

**Town of Marshville
Town Council Meeting
Special Meeting
Tuesday, May 24, 2011 at 7:00 P.M.
Marshville Town Hall – 201 W. Main St.**

Present: Mayor Deese, CM Ned Beachum, CM Dora Bridget, CM Matthew Jefferson, TM Radford Thomas, Clerk/FO Tonya Johnson, DPW Bivens Steele. Also present was Carl Webber. MPT Margaret Bivens arrived at 7:42 p.m. Chief Matt Tarlton and PD Alan Thifault were absent.

Open/Welcome/Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Deese opened the meeting at 7:10 p.m. and welcomed everyone in attendance. CM Ned Beachum gave the invocation. All gave the Pledge of Allegiance.

Before proceeding with the discussion of the proposed FY2011-2012 budget discussion, TM Radford Thomas introduced Carl Webber as the new Chief of Police for Marshville. TM Radford Thomas expressed that he feels Carl Webber is the person our police department needs. He informed council that Mr. Webber plans to assume duties as chief effective June 15, 2011. TM Radford Thomas announced that he is glad to have Carl on board.

Carl Webber expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to come back to Marshville and to serve the community as police chief. He commented that he looks forward to working with everyone.

CM Matthew Jefferson requested to make a comment before beginning the budget discussion. He applauded Matt Tarlton for a job well done while acting as police chief. He further stated his desire upon agreement of the council, to thank Matt Tarlton in a financial way. TM Radford Thomas agreed that Matt Tarlton did a good job and deserves a good degree of public recognition. TM Thomas commented that this has been a good learning experience for Matt. Mayor Deese agreed with CM Jefferson and TM Thomas and urged staff to look into a recognition service for Matt.

CM Matthew Jefferson showed a flag sample he would like to purchase for the promotion of the Veterans' Day event planned for November. He pointed out that there are a lot of veterans living in Marshville. TM Radford Thomas disclosed that the budget figures for insurance represent a "worst case scenario." There may be some savings once the final rates are received. He suggested that the monetary difference in the estimated insurance premiums and the actual premiums, once final rates are received, be used to purchase flags and banners, if council approves. Mayor Deese suggested also handing out a small hand-held flag.

Budget Work Session

TM Radford Thomas passed out a draft of the proposed new rental rates for the Community Center and the Park Shelter. He explained that currently we charge \$25.00 /four hour block.

He further explained that this rate isn't enough to cover the associated expenses. TM Thomas recommended the following rental rates:

Community Center

\$100.00 / four hour block if you are a Marshville resident

\$150.00 / four hour block if you are a non-resident

A \$50.00 deposit (to be refunded if the facility is left in a clean and orderly manner)

No discount for all day use or for partial block use.

An additional \$20.00/hour charge for each additional hour of rental

Park Shelter

\$100.00 / four hour block if you are a Marshville resident

\$150.00 / four hour block if you are a non-resident

A \$75.00 deposit (to be refunded contingent upon inspection of the park facility by the Park Director or his agent)

A \$50.00 / four hour block fee for a park attendant to be on site during the rental period. An additional \$10.00 / hour fee will be charged for each additional hour of rental.

An additional \$20.00 / hour charge for each additional hour of rental

TM Thomas pointed out that these proposed fees will put us more in line with other towns' facility rental rates. Likewise, he emphasized that this may eliminate some security and vandalism issues at the park. CM Ned Beachum agreed that this is a good starting point.

Mayor Deese raised several questions for discussion, the first being that if a renter rents a four hour block for \$25/hour then why does the rate drop to \$20 for each additional hour of rent?

TM Thomas replied that the fee was \$10 for each additional hour and he doubled the fee.

Mayor Deese then asked what happens if back to back blocks are rented but the first renter wants to stay for an additional hour. TM Thomas pointed out that this would be addressed during scheduling. TM Thomas stated that he would check with Debra Leigh about scheduling time between rental blocks for cleanup.

Mayor Deese inquired about the specific duties of a "park attendant". He also questioned whether the charges for additional hours were sufficient. Mayor Deese expressed his opinion that the rate for additional hours should at least be equal to the per hour rental rate (\$100 per four hour block / four = \$25 per hour).

It was the consensus of the council to adjust the additional hourly rate as follows:

Community Center & Park Shelter - \$25 per additional hour for residents

\$37.50 per additional hour for non-residents

TM Thomas reminded council that the utility deposit can be adjusted by the council. He pointed out that during the month of May the town has received approximately \$1,300 to \$1,400 in bad checks. He commented that he doesn't know whether or not this will be a trend. This month's returns total more than the past several months combined. TM Thomas reminded council that as utility rates have been adjusted, utility deposits have not (been adjusted).

