

TOWN OF BLACK CREEK

Regular Board TOWN BOARD MEETING

Date: Aug 14, 2007

Time: 7:30 p.m

Place: Black Creek Town Hall

Present: Mayor Howard Moore, Commissioners Seltzer, Smith, Godwin, Lucas, Franks

Absent: None

Minutes Taped Yes

Quorum: Yes

Opening of Meeting

Mayor Moore: Meeting for August 14th, 2007 is now in session. First thing on the agenda are the minutes. Is there any discussion about the minutes for the July meeting? Motion to approve the minutes made by Commissioner Seltzer, second by Commissioner Godwin, all in favor say I, all opposed. Motion carried unanimously. Motion to pay the August bills made by Commissioner Lucas, second by Commissioner Godwin, all in favor say I, all opposed, motion carried unanimously. First thing on our meeting is Ms. Tina Moore.

Tina Moore: Thank you for having me here tonight. I brought my assistant Elaina to show her that I do more than flip the papers on my desk. My name is Tina Mooring and I am from Wilson and I work at Computer Central. I am the store manager there. I'm here representing a mutual client. You have a new manufacturing firm that is joining Black Creek, which is TYM USA and the owner is Robert Mullet. Mr. Mullet contacted Computer Central because we do his Computer hardware, software, and we also currently provide his wireless internet at his building now, which is one of the apartment type locations at Bills Barbecue. He's bought the building that used to be Carolina Cabinets. We were familiar with Carolina Cabinet when they were there. We know the layout of their yard, understand their network, where they've got their cables pulled. One thing we were looking at for Carolina Cabinet was if we could provide high speed internet for them. Before we got the opportunity they moved down to the Wrangler building. Mr. Mullet is interested in high speed because that's what he's got now. His business is manufacturing tractor equipment. His business covers the United States and abroad. His headquarters is here in Wilson, but he has a counterpart in Oregon, overseas, and Korea. With that in mind he needs high speed internet out at this building. To date he can only get high speed because cable stops right down the road, and the city of Wilson, they don't have anything going out there either. He can get a two line ISD and phone line. Now I'm not sure if you are familiar with what that is. You plug your computer up and you get 56k internet. ISDN is a guaranteed speed. You have to buy it from Sprint-Embarq and you can get it in certain segments 128 256. It is about \$200 to \$250 a month, which

is not very affordable over the long haul. As I said before, Computer Central has been providing high speed internet to Mr. Mullet, wireless and he's accustomed to that, he knows the performance, he knows that he can call us in the middle of the night if it goes down. We've got a relationship there. He has asked me to propose to you tonight is if he can get wireless internet on your water tower that is directly across the street from him. We've been doing this for over 10 years; we've got a long track record in it. We've got a point to point connection. It's encrypted, which means it's only from this location to this location. We've been doing it for the hospital, Wilson Mills, Bill's; we've got places down 301 where no high speed can go. So it's not like we just got up this morning and said hey we want to do this, we've been doing it a while. I've brought the equipment here, that I'd like to see if we can put it on the water tower. If my assistant will stand up I'll get her to hold up one piece. And then I'll show you the other piece. This through a connection cable connects to the back of this. It would go on the rail around the water tower. It uses very low power, it uses about 7 watts, and I've got the hardware specs here for you to take a look at. All we would need to do is run a cable around the rim of the water tower with a regular power cable down to the bottom we would provide a box. Mr. Mullet would assume all the insurance for it, if it got zapped by lightning. And again it is low voltage so it's not something that's going to draw a lot of power. Inside it's got a lightning arrester, so if something hits it, it's going to hit this, and all we have to do is go back up and replace whatever is broken. That brings me to another point; we are licensed and bonded with John Hackney Agency in Wilson. We can provide him speeds of 1 mg, 2 mg up to 10 mgs so he can get the speed he needs up and down. Right now if you have the conventional DSL or cable, you've got one speed up and one speed down. He needs to connect back to his other locations. He needs high speed going both ways, that's what this will give him. He would also like to put one of these here. So if you want wireless internet, all you would have to do is pay for the monthly service. That device is a \$325.00 device. If there are any questions, I'm going to give you some paper work regarding the safety of it that it's not going to cause cancer and all that good stuff, when you've got signal buzzing through town. Commissioner Godwin asks what the rates on it are. The monthly rate depends on what speed you get. \$35.00 is the 512 speed. Commissioner Seltzer asks, for people who are not familiar how fast is that compared to roadrunner? Your download speeds are one thing, your upload speeds are another. When you are trying to send information to another computer on another network it is a faster technology, you are going to get about the same on your downloads, the uploads are where it is going to be faster. I don't have to call somebody to turn the speed up; the equipment is set at the speed you want. Mayor Moore asks where it gets its power from. Usually at the bottom of the water tower there's going to be power down there. That was locked so we couldn't get in there. It's just a regular plug it in the wall type speed. If you let him use that tower, he's going to buy the unit to put on yours, and you just pay for the monthly service. That's one reason he's trying to be a good steward to the town. You all have accepted him in so he would like to do this for you. Commissioner Seltzer asks if we do this could the town be a broker for wireless internet service for anybody that wanted it. Yes you can. We've got a couple of different models that we've done. We have gone in with the town and said look, let us put the equipment out there, you are a good stewards to your people and they get a discounted rate. I've had some towns that just wanted a percentage of whoever connects on. You can provide that as a service. I want to clarify that we've been doing it for 10 years. We do have the liability insurance, we do have the harness, we know what risk we have to assume. We understand coming

