
**TOWN OF WENTWORTH
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
MINUTES
NOVEMBER 5, 2009
7:00 P.M.**

The Wentworth Town Council held their regular monthly meeting in the Town Hall Council Chambers, on **Thursday, November 5, 2009, at 7:00 p.m.**

Council members present: Mayor Dennis Paschal, Mayor Pro Tem Evelyn Conner, Councilwoman Iris Powell and Councilman Robert Aswell

Council members absent: Councilman James Belcher

A quorum was present.

Staff Present: Brenda Ward, Town Administrator - Town Clerk
Fred Baggett, Town Attorney / Yvonne Russell, Finance Officer, and Deputy Clarence Cheshire

Article I. Mayor Dennis Paschal called the November 5th, 2009, Wentworth Town Council Meeting to order.

Article II. Mayor Paschal gave the **Invocation.**

Article III. **Discussion / Revisions / Adoption of Agenda**

A. Requests and Petitions of Citizens

Mayor Paschal noted, "We need to approve the November Agenda, and I have an item to add—under Article VI., Item F—Consideration of a Resolution of Support for the Rockingham County Museum and Archives. *I make the motion to amend the Agenda, do I have a second?"*

Councilwoman Iris Powell seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

Article IV. **Approval of Town Council Meeting Minutes**

A. Town Council Meeting – October 6, 2009

Councilwoman Powell made a motion, "*That we accept them as written.*"

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

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Article V. OLD BUSINESS

There was no Old Business on the Agenda.

Article VI. NEW BUSINESS

**A. Appointment of Judy Wall as an *Alternate* for the Town of
Wentworth Planning Board, Effective January, 2010**

Councilman Robert Aswell made a motion, *“That we appoint Judy Wall as an Alternate for the Planning Board.”*

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

**B. Discussion on Recycling Center in the Town of Wentworth
- Jeff Pruett, Director, Rockingham Opportunities Corporation**

Mayor Paschal asked **Mr. Jeff Pruett** to address Council concerning a recycling center.

Mr. Pruett thanked Mayor Paschal and Town Council members for the opportunity to address them concerning recycling for the Town of Wentworth.

He began, “I would like to briefly talk about recycling...the Rockingham Opportunities Corporation has been in the Town of Wentworth on Cherokee Camp Road for the past 44 years. The purpose of the Opportunity Center is to work with the adults of Rockingham County who have developmental disabilities, to help train them to go into the work force and become productive, and hopefully, tax-paying citizens for those who can and want to.”

“The other purpose is to provide a day program, and an opportunity to have a workshop for those whose disabilities may be a little more severe... such that they can’t go into the community and work.”

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Mr. Pruett explained, “We have a day program, a workshop for them, and job developers, job trainers, and job placement coordinators who take them into the community for permanent placement.”

“Also, we have a residential service for 34 of our consumers on a permanent basis throughout the county.”

Mr. Pruett said he would explain how the center’s purpose and functions would tie in with a recycling program in the Town of Wentworth.

He mentioned the laws that are in effect regarding cans and plastics that are taken to landfills. He noted that Rockingham County does not yet have a plan on how to respond to the new laws, although they are currently discussing how they can address the situation.

“This is going to be a gradual progression,” said **Mr. Pruett**, “to get the citizens of Rockingham County on board with recycling.” He continued, “I don’t know whether or not the Town of Wentworth wants to follow or join the County in their proposal or if you want to do something on your own.”

“What I propose tonight, is that the Rockingham Opportunities Corporation set up a site for separating recyclables. The recyclables would be brought in by the citizens of Wentworth for sorting at our facility.”

Mr. Pruett explained that this process would employ the clients at the Opportunities Corporation for sorting, etc. The proceeds from the sale of recyclables would benefit the Opportunities Corporation by supplementing their daily operations, as well as covering payroll for the clients who work at the recyclables site. He noted, “This would become a permanent job for those individuals.”

