

TOWN OF GRANT-VALKARIA, FLORIDA
TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING
MINUTES OF WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30, 2009
TOWN HALL BUILDING, 5120 HIGHWAY US1, GRANT VALKARIA, FL 32949

The Town Council Special Meeting of the Town of Grant-Valkaria, Florida, of Thursday, April 30, 2009 was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Del Yonts followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Council Member DeMott, and roll call to the Council Members with the following present:

Mayor – Del Yonts	Town Administrator Richard Hood
Seat No. 1 – Joe Hackford	Administrative Assistant Jessica Williams
Seat No. 2 – Lisette Kolar	
Seat No. 3 – Pat Bryan	
Seat No. 4 - Jason Mahaney, Vice Mayor	
Seat No. 6 – Cathy DeMott	

EXCUSE COUNCIL MEMBER FADEN

Town Administrator Hood explained that he had spoken to Council Member Faden and he would be unable to attend due to being out of town.

Motions by Vice Mayor Mahaney, second by Council Member Hackford and vote unanimous to excuse Council Member Faden.

AGENDA ITEM

- 1) Consideration of Town Hall Lease

Mayor Yonts opened the discussion of the consideration of the Town Hall Lease.

Town Administrator Hood explained to the Council that the current lease expired April 17, 2009. Prior to Attorney Karl Bohne completing the extension of the current lease he was approached by Mr. Leon Surles with the possibility of leasing another facility. Our current landlord, the Chase's, asked that Council execute a lease by May 1, 2009 therefore this special meeting was required. Town Administrator Hood then stated that within the packet there is a copy of the lease for our current facility which has the same terms and conditions of the previous lease with an increase in rent, and a sixty day notice required for early termination. He told Council that they also had a copy of the prospective lease from Mr. Leon Surles for the proposed building located at 4240 Highway 1. This lease is not final and has been reviewed by Attorney Bohne with many comments. The new location will have more square footage, more parking, and larger council chambers. However, with this upgrade there will be a greater cost such as the electric which is currently included in our rent; the rents are the same, but there will be additional expenses such as moving, rewiring for computers, phones and the alarm system.

Mayor Yonts asked Town Administrator Hood for the record when he first mentioned to our current landlord that we needed a new lease.

Town Administrator Hood stated that he asked for a new lease from the landlord back in February prior to the Seafood Festival and it was mutually agreed that since everyone was busy preparing for the festival they would wait until the festival was over. He then stated that after this Mr. Chase came over on March 17, 2009 and discussed that there would be a thirteen percent increase due to increasing costs such as taxes and electricity. Laurie Chase then explained that she believed that she and Town Administrator Hood were in agreement that the Town would not move facilities unless they were to purchase one. So she then would wait to receive a simple notice to state that the Council would renew the lease for another year. Mrs. Chase then proceeded to explain that she came in last Tuesday and asked for a signed document. When she asked for this Town Administrator Hood explained that we were unable to submit a signed lease because it had to be reviewed by Council and signed by the Mayor. Mayor Yonts explained that Town Administrator Hood did in fact have to submit it to Council because of the way the Charter was established he can execute only contracts if is agreed by Council that he can execute the contracts. Mayor Yonts then explained that he would not sign the lease unless it was approved by Council so it was planned that it would be added to the Agenda of the May 6, 2009 Council Meeting. However, since they understood that it was important for the Chase's to have the lease signed prior to the next meeting they called a special meeting. Laurie Chase then stated that the lease was supposed to have been completed thirty days prior to the expiration. Town Administrator Hood explained that he had believed up until the conversation Wednesday, April 15, 2009, that the Chase's would be submitting a lease to the Town which they would then add to the Council's agenda. Once Town Administrator Hood was aware that the Chase's wanted to have the Town Attorney prepare a simple lease he then sent the information to Attorney Bohne. Unfortunately, the Attorney's office was having technical issues and was unaware that they were not sending and receiving documentation. Once they were made aware of the situation Attorney Bohne set up a Google email account so that he could ensure that the Town received the required information. Mayor Yonts explained that though there was not a signed lease staff had made sure that the Chase's received a check with the increase for the Month of May. Council Member Kolar clarified that she believed that there was a miscommunication and that the landlord was waiting for a simple notice and Town Administrator Hood believed that they would be submitting a lease extension. Town Administrator Hood stated that was correct he had already discussed the terms with Mr. Chase and agreed to the increase in rent due to increased cost to the landlord. Mr. Chase explained that he had previously explained that an increase was coming and the recent conversation was just the exact percentage. Town Administrator Hood explained that this was true and that he was not out soliciting new locations. He explained that this was brought to him and that in the past he has always presented the Council with the options. The last situation however was not a gain for the Town. The only difference was that they had an option to purchase, but the purchase price was too high. Council Member Bryan explained that he would love to have a bigger building, but since the Town does not have the money for the increased costs such as the moving and maintenance it would be best to stay in the current building. He explained that there has never been a problem with the Chase's and the building is working for now. Council Member Hackford stated that the only problem that they had was the

