

MINUTES OF THE BUDGET WORKSHOP OF
THE TOWN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TOWN OF WILLIAMSTON, NC

April 18, 2017

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Williamston met in regular session on Tuesday, April 18, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. in the Assembly Room at Town Hall.

PRESENT Mayor: Joyce Whichard-Brown
Commissioners: Mayor Pro Tem Al Chesson, Ronell Rodgers, Jerry Knox, William Coffield and Junious J. Horton
Interim Town Administrator: Brent Kanipe
Town Clerk: Christina Craft
Finance Officer: Linda Harrison
Public Works Director: Kerry Spivey
Recreation Director: Allen Overby
Director of Planning and Development: Brent Kanipe
Fire Chief: James B. Peele, III
Police Chief: Travis Cowan
Human Resources Administrator: Martha-Brown Lilley
Zoning and Planner: Jamie Heath

ABSENT None

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

The Mayor called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Commissioner Knox led the pledge of allegiance. Commissioner Chesson offered the invocation.

AGENDA APPROVED AS AMENDED

The Mayor asked if there were any adjustments to the Regular Agenda or if the Board wished any items to be removed or added to the Regular Agenda. *It was moved by Commissioner Chesson, seconded by Commissioner Horton and unanimously passed to approve the agenda as presented.*

BUDGET WORKSHOP

The Interim Town Administrator reported that a 1 ½ cost of living salary with 1/2% merit availability has been added to the budget per the direction of the Board. The salary adjustment discussed at the January Planning Retreat has been implemented in the current year. A 13% increase in the health insurance premiums has been budgeted as opposed to the State Health Plan. Quotes have been requested from BCBS and our current insurance agent but have not been received. Per the direction of the Board, the addition of a temporary position for Assistant Fire Chief has been added to the upcoming budget. This will provide the existing Fire Chief to cross-train the Assistant Fire Chief. The majority of the departments have a reduction in expenses for the proposed budget in comparison to the current budget. The only department that had an increase in expenses is the Fire/Rescue due to the increase in supplies required to operate as EMT-Intermediate Level, which is a billable expense.

The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) draft was distributed for review. The total capital outlay in the budget matches the capital projects outlined in the 2017/2018 year of the CIP (Capital Improvements Plan).

There has been a \$100,000 transfer in the current budget to OPEB (Other Post-Employment Benefits) comprised of \$60,000 from the General Fund and \$40,000 from the Enterprise Fund. Funds will be reviewed and assessed near the 2017/2018 budget year end for the next OPEB transfer.

Martin County had a mandatory property evaluation that anticipates an approximate 6% decrease in property values. In order to remain revenue neutral, a tax rate increase to \$0.77 (old rate \$0.74) is reflected in the proposed budget. The cost to taxpayers should remain relatively the static.

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A portion of Administrative Salaries, in the amount of \$657,827, has been transferred from the Enterprise Fund. This is the amount of salary and benefit costs that staff has identified that should be charged to the Enterprise Fund. These are employees such as the Finance Director, Administrator, etc. whose duties efforts in both the General Fund and Enterprise Fund. The Storm Water Enterprise Funds are established and the Board may want to charge some salary and benefit expense accordingly.

Planning Department

The proposed budget shows no increase in expenses. There is an update to the Williamston Long Range Plan that is included in the Capital Improvement Plan for the upcoming budget year. The River Landing Project is tracked in a separate Capital Projects Ordinance.

Public Buildings

There is nothing listing in a line item for Capital Outlay. There are major Town Hall/Police Department renovations which are identified in the Police Department in the amount of \$1.1 million. The debt payment for this project is listed in Debt Service. This complies with the goal to upgrade public buildings for the Police, Fire Administration and Public Works.

Police Department

In addition to the major upgrade to the building, the Police Department has two patrol cars listed in the Capital Improvement Plan for purchase in the 2017/2018 budget year. The body worn cameras were purchased under Small Equipment in the current budget.

