

WORK SESSION MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF CARY, NORTH CAROLINA**FEBRUARY 17, 2000****SUBJECT: CAMPAIGN FINANCE****TIME: 6:30 P.M.****LOCATION: CARY TOWN HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 316 N. ACADEMY STREET, CARY**

PRESENT: Mayor Glen Lang, Mayor Pro Tem Jack Smith, Council Members Marla Dorrel, Jennifer Robinson, Nels Roseland, Jess Ward and Harold Weinbrecht

Mayor Glen Lang called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and dispensed with all formalities. He stated the Town Council is trying to obtain information on how Cary might have elections that are fair, honest and are not so dependent on money.

Mayor Lang stated Chapel Hill is leading North Carolina with respect to campaign finance reform. He stated they have reduced the amount of money that individuals can contribute in local elections. He stated he personally admires Chapel Hill for their progress in this area. Mayor Lang stated this work session will also focus on public campaign financing.

Ms. Carol Love of Common Cause distributed a handout to the Council. This information is labeled **Exhibit A** and is attached to and incorporated in these minutes.

Ms. Love stated the democracy that people see in today's election system is not the same democracy that so many of our forefather's fought to win. She stated Cary owes its children a healthy democracy. Ms. Love stated Common Cause is a 30 year old citizens group that works for healthier democracy by working for open, honest and accountable government, and by helping people see that they still have a voice in that government. She stated this organization is non-partisan and is comprised of liberal and conservative members.

Ms. Love stated she feels the biggest reason that voters do not vote is because they feel their vote does not count. She stated voters do not believe that candidates care about the issues that concern them the most. She stated 9 out of 10 people feel that money controls the process, and almost 9 out of 10 do not vote because they feel their vote does not make a difference.

Ms. Love outlined three ways that money enters the campaign process: (1) through campaign contributions; (2) soft money; and (3) issue advocacy.

Ms. Love stated issue advocacy is a type of speech in which issue groups advocate for and educate the public about issues of concern. She stated a good example of this is the ads sponsored by the homebuilders association during the last election. She stated these ads focused on a community issue and what the interest groups felt were solutions to problems. She stated they truly focused on the issues. She stated real issue ads play a vital role in the campaign process. She stated issue ads are very expensive, and can cost up to \$200,000 from one group.

Ms. Love stated soft money is supposed to be the money the political parties need and use for party building activities, but the term has come to refer to a loophole in the law that allows money to be funneled to individual campaigns, circumventing the campaign laws that are in place.

Ms. Love stated that issue advocacy and soft money is provided by interest groups to influence the campaign outcomes.

Ms. Love stated campaign contributions is the money chase that hits closest to home in Cary. She stated Common Cause realizes that campaigns cost money, and much of the money goes to media and direct mail costs in order to get the candidate's message to the public. She stated the problem is two-fold: (1) the cost of running for office is getting out of hand; and (2) most of the money comes from a few special interest donors who want a return on their investment.

Ms. Love stated the cost of North Carolina legislative races has multiplied five times in the past six years. She stated it costs an average of \$50,000 to run for State House and over \$100,000 to run for State Senate. She stated the cost of running for a Cary municipal office has skyrocketed, and she stated there should be a better use for this money.

Ms. Love stated the higher costs of elections are funded by fewer, more influential donors. She stated at the State level, 1% of the population donates 90% of the campaign money. She stated these big donors consider their contributions as investments, and they expect something in return for their investment. She stated this usually includes access to politicians, favorable laws and tax breaks. She stated in Cary, the development community has been identified as the largest campaign donor.

Ms. Love read the following quotes:

"Political campaigns are too much influenced by money:" 93% of respondents

"Most candidates don't have the interest of citizens like me at heart:" 77% of respondents

"People don't vote because they don't think it will make a difference in their lives:" 88% of respondents

Ms. Love stated money has become more important than the issues in political campaigns, and in many cases, candidates spend more time raising money and less time talking with citizens about the issues. She stated this feeds citizen anger and apathy, and this gets passed onto the children.

Ms. Love stated the high cost of elections decreases the competition for office. She stated good people of average means do not feel they can afford to run for office.

Ms. Love stated the role of the small donor has diminished. She stated if someone feels their contribution does not make a difference, then they are more likely to not care about the outcome of the race.

Ms. Love recapped the problem with money and politics: (1) the cost of running for office is skyrocketing out of control; (2) special interest groups have too much power; (3) good people of average means can't or won't run for office; (4) people no longer believe their voice or their vote counts; (5) people don't vote; (6) people don't participate; (7) children are raised to be cynical about government and apathetic about public service; and (8) the democracy suffers.

