

September 12, 1995

The Middlesex Governing Body met in regular session on September 12, 1995. The meeting was held in the Middlesex Community Building due to a large attendance of citizens in reference to a proposal on abolishing the Middlesex Police Department. Members present were Commissioners David Jordan, Isaac Lewis, Jerry Daniel, Bascoe Lewis and Naomi Powell. There were approximately 200-225 people present for the meeting. The building was filled to capacity and windows were opened so those on the outside could hear.

In the absence of Mayor Lewis, who passed away on August 23rd, Clerk Bissette called the meeting to order and asked for a minute of silence in honor of Mr. Lewis. The clerk then stated that the first item of business was the appointment of a Mayor Pro-Tem from among its members. Commissioner Daniel moved to appoint Commissioner Jordan as Mayor Pro-Tem, his motion was seconded by Commissioner Isaac Lewis and carried with a majority of 3 to 1 with Commissioner Powell voting against the appointment.

Mayor Pro-Tem Jordan asked Bill Morris to give the invocation. Jordan then addressed the group and stated that each one would be given the opportunity to speak on the issue at hand.

Commissioner Naomi Powell asked Mayor Pro-Tem Jordan for recognition to speak. She address the crowd and stated that Commissioners Jordan and Daniel and deceased Mayor Harvey Lewis had made a visit to the Sheriff Grimes of the Nash County Sheriff's Dept. and asked for a proposal to provide law enforcement protection to the Town of Middlesex if Middlesex abolished its police department. She stated that prior to the visit to the sheriff they had been to the town attorney to determine if would be legal to abolish the police department, and had done so without discussing it with any of the other board members. Powell said that Commissioner Jordan delivered copies of the proposal to her and Commissioners Basco Lewis and Isaac Lewis.

Commissioner Powell further stated that once she had read the proposal she called Commissioner Jordan and asked him to withdraw the copies from each member and not to present it for discussion, that the citizens would not appreciate this proposal and he replied, absolutely not.

Commissioner Powell stated that she was not the person responsible for sending a copy of the proposal to the press, who had printed articles on the issue but was glad someone else did. She read the proposal to the group as follows:

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN;

On August 17, 1995 Harvey Lewis, David Jordan and Jerry Daniels, of the Town of Middlesex met with the Nash County Sheriff's Office to discuss plans of abolishing their police department. These plans appear to have been brought on by economical problems with the police department. After hearing the plans, the Nash County Sheriff's Office agreed to take over Police Services for the town and to assist them in any way possible.

On August 29, 1995 David Jordan met at the Nash County Sheriff's Office and discussed the time frame of the actions to be taken by the Town of Middlesex. Mr. Jordan stated the town was prepared to pay for two deputies and transfer the current police vehicles to the Sheriff's Office if police services were assumed by the county. Mr. Jordan asked to received a letter explaining the costs of the deputies and the type of services the sheriff's office would provide.

The Nash County Sheriff's Office has agreed to undertake police services for the town of Middlesex with the agreement that the town pay the expenses of two deputies at an annual cost of \$60,394.00 and the town transfer control of the current police vehicles and equipment.

Although police services will be moved outside the town, interruptions in police service should be minimal. The sheriff's office has a patrol district that will cover the Middlesex area. Response time will increase due to the distance that will be traveled during a

response. The area deputy will be directed to stay in the Middlesex area as much as possible. However, if he receives a call or has to serve a warrant outside the town this will effect his response time.

The following police services will not be retained if the sheriff's office takes control; unlocking vehicles, parking enforcement, no escorts will be conducted other than funerals, after three alarm calls a business may be responsible to pay the sheriff's office for each additional response, and although traffic will be monitored the sheriff's office does not have a traffic division.

The Nash County Sheriff's Office will provide an immediate response to all emergency calls. Deputies responding to calls in the Middlesex area will be professional and courteous. Nash County Deputies are well trained and have a supervisor on duty 24 hours. All crimes that occur in Middlesex that are not solved by a patrol deputy will be assigned to an investigator.

This agreement will be formalized and transferred to a contract that will be reviewed annually. This contract will be drawn by the county attorney. The contract will be drawn to the effect that each party will be in agreement and be satisfied with its content."

The following cost and expenses associated with hiring and training a deputy. These estimates do not include vehicle expense.

