



TOWN OF SURFSIDE BEACH
WAMPEE CONFERENCE CENTER, PINOPOLIS, SC
February 7, 2010

TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Deaton called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Mayor Deaton, Mayor Pro Tem Truett and Councilmember's Johnson, Martin and Childs were present. Councilmember's Blair and Samples were absent. A quorum was present. Staff present: Administrator Booth; Clerk Pinnell; Public Safety Director, Christenson; Fire Chief Packard; Recreation Supervisor, Ellis; Building & Zoning Director, Donevant and Finance Treasurer Hursey.

PUBLIC SAFETY: POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

Public Safety Director Christenson gave his presentation. Director Christenson reported that when he first came to the town the police and fire departments were referred to as Public Safety but the departments were not taking measures to maintain this status. Council had combined the two back in 2002. There have not been enough personnel or funds to keep these together or for staff to get the proper training. Mr. Christenson stated that North Myrtle Beach is the only other town in South Carolina with the exception of maybe one other that maintains the Public Safety status; all other towns and municipalities are separated. North Myrtle Beach has more than three times the amount of officers as Surfside Beach. The two have been split budgetary-wise and operational-wise for some time. Training, budget/financial and operational was presented. Director Christenson stated that training is much more involved. The yearly training mandates have increased. Current fire fighter to get cross trained they would need to attend a 12 week police academy; at this time they would not be available for service to the town and currently the town only has 4 full time firefighters. The fire academy is 16 weeks. Director Christianson explained that there are many additional costs and cross training involved to maintain a Public Safety Department status and went into more detail to explain the training and financial expenses. Additional costs would include outfitting officers and fire fighters with cross train gear. Director Christianson explained the loss of police officer use during training requirements and working fire shifts. Training on days off incurs added costs and overtime. Director Christianson stated that another negative point is that police officers want to be police officers and fire fighters want to be fire fighters. Mayor Deaton stated that not everyone needs to be cross trained just some individuals need to be. Director Christenson stated that he, Captain Miller and other officer would need to be cross trained to make sure there was enough assistance.

Mayor Deaton asked what Director Christenson and Captain Millers salaries were. Director Christenson stated that his was approximately \$63,000 and Captain Millers was approximately \$49,000. Mayor Deaton stated that if the two were split then the town could eliminate the Director of Public Safety position adding that this was nothing personal but questioned the need for this position. Director Christenson stated that he is currently acting as Police Chief and Mayor Deaton stated that Captain Miller could take over as Police Chief since he has been acting over the police and Mr. Christenson was acting over both police and fire. Director Christenson stated that this was not true and that he was acting as Police Chief. Mayor Deaton questioned paying the salary of \$63,000 for a Police Chief. Director Christenson stated that the Georgetown Police Chief makes \$80,000 and Conway is higher. Mr. Booth stated that when he separated the budget into fire and police the Public Safety was split; it became impossible to make firemen work as police officers. Mr. Booth stated that the training requirements have increased since previous years. Mr. Booth stressed that the town currently does not have a Public Safety Department; it is in name only.

52 Mayor Deaton stated that his concern is that the town organization chart still lists as a Public Safety
53 Department.

