

Mooresville Officials Question County Funding

Kim McKinney
IREDELL CITIZEN

AL JONES, MAYOR OF MOORESVILLE, led a group of south Iredell citizens at the July 13 pre-agenda meeting in expressing disappointment about funding the Iredell County commissioners are providing the town's new library.

The town provided building costs for the 34,000 square foot project, Jones explained, but town leaders considered the county commissioners to be in an informal partnership with the town to contribute toward operating costs.

Last year the county provided funding of \$553,030 for the Mooresville library. For 2004-2005, Mooresville requested doubling that support to \$1,174,004. However, the approved 2004-2005 budget only raised the appropriation by 25 percent to \$691,290.

Jones told commissioners that without an increase the library, scheduled to open March 2005, will be extremely short-staffed and might have reduced hours of operation. He added that the library would be unable to purchase many new books and furnishings would be sparse. He asked the commissioners to do all they could to help them in their dilemma.

Commissioners asked Jones, county manager Joel Mashburn, library directors and financial representatives from both the county and the town to meet to see if they could find dollars in either budget to soften the blow to the library. They will report back to commissioners at a later date.

Jones also asked for financial participation in the regional transit service that operates bus service between Mooresville and Charlotte each day. The cost of the service, which is not covered by the \$4 one-way fee, is around \$200,544. The town of Mooresville asks the county to pay \$50,136, or half the portion not covered by Mecklenburg County, since the service benefits Iredell county residents and helps

meet air quality non-attainment goals for the county. Commissioners expressed skepticism saying they feel that the system should be self-supporting, but agreed to consider the request.

During other business commissioners:

- Approved an amendment of the economic development incentives for Lowe's Companies, Inc. The amendment provides a five-year incentive grant to be awarded to Lowe's after one year's payment of ad valorem (property) taxes. That was a change from the prior requirement of five years of property tax payment for construction of a new hangar/building at the Statesville airport. In addition, Lowe's was given a grant for the location of Lowe's aircraft in Iredell County. The grant will begin after six years and will be based on the aircraft's value in the prior five years. The grants will occur for five years, provided aircraft of the same value remains in Iredell County. The grants will be based upon .0036% of the assessed value of the building and the aircraft. There will be no cap on grant amount assessed.
- Approved a contract presented by Lee Darnell, EMS Director, to outsource billing operations. EMS Management & Consultants, out of Lewisville, was awarded the contract. They currently work with 85 EMS services around the state. Commissioners also approved a contract with EMS medical director Dr. Stephen Folstad.
- Approved changes in zoning to Mooresville properties including: A request from Richard D. Boone to amend the River Highway Corridor Land Use Plan to rezone a portion of property located at Pinnacle Lane and Hwy 150W from Resort Residential to General Business - Conditional Use District; a request from Woodland and Waterview LLC to rezone property located at 1454 Brawley School Rd. from Residential Agricultural to Residential Office District; and a request from JT Alexander Jr. to rezone property located on Langtree Rd. from Residential

- Agricultural to Office Institutional Conditional use.
- Approved a request from Emergency Services Director Tracy Jackson to add a member to the local emergency planning committee from the Iredell County Firefighters Assoc. Jackson also advised commissioners of two vacancies on that committee.
- Approved change orders for the new county library, in the amount of \$33,317.
- Approved an additional \$3,000 appropriation for the Lake Norman Marine Commission.
- Heard an update of current projects and upcoming projects from planning supervisor Ron Smith.
- Heard from members of the Lake Norman Volunteer Fire Department about financing of a new fire station at Brawley School and South Fork Rd. in Mooresville. Commissioners asked them to get financing plans by the fire tax board and return with a report at the next meeting.
- Approved refinancing obligations of the Iredell County Rescue Squad.
- Approved a grant project ordinance and a request allowing Chairman Steve Johnson to sign various documents regarding the FlexSol Community Development Block Grant.
- Agreed to be fiscal agent for a Governor's Crime Commission Grant for the Unity Children and Family Services Agency.
- Approved Marvin Norman as a voting delegate to the NC Association of County Commissioners conference in

Asheville August 19-22.
• Wayne Suratt, of the Plaza Appalers handbell team, asked commissioners for written support for their handbell team at the Senior Games State Finals in October of 2004. Surratt said that the seniors have raised all but \$500 and are looking for community

support.
• Appointed Stephen Issak, Donna Young and Steven Michael Sexton to the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council. Three appointments remain open for the Adult Care Home Community Advisory Board.



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