****Note: MPT Margaret Bivens arrived at 7:42 p.m.****

TM Thomas informed the council of a company, Online Utility Exchange that provides a program providing credit risk assessment to utility providers. This type of program would allow us to create a differentiated deposit schedule. Green represents minimum risk, yellow represents moderate risk, and red represents high risk. TM Thomas suggested that we look at tiered deposits based upon credit risk (ex., green = \$150; yellow = \$200; and red = \$300). He further explained that we can look at moderate and high risk customers over a period of time and offer refunds based upon good payment until they reach the \$150 minimum deposit amount. TM Thomas emphasized that he thinks this program has a lot of potential and will assist us in collecting more delinquent accounts. He asked council to consider this program and how it could work for the town. TM Thomas commented that policies for delinquent accounts and returned checks need to be revisited. We have a fiduciary responsibility to try to collect money owed to the town.

CM Matthew Jefferson expressed concerns that we're making it impossible to rent a house in Marshville.

Mayor Deese stressed that we don't want to make it harder to get into a rental property but we have a fiduciary responsibility to collect monies owed to the town. Mayor Deese asked, in reference to the Online Utility Exchange program, what if applicants' don't give their social security number. TM Thomas replied that it would be assumed they are a higher risk.

TM Thomas reviewed with council the schedule of meter reading to help explain and illustrate late payments. He commented that he would like to see disconnection take place by the 25th of the month that the bill is due. CM Jefferson commented that with a shorter cut off period there may be no need to increase deposits.

DPW Bivens Steele commented that if the utility account is in the landlord's name a deposit would not be required. Our policy states that owners are not required to pay a utility deposit, only renters and mobile home owners.

DPW Bivens Steele responded to a question about increased work if we change the cutoff date. He stated that he doesn't think it would create too much more work

TM Radford Thomas conveyed his concern that times are tough and a lot of people are struggling, but we have to be responsible for money owed to the town. He pointed out that some folks have just figured out how to skip a payment. At the present time it takes a two month bill to get on the cut off list, so many customers are staying one month behind in payment. TM Thomas expressed to the council that some time needs to be spent looking into policy. It doesn't have to be a part of this budget process. TM Thomas suggested we devote some time to looking into utility policies and if changes are warranted we need to spend sufficient time communicating with the residents. He would like to involve the staff, DPW Bivens Steele, and Debra Steele (meter reader) and bring information back to council.

TM Radford Thomas mentioned that at the last meeting CM Jefferson inquired about a 5% COLA increase for employees and compared to a 2% COLA increase. TM Thomas reported that the difference of 3% is equivalent to \$12,790. A 5% COLA increase would be in the range of \$19,000 more than the current level of salary compensation.

CM Matthew Jefferson stated that the budget has been trimmed the past two years. He commented that we're probably looking at painful cuts next year as well. There have been raises

in three years. CM Jefferson doesn't feel we can keep asking the employees to give. He expressed his desire to be an advocate for the employees and feels there are ways to offer incentive such as increasing quarterly safety bonuses, or increasing the Christmas bonus. TM Thomas commented that bonuses are considered wages so taxes and retirement are calculated.

MPT Bivens stated that she's spoken with an employee from Monroe regarding COLA increases. MPT Bivens feels that a 2% COLA increase is in line with everyone else.

CM Ned Beachum agreed that he feels 2% is good. He mentioned that some teachers have gotten a "pink slip". A 2% COLA increase is better than none. CM Beachum feels we're doing good to be able to give 2%. MPT Bivens agreed.

Mayor Deese added that he is an advocate for our employees. They are the ones out there getting the job done. We should let them know we appreciate them. Mayor Deese stated he's glad to be able to give them a 2% COLA increase and not have to use fund balance. He commented that he likes the safety bonus incentive. It could help reduce workers' compensation costs. Mayor Deese asked what amount is currently being paid as a safety bonus. DPW Bivens Steele replied that employees received \$125 per quarter if there are no job-related accidents. Mayor Deese emphasized that the safety bonus gives the employee something but also gives something to the town. Mayor Deese stated that he is in agreement with a 2% COLA increase plus an additional \$25 per quarter per employee safety bonus incentive. He feels that would be a good gesture toward the employees.

MPT Bivens questioned if the town can afford to do this without using fund balance.

Mayor Deese expressed his opinion that a 2% COLA increase plus the increased safety bonus would reap the town a whole lot of benefit. He estimated the cost to the town to be approximately \$2,000 per year. DPW Bivens Steele commented that the safety bonus is a valuable tool. It keeps the employees in check.