54
55 Mr. Martin asked what the difference was in Director Christenson's' job and Captain Miller's job.
56 Director Christenson stated that he oversees the entire police department, hiring, beach patrol,
57 training etc. and Captain Miller does scheduling of the police and oversees activities of police.
58 There was a question regarding these two positions being similar. Director Christenson stated that
59 there is a need for a command element to be in place. Director Christenson stated that other towns
60 have a chief and multiple captains and some have deputy chiefs. Director Christenson confirmed
61 that Captain Miller sometimes patrols. Mr. Martin stated that he used to support Public Safety but
62 given the information received now sees a need for the split. Mr. Martin stated that he understands
63 that the police department may have some overlap but that is needed in case someone is out. Mr.
64 Martin stated that the department seems to be working as it currently exists. Director Christenson
65 stated that the town does not really have much of an overlap being the influx of people during
66 tourist season. Mayor Deaton stated that he would like to be presented with a comparison to similar
67 areas such as Folly Beach adding that it is not fair to compare Surfside to Conway. Mayor Deaton
68 stated that adjustments may need to be made regarding staff positions. Mr. Booth stated that the
69 police and fire could operate how they have been operating; the budget was split to accommodate
70 this. Mayor Deaton stated that council is hearing that there are police cars not being used and
71 recommended the town look at a similar comparison. Mr. Johnson stated that he would like to see
72 an organizational chart of other areas as well. Mr. Booth stated that he would present a study and
73 would also look at North Myrtle Beach and their recent issues. Mayor Deaton stated that North
74 Myrtle Beach is much larger than Surfside. Mr. Booth stated that he is aware of this but they have
75 been dealing with similar issues regarding Public Safety. Director Christenson stated that the
76 concern is that the police and fire department are currently not working as a Public Safety
77 Department and this needs to be addressed. Director Christenson brought up the town
78 organizational chart and explained the positions and explained the day and night shifts. The cars are
79 alternated in use. There have been studies that if cars are used 24 hours they break down. There
80 was some additional discussion regarding police duties. There was some discussion regarding the
81 use of Crown Vics and the cost to equip them. Director Christenson stated that there are currently 9
82 marked police cars; the police have 4 working, 4 off and one extra available.

83
84 Mr. Truett stated that a few years ago Public Safety was the way to go and now with the added
85 training mandates it is harder to maintain. Mr. Truett stated that he hopes that the current police
86 force will not be cut adding that he understands the need to restructure but he does not want to see
87 police officers eliminated. Mr. Johnson stated that he wants to see a comparison so that when
88 people question him he can provide an answer. There was some discussion regarding the pay rate
89 for the Public Safety Director as opposed to a Police Chief rate.

90
91 **FIRE**
92 Chief Packard stated that due to the town being designated as Public Safety the Fire Department has
93 lost out on 3.3 million dollars in grants adding that the town would not have received all of this but
94 he is sure that the town lost on a number of these. The grants specify that the Fire Department must
95 be independent and cannot be combined with the police as a public safety department. Police can
96 get police grants and fire can get fire grants but Public Safety cannot get any safer grants. Mr.
97 Truett stated that the only way the town can reduce the ISO rating was to add the manpower and the
98 safer grant would allow the town to hire additional firefighters. Mayor Deaton stated that the grant
99 would pay for staffing for a couple of years and then it would be up to town to fund the remaining
100 years adding that the town cannot currently afford these salaries, equipment and training. Mr.

101 Truett stated that the town would have three years to plan. Director Christenson stated that he does
102 not care if the town wants to keep Public Safety or not but he wanted to inform council know that
103 the town cannot afford the mandated training and the town does not have the staff to act as Public
104 Safety. Mr. Childs stated that pulling people into dual training has been a problem since this was
105 first changed.

106

FACADE GRANTS

107 Mr. Booth stated that he is looking for direction from council. The grants have had a good impact
108 on the town. Mr. Childs stated that the grants are starting to get away from their original intent.
109 The grants were supposed to be for the facades and not plantings or landscape. New landscaping is
110 only allowed for new construction. Mr. Childs stated that he would like to see the façade grants for
111 items that would be there in the future and not landscaping which changes annually. Mayor Deaton
112 stated that he feels that state of the current economy needs to be addressed and feels that the town is
113 not in a financial position at this time to offer funding of façade grants. There are costs the town
114 needs to offset and does not feel the town should dole out public funds at this time. Mr. Truett
115 stated that he agrees that this is a good time to step back and possible re-write the façade grant.
116 Mayor Deaton stated that the town has a lot of public property that needs to be addressed. Mr.
117 Truett stated that he does not feel it is a bad thing to offer when the town has funds but the town
118 should probably hold back at this time. It was agreed to suspend the grants at this time and take
119 time to rewrite the grant application.

