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**TOWN OF WENTWORTH  
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING  
MINUTES  
February 6, 2007  
7:00 P.M.**

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**The Wentworth Town Council** held their regular monthly meeting at the Town Hall meeting room in the National Guard Armory, on **Tuesday, February 6, 2007, at 7:00 p.m.**

**Council members present:** Mayor Dennis Paschal, Mayor Pro Tem Evelyn Conner, Councilman Nathan Hendren, and Councilman Robert Aswell

**Council members absent:** Councilwoman Iris Powell

**A quorum was present.**

**Staff Present:** Brenda Ward, Town Clerk / Fred Baggett, Town Attorney / Yvonne Russell, Finance Officer

**Article I.** Mayor Dennis Paschal called the meeting to order.

**Article II.** Councilman Robert Aswell gave the **Invocation.**

**Article III.** Discussion / Revision and Adoption of Agenda

**A. Requests and Petitions of Citizens**

Mayor Paschal made the following motion: *“Under Article VII (New Business), we add Item G, Approval of Budget Amendment No. 2 for 2006-2007, and also add Gerald Miller, Fire Chief Lee Bedell, and Ben Dominick to the Public Comments section.”*

**Councilman Nathan Hendren** seconded the motion. There was no discussion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

**Article IV.** Approval of Town Council Meeting Minutes for January 2, 2007

**Mayor Paschal** advised, “Brenda said that Nathan brought it to her attention that a correction needs to be made to the January minutes.”

**Councilman Hendren** said, “Robert (Aswell) wasn’t here for the January meeting.”

**Councilman Aswell** made a motion, *“The minutes be approved as corrected.”*

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(NOTE: The Minutes incorrectly listed Councilman Aswell as present for the January 2, 2007, Town Council Meeting when in fact he was absent.)

**Councilman Hendren** seconded Councilman Aswell's motion. There was no discussion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

**Article V. PUBLIC HEARING**

**A. Consideration of Recommended Amendments to Town of Wentworth's Planning and Zoning Ordinances to Reference the Adopted Land Use Plan: Chapter 2 – Introduction Paragraph; Chapter 2, Article XIII, Section 2 and Section 4(b) (d) (h) and (i)**

**Mayor Paschal** called the Public Hearing to order and asked **Hanna Cockburn** to present the changes to the Ordinance.

**Ms. Cockburn** thanked the mayor and council and explained that the text changes before them represent, "...very minor revisions to the Town of Wentworth Zoning Ordinance that address the inclusion and recognition of the Land Use Plan that you adopted last year. Most of these are very basic and self-explanatory, but I am happy to entertain questions that you or members of the public may have."

**Ms Cockburn** noted that once the approval is made for the revisions, they will be incorporated into the ordinance. She said the appropriate paragraphs would be rewritten to include the new text.

**Mayor Paschal** asked if anyone had any questions for Ms. Cockburn. There were none. The **mayor** made a motion, "*That we approve the ordinance text amendment as presented and that we adopt the Statement of Consistency as required by NCGS 160A-382 and 383, because the amendment is reasonable and in the public interest and is consistent with our Comprehensive Land Use Plan as explained in the statement.*"

**Councilman Aswell** seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

**Ms. Cockburn** advised council, "I have one other quick item for you, to let you know that things have been progressing with the Central Business area planning project that we have been undertaking, and we will be hosting a public meeting to get public comment on this plan on February 20<sup>th</sup>."

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**Ms. Cockburn** pointed out a revised drawing of the Central Business District, and said that council could review the drawing at their leisure. She said she would be glad to answer any questions they may have at the end of the meeting.

**Mayor Pro Tem Conner** asked, “Do we have a time set yet?”

Town Clerk, **Brenda Ward**, replied, “We will probably advertise the meeting for 7:30, which should give the Planning Board enough time to complete their regular meeting, but they do have a Public Hearing that night, so it could be a little later.” She urged Council members to attend, if at all possible.

**Mayor Paschal** thanked Ms. Cockburn and closed the Public Hearing.

**Article VI. Old Business**

**A. Update From U.S. Postal Service Regarding a Wentworth Post Office**

**- Brenda Ward, Town Administrator**

**Ms. Ward** referred Council to a copy of the last email she received from Attorney Bailey King, who is handling the post office matter for the town. She said the email was a response to her request for Mr. Bailey to follow up on a recent letter from Opal Elder, U. S. Postal Service – Greensboro.

