belk responded by saying no that officers are using old ones and that repairs are being made to keep them working.
8. Patrol Staffing Study (attached) - Priority 2 - (see handout) - Discussion: Mayor Robert Whitt asked what the minimum requirement is for officers at any time. Chief Belk responded with 1 sergeant and 3 officers. Some shifts are down due to leave, sick, etc. When this happens, the Sergeant will cover.
9. Radar Units and Shotguns - Priority 2 - (See handout - there was no discussion)
10. Migration to 800 Mhz radio System - Priority 2 - The recommendation is to purchase two of the 800 mhz walkie talkies that will enable the officers to talk to other agencies. Interim City Manager, Ed Munn stated that this technology is a new option for Gaston County. It has been powerful in Mecklenburg County and is becoming more affordable because the state has covered some of the costs.
11. Greenway Coverage - Priority 2 - This project is down the road, but Chief Belk recommends that it needs some planning. EMS coverage will be needed during construction.

Future Projects (See handouts)

1. International Accreditation
2. Project S.A.F.E. - Strategic Aggressive Firearms Enforcement - Federal Program - Partner with other agencies
3. Career Development Programs - Officer Rank Structure

Mayor Robert Whitt asked Chief Belk how he would prioritize his needs after the Tower. Chief Belk responded by saying vehicles, mobile cameras and mobile data terminals.

Mayor Robert Whitt wanted to go back to the Radio Tower and asked what are the concerns and the possible reason for a new tower? Chief Belk explained that the new site is lower than the current site which may mean that a higher tower is needed. He has a meeting scheduled for tomorrow (February 7th) to meet on the tower issue. Mayor Robert Whitt stated that the number (budget amount) for either moving and/or replacing the tower is needed at the retreat. He continued discussion by asking the number of current positions within the department. Chief Belk answered stating 30 sworn positions with 1 vacancy.

Fire and Rescue Presentation

Chief Dale Oplinger thanked Council for the opportunity to speak to them in regards to his department needs. The presentation was on Budgetary Considerations (Part 1) in the following areas: (1) Increase in Staffing Level (2) Vehicle Replacement & Program (3) New Vehicle & Equipment Purchase and Future Capital Improvements (Part 2) as follows: 3 Year Plan - Short Term Focus. The Goal Statements were to (1) Improve current service level (operations) (2) Implement additional lifesaving services (3) Improve safety & readiness of the staff. The objectives to accomplish the goals according to Chief Oplinger are as follows: (1) Purchase Custom Heavy Rescue Truck (2) Purchase of a Fire/Rescue Watercraft (3) Consolidation/Surplus of Apparatus & other (4) Replacement purchases of Thermal Imaging Cameras (5) Implement a Fire Hose Replacement Program (6) Purchase of a commercial grade Gear Dryer. (See hand outs for details of presentation) Discussion: Councilwoman Pat Hubbard had questions in regards to the explanation of the vehicles requested. Chief Dale Oplinger replied by stating that there is a need to look at the units that we currently have verses the width of trails, etc. He also stated that more investigation is needed at this time in regards to what will be needed with the new Greenway.

Chief Oplinger explained that Engine 35 went on no calls this past year and that operationally, there is no need for the building. The vehicle was purchased in 1991 and the replacement value is \$300,000. There are problems with this truck - only 4 to 6 of them in the United States stated the Chief. Chief Oplinger expressed that he would not drive this truck himself. He would like to review the insurance policy to see how it is affected if the Engine is dropped and removed from operation. The proposal to purchase a Heavy Rescue Truck would allow the department to do more with limited staff because of the equipment that is on the truck. It is the Chief's opinion that it is better to have this vehicle versus having duplicate equipment on various vehicles. Mayor Robert Whitt asked if this new vehicle would take the place of 140 and 148. Chief Oplinger confirmed that yes it would cover the same function. Mayor Robert Whitt asked how many fire departments in our county have a truck like the Heavy Rescue Truck. He responded with West Meck is the closest and Gastonia has one as well. Mayor Whitt asked if Rescue Trucks are used as ambulances and Chief Oplinger responded, No.