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SKATEBOARD PARK

122 Mr. Booth stated that he has received some complaints on the skate park and asked if the skate park
123 should be closed for a season. Mayor Deaton stated that he feels the skate park should be tested
124 through one season to see what happens. Mayor Deaton stated that the park could possibly be
125 moved over by 1st Avenue by the dog park. A small area of asphalt could be used. There was some
126 discussion regarding cameras being donated for the skate park area. Mr. Booth stated that he has
127 been in contact with the donor of the cameras. Mayor Deaton suggested documenting the
128 complaints. Mr. Truett suggested contacting Ms. Kohlmann to assist in ways to handle the
129 complaints from the park. Mr. Johnson stated that if the park needs to be moved the town needs to
130 have an alternative location. Council agreed to look at the area west of Passive Park to use as an
131 alternate area.

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DOG PARK

134 Mr. Booth presented rules to council. The town has received some advice from vets and Ms. Blair.
135 Mr. Booth stated that he does not feel that there will be many dogs using the park at one time and it
136 could always be expanded. Myrtle Beach has been successful with their park and they are going up
137 in other communities as well. Town hall licenses the dogs. Mr. Booth reported that the town
138 cannot accommodate a very large dog park because it does not have that kind of land. Mr. Booth
139 reported there was an issue regarding charging non-residents; all dogs must have a license which
140 proves they had their shots. Mayor Deaton stated he thought this sounded like a policing nightmare.
141 Ms. Hursey stated that she feels that many people are protective of their pets and would report
142 people who did not have licenses. There was discussion regarding charging all people \$10 annually
143 for a dog license. Mr. Johnson asked if the town has advertised that people need to register their
144 dogs. It was confirmed that there will be sign to let people know that they need to register their
145 dog.

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150 **SUBCOMMITTEES**

151 Mayor Deaton stated that he wanted to touch on sub committees. Mayor Deaton stated that there is
152 currently an Underground Wiring subcommittee which Mr. Martin, Mr. Truett and Mr. Samples
153 were members of. Mr. Martin stated that most of the technical side has been accomplished and now
154 it is a point where council can make decisions regarding locations. Mayor Deaton stated that he
155 spoke with two municipal attorneys and the Municipal Association regarding subcommittee
156 structures and what subcommittees are usually designed for is when there are large councils of 12
157 members like the Horry County Council. Mayor Deaton stated that Surfside Beach is a 7 member
158 council and he does not feel that there is anything that the council cannot address without having to
159 create council subcommittees. Mayor Deaton stated that by having subcommittees this allows
160 certain council members to be privy to information prior to the rest of council having information.
161 Mayor Deaton stated that council can take action with a quorum; there is no need for all 7 members
162 to be at a council meeting. Council can make decisions on any topic as a council. Mr. Johnson
163 stated that the subcommittee for the Downtown is a good example of getting things done adding
164 that this project had been on the table for quite some time and the subcommittee was created out of
165 frustration with things not getting done. Mayor Deaton stated that he feels that this subcommittee
166 was created from council as a project management committee which is out of the scope of council
167 adding that this was probably inappropriate to do. Mayor Deaton stated that no policies or
168 procedures were created from this subcommittee. Mr. Childs stated that this subcommittee was
169 given councils approval and they were able to make quick decisions. Mr. Childs stated that he
170 would also like to see a subcommittee formed to discuss Business 17. Mr. Childs spoke with
171 Nelson Hardwick, our state senator and Howard Barnard and they are ready to go. Mayor Deaton
172 stated that these meetings need to be advertised. Mr. Childs stated that this was done. Mayor
173 Deaton argued that he does not feel that things need to be micromanaged and feels that all of these
174 items could be addressed by council with no need to create a subcommittee. Mr. Martin stated that
175 he does not agree with the way the subcommittee for the downtown area was created. Mayor
176 Deaton stated that he feels that three councilmember's are making a decision before it reaches
177 council with only the need for one additional vote and he feels that this does not allow all of council
178 to review everything at the same time. Mayor Deaton stated that the public feels that council is
179 doing things behind closed doors and even though this is not happening perception is everything
180 and he would like to see council review and make decisions together. Mayor Deaton stated that Mr.
181 Samples had suggested setting up a subcommittee for the pier and he feels that having a
182 subcommittee for the pier is micromanaging. Mayor Deaton stated that he feels this is giving more
183 authority to some councilmember's and if items need to be addressed council should hold a
184 workshop with the 7 members and as long as there is a quorum there is a meeting. Mr. Johnson
185 stated that he is not opposed to not having subcommittees but reiterated that he feels that they were
186 created out of frustration of things not getting done. Mayor Deaton stated that he felt as if he was
187 blindsided by the decision regarding the downtown development adding that he did not have time to
188 review any of the plans and was not privy to any of the information presented. There was some
189 additional discussion regarding subcommittees. Mr. Truett stated that the subcommittee meetings
190 are open to the public and does not see a problem with subcommittees. There was additional
191 discussions regarding council serving or not serving on any committees.