“How do we do this?” **Mr. Pruett** asked. He proposed that separate bins would be needed for a fenced-in area, and said that citizens would bring the recyclables and separate accordingly. He said the site would be manned certain days and hours of the week, and possibly on Saturdays.

“What I propose to the Town tonight, is that you consider using the Opportunities Corporation as a site for recycling.” He added, “But that is County property so we will have to get this cleared with the County Manager and the Commissioners.”

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Mr. Pruett continued, “What do we need to do to make this happen?” He stated, “We have the manpower...we can do it. We will also need some equipment...bins...probably a forklift and a compactor that will also serve as a baler to bale the recyclables for sale on the open market.”

“There are always grant opportunities for someone wanting to start up a recycling operation. Through North Carolina Recycling, grants have been given to other local municipalities in the past, to purchase recycling equipment. What I would need before I could even start looking for these grants, is to have a commitment from the County *or* from the Town of Wentworth—that this is something you want to do—start a recycling site at the Opportunities Corporation.”

Mr. Pruett added, “If I could get a commitment that this is something you think is really needed and something you really want to do, then I would be more than glad to go out and look for the grants to do this.”

“Has this worked in the past with other sheltered workshops?” **Mr. Pruett** asked. To his question, he responded, “Yes.” He then showed Council and the audience a brief video of a similar process at the East Carolina Vocational Rehab facility in Greenville, North Carolina. He noted that they have been recycling for the past 35 years, and started out with cardboard. They now recycle for 20 counties in eastern North Carolina, and all the proceeds go to ECVC to pay their clients for the work they do there.”

Mr. Pruett noted, “All the clients at the center are not able to do this work...only the more ambulatory folks and those with milder disabilities are able to do the work, but I have plenty of folks who can do it. There are also many consumers in the community who need to go to work,” he commented, “and everyone does not have to have a disability to work on the line.”

Everyone viewed the video and observed the process, as **Mr. Pruett** explained, “To qualify for a grant, at least 75% of the folks we hire must have a developmental disability.”

Mr. Pruett advised Council that the Rockingham Opportunities Corporation has a janitorial service that services churches and businesses during the day, using clients with disabilities. “So, we have already proven that we can do contract work.”

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Mr. Pruett emphasized again that the recycling facility in Greenville has been in operation for 35 years, adding, “I am asking to start out on a much smaller scale. The economy is bad right now, people need jobs and are traveling to Greensboro, Winston-Salem, and up into Virginia to find work. This is an opportunity for us to employ people, who otherwise, will have an even more difficult time finding work and becoming productive citizens. I have two job coaches who go out into the communities, and their whole purpose is to find corporations that will hire our folks. As job coaches, they stay with the clients until they are performing as they should.”

“Our job coaches are also job developers, meaning they go into companies and find jobs within the company that people with disabilities can do. It is becoming more difficult to do this during the current economic times, so we need to find something, a product niche, that fits our clients and at the same time, gives something back to the community.”

“For example,” said **Mr. Pruett**, “we have a greenhouse. You may have purchased something from our greenhouse. Starting a small recycling project will I think, in a short amount of time, prove profitable to the Opportunities Corporation and will take care of the recycling needs for the Town of Wentworth.”

With that said, **Mr. Pruett** thanked the Town Council and said he would be glad to answer any questions.

Mayor Paschal asked, “When you start up, is there any certain amount of trash flow that you need, as far as poundage, in order to operate?”

Mr. Pruett said he could not be sure, but noted that it would be slow at first.

Councilwoman Powell asked, “What happened to the recycling that was at the officers training center at one time?” No one knew for sure. **Mayor Paschal** said the County did away with it.

“The Commissioners met yesterday,” said **Mr. Pruett**, “and one of the proposals, the one I think they will go with, is that they use Waste Management and have them put out bins for recyclables. It would be mandatory for anyone who currently uses Waste Management for curbside pickup to use the recycling bin...all recyclables would go into one can and would be separated at some other point.”

