

**MINUTES  
EMPORIA CITY COUNCIL  
RETREAT  
EMPORIA-GREENSVILLE REGIONAL AIRPORT  
JANUARY 25 - 26, 2008**

*Note to Reader: Although the printed Agenda document for this City Council retreat is not part of these minutes, the Agenda document provides background information on the items discussed by City Council during the retreat. A copy of the Agenda document for this retreat may be obtained by contacting the Office of the City Clerk.*

Emporia City Council held a retreat on Friday, January 25, 2008, and Saturday, January 26, 2008, at the Emporia-Greenville Regional Airport. Mr. Brian S. Thrower, Interim City Manager, presided over the retreat.

**MINUTES ~ FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2008**

City Council members in attendance:

Councilwoman Nancy B. Squire  
Councilman F. Woodrow Harris  
Councilman James C. Saunders  
Councilwoman Doris T. White  
Councilwoman Carolyn S. Carey  
Councilman Ned V. Lankford

Others present: C. Butler Barrett, City Attorney  
Sheila Cutrell, Finance Director  
Brian Thrower, Interim City Manager  
Teresa Welsh, Independent-Messenger  
Jean Whiting, City Clerk

Absent: Councilman John White

*Fellowship ~ 6:00 – 6:15 p.m.*

*Dinner ~ 6:15 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.*

Mr. Thrower welcomed all in attendance and provided a brief overview of the Agenda topics that would be covered during the two day retreat.

***Finance Presentation (Sheila Cutrell, Director of Finance)***

Ms. Cutrell provided City Council members with a general overview of the City's financial status in the form of handouts and slides. Some of the highlights from her presentation were as follows:

### ***General Fund Revenues***

- Revenue collections ~ fifty eight point sixty percent (58.60%) of the budgeted amount as of December 31, 2007
- Revenues exceeded expenditures by nine hundred eighteen thousand five hundred seventeen dollars (\$918,517.00) as of January 25, 2008
- Sales and Use Tax ~ one percent (1%) of local retail sales received from state – declined
- Building Permits ~ eighty one point fifty-two percent (81.52% )
  - ~ Mr. Thrower to conduct compare analysis of permit fees
- Franchise Fees ~ zero percent (0%) - due to non-collection from Comcast
- Parking Fines ~ forty-five percent (45.00%)
- Health Services ~ Nine hundred seventy-five dollars (\$975.00) budgeted – six thousand dollars (\$6,000.00) received from the Health Department due to unused funding provided by the City
- Insurance Refunds ~ forty-two point thirty-seven percent (42.37%)
- Recycled Materials ~ ninety-nine point one percent (99.1%) - cardboard/plastic major contributors
- ISTE Grant ~ seventeen point thirteen percent (17.13%) - due to non-collection of funds from VAPower due to project standstill on South Hampton (relocation of utility lines)
- Motor Carriers Tax ~ zero percent (0.00%)
  - ~ Ms. Cutrell to conduct research as to why fees had not been received
- Recordation Tax ~ sixty-two point twenty-six percent (62.26%)
- Registrar/Electoral Board – fourteen point sixty-four percent (14.64%)
- Emergency Services ~ zero percent (0%) - funding to be received in March
- House Bill 599 ~ forty-eight point thirty-three percent (48.33%) - Police Department funding
  - ~ Councilman Harris reported that budget amendments have been submitted by Senators and House members to restore budget cuts

### ***General Fund Expenditures***

- Expenditures were at fifty-one point sixty-nine percent (51.69%) of the budget amount as of December 31, 2007
- City Council ~ fifty-four point eight percent (54.08%) - due to large payment on audit (more than half of owed amount) and large volume printing of updated ordinances
- City Manager ~ forty-six point twenty-seven percent (46.27%)
- City Attorney ~ twenty-seven point forty-four percent (27.44%)
- Human Resources ~ forty-one point twenty-one percent (41.21%)
- Commissioner of the Revenue – forty-five point one percent (45.01%)
- Assessor ~ fifty-two point seventy-eight percent (52.78%) - assessment recently conducted – assessor paid monthly
- Treasurer ~ forty-eight point eighty-two percent (48.82%)
- Finance ~ forty-six point thirty percent (46.30%)
- Registrar ~ fifty-four point twenty percent (54.20%) (election included)
- Courts ~ sixty-one point fifty-six percent (61.56%) (included seven (7) months of payments made to Greenville County for shared services and payments to Regional Jail)
- Sheriff ~ forty-seven point sixty-six percent (47.66%)
- Police ~ fifty-three point two percent (53.02%) (includes vehicle purchases)
- Fire ~ fifty point seven percent (50.07%)
- Inspections ~ forty-four point fifty-six percent (44.56%)