**Ms. Ward** said Ms. Elder’s letter was, “very definitely a *form letter*,” and that when Mr. King spoke to Ms. Elder, he was advised that the statement, ‘all proposed new facility projects...were being reevaluated,’ is a ‘bit misleading.’”

**Ms Ward** said Mr. King’s email references the fact that the Greensboro District has to recommend the Wentworth facility to the regional office who in turn forwards it to Washington D.C.

**Ms. Ward** asked Council, “What do you want to do...just wait and see, or contact Congressman Miller again, or...”

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**Mayor Paschal** replied, "I think we have set our course of action on this...if they don't approve the post office, we'll continue on with our appeal. We have set funds aside for it...unless we deviate from that, unless Council votes otherwise. She (Ms. Elder) says they should know something in 60 days, and if at that time they tell us we're not going to get one, we'll continue with the appeal process."

**Ms. Ward** added, "What I'm not clear on or happy about is, if she is not with the Greensboro District, why are we communicating with her and not directly with someone in the District office. I guess it's a chain of command thing, but I would rather speak with someone who is directly involved in evaluating the project."

(**Note:** Since this meeting, **Attorney Fred Baggett** asked Bailey King to try to contact someone in the District Office who may have direct involvement in the decision on the Wentworth post office. Mr. Bailey agreed to look into this.)

**Mayor Paschal** asked if anyone else had questions about the status of the Post Office. There were none.

**Article VII. New Business**

**A. Presentation by AFLAC for Consideration of Supplemental Insurance for Town Board / Employees  
- Michael Johnson, District Sales Coordinator**

**Mayor Paschal** invited Mr. Johnson to share the insurance information with Council.

**Mr. Johnson** said he resides in Eden (NC) and that he has been with AFLAC for five years. He said he dropped by the Town office and spoke with the Clerk and Deputy Clerk about insurance with AFLAC. He noted that both Ms. Ward and Ms. Russell were primarily interested in the disability insurance.

**Mr. Johnson** advised, "We are supplemental insurance providers, and pay directly to the policy owner, and if the employee leaves the company, they get to take the policy with them with no increase in premiums. Once you buy a policy with AFLAC, you lock into that premium and the premiums do not go up. We have not had a rate increase in 27 years."

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**Mr. Johnson** said Ms. Ward was primarily interested in the disability coverage, "... and after a quick glance at what you all have, I think we can do a little bit better job as far as beginning coverage, than what you have. It looks like we can offer you a shorter waiting period for those policies for about the same amount of money or just a little bit more."

He said the premiums would not increase, and that AFLAC pays claims within 7 – 14 business days.

**Mr. Johnson** said, "If a doctor takes an employee out of work, not *our* doctor, not the insurance company's doctor, then we pay the claim. It's that simple. If the doctor says they can't work, then we pay the claim. We don't ask them to jump through hoops, we don't ask you to find them another job that maybe they can do on a part-time basis...the claim gets paid. And that's what we have built our reputation on as far as disability goes."

**Mr. Johnson** said AFLAC offers accident coverage on and off the job, and if the employee has to go to the hospital or doctor, AFLAC will help with their deductible and co-payments. He also said they have a Cancer plan and a Vision plan.

"The three things you want to look at on the disability," **Mr. Johnson** said, "is the elimination period, the waiting period—how long does the employee want to wait before they start getting money. How much do they wish to be paid—approximately 75% of your gross annual income, and we do cover them for off-the-job accidents and any type of illness."

**Mr. Johnson** said there would be no coverage for on-the-job accidents, as that would "come under other means" (Workers Comp).

"AFLAC will pay up to 2 years per incident and the policy is in effect until the employee reaches the age of 70," he added.

**Mr. Johnson** said, "If an employee, a mother, for instance, decides she wants to stay home with her child, the policy remains in force. If she has a disability at home and the doctor determines that she cannot perform at least two activities of daily living, the policy is still in effect even though she is not receiving a gainful employment check."

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**Mayor Paschal** asked about the 24-month benefit period—“Is it assumed that someone would be considered permanently disabled at that point in time?”

“Yes,” replied **Mr. Johnson**, “That’s the way we look at it. This is basically short term disability...once you get into 2 years, that’s next door to a long-term disability.”

