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**TOWN OF WENTWORTH  
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING  
NOVEMBER 4, 2010  
7:00 P.M.**

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**The Wentworth Town Council** held their regular monthly meeting in the Town Hall Council Chambers, on **Tuesday, November 4, 2010, at 7:00 p.m.**

**Council members present:** Mayor Robert Aswell, Councilwoman Iris Powell, Councilman Dennis Paschal, & Mayor Pro Tem James Belcher

**Council member absent:** Councilwoman Evelyn Conner

**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 Robert Aswell** called the November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2010, Wentworth Town Council Meeting to order.

**Article II.** **Councilman Dennis Paschal** gave the **Invocation.**

**Article III.** **Approval of November 4, 2010 Agenda**

**A. Requests and Petitions of Citizens**

**Mayor Aswell** said he would like to make a motion *“to amend the November Agenda to change Article IX to a Closed Session according to NCGS 143-318.11(a)(5) for consideration of negotiations for the purchase of right-of-way from property owner, James L. Thompson, Jr. Said property located at 8420 NC 87 in the Town of Wentworth.”*

**Mayor Aswell** continued, *“...and also to add Article X for adjournment of the meeting.”*

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

**Article IV.** **Approval of Minutes**

➤ **Town Council Meeting on Tuesday, October 5, 2010**

**Councilwoman Powell** made a motion, *“That we approve them as presented.”*

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

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**Article V. OLD BUSINESS**

**A. Discussion / Decisions Regarding 2010 Christmas Parade**

**Deputy Clarence Cheshire** was recognized by Mayor Aswell.

Deputy Cheshire said he wanted to see if Council had decided on a Grand Marshal for the Christmas Parade. He reminded them that someone was to contact former Rockingham County Sheriff, Bobby Vernon, to see if he was agreeable to serving as Grand Marshal for the parade.

**Councilwoman Powell** suggested Council consider Irene Scales, a life-long resident of Wentworth. She said that Ms. Scales is “an 87 year-old Black lady and is known by most everyone who lives in Wentworth”.

**Deputy Cheshire** said he was okay with whatever Council decided, that he just needs to know who the Grand Marshall will be and who will make contact with them.

**Mayor Aswell** asked if Councilwoman Conner made contact with Mr. Vernon.

The **Town Administrator** advised, “Since Councilwoman Conner could not be at the meeting tonight, I tried to reach her by phone to see if she had spoken with Sheriff Vernon, but I didn’t get an answer.”

Council discussed having two Grand Marshals just in case Mr. Vernon had been asked.

**Mayor Pro Tem Belcher** suggested the Town Administrator find out from Councilwoman Conner if she had already spoken to Mr. Vernon. He explained, “If Mr. Vernon has agreed, then we should just go with him as our Grand Marshal for this year’s parade and perhaps we could consider Ms. Scales next year.”

**Councilwoman Powell** agreed, along with other members of Council.

*(Note: Ms. Ward checked with Councilwoman Conner later in the week, and was advised that former Rockingham County Sheriff Bobby Vernon was asked to be the Grand Marshall for the 2010 Christmas Parade and agreed to do so.)*

**Mayor Pro Tem Belcher** asked Deputy Cheshire, “Where do we stand on having ‘Susie,’ the dog...?”

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**Deputy Cheshire** replied, “I believe at the last meeting, y’all decided that you wanted to have the parade in her honor, rather than as the Grand Marshal.”

“Oh, that’s right,” **Mayor Pro Tem Belcher** said. “That will work, and hopefully we can find out about Mr. Vernon and let you know this week.”

The **Town Administrator** asked Deputy Cheshire if he had been in touch with the Rockingham County Animal Shelter group to see if they would enter a float and let “Susie” ride with them.

**Deputy Cheshire** said that he, “...planned to go to the Animal Shelter meeting tonight, but it was cancelled. I spoke to several people at the county office as well as a lady in Raleigh with the Humane Society. She wants to be a part of the promotion for Susie, but she would like for the local shelter to take the lead. Thus far, I haven’t been able to get a commitment from the County. I talked with Adam Lindsay who is over the shelter project, but he hasn’t made a commitment.”