in here that proper paper work has to be put together and signed. I've got documentation here to tell you that it would not counteract the wires and the signals that come off that antenna. We had that concern at the hospital. It's on its own signal so it doesn't interfere with pagers, telemetry equipment or anything like that. So we've looked on the medical front as well as the home person. The hospital has a device called the fat pipe. What happens is if we go down at computer central for any reason they've got a fill over to another connection. As far as I know they have not had to use it. I'm the one that gets called in the middle of the night if they do. They have been doing wireless since 1996 with us. The County of Wilson has been wireless with us since 1997. The wireless device comes into their building and from there into a switch. Every cable that's plugged into that switch has internet connectivity. All internet accounts are throttled and what I mean by that is they are at whatever their maximum speed is. But if you need it at a certain time of the day, we will let you burst up to the next speed that is there. We have to do that because everybody at lunchtime is going to hit the internet. We know if someone is getting 1 mg price they are going to go on to 2mgs. It's not set to that 100% but you can burst up to that.

Mayor Moore: We'll study this and table it until next month, and then have you come back. Next item is tax reconciliation for the fiscal years 2006-2007. That's your department Roland. Motion made by Commissioner Lucas to adopt, second by Commissioner Seltzer, all in favor say I, all opposed, motion carried unanimously. Next is Mr. Kevin O'Donnell.

Kevin O'Donnell: I think I've got good news. Every time I come to Black Creek I learn something, and tonight was no exception. I was not aware of the new industrial facility until I read the Wilson Daily Times on line today. I know we have had some concerns recently in regards to the water and sewer rates. A year ago there was a question about annexation. The board chose not to move forward in the annexation. As a result we had to implement a different in town and out of town water and sewer rate structure. I know there have been some questions regarding that rate structure. My purpose here tonight is to talk a little bit about that. And to tell you there is some strong precedence for doing what we did. We are slowly moving our out of town rates up to a point where we can recover our plant investment. When I was here last year I presented a pretty big table showing what tax rates would mean out of town, how they would change if that area had been annexed. It was split, some people in that area would benefit and some would not. In essence there's a hundred and ninety one thousand dollar investment in that area that we chose not to annex. Without the property tax revenues for that investment and it's both water and sewer. We really have no other way to recover our plant investment without doing a difference in the rate structure. That is part of the reason we have been moving to increase the out of town rates versus in town rates. A year ago I told you there were a lot of towns that I work with that have higher out of town rates than in town rates. When I talked to Barbara last week about this issue I immediately went online and found a study that was done by the League of Municipalities and the Environmental Finance Center at UNC Chapel Hill. I'm going to read to you two sentences that will help explain what we are doing. Eighty four percent of the rate structures from municipal utilities samples specify different outside and inside rates. At the average consumption level, at 6000 gallons outside customers were paying a water bill that was 1.5 times what the inside were. For waste water the register was 1.97. What this is basically saying is that

of the municipalities looked at, 84% had rates outside of town that were higher than inside. Roughly they were double that of inside of town. This is where I think that we need to go. No one wants to pay higher rates. But at the same time, the citizens of this town put some investments outside of town. And the only way to recover that investment and to be fair to everyone in town and out of town is to increase these rates to a point we can recover this investment. It's not only the investment, it's also the fact when Greg has to go out there and do some work on the water line, he needs to get compensated for that work. Right now, through your general fund Greg, Barbara, and all the town employees are getting compensated by your tax rates, by your water rates, your sewer rates, and electric rates. There's only one rate for water and sewer so we have to increase that out of town to recover that plant investment but also the O and M cost. I can show you a table that is about 101 pages long that will show you the various rates of all the municipalities. You will see that Black Creek is competitive. That's my main purpose in coming here tonight. I can discuss electric if you want, but I think Damian was right last time when he said something about confidentiality. I can tell you I spoke with some folks today and I'm anticipating being back in front of you within the next two weeks. Everything is going smoothly; it's just taking some time.