- Emergency Services ~ fifty-nine point fourteen percent (59.14%) (includes unforeseen vehicle repairs)
- Public Works ~ forty-six point ninety-seven percent (46.97%)

***Expenditures not included in the budget***

- Demolition costs for old hospital – one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000.00)
- Habitat for Humanity’s office space – one thousand six hundred fifty dollars (\$1,650.00)
- Civic Center Foundation – twelve thousand dollars (\$12,000.00)
- Truck driver training facility – nine thousand four hundred seventy-seven dollars (\$9,477.00) over budgeted amount
- Greenville County Training School – sixty thousand dollars (\$60,000.00)

***Selective Enforcement***

- Court Fines Revenue
  - ~ Budgeted – nine hundred seventy-five thousand dollars (\$975,000.00)
  - ~ Four hundred seventy-five thousand seventy-three dollars (\$475,073.00) collected - 48.73%
- Overtime – Selective Enforcement
  - ~ Budgeted \$143,000
  - ~ Expended \$115,900
  - ~ Eighty-one point five percent (81.05%) total

***Utility Fund Revenues***

- Revenue collections were at forty-four point ninety percent (44.90%) of the budgeted amount as of December 31, 2007
- Expenditures exceeded revenues by one hundred twenty thousand seven hundred eighty-eight dollars (\$120,788) as of January 25, 2008
- Water Sales ~ forty-three point eighty percent (43.80%)
- Sewer Service ~ forty-three point eighty-four percent (43.84%)
- Sewer Taps ~ one hundred four point seventy-six percent (104.76%)
- Penalties ~ sixty-one point twenty-eight percent (61.28%)
- Cut-on/Cut-off Fees ~ sixty-eight point eighty-two percent (68.82%)

***Utility Fund Expenditures***

- Expenditures were at forty-eight point thirteen percent (48.13%) of the budgeted amount as of December 31, 2007
- Administration & Billing ~ forty-six point sixty-three percent (46.63%)
- Water Treatment ~ forty-four point eight percent (44.08%)
- Sewage Collection ~ forty-six point sixty-four percent (46.64%)
- Wastewater Treatment ~ forty-four point twenty-one percent (44.21%) (includes over twenty-eight thousand dollars (\$28,000.00) for repairs to generator and associated rental fees)
- Non-Departmental ~ forty-eight point thirty-five percent (48.35%) (includes debt service and insurance)
- Water Distribution – sixty-two point eighty-six percent (62.86%) (meter conversions/hydrant replacement/water main replacements and upgrades)

### ***Budget Outlook for FY 09***

- Expect reduction in state funding
- Expect reduction in local sales tax revenue
- Real estate reassessment – revenue neutral or not
- Several debt payment reduction
- Final incentive payment to hospital

Ms. Cutrell reported that the City's Administration was in the process of forming a Cost Revenue Team, composed of line staff, to provide recommendations for cost saving measures to possible increase revenues

### ***State Budget Highlights***

- Localities may be required to fund one-half of the retiree health credit premium payments for constitutional officers and their employees
- Localities may be required to fund one-half of the liability insurance and bond premiums for constitutional officers
- Possibility of additional reimbursement from the Compensation Board to assist with LEOS benefits for sheriff and deputies.
- Continued reduction of five percent (5%) for Registrar and Electoral Board – one thousand eight hundred fifty dollars (\$1,850.00)
- Continued two point five percent (2.5%) funding reduction of the Virginia Juvenile Community Crime Control program
- Continued two point five percent (2.5%) funding reduction in state payments to local and regional juvenile detention centers
- Possible reduction of local match for CSA community based services
- Possible increase in local match for CSA residential placements and services
- Possible reduction of local match for CSA foster care services

Ms. Cutrell reported that Councilman Harris received notification that, under the Governor's present proposal, the City of Emporia and Greensville County would see a combined increase of sixteen thousand eight hundred thirty dollars (\$16,830.00) in local costs.

Councilman Harris reported that Virginia Municipal League asked him to speak with the Senate Finance Committee concerning the proposal.

### ***FY 09 Tax Rate***

Mr. Thrower reported that reassessment figures reflected an overall increase of eight point fifty-seven percent (8.57%). He also reported that there had been discussion of a revenue neutral budget and that Ms. Cutrell would research figures relative to the reduction of property tax rates.

Councilman Harris requested that all new construction be included in the figures as they had not been included previously.

### *Senior Citizen Discount*

Mayor Adams reported that he requested that the issue of senior citizen tax discount be addressed and that he requested that the Commissioner of the Revenue research the matter.

