

TOWN OF GREENSBORO  
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING  
March 1, 2018

In Attendance: Mayor Noon, Commissioners Williamson, Reichart and Mackey

Jeannette DeLude, Amber Korell, Dave Kibler, Offc. Ray, Chief Petyo,  
Brynja Booth-Attorney

Public: Rick Faust, Chris Hammer, Abbey Andrews-Star Democrat, Ceres Bainbridge, Christina Robinson, Katrina Thomas, Todd Davis, Tom Mc Knight, Wallace Gould, Robert Thomas, Robert Thomas Jr. , Marian Garey, Mary Riddleberger, Mary Baker

The meeting was called to order at 7:00p.

Minutes from the February Town Council Meetings were reviewed and approved.

Todd Davis- Hot Air Balloon

Currently they are launching the hot air balloons from the Choptank River Park but they were recently made aware that the property is now owned by the Town. They were interested in still launching from there and working out something with the Town to allow them to do that. Dave said once they get a completed park plan they could sit down and review the tree plantings to see if they would interfere with the launching. These trees will be small this year but in years to come they will become large and make it not possible to launch from this site, but maybe we can work something out in the meantime.

Ceres Bainbridge- Caroline County Tourism Office

Ceres thanked the council for their donation last year and showed them some of the flyers, articles, and other media she was able to create using the funds. Currently they are working on a Harriet Tubman Trail Byways with over 100 Trek girls whom will be taking the journey through the county. They would love to be able to create more media resources and hold additional events this year and appreciate any monies the town is able to donate.

GVFC- Rick Faust

Thank you to all who attended the Fire Banquet.

The fundraiser committee has been busy putting together events; we will get you a full list of fundraisers.

GVFC submitted a budget request the same as last year, more would always be better but we are appreciative for what we receive.

Public Forum:

*Christina Robinson-520 W Sunset Avenue*

Christina spoke on behalf of citizens with who had concerns regarding the recent police department hire; she presented a list questions from the public to the Council. Citizens said they are worried about the message the town was sending to people, especially people of color, both in Greensboro and surrounding areas, by hiring Webster and questioned the lack of communication with residents before his hiring and why the towns department needed a forth officer. The Commissioners said Webster was the strongest applicant of about 15 interviewed for the position, passed all background checks and evaluations and was

eager to work with the community. Mayor Noon acknowledged that the dash cam video footage looked bad, but said Webster had been found not guilty. Noon said he would never do anything to knowingly put the town's citizens in danger. "The council is giving Webster a second chance".

Robinson read one such question, asking if Webster's hiring indicated a shift to a more militarized style of policing within the town. "Is this what the mayor and council are going for? Robinson read. "If not, what message do you think this sends to the citizens and people outside the town? Is the goal to discourage people of color from moving here?" Commissioner Mackey said the dash cam footage the public saw was only a snippet of the full story; "People never saw the complete story of what happened". Noon said he knows where everyone is coming from and since the news broke his personal phone has been ringing off the hook. Robinson said even if it is true the public does not know the full story based on the video alone, what can be seen in the video still affects the public's perception.

The next question Robinson read asked why the town police department, which has always operated with three officers, now needed a fourth officer. Commissioner Mackey stated the Sgt. Gardner intends on retiring sometime before the end of 2018. Webster was hired now so he will be trained in time for Gardner's departure. Mackey added this town can't afford a fourth officer and we won't have a four.

Robinson read a question asking why there were no public meetings concerning Webster's potential hiring. Mackey said the town has never involved the public in the hiring process for a town employee before, but he sees where the question is coming from in this particular case.

Greensboro Police Chief Michael Petyo said he personally performed a deep background check on Webster. In Addition to the usual polygraph test, psychiatric evaluation and former employer interviews, Petyo said he visited some of the Dover neighborhoods Webster patrolled while an officer there. "These were high crime areas", Petyo said. "The residents had nothing but good things to say about him, that he was a people person, he got things done."