**Mayor Paschal** asked Mr. Johnson if AFLAC sells life insurance. **Mr. Johnson** said they do, but that he did not include any information on it. He said he tried to put in the, “core products that we sell the most of, which is disability, accident, cancer, and our Specified Health Event policy which covers heart attack, stroke, end-stage renal failure, organ transplant, major third degree burns.”

“Does it cover all of them, or do you just pick one?” **Mayor Paschal** asked. “No, it covers all of them,” **Mr. Johnson** replied. “We do split out Cancer from those because of the health questions, so cancer is a separate policy.”

**Ms. Ward** commented, “And you did say that we don’t have to go for a physical...”

**Mr. Johnson** answered, “No, you don’t have to go for a physical. You do have to answer a few questions, and assuming they are mostly positive answers, the policies are usually issued...90% of the time, effective immediately. The cancer policy has a 30-day waiting period.”

**Councilman Aswell** asked, “What if you have had cancer before?”

“If you have been cancer-free for 5 years, we will still issue the policy, full coverage,” said **Mr. Johnson**. “Our cancer policy becomes more valuable the longer you keep it. It has an increase in benefit, from your first occurrence...every year for every person covered, and the premiums still won’t go up on you. Another great thing about our policy, and I have used it...I received \$40,000, and that policy remains in effect ...there are policies out there that once they pay you, they cancel the policy.”

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**Mayor Pro Tem Conner** said, “And you also reimburse for annual physicals, don’t you?” “Yes,” replied **Mr. Johnson**, “we do have a wellness benefit for an annual cancer screening.”

“And coverage continues until you are cured or you die, one of the two?” asked **Mayor Paschal**.

**Mr. Johnson** answered, “Until you quit paying your premiums, or become deceased.”

**Mayor Paschal** asked the Clerk if the disability insurance was what she was mainly concerned about, and what sort of time table was involved as far as making a change.

**Ms. Ward** referred to a memo in Council’s packet wherein she explained that the company the Town originally obtained insurance with (through Rakestraw Insurance), has sold out twice, and that the current company no longer writes disability policies. Ms. Ward said that when Ms. Russell came to work for the Town, “We had to go with a different carrier. I would like to see both employees insured by the same company with like benefits, and especially if there is a better policy out there.”

**Ms. Ward** reminded Council that they, too, would be eligible to sign up for any of the policies Mr. Johnson mentioned. “They (AFLAC) cannot sell these policies to individuals...it has to be under the auspices of a business or government entity.”

**Ms. Ward** said she is asking Council’s approval to switch to AFLAC for disability coverage, “...if we can keep the premiums about where they are or maybe a little higher, but with better coverage. But if you want to see quotes and comparisons, I am sure Mr. Johnson would bring something back for you to look at.”

**Councilman Hendren** said he would rather see a closer comparison.

**Mayor Paschal** made a motion, “*That we have AFLAC bring back a comparison of differences and costs (current policy Vs AFLAC) to the next meeting.*”

**Councilman Hendren** seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

**Article VII. New Business – Continued**

**B. Review of Amended and Restated Bylaws of Citizens Economic Development Inc. d.b.a., Rockingham County Partnership for Economic Development, Inc.**

- 1. Appointment of Town of Wentworth Representative to the Partnership Board of Directors**
- 2. Consideration of “Private” Nominees from “Western Rockingham,” to Serve on the Partnership Board of Directors**

**Mayor Paschal** asked the **Town Administrator** to review the Partnership information.

**Ms. Ward** explained that the Partnership, “...has been making an effort to change their bylaws to accommodate the requests of the public sector. You will remember that Council said if each town could have a voting member on the Partnership Board, you would agree to remain supportive. Well, they have done that, and made other changes as well. I hope you had time to read over this and if you have any questions, we can talk about it.”

**Ms. Ward** referred to the first item for consideration—an appointee from the Town to the Partnership Board of Directors. She explained that this person would be the one voting on issues at the Board meetings. She asked to read, “...the most recent letter from Craig Cardwell, Interim Chair, which says, ‘Just a reminder that we need your Board to appoint a representative to the Partnership Board before the February meeting. Your appointee does not *have* to be an elected official. The Board can appoint the official who is now serving (Evelyn Conner) or another elected official, or the manager, or someone else. The February 21<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Partnership Board will be a meeting of the old Board since the new board structure cannot be fully implemented until the March meeting. So if your appointee is someone other than the person now serving, the new appointee will not take office until the March meeting. The person now serving will still be your representative for the February meeting; however, the new representative will certainly be able to attend the February meeting if he/she would like to do so.’”

