

**Town of Marshville  
Town Council Meeting  
Monday, October 26, 2015  
Marshville Community Center – 118 E. Union Street**

**Special Meeting – Work Session**

**Council Members Present:** Mayor Frank Deese, Mayor Pro-Tem Virginia Morgan, Council Members Margaret Bivens, Jim Rowell, Norma Carpenter and Gary Huntley.

**Staff Present:** Town Manager, Fern Shubert; Clerk/Finance Officer, Tonya Johnson; Police Chief, Matt Tarlton, Public Works, Bivens Steele

Also present was Luanne Williams with The Home News and members of the Small Town Main Street Committee.

**Call to Order/Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance**

The special meeting for a general work session was called to order at 9:15 pm by Mayor Deese. The invocation was given by Mayor Deese. The Pledge of Allegiance was given by everyone in attendance.

**Work Session Discussions**

Town Manager Shubert reiterated that the purpose of the meeting is for a planning discussion. The desired outcome is to do what is good for everyone. Town Manager Shubert provided a handout of a power point prepared for the meeting. It began with several quotes emphasizing the importance of good planning. Town Manager Shubert stated that the goal is for everyone to be on the same page looking at the same big picture.

The manager raised the question, "Do we have plenty of money?" She went on to explain that general governmental funds have to be kept separate from the enterprise/business funds. In 2013 the property tax rate went up from \$.41 per \$100 to \$.48 per \$100. If the town had plenty of money that probably would not have happened. Town Manager Shubert reported no significant losses in enterprise fund because needed repairs and improvements were not made. The Town of Marshville has a ton of deferred maintenance.

In July, 2013 the town received a grant from the state for a CIP/Asset Management Plan. A study recommended that reserve accounts be created to begin to offset costs of replacement of critical need items based up priorities identified in the study. Known needs far exceed available assets.

Union County has been overcharging the town since the beginning when the county forced Marshville onto the sewer system. Marshville paid for a lot of the costs of building the system on the west side of the county. Union County did not want Anson to have the Town of Marshville as a water customer.

Town Manager Shubert stated that the bottom line regarding Enterprise fund is that there is not a lot of spare money.

Town Manager Shubert commented that it appears that the town has a lot of unrestricted money in the general fund. She attributes this to the fact that funds have not been restricted to address known needs. The council has agreed that we need to address priorities for expending those funds.

Town Manager Shubert stated that the last tax increase left the Town of Marshville with the second highest tax rate in the county. Only Monroe has a higher tax rate than Marshville. We can no longer grow the tax base by involuntary annexations; people have to want to be a part of Marshville. Town Manager Shubert emphasized the need to strategize on how to make Marshville a better value for business. Marshville has a lot of strengths to build on, but first things first.

Town Manager Shubert stated that when asked to look at priorities she started with streets and sidewalks. Powell Bill money can be used for these types of repairs/improvements. However, if the town spent every dime it would not be sufficient to cover all that needs to be done. Powell Bill funds could be stretched with grants and loans, but most require an upfront investment.

Town Manager Shubert asked, "What is the top priority?" "How do we prioritize?" We need a plan!

Town Manager Shubert stated that the Small Town Main Street Committee has a great plan. All that has been proposed needs to be done, but the plan needs to be broken down into a multi-year plan to enable getting it all done.

Town Manager Shubert reported that the park looks better than it has in years. Safety improvements have been made but more remains to be done. The park needs volunteers and public involvement.

Town Manager Shubert discussed other projects. Property was acquired at 511 E. Main St. to establish a recycle center, hopefully partially funded by grant dollars. Council has had discussions on establishing an ABC store. The Town of Marshville has been offered land adjacent the Community Center for the construction of a gazebo; an amenity that would not cost much to provide if land is donated.

Town Manager Shubert asked, "How do we work it out so that everyone feels we are moving in the right direction?" She stated that there is no way for everyone to get everything they want this year.

Town Manager Shubert discussed staffing and personnel changes and provided a list of needed jobs/functions. She reminded council that the town recently lost two staff members who performed many of those job functions. Town Manager Shubert welcomed suggestions. With council's approval, she would like to utilize part time staff and volunteers, as well as utilizing council members as coordinators in key areas.

Town Manager Shubert concluded by stating that Marshville needs to be a business friendly town.