Moving on to other parade matters, **Deputy Cheshire** talked about the “Pink Heals—the Guardians of the Ribbon,” advising, “They will be able to stay at the fire department, and to park their (pink) fire truck there at the Fire Department. They have agreed for them to stay overnight at the fire department, and I think Brenda said that she and Yvonne would prepare a basket of toiletries and things for them.”

**Deputy Cheshire** said he asked the group (Pink Heals Tour) if they would bring the truck back to the Town Hall after the parade, so that anyone who is a cancer survivor can come by to sign the truck before they leave with it. He said he had not heard back from them yet.

**Deputy Cheshire** asked Council if they had thought about what they would like to use for a ride in this year’s parade. He asked if the truck worked out okay last year.

**Mayor Pro Tem Belcher** said, “That seemed to work fine. I didn’t fall off.”

**Deputy Cheshire** said he is working on several different ideas and has talked to different car clubs, etc. trying to find a “vintage” vehicle for Council.

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**Councilman Paschal** said, “What about a tractor and trailer and a hayride? We were sitting on hay last year in the back of that truck.”

“Just as long as we don’t have to walk,” **Mayor Pro Tem Belcher** replied.

“We would have more room to move around on a trailer, and to toss out candy,” **Councilman Paschal** added, “as long as we don’t fall off.”

**Deputy Cheshire** said he could work on the tractor-trailer unless Council knew where they could get one. **Councilman Paschal** said that Harry Rakestraw may have something Council could use.

The **Town Administrator** asked what Council wanted to do about a gratuity or something for the bands, which was mentioned at the last meeting.

**Deputy Cheshire** said the Finance Officer checked back and could not find any record of where the Town had given anything to the band in the past. He said Council may want to think about what they want to do, whether it is a plaque or donation or something.

He said he contacted several bands about being in the parade but had not received any entries yet. He also tried to contact the Northern Guilford Middle School, who will be performing at the Gator Bowl this year, but is waiting for a return phone call.

**Deputy Cheshire** said the Rockingham County Middle School Band and Rockingham County High School Band are supposed to be turning in entry forms.

“We’re still working on everything,” he said, “and trying to find the unique things, but the main thing I wanted to find out tonight was about the Grand Marshal.”

Going back to a gratuity for the band(s), **Councilman Paschal** said he thought something should be done for the bands, “...especially if they have to travel a ways to get here.”

**Mayor Pro Tem Belcher** said, “Didn’t we discuss the possibility of having a prize for the best band?”

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**Deputy Cheshire** said, “We talked about giving a plaque or some type of recognition for the best marching unit in the parade, since the cash prizes are given to the floats. No provision was made for bands or groups like that.”

**Councilman Paschal** suggested that a \$500 prize would help to pull in multiple bands.

**Mayor Pro Tem Belcher** said he was thinking more along the lines of a plaque and a hundred and fifty or two hundred dollars.

**Deputy Cheshire** commented, “It’s too late to put that on the entry form since they have already been printed and distributed, but I could tell each one that I make contact with, that we are giving a plaque and whatever amount you tell me, to the best band.”

**Mayor Pro Tem Belcher** said he would make a motion, *“That we offer a plaque and a cash prize of \$200.00 for what is judged to be the best band performance in the parade.”*

**Councilman Paschal** seconded the motion.

**Mr. William Totten** was recognized by **Mayor Aswell**. **Mr. Totten** commented that giving prizes to the best band might cause hard feelings. He said he has seen this happen, even in churches, where prizes are given and people get upset.

**Mayor Pro Tem Belcher** replied, “Schools have a tradition of competing. They actually go to competitions, both concert bands and marching bands, and they are accustomed to competing and being recognized for their skills. I don’t think it will create any kind of ill will because that is a typical thing that high school and middle school bands do throughout the country.”

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

The **mayor** thanked Deputy Cheshire for the update on the Christmas Parade.