**Ms Ward** continued, “They go on to say that Graham Pervier, the interim President, would be glad to answer any questions if we need him to attend our Council meeting, but of course, I didn’t ask him to attend...I hope you don’t mind. They *are* interviewing for a new president to replace Lisa Perry.”

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**Ms. Ward** continued reading from Mr. Cardwell's letter to the Town/City Managers, "'The managers will all be non-voting members of the RCP board, unless (the manager is) your board's appointee.'"

**Ms. Ward** explained, "The manager can still attend the meetings as I have been doing, but managers do not have a vote. Whoever you appoint will be the one who votes."

She continued reading, "'Your participation has been welcome and helpful in the past and it will be much more appropriate to have you at the table. There will also be a manager on each standing committee'—that is another change they made in the bylaws—'the Governance Committee, Personnel Committee and the Finance Committee. You will choose these appointments from among yourselves.' The managers have already met to decide who would be the representative for these committees. Kelly Almond, Reidsville City Manager, will serve on the Personnel Committee, but the managers made it clear that this should be a rotating seat from city to city."

**Ms. Ward** said the remainder of the letter was a request for the Towns/Cities to make these appointments so they can have everything in place as soon after the March 21<sup>st</sup> meeting as possible.

"The first thing you need to do is to appoint or reappoint your representative, who will be the person attending all the meetings, and voting. Then we will move on to the next item."

**Mayor Paschal** asked, "Can Evelyn, instead of changing her out, can she still do that...?" "Sure," replied **Ms. Ward**.

**Mayor Pro Tem Conner** asked how long she has been the appointee. **Ms. Ward** said, "It's been a year or so...you replaced James Belcher."

**Council** discussed the fact that even though Mayor Pro Tem Conner has been the appointee, she did not get to vote under the old bylaws.

"That's right," said **Ms. Ward**, "because of the rotation process. Someone from the Western part of the County was voting for us and the other three towns (Stoneville, Madison, Mayodan). Every four years, someone from Wentworth would get to vote. But now we will have a vote at every meeting, so it is important for us to be there since we yelled about not having a vote. We will need to be there to vote."

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**Mayor Paschal** asked **Mayor Pro Tem Conner** if she wanted to serve again, and she replied, “I will, unless someone else wants to.”

**Councilman Hendren** made a motion, “*That we continue on with Evelyn, giving her a chance to vote since she had to set that out up until now.*”

**Mayor Paschal** seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

**Ms. Ward** continued with the second item—Consideration of “Private” Nominees from “Western Rockingham” to Serve on the Partnership Board of Directors.

“The way it has worked before,” said **Ms. Ward**, “the Board selected people from the various communities—business men/women—to represent the private sector. The individual municipal boards didn’t really have a say. And, now, they are giving the municipalities an opportunity to present names to a Nominating Committee, and the Nominating Committee will select from those and present a list to the Board for consideration. Eden and Reidsville will be allowed to submit 3 names each, Western Rockingham, which is Madison, Mayodan, Stoneville, and Wentworth, will be able to submit 2 names from the four municipalities, and the county will submit 2 names.”

“The current Western Rockingham member of the Board, Dwight Lake, called to see if Wentworth has any names to submit, as private partners. My personal feeling, and this is what I expressed to Dwight, is that Wentworth should relinquish our two names since we really don’t have business or industry in the Town limits that would have a big impact on economic development, and let the other three municipalities that make up Western Rockingham have the two additional chances for representation.”

**Ms. Ward** said she explained to Mr. Lake that she would need to give Council an opportunity to voice their opinion, and would get back to him after the Council meeting.

**Mayor Pro Tem Conner** commented, “I agree.”

**Mayor Paschal** asked, “Will this also change every year—the private partners?”

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**Ms. Ward** said, “Just because we relinquish our right to submit a private partner name this year, doesn’t mean it stays that way forever.” She then referred Council to **Page 5** of the Bylaws under Section **VI.8. Staggered Initial Appointment of Private Member Directors**, reading the explanation of how the private member directors’ terms are staggered, noting that Western Rockingham would have one director elected to a one-year term, and one director elected to a three-year term.