Ms. Love stated nothing can be done about issue advocacy laws, but these laws can be enforced. She stated soft money is mostly a federal problem, but the Council can support federal legislation. She stated the Town Council can take the following actions dealing with campaign contributions: (1) Limit campaign contributions - Ms. Love stated she believes Chapel Hill has limited contributions to \$200. She stated the ACLU and Supreme Court have upheld this. (2) Increase disclosure - Ms. Love stated Chapel Hill has a local law requiring reporting of all contributions over \$20. (3) Reduce costs by providing free media access - Ms. Love suggested that the Council may be able to do this with the Cable Access Channel. (4) Establish voluntary

spending limits – Ms. Love stated the Supreme Court will not allow mandatory spending limits, but it has approved a public subsidy system which is also known as voter owned and financed rather than donor owned and financed elections. She stated this is also known as public financing.

Ms. Love stated there are two parts of public financing: (1) to qualify, the candidate must demonstrate public support by collecting a certain number of signatures and small contributions and (2) agree to spending limits and other rules. She stated the number of qualifying signatures would be established by the city, based on registered voters and other relevant criteria. She stated some cities require the candidate to agree to spending limits. She added cities may also require the candidate to participate in debates, etc. She stated this frees up the candidates to talk to voters about the issues, rather than spending their time raising money. Ms. Love stated this is completely voluntary, and candidates do not have to participate.

Ms. Love stated each city that has this type law has created it to suit the needs of the city. She reviewed the following components of such a program: (1) set the number of qualifying signatures and contributions high enough to only attract serious contenders, but not so high that it is burdensome. Ms. Love stated it can be set at a specific amount (i.e., 250 signatures), or it can be based on a percentage of the number of registered voters. She stated contribution levels should be kept small so that people can participate without being overly burdened (i.e., from \$10 to \$50, with larger cities having higher amounts). She stated some cities limit the amount of money a candidate can contribute to his/her own campaign, and other cities limit the contribution towards the qualifying contribution (i.e., if someone contributes \$100, perhaps only the first \$50 will count towards the qualifying amount). (2) how long candidates will be allowed to collect the qualifying signatures and contributions; (3) the level of public funds that will be given to participating candidates – Ms. Love stated most cities have a system of matching funds, but this does not eliminate the special interest groups or the money chase from the system. She stated the N.C. General Assembly is currently reviewing full public financing, and this is what Common Cause urges for Cary. She stated this is being sponsored by Senator Wib Gulley, and the Senate has passed this through committee at two different sessions. She stated over 1/3 of the General Assembly are currently co-sponsors of the bill, with over 1,000 resolutions of support from local politicians and support from many local groups. (4) the spending limits – Ms. Love stated this varies from city to city. She stated some cities use the average spent in the last few elections, and others just determine what they feel is a reasonable amount to spend. She stated on a per capita basis, the amounts have ranged from \$0.42 per capita in Tuscon to \$3.80 per capita in New York City. She stated New York City is higher, but they also include the debate program, a website, voter guides, etc. (5) how independent expenditures are handled by non-participating candidates - Ms. Love stated most of the laws have a provision for lifting the spending cap if a non-participating candidate is spending a lot of money. She stated the laws usually require that a non-participating candidate must file a budget in a reasonable time in advance so the participating candidate can get the public funds to respond accordingly. She stated in Maine, the independent expenditure match has been upheld by the courts.

Ms. Love stated the cost of a campaign finance system will depend on the number of participants, what the Town considers a reasonable spending amount, the number of elections, etc. She suggested that \$1 per person per year would be a reasonable amount for all the races. She stated this would afford the following benefits to the Town: (1) the candidates could run for office without being wealthy and without having to solicit donations from special interest groups; (2) a level playing field; (3) a fairer race, especially for non-incumbents; (4) increases competition which, in turn, increases the quality of the races; (5) more time for candidates to address the issues; (6) more voter trust; and (7) it will make the process more fun. Ms. Love stated the voters will have more involvement in decision making matters; it will give them more time with candidates; it renews their trust in the elected officials and in government; and it gives them confidence that their vote – instead of money – is what counts. Ms. Love stated the children will inherit a stronger, healthier democracy; they will not be subjected to so much cynicism; they

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might even decide to strive for public service as a result; and they will have a better idea of the true meaning of democracy.