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“If Waste Management agrees to this...it will either go to the landfill to be separated there, or all of the recyclable material will end up going to Winston-Salem to a recycling center. I don't see any profits coming back to the County, but what it will do, though, is increase the price of curbside service. I'm not against that. I'm willing to do anything to encourage recycling, but again, for the Opportunities Corporation, the Town of Wentworth, we are right here close by, and I would like to start a small recycling center here, as a pilot program for the County.”

“I'm for that,” said **Councilwoman Powell**.

Mayor Paschal added, “When we first started talking about this, we had in mind putting out some bins so the citizens would have a place to bring recyclables. Of course, the other towns and the County have plans for recycling and locations for people to bring their trash, so that is one of the reasons we were looking at it. We felt like we needed to have something here in Wentworth. Of course, the County will probably go ahead with their plan, as you said.”

Mayor Paschal continued, “I feel sure a lot of folks in Wentworth use Waste Management for pickup. Do you think that will be a negative impact on your proposed operation...if the County doesn't transport that back to you at some point in time? Would there be enough flow from the people in Wentworth who don't use Waste Management to keep it going?”

Mr. Pruett replied, “I don't know how much (trash/recyclables) goes to the landfill by people carrying their own. I know out in the county, and I live a little further west, I see a number of people taking their personal garbage into the landfill. This (Opportunities Corporation) is just a little closer. Do I think curbside service will hurt? I don't know, because I don't know how many people use it. How many people will continue to use it if the price increases? It's not a lot of money, but with the economy like it is, it could make a difference to some people.”

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Mayor Paschal said he would like to know if the extra can for recycling furnished by Waste Management would be mandatory for their customers, even if they didn't intend to use it, or would citizens have to stop service completely if they didn't use the recycling can."

Mr. Pruett replied, "Yes, I think it would be mandatory. If you are having your trash picked up, you will have to have recycling also."

Mayor Pro Tem Conner said that she also went to the County Commissioners meeting and, "...they did say that you *will be required* to recycle if it is passed. Presently the County cost to the landfill for recycling...is \$75,000. They presently have 14,000 households in the county who have Waste Management pickup. That figure did not include Wentworth, I don't think."

"Maybe if you can get it started," said **Mayor Paschal** to Mr. Pruett," the County will transfer the recyclables over to you, possibly."

"What I would like to see in the grand scheme of things," said **Mr. Pruett**, "is, number one, now that this has become law...and we all know that recycling is the right thing to do. It takes 500 years for a plastic bottle to dissolve because it is not biodegradable. We are putting all these in our landfill. If I take it to the landfill myself, I know it is going to be separated, but I am paying to have it picked up. Right now, the County doesn't have anything put into place definitely. Even if they passed this tomorrow, it would probably take 90 to 120 days to even begin. I couldn't start it any quicker, but I would like to give people another option. I also think that if people know where the money is going—to the Opportunities Corporation to help our clients have a job. I have to believe that people will bring it there. We are off the beaten path, and it's not very visible. It isn't like you are going to have an eyesore on the side of the road. It is very quiet and secluded where we are, but again, it is County property and I would have to get permission, but I don't think it will be a problem."

Mr. Pruett concluded, "I have put some thought into this. It's a project that I started about a year and a half ago, and was interrupted by a little service time overseas. When I returned home, I saw that I may have lost an opportunity with the County, because they were moving forward."

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“What I would like to see happen,” said **Mr. Pruett**, is for the County to set up a site at the landfill, like the one you saw on that video a few minutes ago; and all the money that comes in, if some of that goes back to the County, that’s fine. But if they would employ our clients to do the work, then that helps them to, and at a reduction in payroll costs to the County.”

“Right now, however, I think we need to start small. I think we need a pilot program to show the County that the people are interested in doing this, and that it can be successful at making money. Again, the question is, ‘What is the market for the recyclable goods at the time?’ Cardboard goes up and down, plastic goes up and down. But overall, if you sell at the right time, it will be a good opportunity to make a few bucks.”