Mr. Thrower reported that the Commissioner of the Revenue provided him with several ordinances from various localities concerning the matter. He also reported that, based on the information provided, seniors were required to meet the following criteria to qualify:

- Must be 65 yrs. of older
- Permanently disabled
- Fall within a certain income bracket

Mayor Adams reported that he recalled the matter being addressed previously and that there would be a very limited number of citizens that would qualify for the senior citizen discount in Emporia.

Councilman Saunders requested that true figures be provided to Council members by the Commissioner of the Revenue to allow them to make an educated decision regarding the matter.

Mayor Adams commended Ms. Cutrell for her work in managing the City's finances.

### **\*\*\*CLOSED SESSION\*\*\***

Councilman Saunders moved that Closed Session be entered for the purpose of discussing Virginia Code § 2.2-3711 (A) (5) **Industrial Matter**. Councilwoman Squire seconded the motion, which passed as follows:

Councilwoman Nancy B. Squire	aye
Councilman F. Woodrow Harris	aye
Councilman James C. Saunders	aye
Councilwoman Doris T. White	aye
Councilwoman Carolyn S. Carey	aye
Councilman Ned V. Lankford	aye

### **\*\*\*REGULAR SESSION\*\*\***

Councilman Harris moved that the meeting be returned to Regular Session. Councilwoman White seconded the motion, which passed as follows:

Councilwoman Nancy B. Squire	aye
Councilman F. Woodrow Harris	aye
Councilman James C. Saunders	aye
Councilwoman Doris T. White	aye
Councilwoman Carolyn S. Carey	aye
Councilman Ned V. Lankford	aye

## ***CERTIFICATION***

Councilman Harris moved to certify the following:

1. only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act were discussed in the Closed Session to which this certification applies, and
2. only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the Closed Session was convened were heard, discussed, or considered by City Council.

Councilman Saunders seconded the motion, which passed as follows:

Councilwoman Nancy B. Squire	aye
Councilman F. Woodrow Harris	aye
Councilman James C. Saunders	aye
Councilwoman Doris T. White	aye
Councilwoman Carolyn S. Carey	aye
Councilman Ned V. Lankford	aye

## **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to present before City Council, Mr. Thrower adjourned the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

## **MINUTES ~ SATURDAY, JANUARY 26, 2008**

City Council members in attendance:

Councilwoman Nancy B. Squire  
Councilman F. Woodrow Harris  
Councilman James C. Saunders (9:18 a.m. arrival)  
Councilwoman Carolyn S. Carey  
Councilman Ned V. Lankford (10:25 a.m. arrival)

Others present: C. Butler Barrett, City Attorney (9:24 a.m. arrival)  
Hannah Barrett, Emporia Downtown Development Association  
Jack Davenport, Industrial Development Corporation  
Tom Delbridge, Water Treatment Plant Superintendent (9:50 a.m. arrival)  
Linwood Pope, Public Utilities Director (9:50 a.m. arrival)  
Clint Strong, Special Projects Coordinator (12:33 p.m. arrival)  
Bernard Richardson, Chief of Police (2:02 p.m. arrival)  
Brian Thrower, Interim City Manager  
Jean Whiting, City Clerk

Absent: Councilman John White  
Councilwoman Doris T. White

*Continental Breakfast from 8:00 – 8:30 a.m.*

## *Economic Development*

### Overview of Past Activities

Ms. Hannah Barrett, Emporia Downtown Development Association Chairwoman, provided City Council members with her view of 2007 accomplishments, which included the following:

- Two (2) districts received state and national historic designations
- First annual Kick-off Kook-off during the Peanut Festival - not as successful as anticipated

### Potential Projects/Activities

Ms. Barrett stated that, due to the historic district designations, she planed to focus on historic tourism and would be pursuing government grants concerning the matter. She also stated that she would be researching the possibility of gateway signage for the two districts.

She reported that she has encountered a number of individuals who are interest in investing in the downtown area. She also reported that a downtown master plan was needed, including the creation of businesses sought and revisions to the downtown overlay zoning ordinance to address development and upper-floor living.

Mr. Thrower reported that a key to attracting business and vibrancy to downtown areas was to have individuals residing there. He also stated that he agreed that the City's ordinance should be reviewed and modified to specifically address upper-floor multi-family living. He also stated that Ms. Barrett had sample ordinances addressing the matter for review.

Mayor Adams advised Mr. Thrower that he would like to quickly move forward in addressing upper-floor multi-family living in the downtown area.