192
193 **COMMITTEES**

194 Mr. Truett stated that he would not have a problem with people serving on more than one
195 committee as long as they do not conflict with each other. Mayor Deaton stated that the town needs
196 to focus on the required committees such as Planning Commission, Zoning Board and
197 Accommodations Tax. Mayor Deaton stated that he would like to make sure these committees are
198 staffed with competent people. The other committees were created to assist with things like

199 developing special events, etc. Mayor Deaton stated that the town currently has enough special
200 events and it cannot afford to fund any more at this point in time. Mayor Deaton stated that he does
201 not feel that the town needs the Recreation Committee at this time. Mayor Deaton stated that he
202 would have no problem with someone serving two committees if it were on an added committee.
203 There was discussion regarding the Building Appeals Board and Ms. Donevant stated that this was
204 a required board. Ms. Donevant stated that if there were a group of individuals who wanted to
205 accomplish something in town they should approach council. Mr. Booth stated that he feels that the
206 Beautification Committee accomplished a lot but they needed more direction and he feels that
207 creating an ordinance would help. Mayor Deaton stated that the attorney is currently working on a
208 committee ordinance.
209

210 **PARKING TIMES/STICKERS**

211 Mr. Booth proposed changing the paid parking times to 7 AM to 7PM. Mr. Booth stated that there
212 are many cars in the lots at these times. The town is currently looking for money to purchase
213 additional property with one property of interest being the property on 3rd and Willow; the town is
214 looking into a matching grant for this property. Mayor Deaton stated that paid parking areas are
215 utilized more and more each year. There was discussion regarding changing the months of the paid
216 parking as well. It was agreed to extend the times and the months from March 1st through October
217 31st. There was discussion regarding hiring additional ticket personnel. Mr. Booth stated that he
218 would bring a decision paper to council. There was discussion regarding allowing non-resident
219 property owners to purchase a parking sticker for their cars and the fee to charge. Council agreed to
220 charge a fee to property owners other than full time residents for parking. Council agreed not to
221 provide stickers to people outside town limits. Mr. Booth stated that he would like to purchase two
222 additional parking stations this year. These machines would take dollars in addition to credit cards.
223

224 Mr. Booth reported that the pier fund is doing well for the first year and anticipates that the town
225 can, in the future, make expansions.
226

227 **MARQUEE/PIER SIGNAGE**

228 Mr. Booth reported that staff had looked into a message sign for the pier which may require an
229 amendment to the town ordinance. Ms. Donevant stated that the town, being a government agency,
230 would be able to have this sign; there would be no need to change the ordinance. Mayor Deaton
231 stated that he hoped the town would go low profile adding that signs are clutter. Mr. Booth stated
232 that he is having trouble getting a consensus of council on a design. Mr. Truett stated that there was
233 a discussion regarding changing the marquee at town hall to include an electronic sign. The town
234 would keep the current sign but just add the electronic portion to the center of it. Mr. Booth stated
235 that the town would like to provide more information to the public. The estimated cost of an
236 electronic sign would cost approximately \$25,000. The town would need to go out for bid. Mr.
237 Booth stated that the money for the pier sign would come from the pier enterprise fund. The
238 marquee at town hall would come out of hospitality funds. There was some discussion regarding
239 the possibility of using some funds from Atax. Ms. Donevant reported that the town is currently
240 reviewing the sign ordinance and it is time to get into this century. There was consensus of council
241 to look into doing message signs for the pier and the town hall. Ms. Hursey asked what year this
242 would go in. There was discussion that it would be in the following year. There was some
243 discussion regarding advertising the business names on the sign at the pier.
244

245 **INSTALLATION OF PERMANENT ELECTRIC**

246 Ms. Ellis stated that the town is constantly putting in temporary electric poles for events and is
247 requesting that the town install three or four permanent poles on Surfside Drive. There was

248 discussion regarding that there would no longer be above ground poles in that area. This was
249 confirmed that this would be a meter service located from the ground.

