

## RECESSED MEETING OF APRIL 20, 2004

Continued  
May 4, 2004  
3:00 p.m.

The City Council of the City of Salisbury met at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 4, 2004, in Council Chambers at City Hall pursuant to the recess of the regular meeting on April 20, 2004, with the following members being present and absent:

<b>PRESENT:</b>	Mayor Susan W. Kluttz, Presiding; Mayor Pro Tem, Paul B. Woodson, Jr.; Councilmen William (Bill) Burgin; William (Pete) Kennedy; Mark N. Lewis; City Manager, David W. Treme; City Attorney, F. Rivers Lawther, Jr.; and City Clerk, Myra B. Heard.
<b>ABSENT:</b>	NONE

Mayor Kluttz called the meeting to order.

### **INFORMATIONAL WORKSHOP ON TERM LENGTHS**

Mr. David Lawrence from the Institute of Government at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill provided information to Council concerning length of terms for various municipalities.

Mr. Lawrence told Council that the trend for North Carolina cities is four (4) year staggered terms. Out of five hundred forty-one (541) cities, three hundred sixteen (316) use four (4) year staggered terms. One hundred eighty-seven (187) cities use two (2) year terms, twenty-seven (27) use straight four (4) year terms and eleven (11) use other. For the twenty-three (23) cities over twenty five thousand (25,000) in population, ten (10) use two (2) year terms, ten (10) use four (4) year staggered, and three (3) use four (4) year terms without staggering. Mr. Lawrence noted that Salisbury is the only city over twenty-five thousand (25,000) that elects its mayor the way Salisbury does. Every other city elects the mayor directly.

Mr. Lawrence told Council that some of the considerations to be given for two (2) year terms are that citizens perceive two (2) year terms to cause a council to be more responsive. He stated that this is an advantage for voters because a council can be removed in two (2) years if the voters are unhappy, but adversely, continuity is lost. He added that with two (2) year terms a person may be more willing to commit to two (2) years of service rather than four (4). Mr. Lawrence commented on the learning curve when a council turns over every two years and also noted that if council runs at-large using a staggered term system it may make it more difficult for minority interests to elect someone.

Mayor Kluttz stated that it appears Council is looking at three (3) different issues: term lengths, staggered elections, and a separate mayoral election. She added that it would be beneficial for Council to determine the positive and negative aspects for this community. Mayor Kluttz commented that by electing all five (5) Council members at one time the citizens have put together a diverse City Council. Mayor Kluttz stated that she felt the job of the Mayor has grown, and perhaps this was due to having a Mayor for the past twelve years that did not have a full time job.

Mayor Pro Tem Woodson asked how the term of a mayor is elected if a council is elected for four (4) year terms. Mr. Lawrence answered that cities handle it in different ways, some with four (4) year terms and some with two (2). He stated that the most common pattern is that even if the terms are for four (4) years the council typically selects the mayor in two (2) year cycles.

Mr. Woodson stated that he likes the way Council is elected and the fact that Council selects the Mayor, but added that it is difficult and expensive to run every two (2) years.

Mayor Kluttz stated that she did not think Council was interested in districts and Council agreed that they would like to remain non-partisan.

Councilman Burgin asked about the general range of size for city councils. Mr. Lawrence stated that five (5) is the most common size with three hundred six (306) of the cities using this size. He added that with cities over twenty five thousand (25,000), six (6) is the most common size. He clarified that this number is the number of people elected as council members and most of those cities elect the mayor separately. Mayor Kluttz asked if the mayors vote. Mr. Lawrence stated that most mayors vote to break a tie but a city can establish the role of the mayor as it chooses.

Mr. Burgin asked about the process for changing term lengths. Mr. Lawrence stated that a council can ask the General Assembly for the change, or a council can pass a resolution on the intended change, call a public hearing and pass an ordinance for the change. He added that voters can also petition for a change and force a vote on the issue.

Mr. Burgin commented that he is concerned about maintaining diversity on Council if a change is made but that he also understands the expense and time involved in running every two (2) years.

Councilman Lewis stated that he felt that the Mayor's seat should be Council's first consideration as this changes the dynamics of any thing else Council may do.

Mr. Lawrence told Council that many councils have members who serve four (4) year terms and the mayor serves a two (2) year term. This situation causes two (2) council members and a mayor to run every two (2) years.

Mr. Lawrence noted that statewide one hundred eighty-seven (187) cities have two (2) year terms for council members, but three hundred thirty-three (333) cities have two (2) year terms for mayors.

Councilman Kennedy stated that he has mixed feelings about the change but can agree with the majority of Council.

Mayor Klutz asked if the next step is to study the issue and put together how each Council member feels. Council agreed for the Mayor to discuss the issue with each Council member one-on-one and report back to the full Council.

Mayor Klutz asked City Manager Treme his opinion on term lengths. Mr. Treme stated that in his eighteen (18) years as Manager the voters have created stability in the system. He noted that timing is important and if unpopular issues are brought up before an election it tends to drive the election. He added that with staggered terms council members who are running for re-election may not want to bring up an issue that the council members not running would, and it creates a 3-2 split. Mr. Treme commented that the current system in Salisbury has worked well for the community.

-  
Mr. Woodson stated that he would like to see Council serve four (4) year terms with the Mayor elected by Council just as it is done now.

-  
Mayor Klutz thanked Mr. Lawrence for providing the information to Council and giving his expert advice.

-  
**ADJOURNMENT**

-  
**Motion** to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Burgin, seconded by Mr. Lewis. All Council members agreed unanimously to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

-  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

-  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk