

## MINUTES

### Regular Business Meeting of the Southern Pines Town Council January 14, 2014, 7:00 PM, Douglass Community Center, 1185 W. Pennsylvania Avenue

**Present:** Mayor David McNeill, Mayor Pro Tem Mike Fields, Councilmember Fred Walden, Councilmember Jim Simeon, Councilmember Teresa VanCamp

**Absent:** None

Call To Order

#### Pledge of Allegiance

##### 1. Manager's Comments

Town Manager Parsons gave an overview of the items on the Consent Agenda.

##### 2. Consent Agenda

- A. Adopt Worksession Meeting Minutes of November 25, 2013, Agenda Meeting Minutes of December 4, 2013 and Regular Business Meeting Minutes of December 10, 2013 as written.
- B. Budget Amendments
  - Southern Pines Garden Club           \$2,000
  - Police Patrol                                 \$27,000
- C. Resolution Adding New Retirement Savings Plan
- D. Board Appointments
  - Library Advisory Board
    - Mary Scott Harrison   1/1/2014 – 12/31/2016
    - Hugh Mensch           1/1/2014 – 12/31/2016
    - Damita Nocton         1/1/2014 – 12/31/2016
    - Kim Wade             1/1/2014 – 12/31/2016

Upon motion by Councilmember Simeon, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Fields and carried unanimously, the Consent Agenda was adopted.

##### 3. Public Comments

Rosie Daniels, 155 Meadowfield Circle, Aberdeen, began by stating she is dissatisfied with the unsolved murder investigation of her son, Floyd Williams and the other unsolved murders in West Southern Pines. Mrs. Daniels continued by requesting that Council understand the family's grief and to ensure the Southern Pines Police Department has what it needs to solve the murder investigations or instruct the Chief of Police to request assistance from the State Bureau of Investigations.

Mrs. Daniels commented that she and her family think the Southern Pines Police Department is not interested in solving crimes in West Southern Pines and it is their hope that Council will help by all available means. Mrs. Daniels continued by commenting she comes to Council as a mother grieving for her son and that she has a lot of anger and hurt.

Mrs. Daniels inquired what the community can do to help Council in finding a resolution to the investigations and commented that the community doesn't cooperate due to a lack of trust of the Southern Pines Police Department. Mrs. Daniels continued by commenting she wants the violence to end.

Lonnie Daniels, 155 Meadowfield Circle, Aberdeen, commented he does not think Southern Pines Police Department is doing their part in the investigation in that no questions are being asked. Mr. Daniels continued by commenting that the Southern Pines Police Department is to protect and serve and inquired what is being protected and who are they serving.

Mr. Daniels commented when the U.S. Open comes to the area, security will be there and if anyone steps on the grass at the tournament, they will be arrested on the spot but nothing is being done in Southern Pines regarding a murder. Mr. Daniels continued by inquiring why the person who has been called as a suspect in a murder charge is not being questioned.

Mrs. Daniels commented she has been trying to attend the Regular Business meeting since October 2013 to discuss this issue.

Mayor Pro Tem Fields inquired if Mrs. Daniels was told that she could not attend the meeting before now. Mrs. Daniels responded in the negative and commented she spoke with Police Chief Bob Temme regarding the murder investigation and due to the holiday season, she was unable to attend.

Mr. Daniels commented they have asked all the questions but have received no answers and all they want is justice.

Mrs. Daniels inquired the ratio of police staff that are investigating the recent murders and suggested asking for help from the State Bureau of Investigations if the Police Department is understaffed.

Helena White, 270 Hutchison Road, Aberdeen, commented her son, Maurice White was killed at Leather Pockets and that she has not received any answers regarding the investigation. Ms. White continued by commenting she has contacted Sgt. Brian Edwards regarding the investigation and has not received any information.

Ms. White commented she wants answers because she is tired of hurting every day and that due to senseless shootings, people are afraid to go outside. Ms. White continued by commenting that Southern Pines used to be a safe place to live and asked Council to help find a solution to the problem.

Ms. White commented the situation does not look good for the Town and they want answers.

Elder Lee Harris, 803 Sycamore Street, Aberdeen, commented nothing has been seen regarding the murder investigations and the only answer they have received is that nobody is talking. Mr. Harris continued by commenting that people are stereotyped once they speak because their name goes into the computer and they are harassed from then on.

