



TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES – October 11, 2010 at 6:30pm

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mayor Dean Lambeth
Mayor Pro Tem Chuck Keener
Commissioner Jim Dugan
Commissioner Barry Nelder

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT

Commissioner Vacant

STAFF PRESENT

Town Clerk Nancy Avery

Town Attorney A. A. Canoutas was in attendance. There was a quorum of the Town Council present.

Notice of this meeting was posted at Town Hall on September 21, 2010.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Lambeth called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm stating the purpose of this meeting is to interview candidates that submitted a letter of application to be appointed to fill the vacant commissioner seat until the next election in November 2011. Commissioner Fuller resigned his position in September 2010.

CANDIDATES TO BE INTERVIEWED

Craig Galbraith, Emilie Swearingen, Steven J. Pagley, David Heglar

Mayor Lambeth called each candidate to the podium and asked the person to give a brief synopsis about themselves and state why they are interested in serving on Council.

Candidate Craig Galbraith

Craig Galbraith stated:

- I am interested in serving on Town Council because when I ran in the last election, a lot of things were highlighted during that process.
- I have been involved in Planning and Zoning (P&Z) for two years and am currently the chairman.
- I think it is important to know that I am a “Ron Reagan” Republican, that I worked as an advisor to many “Reagan era” local Republican officials in California and other states and I am familiar with what Republican politics means for local development.

- In principal, I believe towns and communities should be run with a business model applied to them and look to implement a vision and develop incentives to attract businesses and align ordinances around the vision.
- My background is varied. I have been an entrepreneur, a co-owner of a restaurant and I have a degree in biology and teach a course at UNCW in hotel and restaurant management. I am a professor of Entrepreneurship and Technology Management at UNCW.
- Small business and economic development is important and brings a community to life. Kure Beach has a lot of things going for it. It is a great place, and I have lived here for 18 years. I teach the things we talk about such as economic development, small business and entrepreneurship.
- I feel that, with my background in California and other communities in zoning and planning and development, I can bring a lot to Council

Commissioner Questions and Answers:

Commissioner Nelder – California is currently undergoing severe financial problems. What do you feel Kure Beach should do to avoid those problems?

A – There has been twenty years of mismanagement at the State level, not local. The local governments still have to abide by standards set by Ron Reagan when he was governor. The state has taken away funding from local communities, and they are struggling.

Kure Beach's situation is that we can't raise revenue in many areas. We are constrained. I'm not a big fan of user fees. We have to look at some cost issues more carefully. It is great to use committees to get citizens involved and defer costs for staff. The key to maintaining financial viability is to enhance and create an overall base of community property value by getting more people to live here and set up businesses here.

Commissioner Nelder – What is your position in regards to tax increases in Kure Beach?

A – I'm not a supporter of tax increases. We already pay double taxation with the Town and county. Most towns stop paying county taxes when they start paying town taxes. We pay over 1% total tax rate. In this economy, we should be careful about raising taxes. We can look at user fees and look at the cost structure and how we manage what we have.

Mayor Pro Tem Keener – Why are you asking for this appointment?

A – I am a firm believer in contributing to the community. I have always served on boards and think I can bring some important skill sets to Council to assist in decision making and debates.

Mayor Pro Tem Keener – What is your greatest asset?

A – My experience sets; combination of experience and degrees. I hold a doctorate and MBA degrees in business and economics and a degree in biology. My resume shows my professional experience in regional economic development. I have written articles on this.

Mayor Pro Tem Keener – Do you have conflict with any breakfast, lunch, dinner, etc meetings?

A – No, I am flexible and if I have enough notice, I can arrange to attend any meetings.

Mayor Pro Tem Keener – So during the day you could make meetings?

A – Yes. This semester I am teaching a night class.

Mayor Pro Tem Keener – Tim was the finance and budget liaison. Would you be able to fill that role?

A – Yes, I have worked in finance and with budgets before.

Commissioner Dugan – Chuck (Keener) took most of my questions. What do you see is the biggest challenge facing the Town?

A – I believe the overall vision and implementation of the vision for the park, bicycle paths, landscaping issues, burying power lines, etc., to make the area attractive and to get more people in the area to visit and open businesses.

Mayor Pro Tem Keener – I want to thank all four people for volunteering. The resumes and qualifications are fantastic.

Candidate Emilie Swearingen

Emilie Swearingen stated:

- I have wanted to be on Town Council for the last eight or nine years and have worked in government the majority of my life.
- I have a Masters in Public Administration from NC State University.
- I'm a professional bureaucrat. I don't think that is a negative term.
- I've learned you can accomplish a lot more from the inside than the outside. One of the best things you can do is serve the community.
- I am one of the few people to come to your budget meetings in past years. I enjoyed the interaction between department heads and Council.

Commissioner Questions and Answers:

Commissioner Dugan – What do you think is the biggest challenge facing the Town?