Mr. Pruett reiterated, “Again, our whole purpose is to train people and help them get to work...if not in the community, then provide them an opportunity to work right there, on site.”

Mr. Pruett thanked Council again for letting him speak, and noted that he didn’t have start-up prices yet. He advised, “Used balers run anywhere from \$3500 to about \$10,000 for a rebuilt one. The size that you have to sell overseas is a 60” bale of recyclable materials, whether it be plastic or cardboard. To fill up a cargo shipping container, would take at least 50 – 52,000 pounds to ship overseas. There is a large demand, as you can tell. But how long would it take for us to accumulate 52,000 pounds? I don’t know.”

“What would you need us to do?” asked **Mayor Paschal**. “Support the idea by talking to folks about recycling down there? Are there grant funds available?”

The **Town Administrator** commented to **Mr. Pruett**, “If you apply for grants, you need someone to provide matching funds, right?”

“Thank you,” replied **Mr. Pruett**. “Yes, to get grant money, it is always easier if you have matching funds. I don’t know how much would be required. Forgive me for not having the information, but I just found out that y’all meet tonight, and I didn’t have much time to get this together.”

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“The biggest thing I need right now, is to be able to show the Grantor that there is an interest, that the Town has an interest, that this is something you want to do. If you are interested, I can get some figures together of what equipment will cost, come back at a later date and give that to you, and then go ahead and talk to the Grantors out there, to see what kind of funds they are willing to give out. Synergy in Madison received a grant to purchase a forklift. Plastics Resolutions in Eden received a grant from the State to continue their recycling. The grant funds are there, but you have to show them there is serious interest. Matching funds or a percentage of matching funds from the Town would be great, to show the Grantors that you are interested in recycling.”

Mr. Pruett added, “You saw the video, the conveyors, balers, and everything else. Of course, they have been doing it for 35 years. Storage space...I have a little, but how fast can we get it baled and then transport it in and out. These are things that have to be looked at, but the opportunity is there right now and I want to be able to grab hold and run with it. I think it is the right thing to do, a good thing for the town, but to be honest, it is for my consumers, to give these clients an opportunity to be productive, make money, and be as independent as possible.”

Mayor Paschal replied, “We have been looking at doing something, and this may work well with what you are proposing, so if you would, get some figures together and come back to us at a later date.”

Dessa Scheffer, a member of the Town’s Appearance Committee, was in the audience, and was recognized by the Mayor. **Ms. Schaeffer** advised that her husband is Plant Manager at a local recycling facility that expanded to the area from the west coast. She noted that he would be an excellent resource. She gave his name and phone number to Mr. Pruett and said that her husband is very knowledgeable about grants that are available and about the equipment needed. She said she was sure he would be glad to assist Mr. Pruett if he would give him a call.

Article VI. NEW BUSINESS – Continued

**C. Recognition of Community Pride Award Winners
- Town of Wentworth Appearance Committee**

Sue Aswell and **Dessa Scheffer** recognized the following winners:

- (1) Larry & Jackie Terrell, 553 Peach Tree Road
Mr. & Mrs. Terrell received a Caramel Cake donated by Sue Barber.
- (2) Roger & Althea Cox, 838 NC 65
Mr. & Mrs. Cox received a gift certificate from Misty's Photography.
- (3) Robert & Sarah Broadnax, 10285 NC 87
Mr. & Mrs. Broadnax received a gift certificate from Cabin Crafts.

The winners also received a nice certificate from the Town. Council and the audience applauded the Community Pride Award winners.

D. Consideration of Personnel Review for Finance Officer / Deputy Clerk

- Personnel Committee

Mayor Paschal referred Council to the Personnel Committee's recommendation—"Based on her Performance Evaluation and due to the fact that Yvonne continues to do a good job for the Town, the Personnel Committee is recommending a 2.5% increase. With the increase, Mrs. Russell's new salary will be \$36,547.64."