Ms. Barrett reported that she planed to reorganize the Downtown Board and possible involve students in an effort to boost merchant involvement. She also reported that she would be working jointly with the Chamber of Commerce in developing a new brochure.

She stated that the Historic Garden Tour was slated for April 19-27, 2008 and would take place in Emporia on Saturday, April 26, 2008. She suggested that the City conduct a Clean Sweep operation, two weeks prior to the event, to aid in preparatory beautification efforts.

Ms. Barrett reported that she anticipated implementing "Friday Cheers" concerts in the park whereby area non-profit organizations would serve as sponsors. She also reported that the objective of such events would be to extend downtown hours, increase visibility, and substantiate safety in the downtown area after dark. She further reported that such events require volunteer support and that the lack of such support stagnated implementation of such events in the past.

She stated that the City's snowflake lights were in great need of attention as many of the bulbs were not lit during the holiday season. She suggested that funding be included in the budget to address such matters. She also suggested that commercial lights be purchased and then sold at a profit to local merchants, thereby merchants would sponsor each strand of lights used in the decorative lighting of Veteran's Memorial Park.

### ***Industrial Development Corporation***

Mr. Jack Davenport provided City Council members with an overview of the Industrial Development Corporation's structure and the area's overall economy, which including the following highlights:

- Employment
  - ~ One-third (1/3) retail/services
  - ~ One-third (1/3) manufacturing
  - ~ 1/3 government
  
- Key Assets of Emporia-Greenville
  - ~ Transportation
  - ~ Labor force
  - ~ Availability of buildings and sites
  - ~ City and County infrastructure
  - ~ Telecommunications
  - ~ Respective local leadership
  - ~ Rural/small town quality of life

### **Virginia Employment Commission**

Mr. Davenport encouraged City Council members to speak with Congressman Forbes directly and request that he have a very active role in fighting for the continued existence of the local Virginia Employment Commission office.

### **Mecklenburg Electric & Dominion Virginia Power**

- Mecklenburg Electric ~ Key players in the development of Industrial Park and MegaSite
  
- Dominion Virginia Power ~ Mid-Atlantic broadband transmission line/substation – Key opportunities for attracting future investments:
  - Typical incentive package allows local government to earn back its investment in approximately five (5) to twelve (12) years, the state in approximately twelve (12) to fourteen (14) months
  - Increased interest from utilities and railroads within the past twelve (12) months
  - Direct inquiries – increased from twenty percent (20%) to forty percent (40%) over the years.

### **MegaSite Certification**

- Announcement forthcoming relative to certification
- Clients can be under construction within twelve (12) months when certification is obtained

### Marketing of Vacant Buildings

- ADF Buildings
- Chara/Quickrete
- South Hampton Textile
- IDC Website
- Headsheets
- Staff Resources/Property Owner Cooperation
- IDC Interactive Website
- Budget Needs

### Travel & Tourism

- Walking tour map of historic markers within the City of Emporia
- Orientation of motel/restaurant workers

### Key Issues for Emporia

- Flow of manufacturing offshore
- Condition of the City Industrial Park
- Lack of ready-to-go industrial sites
- Joint industrial park
- Freestanding industrial sites
- Ability to accommodate expansion or facility needs of existing industries

### Future Growth Engines

- MegaSite projects
- Expansion and replacement of aging manufacturing facilities
- Mid to large-scale distribution facilities
- Telecommunications users
- Travel and tourism industry
- Enhanced downtown
- Health care industry
- Fort Lee expansion
- Prince George's Rolls-Royce jet engine facility

Mayor Adams asked Mr. Davenport to elaborate on how important the area's newly constructed YMCA will be in improving the quality of life for prospective industrial clients.

Mr. Davenport stated that he thinks it is vitally important, as the new location will be situated in a good location for visibility and accessibility. He also stated that other jurisdictions are working on developing Mega-Sites and that the Virginia site was currently the only certified site.

***Break 10:45 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.***

### ***Community Facilities and Infrastructure***

Mr. Tom Delbridge and Linwood Pope provided City Council members with an overview of how the City's drainage and water supply systems were operating. They also provided suggestions for system enhancements.

Mr. Linwood Pope reported that the City's Water Treatment Plant had been in operation every day since 1954.

Mr. Tom Delbridge informed City Council members that the City's current technology would not meet the increasing demands of Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards as membrane filtration would be the sole method recognized for guarding against cryptosporidium organisms.

He stated that U.S. Filter, previously contracted by the City, suggested that the existing two (2) filters at the water plant be removed and one (1) side be retrofitted for membrane filtration.