parking and he was unsure if the Chase's would be able to fix this because of the boats in the parking area. The Chase's explained that they would take care of the issue regarding the parking. John Chase then proceeded to explain that he told Town Administrator Hood since the Town is a neighbor tenant with Route 1 Motorsports and he didn't feel that it was his place to go and handle the issue. He stated that Willy was very understanding and that he would work with the Town. He stated that if the Town mentioned the meeting to the neighboring tenant the day of the meeting he would probably take care of it. Mayor Yonts explained that the parking issue has been brought to the landlord twice that he is aware of once was while Town Administrator Brock was with the Town. He stated that the parking has been an issue all along so the contract states that after 6 p.m. we are entitled to all available spaces. Mayor Yonts explained that we have moved multiple meetings and we should have moved several more because we had too many people. Currently when we fill the building, we must move to the Community Center. Unfortunately moving everything to the Community Center every time causes cost and we can't do that. The space isn't big enough for what we need. We often have people in the office and we are unable to meet public records requirements. If we were to seal it off we would lose more space. He stated that he didn't think that there would be that much difference in the costs. He stated that it would be best that we investigate it more and find out the electric bill to see what the costs would be to the Town.

Denni Burr explained that she knows that there has been a time when individuals were parked on the swale and they have been in a situation where they were almost ticketed. However, the establishment next door has offered to allow the Town to park there in the situation that we have a large meeting and we could notify the public so that they could do so. She also thought that the staff and Council could park there to make additional room for the meeting attendants.

Laurie Chase stated that in September they explained to Town Administrator Hood that they offered additional space to the Town and Council decided against doing this. She explained that she will take care of the parking issue.

Barry Cohen explained that the Town doesn't have extra money and it is apparent that the expenditure exceeds what is existing. He stated that the character of this building is better than the other building which is the ugliest building on US Highway 1 in his opinion. He stated that there was available space at the community center with notice.

Dan Robino explained that the volunteers put their souls into the building and we don't have the money to build the building with licensed contractors in our budget. The current FPL bill is for an empty building and the bill will double or triple with occupants. He stated that he thought the Town was kidding itself if they thought that could move into the building at a reasonable price. Town Administrator Hood responded to Mr. Robino's comment by stating that the Landlord would build the building to our requirements. Mayor Yonts explained that the new lease agreement has a sixty day notice with intent to terminate the lease agreement and we should sign this whether we decided to move or not. However, he stated that it would only be fair to let the Chase's know what they were planning to do. Council Member Kolar explained that she didn't believe that we had enough information to make the determination and that she was afraid that it would turn out as the previously researched option on First Street and it may sound good but we