Mayor Pro-Tem Morgan asked about the status of the water line project? Bivens Steele, Director of Public Works reported that the project will be ready to bid on November 19, 2015.

Mayor Deese stated he wants to give the STMS Committee an opportunity to re-familiarize council with its proposal.

Mayor Deese called for a 5 minute recess at 10:05 am. The meeting reconvened at 10:15 am.

Bob Morgan, Chairperson of the Small Town Main Street Committee, took the floor. Mr. Morgan reported that the committee is working toward economic revitalization. There are three banks in town that have agreed to provide ways they can benefit the Town of Marshville financially. Mr. Morgan informed the council that they should be prepared to see a presentation on approximately six months.

Mr. Morgan stated that the Design Committee did not plan in a vacuum. The plan involves rejuvenating downtown and bringing in business. Mr. Morgan stated that he is not an advocate of raising taxes. Mr. Morgan asked, "What will it take to accomplish priorities?"

Mr. Morgan stated that the committee estimates that it will require \$306,000 to fund the proposal. He added that he is not referring to enterprise fund appropriations, but rather at general fund appropriations. Sidewalks

are estimated to be biggest expenditure. The committee understands LGC requirements and restriction of funds, etc.

Mr. Morgan stated that when bypass comes, the town needs to remain viable for business. Marshville needs to turn into a destination.

Mr. Morgan stated that the proposal includes sidewalks, banners, garbage can clusters, benches, way finding signs, a downtown Sitting Park, and an automatic text message/email system (\$100/month) that could be added to the town's website.

Mr. Morgan emphasized the need to look at possibility vs. probability. He has looked at the numbers and believes this is do-able. Mr. Morgan doesn't believe the town needs a Small Town Main Street Coordinator.

Mr. Morgan stated that it is up to the council how to spend the money. However, if Marshville's downtown can make more money than the town has more money to do other things. Discussion ensued about areas around town that need sidewalks, other than downtown.

Council Member Rowell reminded council that it was once approved to build sidewalk along west Main Street but easements could not be obtained from property owners to proceed with the project. Council Member Rowell stated that if we don't use the Powell Bill money the state will take the money away. Powell Bill funds of \$288,519.38 is included in restricted funds that can be spent on sidewalks. Council Member Rowell stated that he doesn't see why we can't move forward with sidewalks if Powell bill money is available.

Mayor Deese commented that the council could allocate a portion of the \$288,519.38 in Powell Bill funds to be spent this year and allocate more funds in subsequent years. Council Member Rowell stated that if funds are available, council doesn't need to be discussing this at this time next year.

Mayor Deese requested that staff research and provide a report regarding how many cemetery plots are available for sale. Bivens Steele reported that approximately 220 plots ready for sale. Mayor Deese asked why the town isn't selling the lots.

Council Member Rowell expressed the need to limit the number of plots that can be purchased. Also, at least 25% of the funds from the sale of the lots should be reserved for perpetual care of the cemetery (mowing, upkeep, gazebo, etc.). Mr. Morgan agreed that money from sale of lots should be spent for upkeep of cemetery. He added that if the town advertises, it could likely increase sales of cemetery lots.

Mayor Deese requested a breakdown of the \$306,000 requested by the STMS proposal. If \$246,000 is for sidewalks, what will the remaining \$60,000 be spent on?

Mr. Morgan commented that he has talked with Bivens Steele and the town could take down building. A gazebo is a shed type building and some of the beams can be taken from the old building to be used to construct the gazebo.

Town Manager Shubert stated that towns generally accept gifts but do not do the appraisal. The town does not want to get into the valuation equation. Mr. Morgan stated that the STMS Committee is obtaining the appraisal.

Mayor Deese stated that if the council decides to provide funds, then how much of the Powell Bill funds can be allocated over the next several years; and, if and how to appropriate other funds (\$60K).

Mayor Deese added that we also need to replace some personnel. He emphasized the need to be careful to hire folks with competence in certain areas.

Council Member Rowell stated that the town operates under a manager-council form of government. The manager is supposed to run personnel for the town. If the manager wants to hire part-time people that is her business. Council Member Rowell doesn't feel the council should be having all this personnel discussion. Mayor Deese stated that, in theory, he agrees with Council Member Rowell. However, the manager has requested the council's input. Council Member Rowell reiterated that the manager is responsible for personnel and needs to do her job.