Salary/benefits/equipment/training....	
annual salary-----	\$ 20,772.00
retirement-----	1,039.00
supplemental retirement-----	897.00
fica expense-----	1,589.00
health/life insurance-----	2,100.00
basic law enforcement training---	1,000.00
uniforms-----	950.00
equipment-----	1,850.00
 Total cost per deputy-----	 \$30,197.00
@ 2 deputies.....	60,394.00

Commissioner Powell stated the letter had no official signature but was typed Respectfully yours, Jimmy Grimes, Sheriff. She told the group that the town was not having any financial problems and this could not be labeled as economical, when in fact a 3% salary increase had been granted to all employees effective July 1, 1995 and the town had recently purchased a new police vehicle, and appropriated \$25,000.00 to upgrade the police department building, and that she felt this was a ploy to be used against the police department for personal reasons.

Commissioner Daniel stated that he was speaking on the issue of why he, Mayor Lewis and Commissioner Jordan met with the sheriff. He said the first issue was to make certain that the town had adequate police coverage at all times. He indicated that the commissioners were given information that most of the Middlesex policemen were looking for new jobs and they wanted to make the sheriff aware of the situation. He also said that the sheriff assured them, at that meeting, that Middlesex would have adequate police coverage.

Commissioner Daniel said the second issue was one of combining resources for police coverage between the town of Middlesex and Nash County. The issue was raised at the first meeting and subsequently Commissioner Jordan asked for a written proposal which might be presented to the Board for discussion. Commissioner Daniel stated that he felt the Commissioners had an obligation to provide quality services at the lowest cost and that currently people in Middlesex were double taxed for police services. He further stated that he was not happy with the proposal and that it needed some work, but that it was a way to provide government services in a less expensive manner. He explained that the sewer project that the commissioners had been working on was a \$2 million project and that although the town was financially healthy, the expense of that project may require tax increases.

Mayor Pro-Tem Jordan spoke to the group " I want to explain that there was no discussion between the council as to why you people are setting there and the reason it was put on the agenda tonight is that it was given verbatim by some member of this board to

the press. Each one was given a copy so this board could discuss it and come to a viable proposal. In the event you do not have a police department in the town then you will need some form of protection, and from the chief's own statement, everybody in his department is looking work elsewhere."

He asked the citizens who were being very unruly to please quieten down, and each one would be given a chance to speak according to the signatures on the request sheet, they were as follows:

1. Terry Longacre--"I have lived in Middlesex for two years and drive 100 miles per day to work in order to live in a town where I feel that my family is safe, we need a police department and this town needs Chief Brock."
2. Stanley Drewery--"I have lived here over ten years and do not agree with everything the police department does but we need a police force and the board should not try to do anything behind the backs of the citizens."
3. Jack Pyritz, representing Fawn Industries read a letter from Steve Pautz, Plant Manager in support of the police department.
4. Bobby Radford--"I've lived in Middlesex for over thirty years and operate a business, and I have had to call on the Nash County Sheriff's Department and their response time is very lengthy, we need our police force."
5. Charles Wood--"I am highly in favor of keeping the Middlesex Police Department."
6. Danny Alford--"I have lived here my entire life and I do not believe the sheriff's deputies could respond as quickly as our own force. A lot of elderly live here and they do not need to be living in fear. When I was annexed, tho I did not wish to be, I was told that police protection

would be one of the services I would get and now you want to take that away, I feel we need our police force."

7. Derek Bissette--"I've lived here all my life and was also recently annexed when I did not want to be but now that I am in town I am paying for police protection and have two sets of elderly grandparents and feel that they should be checked on and he also wanted to know just who voted to do get this proposal so the citizens could know who to vote for in November."
8. Bobby Bissette--"I've lived here all my life and appreciate the fact that you (the board members) are willing to serve the public but I have two questions (1) According to the letter from Grimes, Mr. Jordan stated that the town was prepared to pay for two deputies and to turn over ownership of the equipment and I want to know who gave him the authority to make that statement and what meeting it was done in and (2) how much money does the town have?"

In response to Bissette's first question, Commissioner Powell stated that she had never attended any meeting when Commissioner Jordan was given the authority to make that statement and Clerk Bissette stated that the town had approximately \$360,000.00 on hand.

9. Robert Matthews representing Heritage Bank--
"We do not get a lot of service from Nash County and with two banks here we need the protection of a local police department."
10. Earl Price, Pastor Middlesex Pen. Holiness Church stated that Middlesex needed its police force. That sometimes late at night when he was inside the church that he could see the patrol car as it went by and that was comforting.
11. Jimmy Meacombs--"I've lived here all my life and I want to tell you that you are elected by the people to represent the people and you can see tonight that the people of Middlesex want to keep their police department."

