

SPENCER BOARD OF ALDERMEN PLANNING RETREAT
FRIDAY, JANUARY 30, 2009
SPENCER FIRE DEPARTMENT
6:00 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Jody Everhart
Mayor Pro-Tem Jeff Morris
Aldermen: Scott Benfield
Nick Bishop
Donnie Hinson
C. E. Spear
Ken Womble

Also present were Town Manager Larry Smith, Town Clerk Lisa Perdue, Public Works Director Barry Pruett, Land Management Director Dustin Wilson, Fire Chief Jay Baker, and Police Chief Robert Bennett.

Audience members present included: Jim and Marla Gobbel, Beth and Caroline Nance, and David Smith.

Mayor Everhart opened the meeting with prayer.

Citizen Concerns

Marla Gobbel thanked the Hometown Holiday Committee for all their hard work. She feels the appearance of the Town is a high priority. The Town is not as clean as it used to be, and the same properties remain a problem. The Board and/or the staff should be able to improve the situation.

Beth Morris Nance wants the Town's web site to be kept up-to-date and user friendly. She feels the retreat should be publicized better. The condition of the Library is hazardous (paint chips on the floor, etc.).

Fire Department

Fire Chief Jay Baker reviewed the department's statistics for 2008. The Fire Department responded to a record number of calls in 2008, 64% of which were medical calls. The new Seagraves pumper was received in 2008 and dedicated in memory of Justin Monroe. Spencer Fire Department Auxiliary, Inc. was formed in 2008. The Part-Time staff answered 29% of the alarms. Budget requests for 2009/10 include: turn-out gear, a driveway entrance from Salisbury Avenue, portable radios, and a Plymovent Exhaust removal system. Budget considerations over the next five years include: a station addition, squad 75 replacement, and a command/administration vehicle.

Police Department

Police Chief Robert Bennett is requesting one new vehicle at a cost of \$29,000. The department has fallen behind surrounding agencies over the last several years in all salary

ranges. Perception of the difference has become significant. Most of the officers we have lost over the last 5 years have been because of salary.

Equipment that needs to be replaced includes laptops, in-car cameras, and a desktop computer.

Public Works Department

Public Works Director Barry Pruett's budget requests include a tractor with a front end loader and new mowers. If curbside pickup were initiated, it should be done one section of Town at a time. The recycling area could be moved to a different location at public works that would be less congested. He would also like to trade the Ranger for a bigger truck and purchase a small street sweeper. Bigger flower pots could be placed through the downtown area, and new equipment is needed at the parks for smaller children.

Land Management Department

Land Management Director Dustin Wilson reviewed the mission statement for his department. In 2008, the Land Use Plan was adopted, and a downtown building inventory was completed. Zoning permits were down, but code enforcement abatements were up. He would like to see code enforcement be proactive, not reactive. Staffing is needed for community development. New construction designs are needed for the historic district. Other ideas that could be implemented include a "paint bank" and an Elderly Assistance Program to help with painting. The façade grant program needs to be increased. Owners of some downtown buildings will be advised that their bricks need re-pointing.

Town Manager / Administration

Town Manager Larry Smith reviewed a "hit list" of goals from last year's retreat, and the progress that had been made on each. An engineering study is needed before the Safe Routes to School application can proceed. Few properties were found eligible during the Annexation Study. The Board needs to review the benefits of 501-c-3 groups and how to have an effective relationship with those groups.

With no further business, Mayor Everhart adjourned the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa B. Perdue, Clerk to the Board