

MINUTES
Snow Hill Board of Commissioners
Monday, 9 September 2013
GC Community Center
814 W Harper Street

1. **Call to Order** *Invocation / Pledge of Allegiance*
Mayor Liles called to order at 6pm; Prayer offered by SH Commissioner Hagans; Pledge led by GC Commissioner Jones
2. **Roll Call**
All present; quorum declared
3. **Consider Agenda Approval**
Motion to approve by Washington, Second by Shackelford, Carried
4. **Consider Minutes Approval** *12 August 2013*
Motion to approve by Hagans, Second by Shackelford, Carried
5. **Program:**
 - Joint Meeting w/ GC BoC** *Water Issues*
 - Dana Hill opened by summarizing that Snow Hill is considering the best option for future water system operation. He stated that recent studies performed by Green Engineering confirmed that the town system could be operated more efficiently and with lower treatment cost if isolated from other county systems. Hill said that the Town recognizes that this would present water quality issues for Greene County customers, including South Greene Water Corporation. Hill explained to the group the reason that Snow Hill has a high base rate, in that the regulation was introduced during the time that South Greene was purchasing from Snow Hill. At some point after that, South Greene chose to purchase from Greene County. While the financial impact was difficult at the time on Snow Hill, it now leave the town having made a better than 60% reduction with the loss of one customer, allowing the Town to have flexibility in complying with CCPCUA rules. Hill also pointed out that there seems to be some disagreement about the Town choosing not to execute the proposed amended inter-local agreement and that issue needs to be discussed. He stated that this is a big decision, and both Boards seem to agree that a mutually beneficial plan needs to be agreed upon to lessen impacts on customers.
 - Brian Pridgen, Town Attorney spoke to the agreement and provided clarification that the Town is not disputing the validity of the original inter-local agreement, but maintains that the written, signed document does not speak to surcharge payments past FYE 2013 as outlined in Appendix A.
 - Interim County Manager Richard Hicks shared that the stance of GC is that the surcharge language in the original agreement was an example, not an obligation, and that all parties would participate for the full 40 year term. Hicks advised that the County BoC has taken no action or position as to Snow Hills decision no to sign the amended proposal. Hicks said that he believes it would be complex to isolate a system that was designed to be one. Pressure and water quality issues would be expensive to overcome. He suggested that an agreed upon amount be pumped by Snow Hill, and have GC pump any excess.

- SH Commissioner Washington stated that a decision will take time and that GC should be given the option to complete a timeline if the final decision is to isolate.
- GC Commissioner Jack Edmondson said that both Boards need to work towards a “win-win” solution.
- Hicks said he would like to come to terms to avoid large costs.
- SH Commissioner Becki Scarborough stated that SH is an independent system, but the way we currently operate is unique. She knows of no other in the state with a similar arrangement. There is currently an increased cost to town residents by operating the way we do, and she wants to see a fair and equitable resolution. While she agrees that both systems should work together, she believes that isolation should be the long term plan.
- GC Commissioner James Shackelford stated that water issues will continue to be problematic, and he would like to see GC and SH work together to avoid isolation.
- Scarborough also expressed that she is troubled that GC takes funds from the water account to balance the general fund.
- GC Commissioner Bennie Heath stated that no money had been taken from the Alternative Water account.
- Hicks said that money came from several sources.
- Heath said that AWS money was used strictly for infrastructure.
- Hicks added that the surcharge may be able to stay at \$12 per month and repay debt early.
- Mayor Liles added that he did not see the surcharge as an example in the agreement as it was written. Snow Hill has an ample supply to last 75 years as is, and 100+ if new wells were added.
- SH Commissioner Bobby Taylor said that it would be hard to justify \$175,000 per year to the county when we have an adequate supply for the long term.
- Scarborough said that she is concerned that a fee structure was put into place without any idea of what the final cost of construction will be.
- Hicks responded that the fees were put into place to cover payments as each phase was completed.
- Scarborough feels that larger users made the decline in water levels and that a choice was made for GC and SH before enough research was done.
- Hicks responded that all systems are subject to the reductions unless the EMC changes the requirements in November.
- Heath stressed that he has always maintained that rural counties such as Greene have not contributed to the declining water levels.
- Hicks asked that SH consider working out a plan to monitor usage continue to operate as a single system.

Public Comments

- Glen Gray, Jason Water Corp. – JWC did not participate in the original agreement, but GC borrowed money on behalf of all systems, and feels that a gentleman’s agreement should be upheld. Said that a system to compensate for isolation cannot be built in one year. Believes SH is obligated to the original agreement.
- Bobby Taylor, Hookerton Mayor- All parties should go by what the contract says, not what is implied
- Robert Masters- Asked what costs would be to GC if SH isolates and what would be the impact on customers. Gave a history on GC involvement in WASA and GUC. Seems at the time, the feeling was that GC “owned” the rights to all water and also seemed that SH had no other alternative. SH has a business decision to make and it must be made from factual information