Mr. Pope stated that a portable plant could be utilized while renovations take place to the plant. He also stated that construction of a new facility would cost approximately fourteen million dollars (\$14,000,000.00).

***Lunch 12:30 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.***

### ***Service Excellence***

Mr. Thrower reported that a salary study for the City's Public Works Department and Public Utilities Department was underway. He also reported that the City's website was being updated and provided City Council members with a draft overview view of the new look. He further reported that content software and training would be needed to implement changes and that the collective cost would be approximately ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00).

### ***Organizational Enhancements***

Mr. Thrower provided City Council members with suggestive implementations for increasing employee productivity including, but not limited to, the following:

- Increased supervisory training for line staff
- Employee Committee composed of department representatives to provide suggestions for organizational improvements
- YMCA corporate membership
- Employee "Catch A Star" Program (recognition program)

- Increase informal department visitation

### ***Neighborhoods***

Mr. Clint Strong, contractual Special Projects Coordinator, reported that he researched the City's Redevelopment and Housing Authority and found that the group lacked a clearly defined mission. He also reported that the group had an estimated one hundred twenty-five thousand dollars (\$125,000.00) in the bank. He further suggested that City Council and the Housing Authority work jointly on projects and suggested the following missions for the Housing Authority providing supporting information for each:

- Fund significant portions of the West Atlantic Street Project
- Provide funding for a grants writer
- Provide funding for a significant portion of the Lowground Phase III Project

It was the consensus of City Council members that Mr. Thrower provide written notice to Emporia's Housing Authority of their wish to partner with them in working on the West Atlantic Street and Lowground Road Projects.

Mr. Strong provided City Council with suggestions for moving forward with the West Atlantic Street Project including the following:

- Concentrated code enforcement (push)
- Owner incentives

He commended City Council on the City's progress over the past several years.

*Break 2:00 – 2:15 p.m.*

### ***Review of Ordinance Revisions and Successes***

Mr. Thrower reported that several businesses remained noncompliant with the City's revised sign ordinance and that more enforcement of the ordinance was needed. He also reported that property maintenance issues involving grass cutting had cost the City a significant amount of money, as reimbursement from property owners had not been obtained. He further reported that stronger enforcement and follow-through would be implemented concerning the matter.

### ***Comprehensive Plan Update***

Mr. Thrower reported that the City's Comprehensive Plans would be completed within the next several months and would go before the Planning Commission and ultimately to City Council members for review and final approval.

### ***Train Whistle Update***

Mr. Thrower reported that follow-up was needed with the Federal Railroad Administration concerning the City's previous request for quiet zone hours.

### ***Clean Sweep Emporia***

Councilman Saunders reported that he spoke with Mr. Royal Jones, Director of Public Works, concerning a Clean Sweep program within the City. He suggested that operation Clean Sweep be implemented during the final week of April 2008.

Mayor Adams suggested that City Council member identify areas within their respective districts in need of beautification and that notification be provided to citizens concerning debris removal during Clean Sweep periods.

Ms. Welsh suggested that local organizations such as the Boys & Girls Club and the Boy Scouts be requested to assist elderly residents during operation Clean Sweep.

Mayor Adams reported that City fire hydrants were in need of painting and that street signs continued to need attention as well.

### ***Dog Tethering***

Councilman Harris suggested that the City's existing laws concerning the tethering of dogs be exercised and not modified.

It was the consensus of City Council members to address the matter at their February 5, 2008 Regular Meeting.

### ***Public Safety***

Mr. Thrower reported that an additional ambulance was needed.

### ***Traffic Control***

Mayor Adams reported that speed continued to be a problem in residential neighborhoods and discussed the possibility of placing speed pumps in respective areas.

### ***Police Department Overview***

Bernard Richardson, Chief of Police, provided City Council members with an overview of the City's Police Department. He stated that employee moral had improved within the department. He also stated that the department had been exploring the possibility of utilizing tazers.

He reported that some of the 2007 charges reflected for the Selective Enforcement portion of the financial overview, provided by Ms. Cutrell, were charges for failure to yield tickets and failure to obey highway signs. He also reported that those charges reflect differences in imposed fines.

Mayor Adams asked Chief Richardson if the stop light located near Applebee's was being monitored.

Chief Richardson advised Mayor Adams that the light was being monitored as well as the northbound stop signs.

***CLOSING REMARKS***

Mayor Adams complemented Mr. Thrower and staff on the content and presentation of the material covered during the retreat.

***ADJOURNMENT***

With no further business to present before City Council, Mr. Thrower adjourned the meeting at 2:15 p.m.

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Samuel W. Adams, III, Mayor

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Jean V. Whiting, City Clerk