Councilwoman Powell made a motion, "*That we accept it.*"

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

Article VI. NEW BUSINESS – Continued

E. Christmas Parade Discussion

- Deputy Clarence Cheshire

Mayor Paschal asked Deputy Cheshire to update Council on the Christmas Parade, and commended him for the good job he did last year.

Deputy Cheshire said he wanted to get Council's opinion and advice on a few "last minute details."

The first thing on his list was *judges for the parade*. He noted that there were four judges last year, and asked Council if they had any recommendations as far as who to ask and/or how many judges. He suggested an odd number, either 3 or 5 in case there was a tie.

Councilwoman Powell said it may be easier to find three than five.

After discussion, Council decided to have three judges and two alternates in case someone could not do it at the last minute.

Council also decided to let Deputy Cheshire and the office staff select the judges.

The second thing on Deputy Cheshire's list was *selection of a Grand Marshal for the Christmas Parade*.

Mayor Pro Tem Conner said she would *like to nominate Councilwoman Iris Powell as Grand Marshal*. She commented, "Iris and her husband worked for many years with the youth in the community, through 4-H and coaching ball teams, and Iris was our postmaster for 30+ years. She is a member of the County Historical Society, is very active in her church and the community, and Iris is very dependable, having been elected to the Town Council for several terms now."

Mayor Paschal seconded the nomination. **Mayor Pro Tem Conner** promised **Councilwoman Powell** that she could ride in a closed vehicle (not a horse-drawn carriage).

All voted in favor, and **Councilwoman Powell** asked, "I don't get to think it over?" Everyone laughed and told her "No!"

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Article VI. NEW BUSINESS – Continued

E. Christmas Parade Discussion

Deputy Cheshire moved on to the next item for discussion, noting that the Town Staff has received inquiries about the possibility of awarding a cash prize for the best vehicular entry, and said that \$50.00 was suggested.

Deputy Cheshire commented that there are always a number of cars and trucks, and that this year there are some motorcycle entries, as well. He noted that folks do have to put gas in their cars and drive over to be in the parade, and that he didn't think it is an unreasonable request, but wanted to know how Council feels about it. He said this would be in addition to the cash prizes awarded for floats and other entries.

Mayor Paschal made a motion “to have a \$50.00 prize for the best vehicular entry (car/truck/motorcycle).”

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

Last but not least, **Deputy Cheshire** introduced **Mr. & Mrs. Santa Claus** (aka Mr. & Mrs. Ken Capps) who made a surprise entrance earlier in the meeting.

Deputy Cheshire prefaced his introduction of Mr. & Mrs. Santa Claus, by saying that he has enjoyed working for the Town and helping with the Christmas Parade. “Although I don't live in Wentworth, I feel that I am a big part of the Town, and I want our parade to be as authentic and traditional as possible, so that people will not forget the real meaning of Christmas.”

“Mr. Capps is Santa at the Sheriff Department's Christmas social each year. He doesn't charge a fee but works on donations only. He keeps enough money from the donations to pay for having his suit cleaned. The remainder is given to a children's charity. They both say they would be honored to be in the parade, since they have never done a Christmas Parade before.”

Santa addressed Council, thanking them for the opportunity to be in the parade, and noted several appearances he and Mrs. Claus have made throughout the county at restaurants, fire departments, nursing homes, etc.

Mr. Capps shared several stories with Council concerning his experiences as Santa Claus. He noted that he is a Vietnam veteran, and served nine additional years in the army, and also served in the National Guard. He said that after his stint in the army, he suffered some depression and was having a tough time. A lady approached him in the K-Mart parking lot one day and asked him if he played Santa Claus anywhere. He told her he did not, and she told him that she needed a Santa Claus for something that she was doing through her church. He said he thought about it and agreed to do it. After seeing the smiles on the children's faces and the look in their eyes, he knew this was something he wanted to continue.