- Joyce Paige asked if new treatments were the cause of a change in taste of the water; Hill responded that he would check with her to help determine if there was a problem.
- Mayor Liles spoke to the draft agreement and the uncertainty of the numbers. Stated that SH will be willing to work with GC toward the best outcome. He thanked all for the conversation

6. **Presentation(s):** NONE

7. **Report of Officers:**

a. Mayor

- Shared that Cathy Webb had a successful heart surgery and is now at home recovering

b. Engineer

1. Water System Planning *Information*

- Hill introduced Mr. Leo Green to the Board and invited any questions, there were none. Mr. Green provided that SH has several options as we move forward and thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve.

c. Town Administrator

1. Boys & Girls Club Request *Action Request*

- Request from Patrick Miller for a \$5000 donation to the B&G Club. Hill stated that the allocation for the current fiscal year would be no problem, but asked that the Board not make a multi-year commitment, rather evaluate each annual budget before making a donation.

2. GC ED Task Force *Action Request*

- Request from GC to make an appointment to the newly formed ED Task Force. Discussion took place on the uncertainty of exactly what purpose this group was to serve since there is already an ED Commission on which the Town has a representative.

3. 111 SE Third Offer to Purchase *Action Request*

- Offer to purchase from Salvador Tinoco for \$1000. Hill advised that if accepted, we would need to run an advertisement inviting upset bids.

4. Street Sweeper *Action Request*

- Hill discussed the ongoing need for a street sweeper to improve the looks of town streets as well as reduce the amount of water ponding on the roads after rains. Several used trucks have been located, with the best deal in Monroe NC from Public Works Equipment Co. The sale price is \$120,000 for a 2009 model with 20,000 miles. Funds can be drawn from General Fund, Powell Bill, and Sewer. Financing is also available at 2.9% interest for 5 years.

5. CDBG Plans *Action Request*

- Required plans were presented that need to be adopted to comply with Dept. of Commerce

6. GC Interfaith Zoning Request *Action Request*

- Hill presented a request to add “food bank/distribution” as a special use to the R10 district. A schedule was presented that the request must follow, with the next step being that the BoC refer the request to the SH Planning Board. Scarborough stated that many in the area effected by the request have already expressed opposition and concern regarding traffic. Washington asked that the PB considered the frequency in which large trucks and normal traffic comes to the site. Gene Riddle responded that at this time, 100 families are served 2 days a month. Distribution can be changed to minimize traffic on a single day. Taylor asked if they could monitor the frequency that people come to pick up food. Jim Davenport asked if there were any issues related to the property being located within a registered historical district. Hill will check. Riddle added that Interfaith needs a place to go. If there are better options, they would certainly be considered. He pointed out that the primary purpose of Interfaith is disaster response and that they are not supported by anything other than donations.

8. **Report of Boards:** NONE

9. **Public Comments**

- Robert Masters shared that the recent article in the Standard Laconic was informative. Said that EDC is not at fault for the lack of development, blame lies with the county BoC. Quoted the article “EDC decides if a request warrants the attention of the Board, and a prospective business must plead their case”. He said the article was embarrassing. The Task Force was proposed by the County Manager because money currently handled by the NC Eastern Region may now be administered by counties. Shared that after 5 visits in 2 years to the GC EDC, Sam has finally received funding, but from the Committee of 100. He will soon be opening the new barber shop in the Turnage building on Greene Street. Spoke of the ECCOG , and the decision of Onslow, Jones, and Lenoir Counties to withdraw. Shared a letter from COG President Denny Garner to Jones County
- Gene Riddle stated that in reference to the Task Force, there are very few people that he knows of that have the knowledge, experience and time to serve effectively. Need a professional recruiter. GC Chamber has been approached to serve as a recruiter, but their role should be to support existing businesses. Suggest that the county hire someone qualified to implement development.

Action Items

10. **Unfinished Business: NONE**

11. **New Business:**

1. Consider Funding Request from Boys & Girls Club
- **Motion by Washington to allocate \$5000 from the current fiscal year to be reviewed annually, Second by Hagans, Carried unanimously.**
 2. Consider an Appointment to GC Economic Development Task Force
- **Tabled by Consent**
 3. Consider \$1000.00 Offer to Purchase 111 SE Third Street from Salvador Tinoco
- **Motion to accept and solicit upset bids by Taylor, Second by Shackleford, Carried unanimously**
 4. Consider Authorizing the Purchase of a Street Sweeper
 - **Motion by Washington to approve, Second by Shackleford, Carried unanimously. Hill is to determine the best method of financing and report back.**
 5. Consider Adopting Plans per CDBG Requirements
- **Motion to approve by Washington, Second by Shackleford, Carried unanimously**
 6. Consider Referring GC Interfaith Request to SH Planning Board
- **Motion to forward to Planning Board by Washington, Second by Shackleford, Carried unanimously.**

12. **Closed Session** *Legal Consultation & Personnel* **Item Removed by Consent**

13. **Commissioner Comments**

14. **Adjourn 8:15 pm**

Respectfully Submitted: _____
Dana Hill, Recording

Approved: _____
Dennis Liles, Mayor