Mr. Harris commented that answers cannot be received if one police officer is assigned to a murder case when twenty or thirty police officers are assigned to a drug case and that the attention is on the wrong things. Mr. Harris continued by commenting that some in the community know who is responsible for the murders but will not release the information because they know what the outcome will be.

Mr. Harris commented a resolution will not be met until someone informs the police of who is responsible for the murders, and if the police inform the public that the informant is a snitch it gets the informant killed. That is not the way to do business but that is how it's done here.

Mr. Harris commented the Police Department has some bad apples on the force who ride up and down the roads looking for drugs while the killers are walking right by them. Mr. Harris continued by commenting an investigation in the Police Department from the Chief down to the lowest ranking officer is needed to see who is worthy of the badge and who will not get an informant killed.

Joshua Haire, 165 Morganwood Drive, Seven Lakes, commented the community looks to Council for help and trusts that Council will assist with the issues. Mr. Haire commented they are doing all they can do and asked Council to tell the citizens what they can do further do to help with the investigations.

Mr. Haire continued by commenting the citizens are not trying to create a problem but are trying to correct it and the citizens trust Council to do what they can and asked Council to contact some of the citizens to inform them of any progress in the investigations and commented that they hope and pray that these investigations will be resolved.

Greg Zywockinski, 230 Grove Road, commented that he is concerned with the crime problem and seconded all previous comments. Mr. Zywockinski continued by commenting that things have changed in Southern Pines and we are all in this together.

Mr. Zywockinski commented that it concerns him when someone is shot no matter the location, that he is shaken up over the issues and that Town safety should become Council's #1 priority.

Laura Jackson, 106 Martin Street, Carthage, commented she moved here from New York to provide a better place for her children to grow up and since then, she has had friends and family killed in the area. Ms. Jackson continued by commenting she may have made a mistake by moving here.

Donnie Miller, 510 W. Vermont Avenue, commented that some people have more confidence in Council to make things happen than he does and he thinks there is a 'non-caring attitude' about the murders and that the Town should pursue outside help.

Mr. Miller commented he feels there is an East Southern Pines and a West Southern Pines and that West Southern Pines is a step-child to the Town, just getting the bare minimum. Mr. Miller commented that something more has to be done.

Elder Lee Harris commented that none of the victims had guns when they were killed and the issues were not about drugs. Mr. Harris continued by commenting that the crimes were brought to Southern Pines.

Mayor McNeill thanked those in attendance and commented that many emotions have been felt over the past year and a half and those 5 murders within a 15 month time period is very uncharacteristic of our area.

Mayor McNeill commented that Council is very aware of each of the incidents and that it concerns all of us. Mayor McNeill continued by commenting that he has high confidence in the Police Chief and his staff and that they are doing everything possible.

Mayor McNeill commented that the Police Department's ability to solve the cases would be a lot easier if the community came forward to testify what they saw. Mayor McNeill continued by commenting the Police Department has legal procedures they must follow and they only get one chance to get it right.

Mayor McNeill commented that when these things happen in Town, the Council is concerned and there is no one that wants these issues resolved more.

Councilmember VanCamp thanked those in attendance and commented this is heartbreaking but she has had conversations with the Police Chief and he is doing a great job with the investigations. Councilmember VanCamp continued by commenting that funds have been allocated for equipment to assist the Police Department to solve such investigations.

Councilmember VanCamp commented that the Police Chief has a very proactive attitude and is looking for outside assistance and continued by commenting that the new developments in Town pale in comparison to the Town's safety and that is what Council cares about.

Councilmember Walden commented that Council has met with the Police Chief and this is not something that is being ignored but Council can only do so much because the final outcome is in the courts. Councilmember Walden continued by commenting that Council shares in what the families have gone through.

Councilmember Walden commented that the Town is doing what it can to come to a resolution to these issues but without the cooperation of everyone, there is not much anyone can do and that one of the biggest problems is that no one wants to testify in court due to fear of retaliation.

Councilmember Walden commented that Council cares about the Town although the citizens may not hear a lot of discussion regarding the murder investigations and that perception is one of the biggest problems in Town.

As so incorporated to these minutes of January 14, 2014 are exact copies as so recorded in the ordinance and resolution books of the Town of Southern Pines as fully set out in the minutes.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

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Phillip Britt  
Town Clerk