He noted that "Mrs. Claus" decided to join him and said they have been very happy sharing this role with many various groups, young and old.

Council expressed their appreciation and told Mr. and Mrs. Claus that everyone will look forward to seeing them in the Town's Second Annual Christmas Parade.

Deputy Cheshire noted that Santa is not opposed to tossing out candy and said he told Santa that the Town purchased the candy last year and that he assumes Council is okay with doing so again this year.

Council agreed.

Article VI. NEW BUSINESS

F. Consideration of a Resolution of Support for the Rockingham County Museum and Archives

- Mrs. "T" Butler

Mayor Paschal recognized Mrs. "T" Butler, a member of the Rockingham County Museum Committee.

Mrs. Butler noted, "You folks have twice expressed your support for the establishment of a museum and archives, we hope in the old court house when it is vacated, and the jail. It will be in the heart of downtown Wentworth, and we are asking for support of all the Town Councils in Rockingham County, chambers of commerce, and civic clubs, but we have come first, to you. The Board met yesterday and we are asking you to endorse the museum, in writing."

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Mrs. Butler referred Council to the copy of the Resolution in their packets, and read it aloud for the audience. *(Note: Copy of Resolution is attached as part of these Minutes—“Attachment A”).*

Councilman Aswell made a motion, “*That we adopt the Resolution.*”

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

Mayor Paschal asked if anyone had any questions. **Councilwoman Powell** asked, “When are we going to get started (on the museum)?”

Mrs. Butler replied, “The Board is very active and we are working on quite a number of things. We have to wait for the County to finish the space needs study to determine what space will be available to us. We have asked for about half of the court house, as you know, and the majority of the jail building.”

Councilwoman Powell, who lives next door to the old courthouse said, “We sure don’t want it to remain empty, because it sure will be lonesome down there.”

“Well, I’m sure it won’t be empty,” **Mrs. Butler** said. “The idea is for county offices to remain there, and the museum will use the rest of the building...and we’ll look forward to being your next door neighbor.”

Article VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mayor Paschal referred to the Sign-Up Sheet and said no one signed up to address Council.

Mayor Pro Tem Conner said she would like to make a comment. “I had the pleasure of touring the new jail and courthouse and I was very surprised at how much they have gotten done there. It is on schedule to be finished in November of next year. If anyone escapes from there, they will have to be a magician.”

Councilwoman Powell replied, “That’s what they said about the current jail, but several have escaped. One of them ended up on my front porch.”

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Article VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Paschal made the following announcements:

- The **Town of Wentworth Planning Board** will *NOT* be meeting in November. The next regularly scheduled meeting is on **Tuesday, December 15, 2009, at 7:00 p.m.**
- The next regular meeting of the **Wentworth Town Council** will be held at the Town Hall on **Tuesday, December 1, 2009, at 7:00 p.m.**
This will be an **Organizational Meeting for swearing- in of newly elected council members and election of mayor and mayor pro tem.*
Also, a new photograph will be taken of the Town Council.

Mayor Paschal said he would like to, "...congratulate **Councilwoman Powell** and **Councilman Aswell** on being elected to serve on the Town Council for another four years."

- **An Opportunity To Serve:**
Rockingham County Middle School (RCMS) would like to begin a mentoring program for about 20 students in January 2010. Adult mentors are needed. Interested adults should come to an information meeting on *either* Tuesday, December 1st at 8:00 a.m. or Thursday, December 3rd at NOON at RCMS. Questions? Please contact akenealy@rock.k12.nc.us or slong@rock.k12.nc.us or dcarter2@rock.k12.nc.us or lgraves2@rock.k12.nc.us.

Article IX. A D J O U R N

Mayor Paschal made a motion to adjourn the November meeting. **Councilman Aswell** seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Respectfully Submitted By: _____
Brenda Ward, Town Clerk

Approved By: _____
Dennis Paschal, Mayor