12. Henry Lee Manning--"I've lived in Middlesex most of my life and I am against abolishing the police force, recently I have noticed an increase in police patrol and think it is a good thing. I also have to question the timing of this proposal. You board members tell us that it is being considered now, but it all took place after an incident between the police department and some board members and the police department should be left alone."
13. Micheal Jones--"I've only lived in Middlesex for the past two years but I have questions as to what really motivated this proposal, but after reading the town charter, you are within your legal rights but I have requested of the State's Attorney General's Office to look into the entire matter and see if any laws have been broken and I feel that the destruction of the Middlesex Police Department is a personal vendetta."
14. Randy Glover, representing Triangle Bank--
"I am concerned about the safety of employees and assets if the police department is abolished."
15. Al Smith, Middlesex Pharmacy--"I have great appreciation for the department, we have had a robbery at gun point and needed someone instantly. The visibility of police officers have provided a safety factor and urged the board to keep its police force."
16. Ann Radford--"nothing was ever said until the Daniel's man got a ticket for drunk driving, and if he's no better to get a ticket than anyone else, and if you've ever had a loved one to get killed by a drunk driver you will leave this police department alone."
17. Barbara Bunn--"would you resign your positions? Where were you when Vennie Brock has been on call and answered when needed?"
18. Beatrice Hales--"Vennie Brock has been good to all of the old people, he really checks our homes, please keep the police department as it is."

19. Juanita Davis--"We had a police department in depression days and we need one now worse than then. We need police protection."
20. Allan Womble--"I don't live in town, but in the area, and I can tell you, you cant depend on the sheriff's dept, and I got a ticket for drunk driving but nobody ever said anything about that one, I deserved it, I was drunk but nothing was ever said."
21. Gillistine Pearce--"I had a need to call 911 recently, Vennie Brock responded within 3 minutes, the sheriff department was over 15 minutes to respond, we need to keep our police department"
22. Mozell Icenogle--"Please keep our department as it is, we have needed an officer and Vennie Brock has responded even when off duty, we need Brock."
23. Jimmy Radford--"I live in the Bryants Trailer Park and someone tried to break in my trailer recently, and Vennie Brock was there in just a few minutes even though he was off duty."
24. Ben Brantley--"Mr. Daniel, you stated that you went to the Sheriff's Department because you were afraid of all your policemen leaving at one time, Did you not call for one's resignation?"
25. JoAnn Woodard--"Leave the police department alone and let them do their job."
26. Pam Singletary--"Every time I have needed anyone from the Middlesex Police Department, they have been right there on time, leave them men alone."
27. Sonia Hinnant--"Please look to other ways of cutting expense if it is a matter of economics, Nash County Sheriff's Department will not put into Middlesex what these men do."
28. Bill Morris--"I have lived here many years and we need a police force, there's an old saying- If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

Mayor Pro-Tem Jordan said he appreciated everyone coming and all the comments, and he knew he could not change the minds of the people but the intentions of this proposal were in the best interest of the town, and it was not discussed in a regular meeting but was obtained in order to begin looking ahead for economic reasons.

Barbara Ridgeway commented that it just sounded like something to get rid of Vennie Brock.

Commissioner Powell stated that David Jordan stood in her house and told her that he did not want the contents of this letter let out to the public until after this meeting, to which Jordan replied, simply because of this type of event.

Jordan then asked if anyone else wanted to speak on this subject and several people spoke from their seats in anger about the situation.

The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved in a motion by Commissioner Bascoe Lewis and seconded by Commissioner Daniel and carried unanimously.

The Financial Statements were presented and Commissioner Powell moved to accept them as correct, her motion was seconded by Commissioner Isaac Lewis and carried unanimously.

Chief Brock was present for a report on the activities of the police department for the previous month. He presented a resignation from Richard Lambert, who has accepted employment with the Wake County Sheriff's Dept.

Chief Brock stated that he had been asked by Jordan to log the mileage of the patrol cars on the officers time cards and he felt this added to their work load, and was repetitious since the mileage was entered on the daily log sheet. He stated that he had been told by board members that the patrol cars had been seen outside of town and he would like to know where they were seen in order for him to confront his officers.

Mayor Pro-Tem Jordan stated that the request to log the mileage on the time cards was due to the fact that on some

occasions, the log sheets could not be located when he went into the police office. Chief Brock replied that sometimes there was confidential information on a log sheet that required it to be filed from public inspection, to which Commissioner Daniel replied that was exactly why the request was made to put the mileage on the time sheets and to continue the practice.

Commissioner Powell asked Brock if he thought this action was taken as a result of the action of a certain ticket being written, to which Brock replied, "there were no problems with any board members over anything until after this ticket was written.