**Mayor Paschal** asked Ms. Ward if she knew who the other towns have selected as private partners. **Ms. Ward** said she did not, and that she assumes they will wait to hear if Wentworth is going to have any names to put forth or not.

(**Note:** Sometime after the February Council Meeting, Dwight Lake sent an email to the Partnership Interim Chair, Craig Cardwell, and listed the names of nominees for consideration. This email correspondence has been attached to these minutes for information only.)

**Councilman Hendren** asked, “Are you just recommending that we vote on the directors?”

“On whether or not Wentworth wants to submit two names, since, in the end, all four towns only get to submit two from the entire Western Rockingham area,” **Ms. Ward** replied.

**Mayor Paschal** then made a motion, “*That we support the decisions of Madison, Mayodan, and Stoneville as to the directors, the two private people from the western part of the county.*”

**Councilman Aswell** seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

**Article VII. New Business – Continued**

**C. Consideration of Planning Board’s Recommendation to Move Ken Hux to Alternate Position on Planning Board due to Work Schedule, and Appointment of Judy Wall as a Regular Member of the Wentworth Planning Board.**

**Mayor Paschal** asked Ms. Ward to present the Planning Board’s request.

**Ms. Ward** explained that Ken Hux is a member of the Planning Board, “...but has not been able to attend on a regular basis for about a year and a half.”

**Ms. Ward** said the Board discussed Mr. Hux's attendance record and concluded that since he is still teaching classes in the evenings, it would be better to move him to an Alternate position. She explained that a letter would be sent to Mr. Hux, advising him of this change.

**Ms. Ward** concluded, "The Board is recommending that Council appoint **Judy Wall**, currently an alternate member of the Planning Board, to fill Mr. Hux's seat."

**Mayor Pro Tem Conner** made a motion, "*That we appoint Judy Wall as a regular member of the Planning Board, and Ken Hux as an Alternate.*"

**Mayor Paschal** seconded the motion. There was no discussion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

**Article VII. New Business – Continued**

**D. Update on the Piedmont Triad Rural Planning Organization (PTRPO) and Appointment of Representative from Rockingham County Municipalities**

**Mayor Paschal** asked **Ms. Ward** to update Council.

**Ms. Ward** said she placed a copy of Hanna Cockburn's letter in their Agenda packets, and that the letter indicated it was time to appoint a municipal representative. She said she later talked to Hanna by phone and found out that the current appointee, **Councilman Robert Aswell**, is serving a two-year term and no new appointment would be necessary from Rockingham County's municipalities.

"However," **Ms. Ward** explained, "the letter references a change in the RPO Bylaws wherein an alternate for each appointee is now required. So, if Robert cannot attend a meeting, the alternate would need to attend in his place. The City of Eden has asked that **Mayor John Grogan** be the alternate member representing Rockingham County Municipalities."

"We're okay with this as it is," said **Ms. Ward**. "We really don't need to do anything after all."

**Mayor Paschal** thanked Ms. Ward and asked her to comment on the next Agenda item.

**Article VII. New Business – Continued**

**E. Rockingham County League of Local Governments Dinner Meeting – Hosted by the Town of Wentworth**

**Ms. Ward** advised the Board, “We have a new chairman of the League this year, Eden’s **Mayor Pro Tem Wayne Tuggle**, and he has advised that he would like to see more programs this year at the meetings, something worthwhile for the attendees.”

“I wanted to see if you have any suggestions, since we are the host, and also, where would you like to have it? Dennis mentioned Mom’s Kitchen and I have checked to see if they are available on the 19<sup>th</sup>, and they are. If you have other suggestions, that’s okay, too. One reason I didn’t consider the Fire Department this time, is because we are hosting in February, and it may be cold in the bays and those guys will have to work in the cold, bringing chairs and tables in and out, not to mention the caterers, having to deliver and set up the food.”

**Mayor Paschal** asked, “Have you talked with them about the price of the food? Are they competitive?”

**Ms. Ward** said she hasn’t discussed the price yet, but that Mom’s catered the last time Wentworth hosted. “I will be sure that it’s not unreasonable...”

