

**TOWN OF GRIFTON
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORKSHOP MEETING**

March 5, 2013

Present: Mayor B.R. Jackson; Commissioners Mary Grace Bright, Richard Hill, E.F. Albritton, Will Barnes; Manager Joe Albright

Absent: Commissioner Sammy Whitehurst

Mayor Jackson called the meeting to order.

Mayor Jackson led the Board of Commissioners in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

Recognition of Persons to be Heard:

None

Discussion Items

1. *Buckleberry Canal Update*

Manager Albright informed the Board that the ditching project on the Buckleberry Canal has begun and the contractors are making very good progress. Manager Albright wanted to bring to the Board's attention that he told Mr. Cannon, from the drainage district, that he felt the Board would still be willing to pay ½ the cost up to \$10,000. The Board agreed and the Mayor stated that he felt it was a cheap fix for a large problem.

2. *2003 Doubtful Utility Account Write-Offs*

Manager Albright explained that this is a normal accounting procedure that is done on a yearly basis for accounts 10 years and older and uncollectable. He stated that it makes our receivables account more reliable and realistic. Manager Albright recommended this item be approved at the next regular meeting. The Board agreed.

Commissioner Bright questioned some of the accounts stating that some of these people are still around and some are deceased. She stated that if the estates of the deceased people are still open we should submit accounts for payment. Manager Albright stated that we do not always know when someone passes away and we can't make people pay their debts unless they come in the have water reconnected. He stated that just because we write them off does not mean we still do not have them on file.

3. *Streets Improvement Project*

Manager Albright stated that a decision needs to be made concerning the bond referendum and the financing.

Commissioner Bright stated that she has received positive comments about the Storm Water Drainage Utility Fund option.

There was discussion made about the options and more explanation given by Manager Albright.

Commissioner Hill stated that he is concerned about seniors on fixed incomes being able to pay the additional costs.

Commissioner Bright stated that she did not want to up someone's bill for the Storm Water Fund with the citizens thinking that is for the streets and then the citizens be surprised when their bill goes up and the bond referendum doesn't pass and nothing is done to the streets. She wants the citizens to have a clear understanding of fees.

Manager Albright stated that he feels the Streets and the Storm Water Utility could be mutually exclusive and dealt with separately.

Manager Albright recommended the Debt Service Plan DS-4.

Manager Albright wants to do further research on the Storm Water Utility Fund and bring that information back to the Board. He would like for the Board to consider the Storm Water Fund as a standalone fund. He stated that it is in the long term best interest of the citizens to establish a storm water utility fund for future maintenance of drainage. This, in turn, will free up potential debt service funds for streets.

Mayor Jackson asked if we have the streets paved how long would we have before we would have to spend money for maintenance on the streets.

Manager Albright replied that, not counting water line repairs that require the street to be damaged, it should be about 20 years before money is spent on street maintenance and repair.

After a lengthy discussion between all Board members, Manager Albright stated that he is hearing that the Board would like for him to move forward with the bond referendum placing option 2B on the ballot and the Board would also like for him to bring back more information on the Storm Water Utility Fund. The Board agreed.

Mayor Jackson stated that he would like to stay away from increasing property tax.

Commissioner Barnes and Commissioner Bright would like to know the impact the Storm Water Utility Fund would have on businesses.

Commissioner Barnes feels that if the bills go up the businesses will pass that increase along to the consumer.

Manager Albright informed the Board that the request for proposals for garbage service have been sent out and a pre-bid meeting was held on March 13, 2013. Manager Albright then went through the process with the Board.

Manager Albright stated that the Sewer Rehab Project is about 15% completed and the contractors are making great progress.

Manager Albright also informed the Board that he, Dana Hill, Robbie Sutton, and Ben Gaskins met with Alan Clark with the Division of Water Quality for a technical visit. Mr. Clark gave them a lot of input on how we should be doing things such as record keeping etc.

Mayor Jackson asked Manager Albright to call the State again concerning the 2 cave-ins that have formed on Queen Street before someone gets hurt.

Mayor Jackson also stated that from the large amount of rain we have had it has loosened the dirt and the storm drains are filling with sand. He asked Manager Albright to take a look at this issue.

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Albritton explained his concern about what happens to the money when additional money is received through taxes or utility bills when the project is finished. He feels that any additional increase in taxes or utility bills should be used for whatever is necessary.

Commissioner Barnes stated that he is getting complaints about the discoloration of water and a sulfur smell.

Manager Albright advised Commissioner Barnes to tell the citizens there could have been a break in the line and if they will run their water for a little bit it should clear up.

Commissioner Bright feels we need to stay on the State about the cave-ins on Queen Street. Commissioner Bright also stated there is a big hole on Charles Street off of Pitt Street with no cones around it to notify people.

Commissioner Bright asked about the Garbage Can Ordinance and asked that the police department start enforcing the ordinance.

Commissioner Bright would like to encourage people, through the newsletter, letters, etc. to clean their property and make Grifton beautiful.

Mayor Jackson asked about the Mobile Home Park on Pitt Street.

Manager Albright stated that the owner said it was somebody other than his tenants putting the trash beside the fence.

Mayor Jackson stated that there is a water line in his yard that does not have a meter connected to it and he was wondering if water could sit in it long enough to create bacteria and contaminate our water system.

Manager Albright stated that there will always be dead lines. However, we go through measures to keep the water clean.

Mayor advised citizen who came in late to please attend the next meeting and speak during the time allotted to do so. He thanked her for her attendance.

Commissioner Hill made a motion to adjourn. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Albritton. Motion carried unanimously.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted
Angel Hudson
Town of Grifton