Jordan stated that he wanted to make it clear that this board had never interfered with Brock's ability to do his job and he had never asked Brock to fire Mark Bryant over the ticket being written, but he felt Bryant was guilty of insubordination, and the press had made a field day of all of this.

Jordan was asked to define insubordination by press reporter, Laura Keeter. Jordan stated that Bryant was guilty of insubordination when he failed to obey an order given to him by the Mayor of the

Town of Middlesex. Patrick Ridgeway asked Jordan to tell the group what that order was, and if in fact was it not an order made by former Mayor Harvey Lewis to Bryant, not to patrol the Children's Home Road on a particular night because his son, who lived on that road was having a party, and how could a man be guilty of insubordination to follow an order that was illegal for a mayor to give.

Jordan stated that employees of the town were supposed to follow the orders of the governing body, and he felt Bryant was insubordinate not only to Lewis but also to his chief, because if he felt that someone had asked him to do something illegal, he should have gone to the chief before he did anything else.

The Board reviewed a letter from Risk Management Services in reference to the Safety Officer and

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The Board reviewed a letter from Risk Management Services in reference to the Safety Officer and

their findings when visiting Middlesex. The subject was tabled until the next regular meeting in a motion by Commissioner Powell, carried by Commissioner Daniel and carried unanimously.

Commissioner Bascoe Lewis moved to reject the proposal from Sheriff Grimes to provide Law Enforcement Protection for the Town of Middlesex, his motion was seconded by Commissioner Isaac Lewis and carried unanimously. After this motion a large part of the crowd left the building.

Commissioner Daniel moved to adopt the following resolution in reference to the amended By-Laws of the Region L Council of Governments.

WHEREAS, the Town of Middlesex is a member government of Region L Council of Governments,

WHEREAS, the governing body has reviewed the amendments to the Bylaws of the Region L Council of Governments and approves of the changes and additions,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners, that the Town of Middlesex adopts the Amended Bylaws of the Region L Council of Governments.

DULY ADOPTED this 12th day of September, 1995.

Bobby R. Bissett
Authorized Elected Official

Attest: Peggy Bissett
clerk

Commissioner Daniel's motion was seconded by Commissioner Bascoe Lewis and carried unanimously.

Commissioner Bascoe Lewis moved to accept the resignation of Margaret Holland from her position of Librarian, his motion was seconded by Commissioner Daniel and carried unanimously.

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Commissioner Bascoe Lewis moved to adjust the water bill of Douglas Burnett from \$144.80 to \$88.40, his motion was seconded by Commissioner Daniel and carried unanimously.

Commissioner Daniel moved to appoint Bascoe Lewis to countersign all checks, his motion was seconded by Commissioner Isaac Lewis and carried unanimously.

Mayor Pro-Tem Jordan asked if the board wanted to appoint a Mayor at this meeting, and Commissioner Powell moved to appoint Bobby R. Bisette, former Mayor and candidate on this years ballot to serve the remainder of Harvey Lewis's term, her motion was seconded by Commissioner Bascoe Lewis and opened for discussion.

Jordan stated that he was not in favor of any member of this board showing favor of any candidate over another and could not support this motion since there were two candidates on the ballot, Commissioner Daniel stated that he felt the same way and it did not in any way reflect any ill feeling towards Bisette. There was no other discussion on the issue and Jordan called for a vote.

Powell's motion to appoint Bobby R. Bisette to serve the remainder of Lewis's term as Mayor was carried by a majority of votes with Commissioners Bascoe Lewis, Naomi Powell and Isaac Lewis voting yes, and Commissioner Jerry Daniel and Mayor Pro-Tem Jordan voting no.

Bobby R. Bisette stated that he felt honored to be asked to serve and but would do so with mixed feelings with the citizens and the board under such strained emotions, but since a majority wanted him to serve, he would take the job and do the best job that he could do.

Goy Gene Pearce approached the board and asked if they were aware of his sewage problem at the RockSide Grill and there was a discussion of the sewer moratorium and his problem. Pearce could not understand why IKEX was added to the town sewer line and his business was out of town.

Commissioner Isaac Lewis tried to explain that he had requested sewer services prior to the town being put on the moratorium and even then had to wait for several weeks after his building was complete to turn the service on.

At this time, Bobby Ray Bisette was sworn in as Mayor of Middlesex by an oath administered by Magistrate Oris Stallings.

Mayor Bisette asked if there was any more business to come before the board and there being none, Commissioner Daniel moved to adjourn.

Peggy Bisette
Peggy Bisette
Town Clerk

Mayor Bobby R. Bisette
Mayor Pro-Tem David Jordan
Commissioners
Naomi Powell
Bascoe Lewis
Jerry Daniel
Isaac Lewis