A – I like the idea of a vision and the biggest challenge is to pay for the vision. I would love to see some things done in the central business district. I owned my own business, working with long term care and consulting, so I know a little about running a small business. We have some of the best dining areas in the state. We have a great pier, and tourists like coming here. It would be great to do something with burying power lines. The Town should look into the Main Street program. We had a huge challenge a couple of weeks ago with the rain. The Town has had storm water plans on the books. It has been six years since we did phase one. I asked, at the budget meeting, where we are on that. As a result we have sink holes all over Town that may not have been there if we had moved ahead with phase two and three. I would really like to see us move ahead on those. I know it won't be cheap. The Disc Golf course and things we want to do in recreation will not be cheap. I am not in favor of raising taxes but not to the detriment of the Town. There are other places we should be looking into do these things. Other funds are available, such as the Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF) for water and sewer. I would like us to investigate other funding resources besides taxes.

Mayor Pro Tem Keener – What is your greatest asset?

A – All the years I have worked in government, both local and state. My first stint was with Winston-Salem with Model Cities and Community Development. Later, I worked with Hendersonville, which is a lot like Kure Beach with no town manager and a full-time mayor. They hired a town manager that didn't work out and they went back to a full-

time mayor. I have worked in the state legislature for four years. My degree in Public Administration gives me a lot of experience to bring to the table.

Mayor Pro Tem Keener – Any conflict with times for meetings?

A – No, I am semi-retired but with no time constraints.

Mayor Pro Tem Keener – Can you fill the budget/finance liaison position?

A – I have done budgeting in the past at the City of Winston-Salem and when I worked with the Division of Facility Services. With the City of Wilmington I monitored a Federal fund of \$8 million for fifteen outside agencies and 8 in-house projects and helped our department head with line-item budgeting. I worked with the finance department daily.

Mayor Pro Tem Keener – Your resume says you have a publication on environmental problems.

A – Yes. When I was at NC State University, I did a survey that received 67% participation. Water was the number one environmental issue in this State. With droughts and pollution, it continues to be a major issue.

Mayor Pro Tem Keener – Are you involved now with the Special Olympics?

A – Yes. I am on an advisory committee that coordinates the Polar Plunge, and I am the volunteer coordinator for the Spring Games.

Commissioner Nelder – What do you feel your prior experience with town government lends to pursuing grant acquisitions for our Town and keeping our taxes manageable.

A – I hesitate because I promised myself I would not do grant writing again. Starting with a stint in government with the Energy Division, I wrote the State's first Emergency Conservation Plan that received \$11 million. We were the only ones to turn ours in on time. I have done a lot of grant writing as a consultant; did one for the YMCA for solar energy. I have never had a grant rejected until three years ago on lead-based paint. In working with non-profits as the city's liaison to QENO at UNCW, I taught part of their grant application seminar for non-profits.

Candidate Steven J. Pagley

Steven Pagley stated:

- I don't have an extensive background in BAs, MPAs, etc, but I have worked in municipalities for the past twenty years.
- I am working for the Town of Navassa now where there are two experienced grant writers that said they would share their knowledge.
- I have done budgets when I worked for both the Town of Navassa and Carolina Beach.
- When I worked for the Town of Carolina Beach, I wrote a budget for a sewer plant and an aquifer system.
- I have been in beach renourishment programs and worked with Mike McIntyre.

Commissioner Questions and Answers:

Commissioner Nelder – What is your position with regards to tax increases?

A – I say no tax increases.

Mayor Pro Tem Keener – Why are you asking for this appointment to Council?

A – I think I can share my municipal experience with this Council.

Mayor Pro Tem Keener – Why did you leave Carolina Beach?

A – I left to run a couple of restaurants.

Commissioner Dugan – Because of all of your years at the Town of Carolina Beach and years living in Kure Beach, what do you see as our biggest challenge?

A – Not raising taxes and maintaining the structure without raising user fees. The Town needs to be creative in ways to get the park financed without putting the burden on the citizens.

Candidate David Heglar

David Heglar stated:

- I have lived in Town my whole life and was fortunate enough to grow up here. I want to make sure the Town stays a great place for my kids and grandkids to grow up.
- My first experience with Council was as a fifteen year old asking for a basketball court. That showed me how Council impacts the Town.
- I think that people with skill sets should give back to the Town.
- I have served on Council previously, and then September 11th happened and I didn't run again for Council. I thought because of my Naval background I might get recalled, and I didn't want to commit to something I couldn't finish. I don't think I'll be recalled again and want to offer myself as a candidate.

Commissioner Questions and Answers:

Mayor Pro Tem Keener – I am impressed with the fact that you have served Kure Beach in some way since you were a teenager. Why do you want to be on Council right now?

A – I think the biggest challenge is to provide a high level of service to the community at the lowest cost. Costs continue to rise. Beach renourishment has tripled. Citizens are concerned about their expenses, and rightly so.

I think the second challenge we face is parking. Other communities have started charging for parking. This is pushing people down here. We are the only place that doesn't charge for parking. I'm glad we don't; I don't want to, but it is an issue. Wrightsville Beach saw that all the people coming there started parking in people's yards and all over. This is something we need to watch. The pressure of Wilmington will happen in a different way with services. They are trying to combine emergency, fire, police. There could come a day when Wilmington and the County become one and will be on the outside looking in. They take a huge amount of our money, but what services do we get? They used to pay money back to the beach towns as line items. As property values rise we see a shift of how our money is used by the County.