Mayor Moore: The next thing is sidewalk addition at the park.

Commissioner Seltzer: What I'd like to propose; hook on sidewalk starting I believe it's 302 Church Street and going to the corner and hooking on to that section of sidewalk. I know we've got other projects to get done first and I'm not trying to move in on that. It's just another phase of the park project. We would have a complete sidewalk from there all the way around the corner. Whenever he has time to bid it out I would like to propose that we go ahead and bid it out and get it started. And at the same time we should get bids for the handicap ramp area off Privette St. into that gated area. That's my proposal and I'd like to make a motion that we get bids at the convenience of Greg. I don't want to impede on the other important projects that they are working on, I just want to get it in the works, maybe on the back burner.

Mayor Moore: Motion made to get quotes for the sidewalk by Commissioner Seltzer, second by Commissioner Godwin, all in favor say I, all opposed. Motion carried unanimously. Next is commissioners business. Mr. Lucas have you got anything?

Commissioner Lucas: At the bottom of your meeting sheet you'll see some important meetings coming up. One is rural, it's a two day meeting in Raleigh, and the other is a workshop in Greenville. That one is a requirement for the park grant, so somebody has got to attend that. The other thing is the rural wastewater project Sept. 14th. That's more of a workshop for elected officials. It is on the scanner and pro documents of the town. You have the quote price in front of you, it was discussed in the workshop, and everybody is going to it so if there is no discussion I make a motion that we proceed with it. Motion made by Commissioner Lucas, seconded by Commissioner Seltzer, All in favor say I, all opposed, motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Moore: Motion made by Commissioner Lucas to proceed with the scanning of important documents, second by Commissioner Seltzer, all in favor say I, all opposed, motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Lucas: One more thing. In old business from the last meeting, the community building committee met and we discussed it partly in the workshop about the ice machine being taken out because it has become a liability. The chairs, Greg is working on. The other thing was the dead flowers; we discussed putting some shrubs there, and mulch, stuff that wouldn't take a whole lot of water. I make a motion that we do that whenever we get time.

Mayor Moore: Motion made by Commissioner Lucas, second by Commissioner Godwin, all in favor say I, all opposed. Motion carried unanimously. Maybe we can trade the old ice machine in and get another one. Commissioner Lucas will check into that. Motion made to try that made by Commissioner Lucas, second by Commissioner Seltzer, all in favor say I, all opposed, motion carried unanimously. Commissioner Franks do you have anything? Commissioner Godwin,

Commissioner Godwin: I guess everyone has seen the work they have been doing on 117, replacing several light poles that were either split, crooked or something. Supt. Gates wanted to go in when it was dry. Mercer Street is pretty close to being completed, isn't it Greg? Greg responded that next week should wrap it up except for the phone, and able to get their stuff done. They will do their stuff themselves. Once everybody is on this new line there's no reason we can't start on the water line on Mercer Street.

Mayor Moore: Mack do you have anything? Commissioner Seltzer.

Commissioner Lucas: One other thing I've got is what we discussed about staggered terms for the commissioners. We were going to check into that and see if we can get it on the November ballot. It will not get on the November ballot, so scratch that then. It's a long process to get it done. It's got to be approved by the Department of Justice, it's a long process. I make a motion that we check into it so that it can go onto the next ballot. Motion second by Commissioner Seltzer, all in favor say I, all opposed, motion carried.

Mayor Moore: Joe do you have anything? Barbara, pass. Do you have anything Greg? Pass. Does any member of the audience have anything? If so will you come up to the podium and tell us your name.