Ms. Love stated public financing will not solve all the problems. She stated it will not solve the issue ad problems or the soft money problems, but she stated it is a good step in the right direction. She stated the results from New York City confirm that spending is lowered, participation is higher and candidates and voters like it. She urged Cary to adopt a public financing plan.

Mr. Roseland stated after the last Cary election, some of the candidates did full disclosure. He stated this was a very time consuming task. He asked if Chapel Hill works with the Orange County Board of Elections to provide or assist with full disclosure. Ms. Love stated she does not know this answer, but she will find out. Mr. Roseland stated he spent a lot of time on full disclosure, and this time could have been spent on issues with the citizens. Ms. Love stated the Board of Elections would like to provide software and training to candidates to assist them with full disclosure, but they have not yet received the funding for this. She stated Common Cause supports increasing funds for the Board of Elections so they can be helpful in this endeavor.

Mr. Roseland stated Cary would be required to work with the Wake County Board of Elections to get this more detailed information; however, other Wake County towns may not desire this information. He stated if this is too much for the Wake County Board of Elections, then the Council should consider the Town of Cary assisting with this. Mayor Lang stated the Town has a webmaster, and a database could track this information. He stated the webmaster could have an administrative assistant to keep up with this. Ms. Love suggested that the Council implement a procedure to address this issue.

Ms. Dorrel stated full disclosure and the timeliness of disclosure are separate but equally important issues. She stated "instant" disclosure (24-48 hours) is feasible with electronic media. Ms. Love stated she can gather information from other Common Cause states to see how they handle this issue.

Mr. Ward asked if the \$1 per voter per year would cover the cost of the verification of signatures. Ms. Love stated she just gave this amount as an example. She stated the amount should be crafted to fit Cary's needs.

Mayor Lang stated he quickly figured what \$1 per person per year would equate to, and he came up to a \$20,000 limit for each at-large campaign, and about \$8,000-\$10,000 for the district races.

Mr. Ward stated if challengers must abide by the same limits as incumbents, then this perpetuates incumbents winning, because they have a forum and they are already in the public eye. Ms. Love stated she carefully looked into this issue, and other cities have not found this to be a problem. She agreed that the incumbents have the floor more often and already have name recognition, but the spending limits provide a more equal playing field.

Mrs. Robinson asked how public financing has impacted the number of candidates who seek office. Ms. Love stated it has increased competition by having two people run in each race. She stated one concern is that many people will run for office. She added one way to guard against this is to set the qualifying level high enough to insure the candidate is serious and will go out and obtain signatures. She stated this fear has not materialized in other cities that operate under public financing. She reiterated that this is still an experiment, and it may need future refinement.

Ms. Dorrel asked if the \$1 per year is based on per capita or the number of registered voters. Ms. Love stated it has been done different ways in different cities. She stated this information is contained in Exhibit A. She urged the Council to do what they think is best for Cary.

Mr. Roseland stated in the last election there were two district seats on the ballot. He stated if each district seat cost \$10,000, and there were four candidates in each district seat, that equates to \$40,000 for districts B and D for a total of \$80,000. He stated in the last mayoral race, it would equate to \$30,000 times four candidates for \$120,000 plus the at large seat, which equates to \$200,000 on a two-year cycle. He stated Cary will soon reach 100,000 in population, so this would equate to approximately \$1 per year.

Ms. Love stated at the General Assembly level, they figure 1/10 of 1% of the general fund.

Mayor Pro Tem Smith stated he is intrigued with the other conditions and not the cost. He asked how a forum can be required so that the candidates are held accountable for their words. He stated he viewed this to be a bigger problem than the money spent in the last election. He stated all candidates used the same words, but there was no mechanism to have meaningful dialogue, discussion and debate. He stated he likes the idea that there are opportunities to help all candidates through the media and the use of the Town's cable system. Ms. Love urged the Council to look at New York City's website, because they are being creative with their program.

Mr. Ellis Hankins, Executive Director of the North Carolina League of Municipalities, stated this organization is the voluntary membership association of the N.C. cities and towns – 520 municipalities. He stated they are non-partisan and was originally founded in 1908 to bring municipal officials together to discuss legislative policy issues and to coordinate lobbying activities with the General Assembly. He stated they also provided a central location for resources to assist municipal officials.

