



TO: Mayor and City Councilors

FROM: Rich Olson, City Manager

REF: FYI ~ Week Ending February 25, 2011

COPY: Email Distribution

1. On February 23, 2011, I attended the North Carolina Eastern Municipal Power Agency (NCEMPA) Board of Commissioners meeting in Wilson. We were informed that all of our nuclear units are operating at 100% of availability. Brunswick Unit #2 will begin a scheduled 45-day refueling and maintenance outage on March 5, 2011. This scheduled outage was included in our rate projections. During the meeting, the Board unanimously approved a resolution opposing the passage of House Bill 117. I have placed on the City Council's agenda for the Monday, February 28 meeting a similar resolution. The NCEMPA resolution supports the Local Government Commission's published policy that recommends that municipalities that own electric systems limit transfers to three percent (3%) of the gross fixed assets of the Electric Fund. The City of Elizabeth City has historically followed the LGC's guidelines. Discussions were held in Closed Session concerning the Duke and Progress Energy merger. The Board of Commissioners authorized staff to secure an outside consultant to perform an independent evaluation of all the legal and engineering aspects of the merger.
2. On Tuesday, the City opened construction bids for work to clean and repair the raw water tank at the Water Treatment Plant. We received eight bids ranging from \$632,000 to \$1,184,000. The low bid was about \$100,000 more than the estimate for this project. The qualifying review of the low bidder was clouded by the classification of General Contractor License held by the apparent low bidder. Review of the bids also showed that there was some confusion about the intent of the work specified because of unknowns about the raw water tank, due in part to the fact that it has not been emptied or cleaned in almost 50 years. This was evident by significant differences in some of the unit price bids received. The review of the construction bids is in progress at this time and we

anticipate that there will be a staff recommendation to the City Council regarding this project during the meeting scheduled for Monday.

3. Today, construction bids were opened for the relocation of electric distribution lines as required for the reconstruction of Elizabeth Street. Four bids were received ranging from \$527,000 to \$771,000. This bid only dealt with the labor to install the equipment that the City will provide. The construction bids received were about 60% below the engineer's estimate of cost. We anticipate that the review of the bids will be complete and the qualifications of the low bidder reviewed by Monday in time to make a recommendation to City Council to award the construction contract during the Monday night meeting.
4. On Wednesday this week, there was a quarterly meeting of the Albemarle Regional Planning Organization's Transportation Advisory Committee. Lloyd Griffin, Chairman of the Pasquotank Board of Commissioners was appointed to a two year term as the chairman of the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC). Jerry Jennings spoke to the TAC and advised them on some of the pending budget considerations at the state level that would affect the Department of Transportation: first, a proposed gas tax cap could reduce DOT revenues by almost \$1 billion dollars over the next ten years; and secondly, there is a proposal to change the "equity formula" now used to divide money between the divisions of DOT (the proposed change could have a serious reduction in the share of the DOT monies that are allocated to Division 1). Mr. Jennings also reviewed a couple of interesting statistics about the NCDOT: NCDOT is ranked 48th of all states with regard to the dollars per mile that are spent on state roads; NC is ranked 35th of all states with regard to the number of DOT employees per mile of state roads; but, NC is rated second with regard to the number of miles of state highways, second only to Texas.
5. Staff learned today that the Bureau of the Census will be releasing North Carolina's 2010 Census Data during the week of February 28 through March 4. This release is earlier than we had initially been told and will give staff additional time to work on updates that may be needed to accomplish redistricting.
6. The Code Enforcement Bureau, under the leadership of Chief Charles Crudup, is continuing its efforts in addressing code violations throughout the City. Code violations occurring in the City limits can be lodged and tracked using the Comcate software on the City's website. The software has now been completely updated to include all violations for the past two years, which makes it very easy to see the progress that has been made.

Since January 1, 2009, the Code Enforcement Bureau has processed the following complaints:

- Abandoned, Nuisance, and Junked Motor Vehicles – 246
- Community Appearance and Safety Standards – 192
- Corner Visibility – 33
- Dead trees and/or limbs – 25
- Detached or accessory building - 13
- Dumpster screening – 26
- Fence or retaining wall - 12
- No Business License – 12
- Removal of debris/rubbish - 11
- Vacant & Unsecured Properties – 47
- Weed, Grass, and other Debris – 890
- Other complaints – 37

A total of 1,544 complaints have been processed overall, with a total of 37 cases currently open at this time. The citizens of Elizabeth City are encouraged to utilize the City's website to lodge any complaints or issues they have concerning code violations. Citizens may also call (252)335-4321, ext. 260 should they wish to speak directly to Code Enforcement Officer Mike Williams or Lisa Rich.

7. Human Resources Director Katherine Felton attended the meeting in Nags Head this week concerning the City's new MedCost insurance provider. The information we received was both enlightening and refreshing. This League sponsored meeting advised that our insurance services should be even better than they were with CIGNA. The following is a recap of some of the information received during the meeting.
 - The final health rates will be approved on April 19, 2011 and the current trend is a 9% increase. This amount will be incorporated into the budget document.
 - There will be one MedCost card issued for medical, dental and prescriptions. VSP will continue as our Vision Plan provider.
 - Employees will be encouraged to use generic prescriptions when they are available. If more expensive drugs are desired and a generic is available, you can do so, but will pay the difference (i.e.) \$20/copay (brand names that do not have a generic equivalent) or \$40/copay (brand non-preferred) or \$5.00 generic.
 - If a medical doctor is not currently in the network, MedCost will make sure they do everything possible to get them in.

There will be a Health and Safety Benefits Fair held at Knobbs Creek Recreation Center on April 29 for employees and their families to ask specific questions. Enrollment will begin on May 5.

8. Upcoming Event Reminders:

- Meet and Greet Reception for the winners of the Mayor's 7th Grade Writing Contest at 4:30 p.m. on Monday, February 28 in Council Chambers. The winners will read their essays during the Work Session scheduled for 5:30 p.m.
- City Council Work Session on Monday, February 28 at 5:30 p.m.
- City Council Regular Session on Monday, February 28 at 7 p.m.
- The Elizabeth City Planning Commission will meet on Tuesday, March 1 at 4 p.m. in Council Chambers. The agenda for the meeting is available in the Planning Department section of the City's website (www.cityofec.com)
- Ribbon Cutting Celebration sponsored by the Elizabeth City Area Chamber of Commerce hosted by The Boardroom located in the Weeksville Plaza Shopping Center next to Food Lion on Thursday, March 3 at noon. Please call the Chamber at 335-4365 to RSVP if you plan to attend.

RCO/vdw