Mayor Pro Tem Keener – What is your greatest asset?

A – My MBA in strategic studies from the US Army War College, my life-long history with the Town, and my good relationship with Carolina Beach and the County. I am employed at Corning and know a lot of people in the County. The training that the Navy has given me helps me look at issues and share them with community in an easy to understand way. I am most proud of the budget process I used during the four years I was

on Council when we saved money for hurricanes and FEMA reimbursement. I believe these skills will help anyone on Council.

Mayor Pro Tem Keener – What about conflicts in time?

A – I do work days, but with enough notice I can meet during the day and meet requirements for special meetings and night meetings. When I was on Council before, I asked for Finance. Many of my projects for my MBA were for Kure Beach. I am not as open as the other candidates for day meetings. If Council wants to meet every other Monday at 9 am, that would be an issue for me.

Commissioner Nelder – I'm not sure I understand your actual position on tax increases?

A – I can't take the position; no way, not ever. I didn't take that position when I was on Council before. The Town should seek all other funding as much as possible. In the end, it is Council's job to provide services and sometimes citizens have to pay for it. I don't believe in spending money just to spend money. I think we should spend money for things like fixing infrastructure, for sewer, or an extra water tower to get insurance rates down, etc. If everyone on Council believes you will never raise taxes again, I'd be surprised. Council shouldn't be throwing money around willy-nilly. It's Council's job to find out what people want. I was disappointed Council didn't give raises to employees two years ago. The employees can't afford to live in Town. You can't always take money out of savings. The State requires 7% savings for General Fund. It is not a realistic amount for towns that live on the beach. I set thresholds before when I was on Council. The first time Council didn't support them, and the second time they did. I'm not dead-set against it. I have to look at the financial situation of the Town.

Commissioner Nelder – What about the financial situation of residents in Town that live on fixed incomes and didn't get a raise last year?

A – My grandparents are in that situation. A lot of people have left the Town because of this. I sent out information about the Homestead Act when I was on Council before. We have to balance it. If you look at Kure Beach's taxes, they are the lowest in the County. We've done a lot of things to defray that. The volunteer Fire Department built the Fire Department and helped build the Police Department. It's the leverage with what you get from volunteers.

APPOINTMENT

Discussion and consideration of applicants and appointment

Mayor Lambeth stated we are fortunate to have four candidates to step forward, and this is a hard decision. I am opening the floor for discussion or a motion.

Commissioner Dugan stated this is tougher than I thought it would be when I read the resumes. This is the great thing about Kure Beach. You grab a handful of people and find great assets and so many are willing to come forward. Everyone that wants this job should know that it isn't a bed of roses.

Jerry Hammill, audience member, stated he thinks Council shouldn't pass over David Heglar. Heglar knows a lot about finances, his family has been on the beach for ever, and he is one of the smartest people we have in Kure Beach. He knows how the Town and government runs. My second choice if I was on Council would be Steve Pagley.

Commissioner Dugan stated he is recommending David Heglar, not as negative to the other candidates, but because he is going with what he knows the most. He said he has seen David work with Council and finance and seen the devotion to the Town along with the others here.

MOTION – Commissioner Dugan made the motion to appoint David Heglar to fill the unexpired term until the next election

SECOND – none

Motion died due to lack of second.

MOTION – Commissioner Nelder made the motion to nominate Emilie Swearingen because her background in government would be a great asset to the Town and he feels having her on the board and having a female on the board would be a great asset for the Town. Our financial problems are pretty much taken care of with the new the financial manager.

SECOND – Mayor Pro Tem Keener

(stated I am seconding because I came on board to represent the people and they told me to vote for Emilie. It was a tough decision).

VOTE - Unanimous

Town Attorney Canoutas called a point of order. Are you approaching from a final vote or are you asking if there or any other nominations?

MOTION – Commissioner Nelder made the motion to appoint Emilie Swearingen to serve out the unexpired term until the next election.

SECOND – Mayor Pro Tem Keener

VOTE - Unanimous

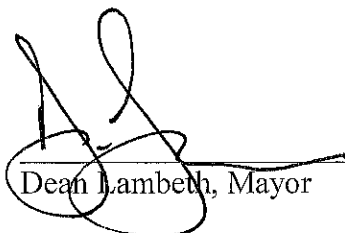
The Town Clerk administered the Oath of Office for Commissioner to Emilie Swearingen and Commissioner Swearingen took her seat on Town Council.

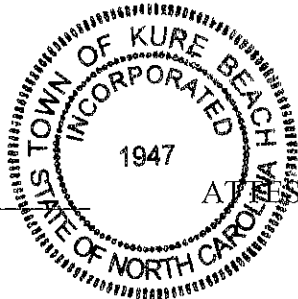
ADJOURNMENT

MOTION – Commissioner Dugan made the motion to adjourn at 7:32 pm.

SECOND – Mayor Pro Tem Keener

VOTE - Unanimous


Dean Lambeth, Mayor



ATTEST: 
Nancy Avery, Town Clerk