Mr. Hankins stated some of the cities mentioned by Ms. Love as participating in public financing are Home Rule cities. He stated those particular states allow their cities to adopt ordinances, laws, etc., without getting additional legislative authority from their State legislature. He stated North Carolina does not have cities with complete Home Rule powers, and the General Assembly has provided scopes of statutory authority, and often cities go to the General Assembly to seek additional legislative authority. He stated the Town of Chapel Hill did this with their local act pertaining to campaign financing (see **Exhibit B** attached to and incorporated in these minutes). He stated most of the things that Ms. Love asked the Council to consider would require additional legislative authority from the General Assembly, and it would probably be in the form of a local bill for the Town of Cary.

Mr. Hankins stated many members of the General Assembly think it is good to be uniform, and they hesitate to offer variations by local act. He stated election law and campaign finance fall into this area. He stated they were very careful in their consideration of the Chapel Hill act, and this bill was greatly deliberated in the House and the Senate and in the election laws committees. He stated there was some doubt – particularly in the Senate Committee – of whether it would ever get through that committee.

Mr. Hankins stated this particular area is one area in which the General Assembly can grant a local act with limitations. He stated the Chapel Hill act allows the Town by ordinance to require disclosure by candidates of all contributors to their campaigns. He stated this act stipulates they can specify a dollar amount below which candidates are not required to disclose the name of every contributor. He added, however, that State law indicates a candidate can file a campaign report and not list the names of individual contributors who contribute below \$100. He stated some contributors may not want their employer or other candidates to know of their contribution to a particular candidate. He stated in the opinion of the ACLU, there is some value in allowing contributors to remain anonymous up to some reasonable dollar limit, because the contributor wishes to remain anonymous. Mr. Hankins stated the Chapel Hill Town Council originally set \$0 as that figure, but they eventually reconsidered and set the limit at \$20.



Mr. Hankins stated he is unsure if the Orange County Board of Elections will assist candidates in campaign reporting/full disclosure. He stated State law stipulates that campaign finance reports are handled by the county boards of election; however, Chapel Hill now has this local act, and he is unsure if the county board of election has agreed to undertake all the administrative responsibilities. He stated he will be happy to try to obtain this answer.

Mr. Hankins stated the NCLM's membership establishes legislative policy to guide their lobbying efforts, but they only do this on state-wide issues. He stated the policy of the NCLM's membership has been for the NCLM to stay out of discussions about local bills. He stated they did not have a position nor did they express an opinion on the Chapel Hill local bill, and they will not if the Town of Cary asks for a similar local bill. He stated it is important for the NCLM to stay focused on state-wide issues.

Mr. Hankins stated several years ago, Towns under 50,000 in population were exempt from the campaign reporting requirements. He stated the General Assembly applied the campaign reporting laws to all municipalities, but they exempted candidates who raised less than \$3,000. He stated the Chapel Hill local act stipulates that this section does not apply to municipal elections in Chapel Hill.

Mr. Hankins stated the Chapel Hill act allows their Town Council to set a limit on individual contributions by individual persons and by local action committees below the \$4,000 State law limit that would otherwise apply. He stated their Town Council set \$200 as the contribution limit.

Mr. Hankins stated they have been unable to identify other towns in North Carolina who have undertaken similar action. He stated members of the General Assembly will probably be inclined to adhere to the uniform State law on elections and campaign finance.

Mayor Lang asked if Cary's chances of receiving approval of a local bill would be better if they requested the exact provisions/wording that have been approved for Chapel Hill. Mr. Hankins responded that this would probably improve Cary's chances of obtaining approval.

Mr. Hankins explained the difference in the "short" and "long" legislative sessions. He stated when the legislature convenes on May 8, 2000, it is a second year continuation of last year's legislative session. He stated the rules are limited about the bills that can be considered, and members cannot just introduce any bill. He stated local bills are eligible in the short session, but only if ALL members of the delegation agree to them and certify that they are non-controversial. He stated Cary's delegation includes every member of the Wake County delegation. He suggested it might be difficult to get all these members to agree on this local act. He stated the chances are better in a long, regular session (i.e., next year).

Mr. Hankins acknowledged Mr. Mike Crowell is a Cary resident and an expert on campaign financing and is present in the audience. He stated he was with the Institute of Government faculty member prior to going into private attorney practice.

Mr. Andy Romanet, General Counsel for the NCLM, stated it is easier to get a local act passed once another town has been granted approval. He stated the caveat is they (legislators) may wish they never did it in the first place, and they may foresee a lengthy line of other towns wanting similar action. He stated they may just choose not to go any further with that particular local act. He stated he is the point person in the legislature, and although the NCLM does not lobby for local bills, they do follow these bills and let cities know when local bills have been introduced.