Interim City Manager, Ed Munn commented on EMS & Rescue stating that Mount Holly has a unique service for providing EMS & Rescue because they provide a 35 square mile service area but the city is only 8.5 square miles. Mayor Whitt asked if we receive any reimbursement for calls outside of the city. Chief Oplinger along with Ed explained that the reimbursement is complicated and there are some hidden costs but the reimbursement is minimal - \$15.00 to load in GEMS.

Councilwoman Pat Hubbard asked how old are our current Thermal Imaging Cameras? Chief Oplinger stated that they were purchased in 2000.

Mayor Robert Whitt asked Chief Oplinger what his biggest priority would be, vehicles versus staff? Chief Oplinger stated he would prefer staff.

Councilman Jim Hope added that equipment is useless without the staff to use it.

Councilman Jerry Bishop asked Chief Oplinger if he had tried for any grants. The Chief responded with yes.

Mayor Robert Whitt called for a break.

Meeting was continued at 8:15 pm

Ms. Christa Francis, a two year resident of the Riverfront Subdivision addressed the Council in regards to a coyote problem the residence are experiencing with their primary concern being rabies. She stated that she is pleading to her elected officials to help address this situation. She has requested assistance from the Home Owners Association and Gaston County Animal Control with no success. Mayor Robert Whitt confirmed that he has seen the coyotes as well and takes this concern very seriously. This issue will be added to the agenda at the retreat.

Utilities Department Presentation

Utilities Director, James Friday addressed the Council with the needs of the Water Treatment Plant, Wastewater Treatment Plant, and Utilities. Ray Clemmons reported on Storm Water.

James Friday presented the following recommendations in regards to the Water Treatment Plant: (1) Filter Media Replacement (2) Filter Actuator Replacement (3) Filter Effluent Valves and Venturi Meters (4) Flocculator Repair (5) Streaming Current Monitor (6) Chemical Feed Pumps (7) Automatic Security Gate (8) Outside Plant Lighting Repair.

(1) Filter Media Replacement - one is currently being replaced that has already been budgeted and one more will need to be replaced at a cost of \$33,000. The replacements will be good for 10 years.

(2) Filter Actuators - The hydraulic operated actuators over the last 25 years of service

have deteriorated to the point that the system is near non-operational. This would allow the plant to replace the hydraulic actuators with electric actuators. The cost for the 4 filters including running electrical to them is \$193,000.

Discussion: Mayor Robert Whitt asked what happens to them when they are not working. Mr. Friday replied that they are making repairs to them as needed.

(3) Filter Effluent Valves and Venturi Meters - see added handout for explanation. Mr. Friday states that the valves need to go and new filters put in and the cost will be \$60,000. Councilman Frank McLean stated that this plant was built in 1984.

(4) Flocculators - There are 8 flocculates at the Water Plant (see hand out for explanation of their function). Mr. Friday stated that the flocculates can be reworked versus replacing them. His recommendation is to have all eight units repaired this year. However, he said that he can do the second stage this year and do the 1st stage next year. The cost is \$50,000 to rebuild all 8 units.

(5) Streaming Current Monitor - The old unit was damaged by a power surge. This monitor keeps the plant running at the optimum coagulant feed rates. The cost is \$10,000.

(6) Chemical Feed Pumps - Replacing the old feed pumps will give the dosing of chemicals a more consistent pumping rate and more dependable pumps. The new pumps will allow the SCADA system to control the feed rates when the system is expanded at a later date. The cost is \$9,000.

(7) Automatic Security Gate - This recommendation is to help with the security of the plant and the safety of the operators. The manual gate is not in the best state of repair and if not replaced it will need to be repaired. Mr. Friday stated that currently the gates are left open during the 1st shift and are shut and locked during the 2nd and 3rd shifts.

(8) Outside Lighting - Mr. Friday stated that the outside lighting around the plant and on the basins is not working. This is a plant security issue and a safety concern for operators when working on the basins after dark. The cost will be \$10,000 including running electrical to the gate (if approved). Councilman Jerry Bishop asked how long the lights have been out. Mr. Friday replied that he has never seen them work within 3 months. Councilman Frank McLean said to make the lighting Priority 1. Mr. Friday presented that he prioritized based on the operational end. The council stated that Assistant City Manager, Jamie Guffey will find money to repair the lights now. Mayor Robert Whitt asked if the staffing is good. Mr. Friday responded, yes - there is one open position currently. An offer had been made but it was turned down so he will be restarting the hiring process.