**Mayor Pro Tem Conner** said she thought “Mom’s” (Kitchen) would be okay.

**Mayor Paschal** made a motion, “*That we have the League Meeting at Mom’s Kitchen and have them cater it.*” **Councilman Aswell** seconded the motion. There was no discussion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

**Mayor Pro Tem Conner** asked, “What about a program, a speaker?”

**Mayor Paschal** said **Janet Rakestraw** may possibly do the program. He said that she is involved with a group that is working to bring “World Changers” to Rockingham County, and that she has wanted to talk with the different Towns about it.

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**Ms. Ward** mentioned that one of the Pastors in Reidsville sent a letter to the Mayor, asking for the Town's support.

**Mayor Paschal** said, "It would probably be interesting for her to talk to everyone about what World Changers does and let them know how they can help."

**Ms. Ward** said she and **Ms. Russell** (Deputy Clerk) had talked about having EMS Director, Steve Hale, come to talk to everyone about the NIMS training, and how this would be of use to everyone, particularly with the tornado season approaching.

**Mayor Pro Tem Conner** said NIMS could be a "back-up" if Ms. Rakestraw was not available to come.

Council agreed to have the Clerk contact Janet Rakestraw in reference to doing the program at the Rockingham County League of Local Governments Meeting.

**Article VII. New Business – Continued**

**F. Mid-Year Financial Summary for FY 2006-2007  
- Yvonne Russell, Finance Officer**

**Mayor Paschal** asked Ms. Russell to present the financial report. **Ms. Russell** noted the highlights in her memo to Council, and said she would be glad to answer any questions from Council.

**Ms. Russell** said she would like to add a couple of things, "...under the Funding Request, Jeff (Strader) from Rockingham County High School, has contacted us to say that SADD would be asking for a donation, probably at the March meeting."

"On the Trust account, I didn't mention it in the memo, but the interest rate is around 5.17 percent, and our Fidelity Bank interest rate has been around 4.4 this year so far. Those are the only additions I have, if you have any questions..."

There were no questions. **Mayor Paschal** made a motion, "*That we approve Budget Amendment No. 2 for Fiscal Year 2006-2007.*"

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**Mayor Pro Tem Conner** seconded the motion. There was no discussion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

The **Clerk** noted that the Budget Amendment had not been discussed yet, and asked Council if they meant to accept the Financial Report, Item F, instead of approving the Budget Amendment (Item G on the Agenda).

**Mayor Paschal** said he was sorry. **Ms. Russell** commented, "He's one step ahead of us."

**Article VII. New Business – Continued**

**G. Approval of Budget Amendment No. 2 for FY 2006-2007  
- Yvonne Russell, Finance Officer**

**Note:** This item was voted on and approved with **Item F**, above.

**Article VIII. Public Comments**

**Mayor Paschal** asked **Mr. Ben Dominick** of 213 Timberwood Trace in University Estates to address Council.

**Mr. Dominick** expressed his appreciation to the Mayor and Council for, "listening to me for a couple of minutes." He stated his reason for coming—"A real problem in University Estates with burning of trash... limbs and leaves."

**Mr. Dominick** said he has severe allergies and heart problems, adding, "This past fall, I had to go to the doctor due to severe choking problems. Not only is this a real problem (health wise), but on several occasions this fall, I was driving down Cedar Lane in the late afternoon, and the smoke was so dense that if a child ran out in the street, unless you were really looking close, it could be dangerous." **Mr. Dominick** said there are a number of children in the area.

He said he would appreciate any help the Council could give him—"...maybe banning burning of this type."

**Mayor Paschal** thanked **Mr. Dominick** and recognized **Mr. Gerald Miller**, who also signed the speaker register to address council. **Mr. Miller** said he is "a resident of Shannon Forest, which is not in the Town of Wentworth."

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He advised Council that he also spoke with the County Commissioners on this same topic, and he suggested that the Town and the County should work together to solve the burning problem.

**Mr. Miller** said he was referring to “open air burning...not just leaf burning, but limbs... anything you grow on your property is open air burning. I have called the County several times and the County Clerk says to call the Fire Department. You call the Fire Department out here and he is handicapped (due to no burning ordinance); there is nothing he can do. He tells you to call Rockingham County Air Quality. You call that number and it goes directly to Winston-Salem. The little guy down there has 13 counties and gets thousands of calls every year from irate citizens. He said that if my house is 15 feet from the line, I can burn 365 days a year right beside of you. There is nothing that can be done about it. It’s not right. You can’t breathe, but it’s legal (to burn).”