Mr. Romanet stated the U.S. Supreme Court (Nixon vs. the Shrink Missouri Government PAC) upheld a contribution limit by the State of Missouri of \$1,075 on contributions to candidates for state-wide office. He stated this case reaffirmed an older U.S. Supreme Court opinion. He stated

the Supreme Court Justice in this case stated that lower limits are constitutional unless they are "so radical in effect as to render political association ineffective, drive the sound of the candidates voice below the level of notice and render contributions ineffective."

Mr. Sol Robinowitz, a Regency Park resident, stated he is proud of the Town Council for having this discussion. He complimented Ms. Love on her presentation. He stated Bill Bradley and John McCain have both said that the country's democracy is in danger. He stated it is also clear that many good Washington legislators have stepped down, because it is impossible for them to make a difference because of the way campaigns are financed and with special interests controlling Congress. He stated in the current primary campaign, two of the four major candidates promoted campaign finance reform, and now all four candidates are supportive of this initiative.

Mr. Robinowitz stated no one in Cary wants to have another election like this past November. He stated he feels the most effective campaign reform is public financing with clean money. He asked what would happen in Cary when one or more candidate(s) declines to accept public money and opts instead to raise huge sums of money.

Mr. Robinowitz stated he recently received a newspaper account of clean election ordinances being proposed in Minneapolis and St. Paul, and the article stated "even if a candidate declined to accept only clean money, then public financing will still work for the benefit of the electorate by making it clear to the voters in real time who will be beholding to the voters and who will be financed by special interests." He stated he feels campaign financing reform and public financing of campaigns is a very urgent matter. He urged the Town Council to pass an ordinance creating public financing of Cary elections.

Mayor Lang stated he feels a proposal should be drafted, and public hearings should be conducted. He stated the Council should talk to community organizations and churches.

Mrs. Robinson stated she would like to expedite the process, even though there may be only a small chance of it passing during the short session.

Mr. Weinbrecht stated his main concern initially was that it sounded like a bottomless pit of money. He stated he now understands that a certain amount of money is set aside, and that money will be used, and less money from special interest groups will be used, and this now gives him a feeling of comfort. He stated one of the tasks of the Council will be to explain this to the public and insure they understand that the taxpayer money will be well spent and will be a good investment. He stated, personally, he won a very close election, and he was outspent 8-1. He stated he is convinced that money does make a big difference, and it is important to provide a level playing field.

Mr. Ward stated he does not think the Council can move quickly on this proposal. He stated some issues deserve a complete study, including what happens if a candidate chooses not to participate, what happens if 90% of the money comes in after the final reporting, etc. He stated it would be possible for a candidate to win an election based on a deceptive picture.

Ms. Dorrel stated there is a question in the biannual survey to measure the interest of campaign financing. Ms. Moran, the Town's public information officer, stated this year's biannual survey collected data from just over 400 Cary citizens utilizing representative sample, scientific sample and telephone survey with an error rate of +/- 5%. She stated the question on the survey was, "On a scale of 1-9 with 1 being absolutely against it and 9 being absolutely for it, how would you rate your level of support for the Town of Cary offering matching funds to local candidates who agree to limit their spending in local elections." Ms. Moran stated the results are mixed; therefore, as the Council refines its ideas, the results will likely change. She stated 379 citizens answered the question; 33% of respondents responded with a 1 (the lowest score – they are absolutely



against it); 19% of respondents responded in the middle of the range; and 12-18% responded at the high range of the scoring. She stated in general the results indicate that overall, the respondents do not support this issue. She stated 43% rated 1-4; 38% rated 6-9; and 19% were in the middle of the range. Ms. Moran stated the survey does not require respondents to be registered voters, but it does require that they are residents of Cary and are over 18 years of age.

Ms. Dorrel stated she feels it will help with the citizens' perceptions if the Council can differentiate federal, state and local elections. She stated the local government is much more accessible to citizens on a day to day basis. She stated several different issues have been discussed: public financing, spending limits as a qualifier to get public funding, contribution limits, free media and air time, full disclosure and timely disclosure. She stated the Council did not address eliminating soft money or indirect contributions. She stated this past election was an unpleasant campaign season, and the very reasons are the reasons that cannot be addressed by the Council – soft money (PAC money) and the issue ads. She stated the Council cannot fix all the problems, and there are no guarantees that campaigns will cease to be nasty. She stated she would love to talk about clean campaigns, but no one should believe that any action taken by the Council to address campaign financing will make the campaigns more civil.