Council Member Carpenter asked if the STMS Committee's requests will be on the agenda for Monday night.

Bivens Steele raised an important point regarding the cemetery by pointing out that town hall staff needs some rules/guidelines regarding sales of lots in cemetery. Town Manager Shubert commented that the cemetery looks better than it has in many years thanks to volunteers. She agrees that money needs to go toward cemetery expense and upkeep and that there should be rules/guidelines in place.

Town Manager Shubert clarified that she does not want to hire people for all those jobs. To stay in NC Small Town Main Street the town is required to have a coordinator to represent the town. Town Manger Shubert agrees that we need to put money where it will make more money for the town. The state is not going to look after the town if town doesn't look after itself. Town Manager Shubert commented that she is looking for more money from state to finish out the sidewalk to Food Lion.

Mayor Deese agrees that the town needs the sidewalks. It is a matter of priority. These requested by the STMS Committee may need to take priority right now. The town can still be searching for grants to help stretch dollars. Mayor Deese stated that the Small Town Main Street designation is a big deal and that the town needs to utilize it.

Mr. Barker asked for clarification of how Powell Bill money is distributed.

Council Member Bivens asked if the town qualifies for any other grant funds. Mayor Deese explained that North Carolina awards grants on a tiered system. Union County is classified as tier three because west side is rich. Marshville's location in Union County makes it difficult to obtain grant funds, even though the median income is low.

Town Manager Shubert discussed the need to work with the STMS Committee to determine which sidewalks they feel are a priority. Discussion ensued about the process of input by the council and funding.

Mayor Deese stated that the consensus of the council is to allow the manager to be a manager and handle personnel.

Mayor Pro Tem Morgan requested that council not forget discussion of a Parks and Recreation Director. Mayor Pro-Tem Morgan commented that the manager doesn't agree with the position. Discussion ensued regarding park.

Council Member Rowell raised the issue of hiring someone on a part time basis, if competent, to provide assistance. Mayor Deese reiterated that the manager needs to handle personnel according to budget.

Council Member Rowell reminded everyone about Halloween on Main Street this Friday night at 7 pm.

Town Manager Shubert encouraged council members to volunteer. She stated that she is going to look into all sorts of possibilities.

Council Member Rowell commented that a parcel of property adjacent to the exit at the park may be available and he would like to have the manager look into the possible acquisition of the property. Council Member Rowell stated that one of the ball fields encroaches on the property as was allowed by the owner years ago when the ballfield was constructed.

**Adjourn**

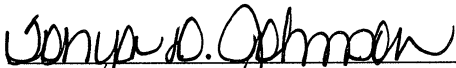
Council Member Rowell made motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Council Member Huntley. There being no further comments the meeting adjourned at 11:24 am.

These minutes approved this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of November, 2015.

By: 

Franklin D. Deese, Mayor

ATTEST



Tonya B. Johnson, Town Clerk



### Help wanted-

- › Small town main street coordinator
- › Grants writer
- › Volunteer coordinator
- › Utilities billing administrator
- › Technology administrator
- › Assistant manager – public works
- › Recreation director
- › Code enforcement officer
- › Contract manager
- › Analyst – financial planner

→ Why need coordinator when have  
Committee w/ chairperson?

### Suggestions welcomed-

- › We just lost two people who covered all of those positions and more.
- › We need to rethink several job descriptions because it is unlikely we can find two people with all of the skills we just lost.
- › With Council's approval, I would like to explore greater utilization of part-time staff and volunteers, including Council-member coordinators in key areas.

### Small Town Main Street

- › The proposal presented by Small Town Main Street must be part of our planning. It proves we have people willing to invest their time and effort to make Marshville an even better community.
- › But which part of their recommendations can be funded now? Do we need a multi-year plan and if so, how will it be structured?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Parks & Rec

- › Have you been out to the park lately?
- › It looks better than it has in years.
- › Needed safety improvements are being made.
- › Why? Volunteers & public involvement.
- › And yes, more remains to be done.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Other projects? For example-

- › We acquired property to establish a recycling center next to public works, hoping to obtain grant funds to partially fund it.
- › Council has on several occasions discussed establishing an ABC store.
- › The Town has been offered land adjacent to the Community Center for the construction of a gazebo.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### General Fund – Powell Bill