needed more details and she would support staying here until we have further details. She was also concerned with the looks of the new buildings surroundings. Council Member Hackford explained that he was at first leaning toward the new building, however the parking was the biggest concern and it has been addressed. He stated that he didn't have to be in the building and we did need more room but the expenses were greater that he had anticipated. Vince Wilson asked the landlord if they were happy with the tenants. He also stated that we do not have the money and we may need to stay here this year and possibly next year. Laurie Chase explained that the Town had in fact been good tenants. Harold Angelbeck stated that the Town should post on the email that is sent to the public that parking is available at the bar. Mayor Yonts stated that the comments that have been brought up about waiting a year or two may not be possible because of the economy and the sales tax. He stated that he believed that it would be five years and the Town wouldn't have the money to go purchase property which may make years before we move. He understands that we can go to the community club but we have had residents leave because we don't have the space to hold everyone. It costs money each time to move and we don't have many buildings that will meet the needs of the Town. If we don't take the opportunity now and in a year we decide to move it may not be an option. Mayor Yonts stated that he recommends signing the lease as well as continuing to research the electric bill and other costs of the other building option. The parking has been brought up twice and the lease says available spaces but when this has been brought up it was stated that they aren't available. Route 1 Motorsports also needs the space and it isn't fair to him either to have to move everything for the meetings. He stated that the Town will have our research within thirty days and if we like it we will give the notice; if not we would have already signed the lease. Denni Burr asked Town Administrator Hood if he had said that staff has enough room to operate. Town Administrator Hood responded to her question stating that staff was fine in the current space. Denni Burr then stated if the parking was going to be addressed the only issue would be the space for Council Chambers. Council Member Kolar asked why we didn't take the space. John Chase explained that Mayor Yonts told the landlord that after the hype of the Town Incorporation was over they would see no more than nine cars in the parking area. Mayor Yonts explained that he did in fact say that however the community involvement was higher than they had anticipated. He stated that the extra space was not in an area where they could expand Council Chambers and if they found a way they would not have adequate parking if they had a larger chamber are. Laurie Chase said after reviewing the proposed lease she believed that she deserved at least six months notice as well. Town Administrator Hood explained that after speaking with John Chase yesterday and asked if they were going to terminate what notice would be fair. John Chase said that he had never seen a lease with an escape clause. Mayor Yonts explained that Council must approve the information that is brought before them. He explained that Town Administrator Hood brings a recommendation to the Council and in most cases Council agrees with Town Administrator Hood; however this is not always the case. We will have an escape clause in all contracts. We have not yet discussed the terms of the proposed contracts. Council Member Hackford explained that this was a business move and that we did not have the space that was

needed. John Chase explained that it wasn't a business move and that they should have had a lease on March 17, 2009 and they took a verbal.

Motion by Council Member Kolar, second by Council Member Hackford and vote unanimous to approve the extension of the lease of the existing location for one year with a sixty day notice of intent to leave.

Mayor Yonts opened the discussion of looking at the proposed site.

Council Member Kolar explained that we have always looked at all locations and we should still look into this one as well.

John Chase asked if they required first, last and security, that they previously waived.

Mayor Yonts explained that it was just a proposed lease agreement and the Attorney as well as the Council Members will address their comments and concerns.

Denni Burr then stated that she would be sad to see the proposed building as the Town Hall and she doesn't believe that it fits the Town image.

Vice Mayor Mahaney stated that he must be thinking of the wrong building.

Mayor Yonts explained that he didn't have a problem with the building, we would then have a larger Chamber and the Staff would have enough space. He stated we needed to do the research to determine if the little cost would be beneficial or not. Council Member Hackford explained that he was concerned with the community response to the idea of the change; however, we should still research the options. Mayor Yonts explained that he would like to see a break down to see what we would get out of the proposed space and how it would help the staff. Town Administrator Hood stated that he got the call on April 22, 2009, and the proposed lease on April 28, 2009, so he hadn't had time to look at anything other than the size of the building. He explained that since he didn't know what the Councils wishes were, he wasn't sure if he was to proceed. He said that this is the lease with no input from anyone other than the proposed landlord. He explained that he has concerns that need to be addressed prior to any signing.

Council Member DeMott explained that she didn't believe that we should get into the terms of the lease until they have further information on costs. She explained that she was happy with the current location but agrees that we should always investigate the options. Mayor Yonts explained that we should always consider our options.

It was the Council's consensus to have Town Administrator Hood investigate the options and wait on the lease terms until they have further cost related information.

Motions by Vice Mayor Mahaney, second by Council Member Hackford, and vote unanimous to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

(Signature on file)

ATTEST:
(signature on file)

Del Yonts, Mayor

Jessica Williams, Administrative Assistant