250

251 **TOWN BANNERS**

252 Ms. Ellis requested replacing town banners. There was consensus of council to get rid of the town
253 banners.

254

255 **PERSONNEL CHANGES**

256 Mr. Booth reported that he is in the process of making some personnel changes. Ms. Lewis will be
257 moving over to take care of Emergency Operations and will assist the fire department with
258 administrative work and training. Mr. Booth stated that Ms. Lewis will continue with the
259 Workmen's comp for a while. Mr. Booth reported that he would like the individual departments to
260 get more involved in their own purchasing and bids and will remove this responsibility from Ms.
261 Lewis. Mr. Booth stated that Ms. Fellner was hired as an administrative assistant and has
262 progressed to being the IT Manager. Mr. Booth stated that he would like to change the job
263 description for Ms. Fellner adding that she saves her salary on what she saves in IT costs.

264

265 **PERSONNEL COMPENSATION/BONUSES**

266 Mr. Booth reported that the Holiday bonus has been decreased two thirds. The bonus was taken
267 out. The merit raises were discussed. No more than half of the employees can get the full 4 percent;
268 the other half get zero to 3 percent which is decided by on the department heads. This is all on
269 merit. Town council agreed on merit increases proposed.

270

271 **CAROPINES SANITATION**

272 Ms. Hursey stated that Mr. Samples had requested this information. Ms. Hursey reported that the
273 additional customers bring in an additional \$20,000 per year. Mr. Booth reported that the town has
274 excess capacity and the service is making money and keeps the costs down to the residents. Mr.
275 Truett reported that Caropines is closer to Public Works than some of the homes in Surfside Beach.

276

277 **BROCHURES**

278 The previous brochures have been distributed and there are a few remaining and will be gone
279 shortly. Council agreed to approve the new brochures and to use funds held by the Myrtle Beach
280 Chamber.

281

282 **VEHICLE POLICY**

283 Mr. Booth reported that the policy is zero tolerance with no use of town vehicles for any personal
284 use. They are to be used for town business only. Mr. Christenson stated that at times some of the
285 designated officers who have town cars may need to stop on their way home for milk or will stop on
286 the way home to work out. There are times when the officers need to drop their kids off to school
287 on their way to work and they are in the town vehicle. The intent of the vehicle use policy was
288 discussed. Mr. Booth stated that it was meant to be zero tolerance for use of town vehicles.
289 Liability being an issue was discussed. Mr. Johnson stated that he believes zero tolerance was
290 discussed at the time. Vehicle abuse was discussed. Mr. Martin stated that the town has a policy
291 and common sense needs to be applied. Using vehicles outside of business hours was discussed and
292 the fact that the police and fire work all hours. Eliminating item 4 on the policy was discussed.
293 Allowing child drop off to school on the way to work was discussed. Using common sense was
294 discussed.