James Friday presented the following recommendations for the Wastewater Treatment Plant: (1) Reclassify Position (2) Repair Basin Walkways (3) SCADA System (4) Aerator (4) Holding Tank Platform/Pump Repair (5) Bar Screen (6) Environmental Impact Study with CMUD.

(1) Reclassifying Position - Mr. Friday recommends reclassifying the Operator Position to Superintendent Level. The duties of this position would implement a Backflow/Cross Connection Program the F.O.G. program and Industrial Pre-Treatment. It is a \$10,000 expense - the existing position pay scale is \$22,156 - \$36,179 and the new position pay scale would be \$29,691 - \$48,484. Discussion: Interim City Manager, Ed Munn stated

that a letter will be going out to businesses in regards to facilitating the backflow prevention. One has already been sent with 50% response and another one will be sent. This program will target high risk businesses such as Funeral Homes. Ed Munn also stated that the state imposed it 5 years ago and an ordinance passed. Councilman Jerry Bishop asked would this be extended to current businesses. Interim City Manager responded with yes, but he did not know the level of grandfathering. Ed Munn verified that this is state mandated.

(2) Basin Walkways - The walkways over the basins have deteriorated to an unsafe condition. This recommendation will continue the walkway replacement started last year. The cost is \$71,000. Mr. Friday stated that 4 walkways have been replaced. Currently there are 4 cracks. Councilman Jerry Bishop asked if this repair is required by the state. Mr. Friday confirmed that it is.

(3) SCADA System - This system is a Computer Control System that monitors automatically. It would give the option of leaving the plant unattended at night. With all the data points monitored by the SCADA System, it can call the "on call" operator who can check the plant via a lap top computer. This will give him/her the information to determine if a return to the plant is necessary. The third shift operator can be moved to help with maintenance issues (should have two present when working on mechanical) and to cover sick days and vacation days, which will off set the cost of the system. The cost is \$57,000.

(4) Two Basin Aerator - Two aerators were replaced this year and this will be the last of the two that are scheduled to be replaced. The cost is \$64,000.

(5) Holding Tank Platform and Pump - The platform has become unsafe and the pumps will not sit properly and have excessive blow-by. The \$19,00 cost will include: New Pump Guide Rails, New Pump, Platform Framing, and Platform Grating.

(6) Mechanical Bar Screen - this is a wish per Mr. Friday and will replace the fix bar screen. If there is future plant expansion, the fixed bar screen will not be adequate. As the flow to the plant increases, an automated Bar Screen will be needed because of the loading rate on the fixed bar screen. The cost is \$100,000.

(7) Environmental Impact Study - this is the start of the process for the CMUD/Mount Holly joint Wastewater Treatment Plant. If the City does not go with CMUD, the study can be used by Mt. Holly when we expand our plant. The cost is \$50,000.

Mr. Friday presented the requests for Utilities as follows: (1) New position (2) Radio Read Meters (3) Sanitary Sewer Replacement (4) Water Line Replacement (5) Water Tank Maintenance (6) Equipment (7) Vehicles (8) Raw Water Connect (9) Water Connection with Belmont (north) and CMUD (south) (10) Elevated Water Storage Tank See hand outs for a detailed explanation and expenditures.

Discussion:

Councilwoman Pat Hubbard asked what kind of places use Vault Meters when discussing the touch pad meters for vaults. Mr. Friday replied with large companies like A&E and Freightliner.

Councilman Jerry Bishop asked about the existing meters that Mr. Friday wants to change out. Mr. Friday replied with some can have a conversion kit installed while others will need to be replaced. New Construction is using Radio Meters which can be read from a truck mounted reader. Mr. Friday summarized by saying that the older the

meters get, the less it reads and they need to be changed out.

Councilman Jerry Bishop asked does the money come out of Sewer Rehab for the Sewer Replacement. Assistant City Manager Jamie Guffey responded with yes, but it is a yearly budgetary expense that the Council decides on.

Mayor Robert Whitt dismissed previous presenters at this time.

Ray Clemmer addressed Council on Storm Water Management. His presentation included where we are now and where we want to go in the following areas: (1) Adding new positions (2) Update Vehicle Fleet (3) Equipment (4) Equipment (5) Projects and Programs (6) Educate the Public. See hand outs for presented information.