**Article V. OLD BUSINESS – Continued**

**B. Consideration of Proposals for Necessary Renovations to Town Property Located at 8286 NC 87 (If use changes from Residential to Business)**

**Mayor Aswell** asked the Town Administrator if she had any comments about the proposals.

**Ms. Ward** said she had hoped to receive at least three proposals but that the two she included in their packets are the only ones to consider.

“Will either one of these proposals bring it up to code for use as a residence?” asked **Councilman Paschal**.

**Mayor Pro Tem Belcher** said, “We don’t have to do anything to rent it as a residence. These proposals are to bring it up to code for use as a business.”

“According to this one from Sun Spirit, none of the receptacles have grounds, and I would think that needs to be changed,” said **Mayor Aswell**.

“Wright & Wray’s proposal is a whole lot cheaper, though,” said **Councilman Paschal**, “although they didn’t include a price for changing the outlets.”

**Mayor Aswell** noted that Sun Spirit construction did not include a price for changing the electrical outlets, either.

“The **Town Administrator** reminded Council that the quotes were requested so they would have an idea as to what would be involved if they decided they wanted to rent the house as a business rather than as a residence.”

“Yes, this was just our wanting to seek more information,” said **Mayor Pro Tem Belcher**. “I really think we need to discuss what direction we want to go, whether we want to pursue renting it as a residence and let it bring in some income before we invest a lot of money in order to rent it as a business.”

**Councilman Paschal** asked the Town Administrator, “So, we can rent it now as a residence, just like it is, Brenda?”

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**Ms. Ward** replied, "Sure."

**Mr. Baggett**, Town Attorney, said he would like to comment on the zoning issue regarding the McCollum house.

He explained, "Brenda, Frankie Legaux, and I, have been emailing about this...there may be a zoning issue regarding its use as a residence."

"Unless we hurry up and rent it," said **Ms. Ward**

**Mr. Baggett** continued, "It's zoned...Community Shopping, and residential use according to Frankie, is not included in that zoning district. It was a non-conforming use as long as it was occupied, but a non-conforming use that ceases for a period of one year, loses its non-conforming status. I believe it will be a year in December since that house was occupied as a residence."

"So, it wasn't considered a residence even while she was alive, owned it and paying taxes on it?" asked **Councilman Paschal**.

"It was considered a residence, but it was a non-conforming use. As long as it continued (as a residence), it could continue, but once it stopped for a year, then you lose that ability to continue using it as a residence," **Mr. Baggett** explained.

"But in my mind," said **Councilman Paschal**, "where it stopped would have been at the point she passed away. Are you saying that she died in December?"

The **Town Administrator** said she thought it was around Christmas or right after.

The point made, however, was that time is closing in to rent the house as a residence.

Council decided from their discussion that a realtor should be contacted to see if the house could be rented as a residence.

**Councilman Paschal** asked, "Are we going to let a realtor handle it from then on?"

"I hope so," **Ms. Ward** replied.

**Mayor Pro Tem Belcher** agreed... "I would not be in favor of us trying to manage that ourselves."

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*"I make a motion that we have Brenda check with some realtors and get back with us on what they would charge us to handle it, as far as a percentage of the rent,"* **Councilman Paschal** said.

**Mayor Aswell** said, "She already checked on that and it was 8 to 10%, I believe."

"That's right," said **Ms. Ward**, "and we don't have a lot of time to bring something back to you."

"I meant for you to call us, individually, and let us know," said **Councilman Paschal**.

*"I make a motion that we go ahead and do that and have Brenda get back in touch with us,"* **Councilman Paschal** said.

**Mayor Pro Tem Belcher** added, "You're saying to attempt to rent it as a residence between now and the December meeting."

"Yes," **Councilman Paschal** said.

**Attorney Baggett** suggested, "You want to authorize Brenda to actually lease it after she talks to you." Council agreed.

**Mayor Aswell** said he would second the motion *to have Brenda contact the real estate agent for the Town, about renting the property next door as a residence.*"

All voted in favor and the motion carried.