CM Matthew Jefferson brought before the council an incentive for police officers to reside in the corporate limits or ETJ of Marshville. He suggested \$100 per month per employee if they live within the town limits. CM Jefferson said he feels most officers would live in town if they could find a suitable residence and were offered some incentive for doing so. TM Thomas questioned if CM Jefferson was referring to new hires only, or existing employees of the police department. CM Jefferson replied that he is referring to both existing officers and new hires. He reiterated that he is not suggesting we make it a requirement.

TM Thomas commented that at the present time we have three officers residing in town, one residing in the ETJ, and three officers residing outside the town limits.

Mayor Deese commented that if we do this we would automatically have to pay an additional \$400 per month. CM Ned Beachum stated that he's done some figuring and if we pay \$50 per month per employee the cost would be a wash if you consider the cost of gasoline. CM Jefferson emphasized this incentive has a two-fold purpose: to benefit the officer and the town. Mayor Deese commented that it may not reflect savings, but it shows us to be a progressive town.

MPT Margaret Bivens stated that seeing a police car parked deters a lot of crime. She doesn't feel, however, that we should pay a police officer to reside in town. She questioned whether the town can afford to offer this incentive. MPT Bivens expressed her opinion that the budget, as recommended, looks fine to her. Mayor Deese clarified that we would not be requiring them to

live in Marshville. We would merely be offering them an incentive to reside in town, if they so choose.

CM Dora Bridget stated that we cannot ask someone to work only if they live in a certain place. She brought to councils' attention that the officer may already own a home.

Mayor Deese asked TM Thomas if reducing the budget line item for fuel would allow for this incentive for police officers.

TM Thomas commented that, based upon responses to a question he put on the list serve, towns that have implemented this incentive program did it for new hires and didn't make it retroactive. Some towns offered a one-time incentive payment. CM Dora Bridget expressed her opinion that it could complicate relationships if you didn't do something for existing employees.

It was the consensus of the council to do further research regarding the police officer incentive.

Mayor Deese followed up on installing fences/gates at the park, as mentioned at a previous meeting. TM Thomas commented that he thinks there is money in the existing budget to cover this. He also stated that prices are being check on.

Mayor Deese summarized the discussion of raising fees/charges for the park and community center. TM Thomas stated that this will be included in the schedule of fees to be approved. Mayor Deese reiterated that it was the consensus of the council to raise safety bonuses to \$150 per employee per quarter (this is up from \$125/employee/quarter), and to give a 2% COLA increase to employees. Regarding the police incentive, TM Thomas was asked to look further in this and bring back more information. Mayor Deese reminded council that the public hearing for the proposed FY2011-2012 Budget Ordinance is scheduled for Monday, June 6, 2011.

TM Thomas commented that he will revise the schedule of fees, prepare the budget message and budget ordinance, and revise the draft of the budget to reflect the discussed changes.

TM Thomas reminded council that Town Hall will be closed on Monday, May 30, 2011 for Memorial Day.

Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by MPT Margaret Bivens, and seconded by CM Ned Beachum. Vote: All ayes.

There being no further discussion or comments the meeting was adjourned at 8:56 p.m.

These minutes approved this 6th day of June, 2011.

By: _____

Franklin D. Deese
Mayor

Attest: _____

Debra Leigh
Asst. Town Clerk

**A brief recess may be called every 45-60 minutes, as desired by Council.*

**NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING OF
TOWN OF MARSHVILLE COUNCIL MEMBERS**

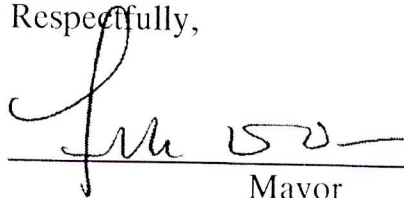
TO: Media & Public

DATE: May 23, 2011

Dear Sir/Madam:

You are hereby notified, pursuant to Section 71 of Chapter 160-A of the North Carolina General Statutes, that Mayor Frank Deese has called a special meeting of the Marshville Town Council to be held at 7:00 PM on the 24th day of May, 2011, at Marshville Town Hall, 201 W. Main Street, Marshville, NC, for the purpose of a budget work session.

Respectfully,



Mayor

Town of Marshville
Town Council Meeting
Special Meeting
Tuesday, May 24, 2011 at 7:00 P.M.
Marshville Town Hall – 201 W. Main St.

1. Open / Welcome
2. Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance
3. Budget Work Session
4. Adjourn

**A brief recess may be called every 45-60 minutes, as desired by Council.*