

SPENCER BOARD OF ALDERMEN  
CALLED MEETING  
MONDAY, MARCH 26, 2012  
6:00 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Jody Everhart  
Mayor Pro-Tem Jim Gobbel  
Aldermen: Scott Benfield  
Kevin Jones  
Jeff Morris  
David Smith  
Reid Walters

Also present were Town Manager Larry Smith, Town Clerk Lisa Perdue, Police Chief Mike James, Public Works Director Joel Taylor, and Land Management Director Dustin Wilson. Gary Page, Rowan County Manager, was also in attendance.

1. BUDGET WORKSHOP

Mayor Everhart called the meeting to order, explaining that the goal of the meeting was to give direction to the Town Manager to help with budget preparations.

Town Manager Larry Smith reported that he met with Rowan County Manager Gary Page last week and reviewed the County services that could potentially be combinable with Spencer municipal services. The Board packet includes the Land Management Services study from last year. That study is a good overview of the Land Management services, which includes code enforcement. The Land Management Director now handles all LMD responsibilities, and has also had to take on more of a role of assistant manager too, helping to orchestrate efforts with other Town departments (especially Public Works, Police, etc.)

Mayor Everhart advised the Board that the County Manager had also met with the Mayors from Rowan County municipalities. The County can provide signs, and planning and zoning. County fire or police protection is not an option at this time.

County Manager Page explained that Rowan County is open to any agreement for services that can be worked out. The County has cut 50 positions over the last three years. China Grove currently contracts with Rowan County for planning services for \$1500 per month, or \$18,000 per year. That service includes public notices, meetings, etc. The fee for China Grove for the upcoming fiscal year will be increased to \$25,000. Page and his staff would be glad to discuss a possible contract with Spencer.

Alderman Morris presented a request for an RFP in three parts: 1) RFP for basic land management services; 2) RFP to provide code enforcement on a complaint-driven basis; and 3) RFP to provide “Cadillac” services broken down on an “a la carte” basis. He

would like to compare the response to this request with the current Land Management departmental budget.

County Manager Page explained that the same employee does all the planning work for China Grove. Permits are done at the Rowan County building, 402 N Main. Rowan County also handles the publishing of required advertisements.

Alderman Gobbel stated he would like to keep the same services we have now, and would prefer full time code enforcement. Town Manager Smith reported that Dustin estimates he can spend over ½ his time on code enforcement.

Alderman Walters thinks in-house code enforcement would be better. County Manager Page stated that the possibility of using an office here in Spencer could be discussed.

**MOTION WAS MADE BY ALDERMAN MORRIS TO ASK THE TOWN MANAGER TO SEEK AN RFP AS ATTACHED. MOTION SECONDED BY ALDERMAN BENFIELD AND CARRIED BY A VOTE OF FIVE:  
AYES: BENFIELD, JONES, MORRIS, SMITH, WALTERS  
NAYS: GOBBEL**

Alderman Smith would like to review the check list of services provided to China Grove. Alderman Walters suggested that a police officer could be paid 30 hours a week to do code enforcement, which would also provide an additional police officer when needed. Mayor Everhart stated that 30 hours per week is needed during the peak season for code enforcement. Town Manager Smith reported that Ed with Rowan County can gauge how many hours might be needed according to the recent code enforcement reports.

Page stated that a 60-day cancellation notice could be included in a contract. He feels he can have a contract ready for the Board to review in two to three weeks. Rowan County can make signs for Spencer if requested instead of the prison system. County-wide fire protection is not an option yet, but may be eventually.

Page also reported on a recent request by Alderman Morris about videotaping meetings. Those with no cable and no laptop cannot currently watch the meetings. Morris reported that there is a new public access channel, but the current set-up is not available to Spencer, Landis, and China Grove. Page has talked to Salisbury's City Manager and if Spencer wants to contract with someone to film their Board meetings, the City of Salisbury would run it on their public access. The videotape could also be put on Rowan County's website. The County simply cannot staff another position to cover meetings.

Gobbel questioned the reason for going with Rowan County for planning services. Morris replied that it's because Rowan County is a government entity, not a private company like Benchmark. Everhart suggested asking for a price from the City of

Salisbury too to compare with Rowan County; just get prices now, then the Board can discuss the options.

**MOTION WAS MADE BY ALDERMAN GOBBEL TO ALSO REQUEST A BID FOR PLANNING SERVICES FROM THE CITY OF SALISBURY. MOTION SECONDED BY ALDERMAN MORRIS AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Tax Rate

Alderman Benfield does not favor any tax increase. Alderman Morris does not want to use cash reserves or raise taxes. Town Manager Smith explained how too many cuts cause a decrease in efficiency. The best way to affect Spencer's specific tax rate is to work on building our industrial and commercial tax base. Spencer should continue working closely with EDC.

Stormwater

The new Public Works Director has not been able to receive much training yet. DENR has backed off on the designations, so there is no need to plan for compliance at this point.

Regarding the \$50,000 from City of Salisbury in the water contract, Spencer would have to expend funds to go along with that compensation for anything over the \$50,000. The amount from Salisbury is not allowed to build over time. Salisbury Rowan Utilities has good grant writers that could help Spencer.

Extension of utilities to Snider Street was discussed. Mayor Everhart reported that he had met with the Salisbury Mayor and City Manager. They may attend Spencer's next Board meeting if their attorney gives his approval. Water should not be a problem to Snider Street, but sewer would be expensive. Salisbury's engineer will look at the project, which would be a partnership between Spencer and Salisbury. Alderman Morris suggested a courtesy hearing for the residents to see if they are interested. Town Manager Smith explained that residents would be involved from the start as part of the research. Morris suggested it might be better to go out Long Ferry Road instead of Snider Street. Everhart stated he felt good after his meeting with Salisbury. Morris stated he will wait until Salisbury's budget is passed and see if they act in what he considers to be good faith.

Fleet

Town Manager Smith reported that refurbishing police cars does not seem to be a good option. Staff has been unable to find any other Towns that refurbish their vehicles. The request from the Fire Department for a replacement brush truck has been postponed several years already.

Capital Expenditures

The Small Town Main Street meeting is April 5 in Bessemer City. Four more in-car cameras are needed for the police department. Estimated figures were reviewed for potential COLA and / or bonuses.

Revenues

The NCTM security contract will not be renewed. The Town Manager recommends no donation to the NCTM if the contract is not renewed, since the projected continuing costs to our agency will be a substantial “in kind” donation already.

Economic Development

Robert Van Geons, Executive Director of Rowan Works, will meet with the Town Board if they are interested.

Nonprofits

The Board reviewed those agencies currently being funded.

The next budget workshop will be scheduled after the regular monthly Board meeting.

With no further business, Mayor Everhart adjourned the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa B. Perdue, CMC  
Clerk to the Board