**Article VI. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Presentation of Town of Wentworth Audit for Fiscal Year  
July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010**

**- Rex Rouse, Rouse, Rouse, Penn & Rouse, LLP**

**Mayor Aswell** invited the Town Auditor, **Rex Rouse of Rouse, Rouse, Penn & Rouse**, in Eden, NC, to present the Town Audit for 2009-2010.

**Mr. Rouse** said he would first like to give Council a brief review of the Town's financial statements and referred them to Page 1 of the Independent Auditor's Report.

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He noted, “In the first paragraph we state that we have audited the financial statements of the Town of Wentworth; in the second paragraph we say that we have conducted our audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards, and in the third paragraph—In our opinion, based on our audit, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the governmental activities, etc. in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles.”

**Mr. Rouse** asked Council to turn to Page 28 in the audit report, for discussion of the Comparative Balance Sheet.

He advised, “Your cash (Cash and Investments) was up from \$810,000 to \$955,000; your Accounts Receivable (Net) was up from \$101,000 to \$103,000—about the same. Your Total Assets were up from \$911,000 to \$1,059,000. The Liabilities—last year, your total was \$91,274.00 and the end of this year it was \$25,797.00.”

**Mr. Rouse** explained, “Last year, you had incurred some expenses in the Capital Projects Fund, which would have thrown it into a deficit, so we had to set up a Liability from the General Fund to the Capital Projects Fund to cover that deficit, right at June 30<sup>th</sup>...so that’s why we are showing the \$71,415 liability to the Capital Projects Fund at the end of last year.”

“This year your total fund balances were \$819,000 at the beginning of the year and \$1,033,000 at the end of the year, but of the \$1,033,000 you have already appropriated to next year’s budget, the amount of \$443,160.00.”

**Mr. Rouse** noted that the Fund Balance Reserved by State Statute relates back to the Accounts Receivables and that the \$486,691.00 in Undesignated Fund Balance, “...leaves the town in a very sound financial position.”

“Going on to the Income Statement—Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balances, on Page 29,” **Mr. Rouse** continued, “At the bottom of the page, last year your total revenue was \$612,582 and this year, your total revenue was down to \$570,758.”

**Mr. Rouse** also pointed out that the Town’s Local Option Sales Tax was down from \$486,445 to \$456,000—(as far as the “actual amount”).

He added, “Your budgeted amount was \$536,000 so you came in \$34,000 over the budgeted amount (Total Revenue).”

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Going on to the Expenditures at the bottom of Page 31, **Mr. Rouse** explained, “Last year, your total expenditures in the General Fund were \$552,861, and this year you were down to \$456,692.”

“At the bottom of Page 30,” **Mr. Rouse** said, “your total expenditures—the budgeted amount—was \$246,506. Your actual expenditures were \$225,382 or \$21,124 less than the budgeted amount. But comparing the actual (figures) with last year, you were up about \$20,000.”

**Mr. Rouse** reviewed some of the expenditure line items that were up slightly from last year—salaries, medical, and legal and professional services. He commented that with the new town hall, property maintenance was up from \$28,020 to \$88,039, as well as utilities of \$9,186 this year, compared to only \$820 in the old location.

**Mr. Rouse** pointed out also, that the previous year’s expenditures reflected larger amounts for office furniture, along with the biggest item—road paving—that was not in the 2009-2010 Fiscal Year Budget.

Some line items **Mr. Rouse** mentioned were about the same, some were more and some were less, and according to the audit, overall expenditures were down from \$552,861 to \$456,692.

On Page 32 of the audit, **Mr. Rouse** referred to \$611,484—an amount transferred to the Capital Project Fund last year. This year, an amount of \$100,065 was transferred to the Capital Project Fund. He noted the deficit of \$550,616 last year, largely due to the transfer to the Capital Project Fund.

**Mr. Rouse** added, “This year you had an excess of Revenues over Expenditures in the amount of \$214,131.”

“You closed out the Capital Projects Fund, and the Balance Sheet for the Capital Projects Fund appears on Page 33.” **Mr. Rouse** pointed out that \$28,650 in sales tax was recovered from the construction of the Town Hall.

