

Town Board of Commissioners
Special Meeting
October 25, 2013

A Special Meeting of the Town of Oriental Town Board of Commissioners was held on Friday, October 25, 2013. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss a possible resolution concerning providing water service to and the annexation of the new Walmart being constructed on the outskirts of town.

Mayor Sage called the meeting to order at 3:04 PM, and determined a quorum was present.

PRESENT: Mayor Sage, Commissioners Bessette, Styron, Venturi, Summers, Town Manager Cutler, Deputy Clerk Beyer, Administrative Assistant Cox, Police Captain Moore, public

ABSENT: Commissioner Johnson

Mayor Sage's opening comments reminded the audience that any prospective outside of Town use of Town water must be obtained by the approval of the Town Board. The Town Board approached Walmart with an agreement to provide water service on the condition that Walmart annex into the Town.

In the October 1, 2013 Town Board Meeting, a Motion was made by Commissioner Johnson for the Town Board to approve providing Town water service to Walmart, if, upon completion of the store, Walmart agrees to request voluntary annexation into the Town. Commissioner Venturi seconded the Motion. Mayor Sage recommended holding a Special Meeting once Walmart's response was received.

Mayor Sage opened the floor to Public Comments, with 12 townspeople signing up to speak, all of whom were against providing Walmart water service.

Barbara Stockton read a letter and presented same for the record.

Caroline Parham-Ramsey read a letter concerning Walmart harming the small town atmosphere of Oriental. This letter is attached for the record.

Bob Miller requested that Walmart present their response to the Town in writing, and also requested that this issue be tabled until the new Town Board is elected.

Bill Hines requested the decision be tabled.

Lili Stern presented for the record a picture of the family who owned the Town and Country Grocery store. She described 40 years of service to Oriental by Town and Country, and asked that in respect of the local businesses this decision be tabled.

Marlene Miller stated that Walmart had unfair business practices and requested the issue be tabled.

Doug Sligh felt that Walmart may be bluffing the Town with its refusal to comply with the Town's annexation request, in hopes that the Town will back down and comply with Walmart's wishes.

Michael Tigar recommended the Board take a tough, hard nose approach to the negotiations with Walmart

Penny Flaherty stated the list of items Walmart has agreed to is lame, and to table this issue pending election of new Town Board.

Ron Zielinski commented on the Town not receiving a written refusal from Walmart and recommended getting something in writing before making a decision.

David Marchand wanted the Town to make the best deal possible for Oriental

Pat Herlands inquired as to why the Town was changing its position and making an exception.

Mayor Sage concluded the Public Comment portion of the meeting.

Mayor Sage then read a Resolution that he had written, a copy of which is attached to the minutes. In this Resolution, permission is granted to Walmart to tap onto the Town water service.

MOTION: Commissioner Summers made a Motion to adopt the Resolution as written, seconded by Commissioner Venturi.

Discussion followed:

Commissioner Summers recommended getting Walmart's answers in writing. He also suggested asking Dollar General to annex, as well as the new apartments that are being built.

Commissioner Styron stated he could understand why Walmart did not wish to annex as the GMO has many parts to it that are prohibitive to businesses. He also reminded the audience that the Town is in the business of selling water, and that there have been years in the past where taxpayer dollars have been used to subsidize water. He also recalled some \$930,000 of grant money obtained and put towards the construction of the water tower.

Commissioner Venturi stated that the Town Board of Commissioners have not been afforded the opportunity to speak with Walmart officials. She did not understand why this meeting has taken place, as a Motion was already made prior, with a direction the Town Board would move in.

Commissioner Bessette recommended postponing the vote on the Motion currently on the floor, as the Board has been left out of the communication loop.

After hearing discussion from the Board, the Motion concerning the Resolution by Mayor Sage was put to a vote. The vote received all Nays, and the Motion failed.

MOTION: Commissioner Styron made a Motion to appoint a committee of two Commissioners to approach Walmart for negotiation to reconsider annexation. Commissioner Venturi seconded. Discussion followed.

Commissioner Venturi stated that it was a mistake that was made by the Town allowing Dollar General to obtain water from the Town without Town Board approval.

Mayor Sage then asked for a vote on the Motion that was currently on the floor. The Motion passed 4-0.

Commissioner Venturi appointed herself and Commissioner Styron as the Commissioner representatives, along with the Town Manager and the Mayor as composing the committee.

Commissioner Summers suggested appointing Commissioner Venturi and Commissioner Johnson as the Commissioner representatives, with Commissioner Summers as Alternate. Commissioner Styron seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

There being no further business to discuss, a Motion to Adjourn was made. Commissioner Venturi made a Motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Styron seconded. The Motion passed 4-0.

The meeting adjourned at 4:05 PM.

Mayor Bill Sage

Town Manager Wyatt Cutler