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296

297 **COURT**

298 Mr. Childs stated that the town has grown and discussed the town judge. The town has grown and
299 many surrounding towns have appointed their own judges. Mr. Childs stated that Myrtle Beach has
300 four lawyer judges appointed by council, North Myrtle Beach has one lawyer judge appointed by
301 council, Conway has one lawyer judge appointed by council and Surfside has one lawyer judge not
302 appointed by council who answers to Horry County, Briar Cliff, and Pawley's Island and he feels
303 that the town now needs their own judge and would like to add it to the next agenda. There was
304 discussion that Judge Blanton had a contract which has expired. Mayor Deaton stated that he does
305 not like to depend on the County for anything adding that now the town has more complicated
306 needs and agrees the town should look into getting their own appointed judge. Mayor Deaton stated
307 that he is not comfortable paying the county contract for a judge adding that the town has a contract
308 with Horry County not Judge Blanton and the county can send whoever they want. Mayor Deaton
309 stated that Judge Blanton is a county appointed judge and not a town appointed judge. Mayor
310 Deaton stated that if Judge Blanton would like to apply he would need to give up working for
311 Pawley's and Briar Cliff and the town could pay him the \$15,000 annually. Mr. Truett asked where
312 the town was going to find a judge to agree on working for \$15,000 a year to service only Surfside.
313 Public Safety Director Christenson stated that the police do not have Judge Blanton on a day to day
314 basis since he works for the county and if the town looks at the number of people arrested in town
315 which was 500 in 2009, they all have bond hearings and affidavits need to be prepared. Mr.
316 Christenson stated that the police department would agree that working with an appointed judge
317 lawyer on a day to day basis would be preferred. Mr. Truett stated that the town having their own
318 judge will not change the procedure of having to go back and forth to J Reuben Long. There was
319 discussion regarding the town attorney Mr. Smith becoming the town judge and that if he became
320 the judge he could not prosecute and the town would need to find a new attorney. Mayor Deaton
321 asked to bring an issue paper for a decision on the judge back to council at the next meeting. There
322 was some additional discussion regarding what the decision paper would include. Mayor Deaton
323 stated that the issue is whether the town wants to have their own judge and this is what should be on
324 the issue paper. It was confirmed that Ms. Wentz would still be the associate judge. Mr. Booth
325 stated that he would invite all of the parties involved in the court to the workshop.
326

327 **DISCUSSION**

328 Mr. Johnson thanked staff adding that it will be different without Mr. Truett and Mr. Martin. Mr.
329 Martin stated that he is excited to see the town becoming more energy efficient and he hopes the
330 town will continue to look into these types of opportunities. Mr. Truett stated that a lot has changed
331 in the past two years he feels that there is more camaraderie and a lot more communication and
332 challenged the council to continue this and added that council has been elected to represent the
333 people and the council needs to focus on this. Mayor Deaton stated that he agrees that council has
334 come a long way and he would like to see council continue on the path they are heading. Mr. Truett
335 stated that the concept council has followed pay as you go is the reason the town is in such a good
336 position. There was discussion regarding the town having to spend money and that the money spent
337 has increased the net worth of the town. Ms. Ellis thanked council for not cutting special events.
338 Mr. Truett stated that he feels the town has the best town staff and added that they make council
339 look good.
340

341 Ms. Donevant asked for direction on the international property maintenance code. The 2006 has
342 been introduced and she would like to discuss at a future workshop. Mr. Booth stated that staff
343 would need guidance. Mr. Childs stated that he has issues with abandoned buildings and these need
344 to be addressed. Ms. Donevant stated that there will be a lot of changes with the energy code which
345 will be coming in and the town will try to stay on top of that. Mr. Christenson suggested keeping a

346 cohesive working environment with council and staff and suggested having the new council come
347 in and meet with the department heads to see what each department does. Chief Packard thanked
348 Ms. Hursey and Mr. Booth for the work they did on the budget. Mr. Booth stated that this is the
349 best staff he ever had and enjoyed working with this council. Mr. Booth stated that he came to this
350 town because he saw the opportunities it had adding that there is still a lot to do.

351

352 **ADJOURNMENT**

353 Mr. Johnson made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Truett seconded the motion. **All present voted in**
354 **favor. MOTION CARRIED.** Meeting was adjourned at 11:52 AM

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358 Approved: June 22, 2010

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Sharon Pinnell, Town Clerk

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K. Allen Deaton, Mayor

Roderick Smith, Town Council

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Vicki W. Blair, Town Council

Anna Dodge, Town Council

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Douglas F. Samples, Town Council

Mark L. Johnson, Town Council

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Robert F. Childs, III, Mayor Pro Tempore

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385 Clerk's Note: This document constitutes minutes of the meeting, which was audio taped. In accordance with FOIA, meeting notice and the
386 agenda were faxed and/or emailed to local media and interested parties. A complete list is on file in the clerk's office. The agenda was posted
387 on bulletin boards outside Council chambers and in the town hall reception area. Meeting notice was also posted on the town marquee.