Discussion:

Mayor Robert Whitt asked what is done to the Right of Ways. Ray Clemmer responded with mowing them. The Mayor asked who is doing it now. Is no one designated to mow the sewer ROW? Ray Clemmer confirmed that no one is responsible, they are trying to maintain but it is whoever is available - goes to Bo. He stated he needs a bush hog competent employee to perform this duty.

Councilman Jerry Bishop asked if the road in question is not a state maintained road. Ray Clemmer confirmed that it is not.

Ray Clemmer presented two additional hand outs to council: (1) Clean Water Management Trust Fund Grant and (2) Runnymede Outfall Project.

(1) Ray Clemmer stated that the letter of support and application for the Clean Water Management Trust Fund Grant is due by March 1, 2007. Mayor Robert Whitt stated that this would be put on the agenda for next week. Councilwoman Pat Hubbard asked if we would have to do the grant. Ray Clemmer answered with no.

(2) Ray Clemmer explained that there is a washout at Runnymede in the sewer ROW that was discovered in July 2006 and was brought to his attention in October 2006.

Mayor Robert Whitt stated discussion of this item would be added to the agenda for next week.

Street and Solid Waste Department Presentation

Streets Director Mike Santmire addressed the Council stating that he was here to provide information and is not asking for anything except to keep all of the people he has. See the hand outs for the details of the presentation.

Discussion within presentation:

Mayor Robert Whitt asked what it means to be on the disabled list. Mike Santmire responded that it means that the city employees go to get the trash pick up.

Councilman Jerry Bishop asked how do you determine who is on the disabled list? Mike Santmire responded with a note from the Doctor to verify the need.

Mayor Pro Tem Phyllis Harris stated that there are people who abuse the disabled list.

Interim City Manager Ed Munn stated that there is a problem with how to determine who is on the list.

There was open discussion on charging for computer terminals, white goods and

mattresses. Information was provided by Mike Santmire on other cities and their additional charges to citizens. Councilwoman Pat Hubbard asked how you would keep up with the payment, on the bill. Mike Santmire responded by saying an upfront charge would have to be paid prior to pick up.

The leaf collection program is going on the agenda for the next meeting per Mayor Robert Whitt.

Discussion of Special Events and the need for man hours for clean up. Councilman Jerry Bishop stated that if it is not a city sponsored event, the organization should be responsible. Mayor Pro Tem, Phyllis Harris stated that if it is a city sponsored event, it will come to the Council through her committee. Mayor Robert Whitt confirmed that events need to come through Council.

THE ANNUAL RETREAT

Mayor Pro Tem Phyllis Harris stated that she has reserved the board room for 8 pm on Thursday evening. Mayor Robert Whitt stated they would start on Friday morning at 9 am with an Agenda Draft, but that other matters can be added. Interim City Manager Ed Munn requested that if there was something in particular that needed to be discussed that he would like to know in advance.

OTHER BUSINESS

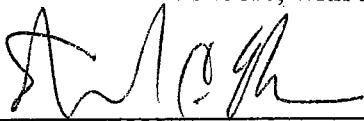
Assistant City Manager Danny Jackson present the Council with information at the instruction of the City Attorney in regards to property in Catawba Heights. There are a total of 4 properties to consider on Maple Circle and Forney Avenue that are paying taxes and receiving city benefits but are not annexed into the city.

Motion: Councilman Frank McLean made a motion that the city request a voluntary annexation by the residents. Councilwoman Pat Hubbard seconded the motion. Pass is unanimous.

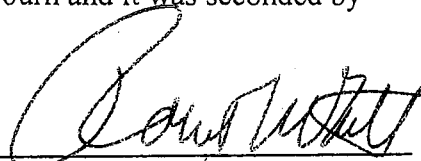
Assistant City Manager Jamie Guffey received and email stating the financing for the Citizens Center is approved.

Councilman Jerry Bishop inquired about the status of the streetscape traffic light. Danny Jackson responded that there is no concrete answer.

Motion: Councilwoman Pat Hubbard made a motion to adjourn and it was seconded by Councilman David Moore, with all in favor.



Clerk



Mayor