- Marshville had significant needs for street and sidewalk improvements even before the Bypass started moving.
- Restricted Powell Bill funds can be stretched farther with loans and grants, but most require matches and all require an investment up front to secure them – either paying consultants or using staff.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### General Fund – Powell Bill

- What is the top priority?
- (a) Extending 74 sidewalk to reach Pilgrim's Pride and Food Lion
- (b) Joining the Carolina Thread Trail with a greenway linking Wingate and Marshville
- (c) Sidewalks/bike paths linking downtown and the Marshville park along Union Street and/or Olive Branch
- (d) Improvements to downtown sidewalks

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### General Fund – Powell Bill

- That was a trick question –
- All four need to be done and more
- And we could spend every dime in unrestricted funds this year and not get that all done.
- We need a plan.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Enterprise Fund

### › Warning (Continued):

- › Hardly any customers know that Union County forced the Town of Marshville to sign on to a County system and used that system to systematically overcharge Marshville customers for the benefit of others.

- › *The fact that we need to improve our infrastructure does not mean we should give it away and lose the protections we now enjoy.*

## General Fund

- › The General Fund also appears to have unrestricted funds. Again, that is only because funds have not been restricted to address known wants and needs.

The Council has already agreed that we need to establish priorities for expending those funds and asked me to make suggestions, with a due date of year end. These are merely preliminary comments.

## General Fund:

- › It is important to note that with the second highest tax rate in the whole county, tax increases are not an option. We must grow tax revenue by encouraging positive commercial and residential development. As Union County grows their infrastructure, we will be competing with County sites as well as other towns.

- › We have many strengths – we need to build on those strengths. Always remember – first things first.

### Enterprise Fund

"In July of 2013 the Town of Marshville received a planning grant from [the state to fund a study of water and sewer needs and how to meet them. The study] recommended that, at a minimum, the Town create reserve accounts to offset the cost of replacement of the oldest and most likely to fail water system assets and the highest priority sewer system assets [to the tune of] \$249,100 per year."

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Enterprise Fund

- › Known needs far exceed available assets.
- › While the balance sheet shows "unrestricted funds" in the Enterprise Fund, it should be understood that there are no funds available for anything that does not improve efficiency, address known needs or newly discovered deficiencies, or fund itself.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Enterprise Fund

- › Warning: Union County may offer to take over Marshville's utilities "to help out our customers."

Most customers are unaware their utility bills have been higher than they should be BECAUSE of Union County overbilling the Town of Marshville.

Hardly any customers know that Union County actually tried to get Anson to drop Marshville as a water customer so Union County could control our water. Not a very neighborly thing to do.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**But I can't be overdrawn**

***I still have checks left***

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Do we have plenty of \$\$\$ ?**

In the General Fund:

In 2013, Town Council increased the property tax rate from 41cents per \$100 to 48 cents, a 7 cents or over 17% increase, and there were those who called for a larger increase.

The General Fund had operated at a deficit in 3 out of the 4 prior years; in 2011-12 there was a surplus of \$7840.20

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Do we have plenty of \$\$\$ ?**

› In the Enterprise Fund:

› In 2013 changes were also made to increase net earnings from water and sewer.

› While there was only one year in the previous four in which the Enterprise Fund showed a loss, needed repairs and improvements were not made.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

<http://www.goodreads.com>

‣ **Benjamin Franklin said:**

‣ **“If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail!”**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**(Q) What is the point?**

- (a) Planning is important
- (b) Honest people can confuse facts
- (c) The devil is in the details

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**(Q) What is the point?**

- (a) Planning is important
- (b) Honest people can confuse facts
- (c) The devil is in the details
- **(A) All three**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Town of Marshville

### ► Planning Discussion

► October 26, 2015

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

<http://www.phrases.org.uk>

### ► Failing to plan is planning to fail

#### ► Origin

► This modern-day proverb is widely attributed to Alan Lakein, the writer of several self-help books on time management from the 1970s onward. The quotation is certainly in the gung-ho, up and at 'em style of Lakein's and he may well have coined it. I can't find the source of the quotation in his published work, so 'attributed to' is the best I can do for now.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

<http://www.answers.com>

► It's Winston Churchill who said "He who fails to plan is planning to fail" during World War II

---

---

---

---

---

---

---