

Middlesex Governing Body Meeting Minutes
July 14, 2014

Mayor Lewis opened the floor for a Public Hearing at 7:30pm. The purpose of the hearing is to solicit comments and ideas from the citizens on any potential project ideas for funding under the 2014 Community Development Block-Infrastructure Grant which has a September 2, 2014 deadline. This round provides funding towards water and wastewater improvements benefiting residential areas with primarily low and moderate income residents. The town's intention for the funds is to rehabilitate/replace eight (8) sewer lift stations as stated in Resolution R2014-1127, as this is a top priority. Dennis Patton, Grant Writer with the Upper Coastal Council of Governments, addressed the citizens and asked for input.

Patton advised that the town had submitted an application on May 1, 2014 for the 2013 round of CDBG funding in the amount of \$896,894 to repair/replace nine (9) wastewater lift stations. The award for this round have not yet been announced.

If the 2013 application is funded, the town has the opportunity to submit a new proposal for its next greatest need. If the 2013 application is not funded, the town may resubmit the proposal for improvements contained within the 2013 application, revise the 2013 funding proposal, or submit a new proposal.

Prior to submitting an application for the 2014 round of funding, a second public hearing is required, which will specify the project description, area served, and the amount of funding.

Citizen Robert Johnson asked how much of the \$896,894 would help with the town's utility bills and how it will effect the customer's sewer bills. Mr. Patton explained that the vast majority of the money goes toward actual construction costs, some to engineering costs and a portion for grant administration. He further explained that the grant funds used will make the pumps and sewer system operate more efficiently, which may keep the utility bills from increasing. Mayor Lewis further explained that six of nine lift stations, which have been in place since 1996-1997 are to be completely redone. The town has a total of eleven (11) lift stations, and once the six stations are redone, the town's system will be in fairly new condition. In answering Johnson's question, he noted that we are trying to do what we can to keep from spending town funds on repairing and replacing sewer pumps, and are anticipating systematically replacing/repairing the lift stations one by one until finished, and this should keep bills down. If the town is not awarded any funds, we will do the most we can with the least amount of money. The town's second priority is inflow problems.

Citizen Edna Mount asked if the town had received previous grants which were used for sewer pump repairs. The Board replied "not to their knowledge". Clerk Lambert added the only sewer rehab grant she was aware of was back in early 2002-2003 and the funds were used for repairing inflow and infiltration in sewer lines, and manhole repairs, but no

funds were used for pump stations. Cash Cameron asked if any funds would be used for household lines, and Mayor Lewis answered that household lines would not be included and advised that he could address his concern about his water line during the Public Comment Session. Commissioner Alford asked when the town would hear from the first grant application. Mr. Patton stated that the decision should be made on July 17, 2014. With no further questions/comments, Mayor Lewis closed the public hearing.

Mayor Lewis then called the regularly scheduled meeting to order and gave the invocation. Commissioners Harold Meacombs, Danny Alford, Cherrye Davis, Ann Lewis, and J.W. McClenny were all present. Approximately twenty guests attended.

Before the regular business, Mayor Lewis introduced John Anthony, Anthony and Tabb, PA, the town's auditor, to address the citizens regarding the financial condition of the town after the recent embezzlement case involving Administrative Assistant Shelly Woodruff. Anthony stated that when the info broke about money taken from the town, he happened to be in the area and he stopped by to give Jennifer a pep talk. He assured the citizens the Town Board had a good system in place that works for a town this size. To put things into perspective, the town has a system that works, but basically there is no way to assure no money will ever be taken, even if you hired a security guard. The estimated \$5,000 taken is a small amount in comparison to the town's annual budget, its' cash and assest, and there will be no loss to the town because the loss is covered by the town's blanket bond. Most important, he said, was that it did not go on for long. Anthony continued by stating that this took place over thirty to sixty days. When customers began coming in with incorrect bills, Jennifer Lambert researched and found the problem. Jennifer immediately reported the problem to Mayor Lewis, and he and Chief Dennis Murray acted quickly. One of the issues with the new software installed in February discovered was it allows a receipt to be modified and there is no audit trail. The flaw in the system is it wipes out the original transaction. Jennifer and Mayor Lewis immediately notified the software company in writing of this problem, along with another problem she discovered, and the software company has assured that their development and programming team are working to resolve these issues. Anthony commented that he had been in his business for over forty years, and he and his staff tell employees from other towns with problems to call Jennifer. If Jennifer is uncertain about how to record something, she calls us so the books are as accurate as possible. He stated that Middlesex is lucky to have someone so conscientious. Anthony assured the town that they have the right system in place and the right people in place, and the matter was handled the way it should have been.