Dickie Strickland: I live on Castlewood Drive. I was here tonight to try to find out what's going on with the water rates, but after hearing this gentleman I think I've kind of figured it out. I still don't understand totally. You say you are from Cary, why has Black Creek got somebody from a big city like Cary. Mayor Moore responds he's our energy consultant; he helps us on stuff like this. I live outside the city limits. My water bill doubled. The town of Black Creek got the same people working here that are working on my street. I can understand a rate increase, but mine doubled, and everybody else I've talked to has doubled. Mayor Moore responds that for years the rates were the same for in town and out of town. That's not right for the people in town who pay taxes to pay the

same rate as the out of town. A few years ago the town spent four hundred thousand dollars running sewer lines out of town. This past year we spent four hundred and thirty five thousand dollars on water line improvements out of town. We don't feel like its right for people in town to pay that kind of money for people out of town.

Mrs. Strickland: Well let me ask you this. I'm his wife. We've been in our house for eight years. That sewer line was there when we got there. Now eight years later you are going to double our water bill to make up the difference. Mayor Moore responds that shows you were getting a real bargain you were paying the rates that the people in town were paying. Mr. Strickland states that he can understand a rate increase, but not double. I paid a hundred dollar water bill to wash my clothes, take a bath, and brush my teeth. Mayor Moore responds. My bill was high too; you've got to remember it was a hot month, and a long month. Mr. Strickland responds. According to my bill, I used 4900 gallons, which is what I used last month, and my water bill doubled. I even went and checked my meter, I thought they might have read it wrong, or it was broke. Mayor Moore responds. You used the same amount of water and it doubled? Mrs. Strickland responds. The water bill that I just paid was \$95.00 and some odd cents. The water was forty seven dollars and something; sewer was forty seven dollars and something. Now it's hard for me to believe that both of them match. And as of July 1st of this year, you used to be able to fill up your swimming pool and you would knock the sewer part off, now you don't do that. When we get through with the pool and put it up for the winter all the water is going out in my yard. Mayor Moore responds. The board decided it was a lot of effort for the town people to try to keep up with it. They also felt like some people might be abusing that. I'm not saying they were, but that's something that could be abused.

Commissioner Godwin: Well, Dickie, Sherry, I know for the last ten years I have harped on the town of Black Creek, with their cheap water rates. We have been under for so many years, and then when we had to go up we had to go up so much at one time. That's what really makes it look so bad.

Dickie Strickland: I can understand an increase, but to double it. During this time of year my bills normally higher especially because it's been 101 degrees. This winter when I don't run the air conditioner my water bill is going to be as much as my light bill. My light bill in the winter is any where from eighty to ninety dollars. And my water bill is going to be as much as my light bill.

Greg Gates: May I say something. I have a private well, and I have to treat my water to get it to drinking standards. By the time I buy the chemicals to go in my treatment and pay for the electricity my water cost me about seventy dollars a month and I'm on a private well.

Dickie Strickland: I understand that, and know you have to treat the water, but you've been doing it all these years without doubling it. A slow increase would have been better than wham, bam. You are talking to somebody who opens up a fifty dollar max water bill to opening up one that says ninety five dollars. Everybody has got an opinion, but I don't agree with in town rate out of town rate. Mayor Moore responds. I believe as this gentleman said, all municipalities do this, even Wilson. That's another thing that I don't

agree with. Get somebody local, nothing against you, but get somebody local.
Commissioner Seltzer responds. This is based on small town comparison; we're not comparing it to Cary.

Mayor Moore: Mr. O'Donnell just happens to live in Cary; he's not basing it on Cary.

Commissioner Godwin: If you look at Stantonsburg and the other ones you'll see we are right in line with them. It isn't Cary we're dealing with; its Lucama, and Stantonsburg and all your other small towns. Commissioner Franks adds that we are still lower than all those towns.

Mr. and Mrs. Strickland: Yeah, but what we're talking about when we said Cary was the report that he read.

Mayor Moore: He was talking about municipalities' state wide including small towns even smaller than Black Creek. I read that report too.

Kevin O'Donnell: I happen to live in Cary. The report that I sighted was statewide and it was written by the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, it has nothing to do with Cary. But since you asked, it's my understanding that Cary's rates are triple for out of town. 84% of the municipalities surveyed have said that their rates out of town are doubled. I don't believe that out of town rates in Black Creek have doubled. I can't explain what happened to your bill last month.

Dickie Strickland: Now you know how we feel, thank you.

Mayor Moore: Thank you we appreciate it. Is there anybody else in the audience that would like to speak? If not do I hear a motion to adjourn. Motion made by Commissioner Godwin, second by Commissioner Seltzer all in favor say I, all opposed. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.

Barbara Aycock
Secretary to Board

Mayor Howard Moore

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