

SPENCER BOARD OF ALDERMEN PLANNING RETREAT
FRIDAY, JANUARY 28, 2011
SPENCER FIRE DEPARTMENT
6:00 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Jody Everhart
Mayor Pro-Tem Scott Benfield
Aldermen: Tracy Aitken
Delaine Fowler
Jeff Morris
David Smith
Reid Walters

Also present were Town Manager Larry Smith and Town Clerk Lisa Perdue. Fire Chief Gray Grubb, Police Chief Mike James, Public Works Director Jeff Bumgarner, and Land Management Director Dustin Wilson were present for portions of the meeting. Mayor Everhart opened the meeting by welcoming all those in attendance.

Citizen Comment

Marla Gobbel, 609 8th Street, gave an overview of Hometown Holidays' accomplishments for 2010. She also announced that the group is currently selling their 2011 community calendar.

NC Transportation Museum

Elizabeth Smith, Executive Director, explained the possible changes for the Museum due to changes in the State budget. The Museum may be required to become an enterprise fund and not rely on the State budget for operations. The plan for implementation may be similar to the operation of the USS North Carolina, which relies not only on admissions, but fees for rental spaces and other funding sources. The Museum would like to make the transition over a 2-3 year period, but that plan may not get approval. They expect a 20% drop in visitation over the first few years after the change. The Museum has 18 full time employees and 4 part time employees. School groups make up only 25% of their visitors. Aldermen Walters suggested that Aldermen contact their legislators regarding support of the 2-3 year transition period. The Museum encourages their visitors to cross the street to the downtown business district through use of the Spencer Partnership brochure and the kiosk near Barber Junction depot.

Police Department

Chief James reviewed the capital needs: one patrol vehicle, more digital cameras, two Glock weapons, software upgrades, ammunition, two tasers, one in-car camera system, and AVL locator/GPS for patrol vehicles. He summarized ways in which departmental expenditures have been reduced. Chief James asked the Board to reconsider the policy of take home patrol cars. He reviewed the officer benefits, agency benefits, concerns, cost to the Town, and policies from other agencies concerning take home vehicles. Alderman Fowler requested statistics concerning the performance evaluations of officers, and the grades they received in those evaluations. Chief James expressed his concern over the

radio problem in the schools. Currently there is no communication by police walkie talkie or cell phone service inside the school (other than walkie to walkie), which could be a safety concern in the event of a volatile situation. He recommends that these concerns be put in writing to the appropriate school officials.

Fire Department

Fire Chief Gray Grubb gave the Department's review of 2010, with a record-breaking year of 573 total calls. Part-time firemen answered 29% of the total calls. His budget requests for 2011/2012 include five sets of turnout gear, and replacement of squad 75, (the 1987 Chevrolet). The replacement vehicle would cost between \$60,000 and \$150,000, depending on the options. Few used trucks of this type are available for sale. Chief Grubb reiterated Chief James' concern over the lack of available radio communication within the school buildings.

The department would like to apply for a Volunteer Fire Department Fund Matching Grant. Their grant application would be to purchase 1 Motorola mobile radio, a gas monitor, 30 gear lockers, and a chainsaw and circular saw. The total amount requested is approximately \$15,272, with the Town's matching portion of \$7,636. The Board asked if the grant could be used to upfit and get equipment for a new brush truck. Chief Grubb's response was that the grant could not purchase the new truck or upfit the current vehicle, but could be used to upfit a new vehicle.

Public Works

Public Works Director Jeff Bumgarner gave his yearly summary for 2010. Spencer has received a letter from NC DENR identifying the Town as a candidate for National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II regulations for stormwater. His capital request is for a F-550 truck with a dump bed, new or gently used. He would like to replace the cherry trees at Library Park with a different type tree that would be less prone to disease. A grant may be available for a reading garden in the back of the Library.

Land Management Department

Land Management Director Dustin Wilson gave his review of 2010 and ideas for 2011. The department has no major budget requests for 2011/2012.

Town Manager / Administration

Town Manager Larry Smith reviewed activities and accomplishments from 2010. He stressed the importance of information in regards to Town image and efficiency. He also reviewed Spencer's fund balance and that of surrounding communities. He gave a timeline of previous discussions regarding recycling.

With no further business, Mayor Everhart adjourned the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Perdue, CMC, Clerk to the Board