**Mr. Miller** said that neighbors, “...mulch their leaves, put them in a pile and burn them. One guy burns three weeks solid, rain or shine, everyday. When you’re mulching this stuff, some of it has been sprayed with Roundup and other chemicals and when you burn, this stuff gets in the air. The bottles of Sevin Dust and Roundup tell you on the label, ‘Do not breathe. Wear a mask,’ but you’re going to burn this, and your kids are outside and they are breathing this. As seniors, we have a hard time breathing. I have to leave my house sometimes just to get away from it.”

**Mr. Miller** continued to talk about the pollution problems from burning, especially during the summer. He said, “You can get a medical letter from Winston (to keep people from burning) but all this does is turn all your neighbors against you, and they get mad, and we don’t want that. We want some kind of legislation, work with the county, something to help us. Other states have ‘no burning’ bans altogether.”

**Mr. Miller** said the population is growing, people are building new houses and, “the smoke is rolling from University Estates and Shannon Forest.”

The ideas **Mr. Miller** presented for Council to consider were:  
“Mulching—homeowners can do that; have several drop-off stations throughout the county with gates, cameras and hours (for pick-up), and a Fall pick-up in the county.”

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**Mr. Miller** suggested that if there cannot be a countywide ban on burning, "...make it a thousand feet from the nearest dwelling where someone is living; farmers and golf courses are exempt because they have big tracts of land and you have to burn there to get rid of stuff."

**Mr. Miller** concluded his remarks and thanked Council for their time.

**Mayor Paschal** responded, "The County would have to help you out over there in Shannon Forest...we don't have the authority across the line up there."

**Mr. Miller** replied, "I'm asking you to work with the County, give us some support."

In line with the speakers' remarks, **Mayor Paschal** suggested it would be a good time to ask Fire Chief, **Lee Bedell**, who also signed the Speaker Register, to come forward.

**Chief Bedell** said he wanted to see if anyone had problems getting the "(insurance) rate reduction that went into effect December 1 (2006)." He said the average savings has been between \$125 - \$150.00 per year, depending on how much insurance coverage a person has. This reduction is based on the new, lower ISO rating received by the Fire Department and verified in a letter from the State Insurance Commissioner—the rating went from a 9 down to a 7."

**Chief Bedell** said he has spoken with several insurance companies and explained the rate reduction and that most companies have been "making refunds right and left." He said if anyone has had any problems getting refunds, to let him know.

**Town Clerk, Brenda Ward**, said that her homeowners insurance is with Allstate and that her renewal date was October, 2006. She said her agent said he was not aware of the rate reduction. After checking, he advised her that she would not see a decrease until *next year* because of the renewal date.

**Chief Bedell** said she should question the agent, adding, "You may have to pay the higher rate for the first two months (October/November), but you should get a refund or reduction from December 1<sup>st</sup> on."

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**Harry Rakestraw**, with **Rakestraw Insurance** in Madison, said that his company has been giving out partial refunds since December 1 (2006).

**Chief Bedell** continued, saying he wanted to update Council on the Fire Department's response last year. He advised that 497 calls were answered, and to date, as of February 6<sup>th</sup>, 45 calls had been answered.

The **Chief** cautioned about burning in dry weather and winds. He said he, "...understands what the two speakers are saying," and that those cases of burning are an equally big problem for the Fire Department.

**Chief Bedell** reminded everyone, "EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) says you can burn excessive growth, like leaves, but if you see anyone burning 2 x 4's, you cannot burn any building materials. When this happens, they call the Fire Department, and we will put it out and I usually tell them, 'If I get another call, I'm going to call Winston and they (EPA) will issue a \$10,000 fine.'"

**Chief Bedell** said he understands the problem in University Estates and that he thinks it, "...is a pretty congested area to be burning like they do."

**Mayor Paschal** said, "Well, there are some congested areas in the county, too. The way you have to look at that, I guess, and there may be some legal issues, is whether you can say you can burn in one district and not burn in another."

**Town Attorney, Fred Baggett**, said he believed it, "would have to be jurisdiction-wide, whether it is in the Town or in the County."

**Chief Bedell** said that both the City of Eden and the City of Reidsville have "no burning in the city limits. The Town (Wentworth) would have to have an ordinance that says 'no burning.'"