Citizen Robert Johnson asked Anthony if a system could be put in place to avoid this from happening in the future. Anthony advised him that the town would have to weigh the cost versus the benefit – you could put \$250,000 in a system, and still not catch something. Mayor Lewis then thanked Anthony for coming and for his message.

The June 14, 2014 meeting minutes were approved unanimously in a motion by Commissioner Davis, which was seconded by Commissioner Lewis.

The agenda was unanimously approved as presented in a motion by Commissioner Meacombs and seconded by Commissioner Alford.

Mayor Lewis opened the floor for the Public Comment Session. Gillistine Pearce, Robert Johnson, Lori Sherrick, and Cash Cameron spoke about various concerns.

The June Financials Statements were unanimously approved as presented in a motion by Commissioner Meacombs and seconded by Commissioner McClenny.

Mayor Lewis then advised the Board that James Liles, Utility Supervisor, who was promoted to Supervisor July 1, 2014, was doing an outstanding job, as well as the whole department. He added that all of the Public Works staff had been working really hard.

Librarian Cherrye Davis reported she had attempted a summer reading program, but only one child had attended. The program will continue through July.

The new guns budgeted for the Police Department have been purchased and as soon as the scheduled training is completed, the old weapons will need to be disposed of. Commissioner Meacombs researched the pricing and the appraised value of used guns varies greatly. He stated they would be worth between \$175-\$200 each. He is in favor of approving for the officer to buy his weapon for \$200 and to receive a bill of sale from the town versus trying to sell the guns through a third party. There are five available guns. Chief Murray advised the Board that if an officer does not want his weapon, he will keep it in inventory locked in the safe to be used for backup and training new officers. After a brief discussion, Commissioner Meacombs moved to sell the existing weapons to the current police officers for \$200 each and the unsold weapons will be locked in inventory for new officers. Commissioner Alford seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Mayor Lewis presented a proposed Golf Cart Ordinance, which he stated was a culmination of golf cart ordinances from other towns. It includes the requirement for an application for a permit and proof of liability insurance coverage. Permit holders will be required to follow DOT guidelines and follow all state laws. The Chief and the Police Department will administer the application process, the permit stickers and they retain the right to issue, refuse, or revoke a permit. A Hold Harmless Agreement must be signed by the owner of the golf cart. Mayor Lewis asked for the Board's input, noting that several people had approached him regarding the topic.

Commissioner McClenny stated he was in favor of the ordinance, and added that someone had also approached him about golf cart riding in town. Commissioner Meacombs added he had no problem with the ordinance either way, but expressed concern that he did not want to open the avenue for minors to ride and is afraid kids will see someone riding and think they can ride also. Mayor Lewis and Chief Murray assured Meacombs that kids riding on golf carts on streets will be addressed. Commissioner McClenny moved to adopt the Golf

Cart Ordinance as presented. Commissioner Davis seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

As an FYI, Clerk Lambert advised that the state legislature recently passed a law taking the authority from municipalities to charge privilege/business license taxes effective July 1, 2015. Therefore, next fiscal year, the town will lose an estimated \$1,900 in revenue.

Mayor Lewis advised that a 2004 Crown Vic with only 8,300 miles had been found at Griffin Ford for \$9,000 and a lot of the necessary police wiring is installed. Sergeant Pollard is getting prices on equipping it with the necessary light bars, sirens, etc., to get it fully equipped and will remain with the budgeted amount. Commissioner Meacombs moved to purchase the 2004 Crown Vic from Griffin Ford for \$9,000. Commissioner Alford seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Meacombs moved to adopt Resolution #2014-1127 to apply for the 2014 round of CDBG funds for water and wastewater infrastructure projects. His motion was seconded by Commissioner Davis and passed unanimously.

Commissioner Meacombs moved to go into Closed Session as authorized by G.S.143-318.11(a)(6) to interview a job applicant. Commissioner Lewis seconded and the motion unanimously passed.

With no further business, Commissioner Lewis moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McClenny and meeting was adjourned.

Jennifer Lambert, Clerk

Mayor Luther H. Lewis, Jr.
Commissioners
Harold Meacombs
Danny Alford
Cherrye Davis
Ann Lewis
J.W. McClenny