He advised, “You have now completed construction of the building, paid off those final bills, and we have taken the building out of Construction in Progress and put it in Completed Construction.”

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**Mr. Rouse** continued, “I want to briefly review the Comparative Net Assets. The General Fund and the Capital Projects Fund are maintained with a modified accrual method and do not reflect the balances in the Capital Assets...that is the biggest difference in there...and the long term debt.”

**Mr. Rouse** referred Council to Page 7, explaining, “Here we have a brief comparative synopsis of the Statement of Net Assets, and this is a consolidated statement of both the General Fund and the Capital Project Fund. It shows the current assets up from \$940,000 to \$1,059,000. The Capital Assets went down about \$20,000, and that’s because of a year’s depreciation of the building and some depreciation of the other furniture and equipment. You had almost completed the building in last year, so the net cap assets went down by about \$20,000. Total Assets went up from 2,590,000 to 2,690,000.”

“Last year, at the end of the year we had incurred debt of \$339,458. At the end of this year, you borrowed some more money, and your total long-term debt was \$395,802. Your current liabilities were down from \$121,000 to \$25,797. Your total debt was down from \$460,000 to \$421, 600 and your total net assets were up from \$2,130,364 to \$2,268,353. But of that \$2,268,353, \$1,235,000 was invested in Capital Assets, net of related debt. You had unrestricted net assets of \$1,033,000 compared with \$939,000 last year, so you have improved your financial position significantly during the year and you remain in a sound financial position this year, compared with last year, and also compared with other towns of your size.”

**Mr. Rouse** explained to Council that the former Management Letter is now called the “SAS-115—Statement of Auditing Standards-115.”

He continued, “There is only one item in here, and we always have it in here, and we have it in all the small units of government and not-for-profits that we audit. It is the inherent risk with a limited number of personnel.”

**Mr. Rouse** read from the SAS-115: “Because of the limited number of personnel employed by the Town, it is not practical to have an adequate separation of duties. The same employee makes the deposits, posts cash receipts and disbursements to the general ledger, and reconciles the bank accounts. Although this is a material weakness in internal control, the internal controls for the disbursements are somewhat stronger because of budgetary controls and the independent dual-signature check-signing requirement. ...”

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**Mr. Rouse** added, “You were below the budgeted amount in each line item in the budget, so you were within the statutory requirements for the budget...”

**Mr. Rouse** continued reading from the SAS-115, “Also, a council member reviews the bank statements and bank reconciliations. The weakness in internal control relative to receipts is greatly mitigated by the fact that nearly all of the receipts of the Town are directly deposited in the Town’s bank account by the NC Department of Revenue.”

He concluded, “I think you have mitigated the potential weakness in internal control about as much as I know how you can do it.”

“In the other letter, the SAS-114,” said **Mr. Rouse**, “there is only one really significant statement and that is in the middle of the second page—Difficulties Encountered in Performing the Audit.”

**Mr. Rouse** noted, “I stated there that we encountered no significant difficulties in dealing with management in performing and completing our audit. There were no significant problems on this job. It was a clean job and we have enjoyed doing it through the years. Thank you.”

**Mr. Rouse** asked Council if they had any questions about the audit. There were no questions and Council thanked Mr. Rouse for “a job well done.”

**Article VI. NEW BUSINESS - Continued**

**B. Consideration of Resolution in Support of signs on River Bridges in Rockingham County**

**- Brenda Ward, Town Administrator**

**Mrs. Ward** explained to Council that the request for the resolution came from “Mrs. T Butler and the Dan River Basin Association.”

“The DRBA is concerned that tourists and locals who use the rivers in Rockingham County for recreational purposes, particularly newcomers, have at times become confused about their location on the river and unsure of the location of certain bridges and access points.”

“To help make it safer for people on the rivers and easier for public safety officials to respond to emergency calls, the resolution requests the N.C. Department of Transportation to place signs on each bridge over the rivers, and if you read it, you know that the resolution is self-explanatory.”

