

SPECIAL MEETING
FEBRUARY 18, 2016

The purpose of this meeting was to hear a proposal from Sheriff Calvin Woodard for police protection for the Town of Stantonburg

Mayor Bill Edmundson called the Special Meeting to order at 7:00 pm with the following Council members present: Councilmen Ken Horne, Robert Watson, Donnie Bass and Powell Dew, Jr. Councilwoman Jackie Grice arrived at 7:25 pm. Also present were Town Manager, Gary Davis and Town Clerk, Debra Beamon. Special guest were Sheriff Calvin Woodard and Major Tom Futrell from the Wilson County Sheriff's Dept. There were approximately 40 citizens attending the meeting to hear Sheriff Woodard's proposal for police protection for the Town of Stantonburg. Mr. Dan Whitley led the Pledge of Allegiance and Councilman Powell Dew, Jr. opened the meeting with prayer.

Sheriff Woodard made his presentation at this time. The proposal is as follows:

There would be a deputy or a supervisor in Stantonburg for 12 hours a day. During the other hours, a deputy in the Stantonburg zone would respond to calls with a response time from 2 minutes to 15 minutes. The deputy on duty will only leave the Town if another deputy is in serious trouble and needs assistance. The deputies would walk the streets and visit the businesses to get to know the citizens and would be at the school in the morning and afternoon to control traffic. The officers assigned to the town would go through community policing training before being assigned to the town. The Town will provide a sub-station for the deputies, patrol car, vehicle maintenance, uniforms, office supplies, payroll and certain payroll deductions. The initial start up cost would be \$175,596.00. The next year the cost would be less by \$34,625.00 for 3 years because they would not need to purchase a car. Once a patrol car reaches 100,000 miles, it would be returned to the Town for surplus and a new car would be purchased.

At this time, the Town Council members had some questions for Sheriff Woodard.

Next, Mayor Edmundson opened the floor for the public to express their opinions and ask questions also.

Former Mayor Dan Whitley asked why the Town Council was considering contracting the Sheriff's Dept. for police protection. Mayor Edmundson explained that the main reason was to cut expenses with Sheriff Woodard's proposal being a maximum of \$175,596 per year versus the \$300,000 plus annually that the town is now budgeting for the police department.

Councilman Dew explained that the Town is now transferring \$250,000 per year from the Electric Fund to the General Fund to support the Police Dept. For several years, the State Legislature talks about not allowing this transfer anymore because each fund is supposed to be self-sufficient. Mr. Dew explained that if this happens, the property taxes would likely have to be tripled to support the Police Dept. at its current level. The town has lost several businesses in the town and this resulted in a loss of revenue for the town. The Town Council is looking at other options in case this transfer restriction were to pass and/or to cut operating expenses in the Police Dept.

There were several senior citizens present and their main concern was not having 24-hour police coverage and the feeling of security that they now have knowing that there is a police officer that will respond within minutes if needed. Mrs. Joann Lucas spoke on behalf of the seniors in Stantonburg. Mrs. Lucas stated that many of the seniors live alone and that they feel safe now, but would not feel as safe knowing that there is not a police officer on duty 24 hours a day. She feels that the Town Council needs to look at other means of cutting expenses in the General Fund instead of getting rid of the police department.

After much discussion and comments from the public present the Town Council decided to further investigate this proposal and contact officials from Lucama and Elm City to hear their comments about the Sheriff's Dept. coverage in their town.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra L. Beamon, Town Clerk

William H. Edmuindson, Mayor