

**TOWN OF CHARLOTTE COURT HOUSE
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday February 16, 2016 7:00pm**

A regular meeting of the Charlotte Court House Town Council was held on Tuesday, February 16, 2016, at 7:00 pm. Vice-Mayor Watkins called the meeting to order. Council Members Kurdt, Walker, Andrews, Jones & Watkins were present. Council Member Haskins was absent. Mayor Walker arrived mid meeting. Council Member Kurdt motioned to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded and carried by voice vote: 5 ayes, 0 nays. Council Member Kurdt motioned to approve the January 19, 2016 minutes as presented. The motion was seconded and carried by voice vote: 5 ayes and 0 nays. Council Member Andrews motioned to approve the financial statement as presented. The motion was seconded and carried by voice vote: 5 ayes and 0 nays.

Citizen Comments Terrill Ramsey stated that the existing Jeffersonian style courthouse building is something the Town and County can take pride in. What is needed is the efficient operation of the courts within a modern and beautiful facility, with a lower profile, that is at the same time subordinate to the Jeffersonian facility; a building that complements the existing courthouse but doesn't overpower it. Mr. Ramsey stated that there is one man in this Town and County, who can save our courthouse; who has great skill and can make the requested changes to the plans happen.

Courthouse Design & Location Information Sharing Vice-Mayor Watkins stated that the Town passed a Resolution in March 2015 regarding the style and location of the new courthouse. He stated that the current proposed location, directly behind and connected to the County Clerk's office, has caused some concern and that an additional resolution has been drafted to request the Board of Supervisors (BOS) to follow the recommendations of the Dept. of Historic Resources and requests a ninety-day extension to the deadline. Council Member Andrews stated that she has received numerous negative calls and emails regarding the new courthouse and expressed concern that the existing courthouse was accumulating mold and mildew and not looking very well maintained. Council Member Kurdt stated that several people have conveyed to her their preference of a courthouse with a lower profile and located fifty to seventy-five feet further down the slope. Council Member Jones stated that many have wondered why the new courthouse couldn't have been located by the jail, but voiced his understanding that the location has been dictated by the judge. Vice-Mayor Watkins offered the floor to BOS member Gary Walker, who stated that the location had to be contiguous to the courthouse square. Mr. Walker stated the following: The objective was to build the smallest courthouse possible; in September 2011 Judge Cunningham asked that a committee be formed to study the needs of the Juvenile & Domestic Relations, the Circuit and the General District Courts; three court rooms were required; Senator Ruff filed legislation to take power from the judge, which passed; the judge filed suit and stopped the courthouse project from going forward; the County was on the verge of losing control of the process and losing control of the costs; the architectural firm of Glave & Holmes was selected; after meeting with their attorney in 2014, the BOS were allowed to make plans public; the BOS met with the Museum Board and others to present the plans; in January 2015, Judge Cunningham wanted to meet with the BOS and at that meeting there were three judges present; BOS wanted to keep the J & D court at its current location; judges refused to allow continued use of historic buildings; judges threatened a court order to require a deputy to guard the clerks and commonwealth's attorney; the BOS knows that the courthouse plans are not popular with some, but must do what is in the best interest of 12,500 residents; any further delays will add to the cost. Mr. Walker asked for the Town's cooperation with the BOS, and thanked the Council for their hard work.

Courthouse Resolution Following clarification of the differences between the current proposed resolution and the one adopted in March 2015, Council Member Watkins stated that this resolution is to lower the impact the new building will have on the Courthouse Square. He stated that the Council needs to be concerned about this because "when it's done, it's done." Council Member Andrews stated that passing the resolution will only prolong the process. Council Member Jones stated that the Board of Supervisors tried to make changes, causing retaliation by the judge, and stated his opposition to spending additional funds by requesting an extension of time. Council Member Walker stated that it's frustrating that a judge can demand such a project without regard to the cost or to other pending needs the county may be facing. She stated that the decision does not really rest with the Board of Supervisors, but the judge. Council Member Watkins stated that while he appreciated the views expressed, he reiterated his concern that the new courthouse could be built in a less intrusive way. Council Member Watkins motioned to adopt the resolution as presented. The motion did not carry for lack of a second.

Resolution to Adopt and Abide by USDA Requirements Council Member Jones inquired whether the preliminary engineering report could be expanded to include connecting Town residents to the County sewer system. Mayor Walker stated that he met with an engineer from Dewberry who stated that the current system will accommodate the entire Town, including a new school and courthouse. Council Member Walker asked if this project was being done without County involvement. Council Member Jones motioned to adopt the resolution as presented. The motion was seconded by Council Member Watkins and carried by roll call vote: Andrews, aye; Watkins, aye; Jones, aye; Kurdt, aye; Walker, aye.

Sewer Upgrade Proposals Mayor Walker reported that two engineering firms responded to the Town's request for proposals: Dewberry and Maxey & Associates. He stated that Dewberry has knowledge of the sewer system, having worked with both Charlotte County and the Town of Drakes Branch. Council Member Jones motioned to hire Dewberry to develop a Preliminary Engineering Report for sewer system upgrades. The motion was seconded by Council Member Watkins and carried by voice vote: 5 ayes, 0 nays.

Committee Reports Building, Grounds, Streets & Lights – Council Member Andrews stated that she would like to move forward with having the parking lot repaired, since the Fire Department is not moving forward with renovating the municipal building/firehouse. Financial Committee – Council Member Watkins stated that committee will meet ahead of the March Council meeting to begin preparing the FY 16-17 budget.

Water / Maintenance Report Curtis Inge reported that February purchases include a box of meters, a pallet of soda ash, and a new check valve for well #3. He stated that all test results were satisfactory. He also stated that new E.P.A. regulations for total coliform would go into effect April 1, 2016. Curtis stated his intention to resign as water operator at the end of the year.

Clerk's Report Karen Price reported that one zoning permit application was approved for the addition of a rear porch and that a business license was approved for Collegiate Athletic Marketing. She stated that Planning Commission member, Bob Reynolds' term has expired and that he is deliberating whether or not to serve another. He will advise the Council of his decision prior to the March 2016 meeting.

Council Comments Council Member Andrews suggested that the Town come up with a way to welcome new businesses. Mayor Walker offered to take up the matter. Following a request by Council Member Andrews for an update on the investigation of the former clerk, Mayor Walker reported that the state is issuing subpoenas to determine how checks written to non-existent businesses were being cashed. He stated that they hope to wrap up the investigation by summer.

With no further business, Council Member Jones motioned that the meeting adjourn. The motion was seconded and carried by voice vote: 5 ayes and 0 nays.

Stephen D. Walker, Mayor

ATTEST:

Karen K. Price, Clerk of Council