**Councilman Paschal** said, “So, they would be visible signs on the bridges that you could easily see from the river?”

**Mayor Aswell** replied, “That’s right. I remember an incident last year where they had a problem locating someone because they didn’t know where they were on the river.”

**Mayor Pro Tem Belcher** made a motion, *“That we adopt the Resolution in Support of Signs on River Bridges in Rockingham County.”*

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

**Article VI. NEW BUSINESS – Continued**

**C. Consideration of Resolution Supporting Rockingham County’s Request to Rename Prison Camp Road, in the Corporate Limits of the Town of Wentworth, to “Justice Center Drive”**

- **Brenda Ward, Town Administrator**

**Mrs. Ward** advised, “I told you a while back that County Manager Tom Robinson said the commissioners had decided to refer the renaming of Prison Camp Road to the committee that worked on the planning and construction of the new courthouse. They came up with the suggested name of “Justice Center Drive,” and you have in your packets a copy of the County’s Resolution requesting this name change, along with a Resolution from the Town in support of the County’s request.”

**Mayor Aswell** made a motion, *“To adopt the Resolution Supporting Rockingham County’s Request to Rename Prison Camp Road, in the Corporate Limits of the Town of Wentworth, to “Justice Center Drive.”*

**Councilman Paschal, Mayor Pro Tem Belcher, and Councilwoman Powell** seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

**D. Consideration of “Certificate of Municipal Declaration to Enact Speed Limits and Request for Concurrence”**

**Mayor Aswell** noted, “We requested a change in the speed limit from 35mph to 45mph from a point 0.327 mile north and west of SR 2012 (Hall Farm Road) to a point 0.07 mile north and west of SR 1001 (Sandy Cross Road) in Wentworth.”

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**Councilman Paschal** made a motion, *“That we approve the certificate to enact the speed limit...”*

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

**Article VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**Mayor Aswell** acknowledged that no one signed the Speaker Register to address Council.

**Article VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Mayor Aswell** made the following announcements:

- The next regular meeting of the **Town of Wentworth Planning Board** will be held on **Tuesday, November 16, 2010, at 7:00 p.m.** in the Town Hall Council Chambers.
- The next regular meeting of the **Wentworth Town Council** will be held in the Town Hall Council Chambers on **Tuesday, December 7, 2010 at 7:00 p.m.**
- The **2010 WENTWORTH CHRISTMAS PARADE** is scheduled for **Saturday, December 11, 2010, at 11:00 a.m.**  
**Entry Deadline: November 22, 2010**

**Article IX. CLOSED SESSION**

**Mayor Aswell made a motion,** *“To go into Closed Session according to NCGS 143-318.11(a)(5) for consideration of negotiations for the purchase of right-of-way from property owner, James L. Thompson, Jr. Said property located at 8420 NC 87 in the Town of Wentworth.”*

**Councilman Paschal** seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. All voted in favor and Council convened the Closed Session.

**Return to Open Session:**

After a motion to adjourn the Closed Session and reconvene in Open Session, **Mayor Aswell** recognized County Manager, Tom Robinson, for comments.

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**Mr. Robinson** advised Council that the move-in date to the new courthouse is March (2011). He mentioned all the different zones in the building and that it is taking some time to “work all the kinks out.” He said there is still some outside work to do, “which will be contingent upon weather conditions.”

**Mr. Robinson** said he anticipates they could possibly have occupancy in December, with transition to the building during the first couple of months of the year, and be fully moved in sometime in March.

**Mr. Robinson** talked about all the buildings the county owns in the county and the need to sell some of them. He advised Council that the County will make an effort to preserve the older buildings, and that there is strong interest in using the old courthouse as a historical museum.

**Councilwoman Powell** advised, “Yes, I am on that committee, and the Rockingham County Historical Society, Museum & Archives group is applying for grants and will accept donations if anyone wants to make a donation.”

**Mr. Robinson** thanked Council for their time and for “hearing me out.”

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

**Mayor Pro Tem Belcher** said, “*I make a motion that we adjourn.*”

**Mayor Aswell** seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the meeting was adjourned.

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

**Approved By:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Robert Aswell, Mayor**