Ms. Dorrel stated full disclosure is her highest priority, with instant disclosure being her goal. She stated she personally limited contributions to her campaign, and she stated this did have a significant impact, specifically in regards to the donor feeling that they can influence the race. She stated it encouraged people to contribute who have not felt in the past that their contribution would be significant enough to make a difference.

Ms. Dorrel stated many people were devastated as a result of this past Cary election. She stated after the election, the community seemed to be battered. She stated in this past election, most people could not fathom a certain candidate winning. She asked the Council to consider giving that person the \$1 per person per year. She stated she feels this is why people have trouble supporting public financing. She asked if the benefit gained is worth enough to give the same money to a candidate that is detested by a citizen(s).

Mr. Roseland stated the current Council is more interested in State policy changes. He stated he would like the Council to develop a comprehensive legislative package every year, and one month before the session, the Council would meet with the local legislative delegation and go over the proposed local bills (i.e., campaign reform, tree protections, etc.). He stated legislators routinely see legislative packages from Raleigh and Charlotte, and he wants these same legislators to become just as comfortable dealing with Cary local bills on a regular basis. Mr. Roseland stated he fully supports all elements of the campaign finance bill, but he stressed the need for a full legislative package.

Mayor Pro Tem Smith stated some discussion addressed creative ways of addressing campaign reform other than just funding (i.e., affordable media through cable access, brochures, etc.). He stated he thinks this was a void during the last election. He stated some people feel the Cary election two years ago was mean-spirited. He stated those ads from two years ago were factual based ads. He stated it was new then to have a campaign based on data and factual information. He stated the last election was not based on data and facts. He stated Cary has an educated community, but some apathy does exist. He stated the best way to cure apathy is with information. He stressed that the Council incorporate creative ways of addressing campaign reform, instead of just capping contribution dollars. He stated it is important to make the playing field fair to have honest and open dialogue on ideas.

Mayor Pro Tem Smith stated if he received a "cold call" asking if he wanted to give money to the government (for campaign financing), then his answer would probably be very negative. He stated the burden is on the Council to have open meetings with the citizens to insure they understand the intent of the campaign reform.

Mayor Lang stated he is financially capable of funding his own elections, and if he had bad intentions, he could make it tough for someone to beat him with the current election laws. He stated candidates can buy an election. He stated the last time he ran for office, he spent the most ever spent in a Cary race except for his opponent who spent more than that. He stated prior to the last election, he thinks the most spent was \$10,000. He stated two years ago he collected approximately \$200, and his other expenditures came from his own pocket. He stated that this is not good campaigning. He stated without his own money, he could not have gone up against the development community. He stated this type of campaigning will result in people with financial means seeking office against the special interest groups. He stated this type of government does not represent the general population, and it results in the possibility of corruption. He stated he is a strong advocate of full disclosure.

Mayor Lang stated he contributed money to Mr. Weinbrecht's campaign, because he thought he was much more representative of the community than his opponent. He stated this is not good campaigning. He stated he likes Chapel Hill's law, and he suggested that Cary model their local act to match Chapel Hill's. He stated he does not think the public financing should go before the General Assembly, because it is completely voluntary.

Mayor Lang suggested that Mrs. Robinson, Ms. Dorrel, Mr. Ward and Mr. Weinbrecht draft a proposal. Mr. Ward stated he must decline at this time. He stated the Council should think about a sub-group of the Council to draft a proposal. He stated the appropriate staff should assist this sub-group. Mayor Lang stated at the next Council meeting, he will announce who will work on this proposal. He stressed that this will not be an overnight process.

Ms. Dorrel asked if it is completely voluntary to contribute to the fund. Mayor Lang stated it is completely voluntary whether a candidate participates in this program. He stated if the Council implements this program and the taxpayers do not like it, then they can vote the current Council out of office.

Mr. Roseland asked if the scope of the sub-committee can be broadened to include a Cary legislative package by April. Mayor Lang responded that this sub-committee will be only to study campaign finance. He stated Mr. Roseland's idea regarding the legislative package is a great idea, but committee's with a broad scope do not accomplish enough.

Mr. Roseland asked if a few more local bills can be considered in April. Mayor Lang responded that Mr. Coleman has a list of suggested bills (i.e., tree ordinance, etc.). Mr. Roseland suggested that in late March at a Council meeting, the Council should discuss Mr. Coleman's proposed bills. Mayor Lang stated Raleigh hires a lobbyist at the General Assembly, and Cary has done this in the past on certain issues. He asked Mr. Coleman to consider this.

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.