

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE NEWTON CITY COUNCIL

October 6, 2015 – 7 p.m.

The regular meeting of the Newton City Council was held at 7 p.m. Tuesday, October 6, 2015, at Newton City Hall.

PRESENT: Mayor Anne P. Stedman, Mayor Pro Tem Mary Bess Lawing and Council Members Wes Weaver, Robert C. Abernethy, Jr., Wayne Dellinger, John Stiver and Tom Rowe

STAFF: City Manager Todd Clark, City Clerk Amy S. Falowski, Assistant City Manager Sean Hovis, City Attorney John Cilley, City Department Heads and members of the management team

ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Anne P. Stedman welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

ITEM 2: OPENING Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Council Member John Stiver gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ITEM 3: APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Upon motion duly made by Mayor Pro Tem Mary Bess Lawing, seconded by Council Member Robert C. Abernethy, Jr., it was unanimously RESOLVED:

That the Regular Minutes of the September 15, 2015, City Council meeting be –
APPROVED

ITEM 4: CONSIDERATION OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Upon motion duly made by Mayor Pro Tem Mary Bess Lawing, seconded by Council Member Tom Rowe, it was unanimously RESOLVED:

That the Consent Agenda be – APPROVED

- A. Tax Releases
- B. Sewer Adjustments
- C. Consideration of Rental Rate Schedule for Charter Communications Electric Pole
- D. Consideration of Resolution to Proclaim the City of Newton a Purple Heart City

Mayor Stedman read the Resolution proclaiming the City of Newton a Purple Heart City and presented the Resolution to Mr. John Eller.

- E. Consideration of Appointment to the Business Advisory Committee – Jennifer Stiver
- F. Proclamation – Fire Prevention Week – October 4-10, 2015

(Ordinances, Resolutions and Proclamations are hereby referenced and on file in the Office of the City Clerk)

ITEM 5: **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC: PEOPLE WHO WISH TO COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS ARE ASKED TO SIGN IN WITH THE CITY CLERK PRIOR TO THE MEETING.**

Mayor Anne P. Stedman asked if anyone present would like to make comment concerning non-agenda items.

Reverend Dwayne Tutt, pastor of Thomas Chapel AME Zion Church in Conover spoke about his wish for the mayor and city council to come up with another way to celebrate Soldiers' Reunion without ties to Confederate soldiers. Reverend Tutt stated that he likes the idea of people coming together and celebrating, but not how the event is celebrated. Reverend Tutt stated that he does not agree that the Confederate soldiers that gather annually in Newton seeking pensions for their military service should be celebrated. Reverend Tutt stated that he did not want the city of Newton or the fine people of Newton to stop having the annual celebration. Reverend Tutt stated that he felt sorrow for both sides of the Civil War and the families affected by the bloodshed. He stated that the Civil War is over and that we cannot allow our parades in 2015 to have people carrying Confederate flags marching down the streets with church floats, school kids, sports teams, city officials, and anyone who finds the Confederate flag offensive. Reverend Tutt stated that the shooting of nine African-Americans in a historic church in Charleston, S.C. has forced security concerns at the Newton parade. He stated that he realizes people have a right to free speech and to peacefully assemble, but that there is a time and place for it but he does not think that a local government should allow Confederate soldier sympathizers to march in the same parade with people that want to celebrate how good God has been to Newton.

Reverend Tutt stated that we are all in this together and he hopes that we can find a way to do this differently to benefit all.

Mayor Stedman thanked Reverend Tutt for coming and stated that she hopes a meeting can be scheduled soon to discuss what steps might be taken.

Collette Touchette, Chairperson for the Appearance Committee, stated that Curb Appeal Newton will be Friday and Saturday the 23rd and 24th.

Sylvia Ray stated that the Soldiers Reunion Parade does not represent just any one group. She stated that it is to praise the men and women that have gone to war for this country currently and in the past. Ms. Ray stated that the parade is to honor our veterans, and that she wishes Mr. Tutt had been here long enough to know that this parade is just to say thank you.

ITEM 6: **New Business**

A. Presentation – Business Advisory Committee

Jerry Hodge, Chairman of the Business Advisory Committee, presented the City Council with a slide show outlining how the City of Newton and Catawba Valley Home Builders Association is currently building partnerships to grow the City of Newton.

Mayor Stedman thanked Mr. Hodge for his presentation and for the hard work of the Business Advisory Committee.

ITEM 7: **City Manager's Report**

- Newton 101 Began September 10th and will run every Thursday **ending October 22nd at Abernethy Laurels**

- NCLM Annual Conference – October 10-13, 2015 in Winston Salem.
- **Mayor Stedman, Mayor Pro Tem Lawing, Council Member Stiver and City Manager Todd Clark will be attending**
- Future Charlotte Breakfast Forum – October 14, 2014
- Leaf pick up begins the first week in November
- Toby Tyler Circus – Oct., 9th, 10th and 11th
- Brownfields

Planning Director Randy Williams presented the City Council with information pertaining to the Brownfields Program and benefits that this program creates for local communities.

- Building Re-use Grant
- Audit
- Fire Truck Delivery

Fire Chief Kevin Yoder stated that the Fire Tanker Truck has arrived.

- Hwy 16 Construction Project
- Information Systems Director Position

Projects

1. South Caldwell Culvert Project
2. Storm Report
3. Sidewalk Replacement Project (18th, 19th Streets and North Main)

ITEM 8: Questions and Comments from Mayor and Council

Council Member Robert C. Abernethy, Jr. stated that he would like to see more information on the Streetscape Master Plan, and discuss more ideas that could make it happen. He stated that he has seen information in the public that he wasn't aware of.

ITEM 9: Closed Session – NCGS 143-318.11(a)(5)

Upon motion duly made by Council Member Wes Weaver, seconded by Council Member John Stiver, it was unanimously RESOLVED:

That the City Council enter CLOSED SESSION per G.S. 143-318-11(a)(5)

Council Member Wes Weaver made the motion to go back into open session, which was seconded by Council Member Robert C. Abernethy, Jr. All Ayes.

ITEM 10: Adjournment

Upon motion duly made by Council Member Wes Weaver, seconded by Council Member Robert C. Abernethy, Jr., it was unanimously RESOLVED:

That the Meeting be – ADJOURNED

Amy S. Falowski, City Clerk



Anne P. Stedman, Mayor