Petyo said Webster's former supervisor in Dover also told him if he had been Chief, Webster would not have been let go. "I looked at the totality of the applicant", Petyo said. "This is someone not afraid to his job, who wants to be embedded in the community."

Robert Thomas, another concerned citizen, said watching the video, he was most concerned about the tactics Webster used to address Dickerson, who was unarmed. "This is a training thing, not a black and white thing" Thomas stated. Petyo said Webster is now in training for state certification and will get much more training once he joins the Greensboro force. "Training is paramount for everyone in this department", Petyo said.

Mary Baker, another concerned citizen, asked if there was any truth to rumors going around social media- that Webster had previously applied to join the Caroline County Sheriff's Office but was turned down, and that he and Petyo had been roommates in the police academy. Noon said that only the sheriff's office would know if Webster had applied; the town was not privy to that information. Petyo said he went through the academy two years after Webster, and only knew him in passing, Webster worked in Dover and Petyo worked for nearby Wyoming.

Robinsons final question was who would be responsible if there was another incident while Webster is employed by the town; the City of Dover paid Webster \$230,000 over six years after this release from the police department, on the condition had would never again seek employment there, and paid Dickerson \$300,000 to drop a federal civil rights lawsuit against the city. Town attorney Brynja Booth said Greensboro would be responsible. Robinson said the citizens' questions were not an attack on the police department or the town, and the circulating rumors and fears could have been staved off from the

beginning if the town had been more transparent. “This is the problem when we don’t address things beforehand”, Robinson said. “We get misinformation” “This has been a learning experience”, said Noon. Town Manager Jeannette DeLude said an “open house” will be held once Webster is through training, to give the public a chance to meet him. She said similar events are held for every police officer hired by the Town.

Noon said Webster had offered to attend the meeting and speak to the citizens himself, but town officials asked him to wait. The discussion concluded DeLude, Petyo and Noon offering to talk to any citizen, at any time, about any concerns.

*Jessica Hill- CC Law Enforcement*

Jessica has worked at the Caroline County Detention Center for seven years states the Greensboro Police Department are doing an outstanding job!!! She has seen them more in the last 7 months then she has seen in the last 7 years.

*Dom Brandford-312 W Sunset*

Dom stated he has a son who has autism/aspersers and his son sometimes makes sudden movements that may look odd; and he just wanted the police department to be aware to avoid any issues in the future is they happen to see his son out and about.

Parks Board-Comm. Williamson

Fishing Derby May 5, 2018-volunteers needed

Shirts, prizes and trophies have been ordered

Scales for Tales has been booked

Christina asked the council if they would match our donations that the board raised last year and give the parks board \$1,000 more in their budget for Christmas lights.

Public Works- Dave Kibler

PW has been preparing all week for the upcoming winds tomorrow. Trees will up root and that will be a potential issue.

Goldsboro the wells will need to be double casing per the health department which will be an additional fee.

Police Department- Chief Petyo

February stat report to the council

Chief will be working with the Greensboro Elem School in the next few weeks on active shooter drills. There will be increased police presence in the schools 2x a day, as well as safety signs for in case of a “situation”.

Town Manager: Jeannette DeLude

See Report

Old Business

Comm. Reichart made a motion to approve the new fee schedule; Comm. Mackey seconded the motion. All approved.

New Business

Mandatory recycling ordinance council will discuss at the next workshop.

Bills

Bills were reviewed and approved.

Town Council Remarks:

Public Comments:

Christina Robinson asked about a youth center in the old town hall upstairs space and if that would be able to serve as a youth center. Jeannette explained it could be done but there would need to be some major construction work on the upstairs as well as an access from the downstairs. Currently the only way to get upstairs is through the Law Office side we rent to Mrs. Swafford.

Dave suggests we contact the church on Park Avenue because they had once said they wanted to be part of the community.

Comm. Williamson made a motion of exc. session at 8:30pm for personnel issues and legal advice;  
Comm. Reichart seconded the motion. All approved.

Meeting adjourned 8:30pm for exc. session.

Respectfully Prepared by  
Amber Korell