**Councilman Aswell** commented that the cities that have such ordinances also provide leaf and trash pick-up.

**Mayor Paschal** added, "You are supposed to be able to burn yard debris within a hundred feet of your house, enough to control it with a hose. We do have congested areas, but we have a lot of people living in the great wide open. If you put a ban on burning, you can't even have a bon-fire out there. It would have to be the whole jurisdiction..."

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**Chief Bedell** said, “I understand what you’re saying...it’s a tough decision.”

**Attorney Baggett** advised, “You could have some definitions, some standards in there (ordinance) that have to do with proximity to other houses or buildings. The regulation would be in effect throughout the town, but it would only apply to a burn that was near a house.”

The **Mayor** replied, “That would be one way we could do it.”

**Chief Bedell** said, “I’ll be honest with you, I wouldn’t be afraid to say that in the next ten years, the way air quality (regulations) is going, they’re just about going to shut it off anyway. We can’t even burn a house for training unless we get permission from Air Quality.”

“What about wood stoves?” the **Mayor** asked. “More people are starting to go back to wood heat because of the high price of fuel.”

“I guess the emissions are different...” replied **Chief Bedell**, “but when they require me to fill out a bunch of paper work to burn a house and give me a time to burn and then call on that day and tell me I can’t burn because it’s a Code Orange day...so that’s what I’m saying...”

**Chief Bedell** continued, advising Council, “If you know of some elderly folks, disabled, or senior citizens who need a smoke detector in their house...we will arrange for someone to go out and install the smoke detector.”

“The County” said **Chief Bedell**, “is growing leaps and bounds, maybe not in people, but in buildings. The Fire Department does not receive revenue from these county buildings. That is one thing that hurt us in not getting a lower rating. I wanted the entire district to get a six rating—the lowest residential rating you can get through the ISO program. We did not get that because, number one—water; number two—the equipment we have. We do get a little money from the State, but it concerns me, being Fire Chief, that the County has several big buildings in the Town that hurt the district and the people (as far as the rating).”

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**Chief Bedell** advised, “I have a list of equipment that the Inspector sent me saying that if I wanted to continue lowering my rating or to keep the current rating, that I would need these pieces of equipment. One of them, water, will hopefully be greatly improved when we get the tank up. The other thing, and I have mentioned this before to the Town, is that we need an aerial device, an aerial ladder truck. I know that I should also go to the county and talk to them about it, but I know about how far that is going to go.”

“Didn’t you say you could probably get a reconditioned or used one for about a hundred and fifty thousand dollars?” asked **Mayor Paschal**.

“Probably about a hundred and fifty or two hundred thousand,” replied **Chief Bedell**. “That is one reason we allowed for an aerial ladder when we built the fire department,” said **Chief Bedell**, because I knew, as the expression goes, ‘if you ever get behind, you can’t ever catch up,’ and that’s about where the fire department is with new equipment.”

**Chief Bedell** added, “If we had the water, which hopefully will correct itself this summer, and the ladder truck, we could have gotten a much better rating. But all those County buildings really hurt us. So, if the Town could help the Fire Department, we would really appreciate it.”

**Mayor Paschal** said, “If you could get together a list of equipment that you were short on and get it to us, along with the prices, maybe we could look at helping you some...and maybe we can contact the county to get them to help out.”

**Chief Bedell** replied, “I will get that information to you, and if anyone has any problems with insurance, questions about the fire department, or has some trouble with air standards, just call me and we’ll work on it.”

**Article IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Mayor Paschal** made the following announcements:

- **The Town of Wentworth will host the Rockingham County League of Local Governments Meeting on Monday, February 19, 2007, at Mom’s Kitchen in Wentworth. Socializing will begin at 6:00 p.m. and the Dinner Meeting at 6:30 p.m. (Note: This meeting date changed to February 26, due to scheduling conflicts.)**

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**Article IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS – Continued**

- **The Town of Wentworth Planning Board will meet on Tuesday, February 20, 2007, at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Hall Meeting Room at the National Guard Armory. (There will be a Public Workshop After the Planning Board Meeting)**
- **The next Town Council meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 6, 2007, at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Hall Meeting Room at the National Guard Armory.**

**Article X. A D J O U R N**

**Councilman Nathan Hendren** made a motion, *“The meeting be adjourned.”* **Mayor Paschal** seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the meeting was adjourned.

**Respectfully Submitted By:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Brenda Ward, Town Clerk**

**Approved By:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Dennis Paschal, Mayor**