RRT (Rapid Response Team)

There is no change in the RRT Revenue and Expenditures except vehicle funding and purchase. The total amount is funded by the State of North Carolina.

Street

The Powell Bill is now shown in a separate fund for tracking purposes only. Under Capital Outlay, there is a proposal for a \$100,000 paving project.

Parks & Recreation

The Parks & Recreation department proposes \$16,000 in repairs to the Gaylord Perry Building and the \$23,000 purchase of air conditioning for the Gaylord Perry gym.

Cultural Department

The proposed budget shows no increase for the Martin Memorial library. There is a slight decrease in appropriations for Christmas decorations, Christmas Parade, and Stampede expenses.

Economic & Physical Development

An appropriation of \$15,000 is incorporated in the proposed budget for the local Boys & Girls Club housed at the EJ Hayes building. This is the 2nd payment of a 2-year commitment. Retiree benefits expense is budgeted at \$157,284, compared to the current year expenses of \$97,284.

Powell Bill

The Powell Bill proposes a payment of \$130,000 to the Annexation Project for required Street work in the Annexation Area "A." There is also an appropriation for \$100,000 for street work in other areas of the Town. The total Powell Bill revenue will be \$255,250. Powell Bill Funds and \$25 license fee can only be used on paved streets that are owned by the Town. Main Street is a NCDOT highway and not owned by the Town.

Water/Sewer

There is a proposed increase in the Water/Sewer residential customer's bill. This is due to the addition of the increased MCRWASA (Martin County Regional Water and Sewer Authority) rates and the loss of the Parkdale Mills' revenue as the company was the largest water customer. MCRWASA has increased the rates to \$5.15. If the Town raised the rate from \$4.71 to \$5.15, the Enterprise Fund would be an estimated deficit of \$141,921. In order for

the Enterprise Fund will break even, the rate will need to be increased to \$5.85. It was the recommendation to request a readjustment from MCRWASA of the cost per gallon due to the loss of Parkdale Mills. The Stormwater fee is a revenue stream that can only be used to pay the USDA loan as required by the USDA.

Outstanding Items

There are several items that have not been included in the proposed budget and require direction from the Board. These items include the \$2,000 appropriation requested by the Williamston Historical Society for the Asa Biggs House, architectural and engineering design for the Police/Town Hall of \$101,250 and downtown redevelopment items that include way-finding signage (\$27,000), building incubator (\$75,000) and incentive/grant funds (\$30,000). If the Town moves forward with the Town Hall/Police building renovation and possibly borrows funds from the USDA, we would receive a commitment that would be good for a couple of years. The commitment will allow the Town to get a short-term construction loan from a local bank. The USDA will pay the short-term loan when the project is completed. The total renovation will take up to two years to complete as the renovations would be done in phases. Once everything is completed, the first payment to USDA is due 12 months after the closing date.

The proposed total of all funds in the proposed budget is a total of \$10,345,802. The Department Heads have done an excellent job recommending cuts in their budget that will provide a level of service the residents need and still allow the employees the resources to do their jobs.

Health Insurance

The Interim Town Administrator reported that the current insurance is in the proposed budget with a 13% increase. Currently, employees must pay the full price of medical office visits, labs, x-rays and prescriptions until the deductible is met. The Town will reimburse the employee up to \$2,750 towards their deductible after the employee has paid a minimum of \$2500 of their deductible. Another option has been to approach a local physician that would accept a lump sum such as \$10,000 one-time fee from the Town to treat our employees and the employee would pay a set fee for an office visit. It was the consensus of the Board to not join the State Health Plan at this time. If the State Health Plan was chosen, the entire deductible, which would be much higher than the current rate, would be paid completely by the employee with no help from the town.

The next workshop will be held at the regular Board meeting in May. A public hearing will be held at the regular meeting in June to adopt the budget.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 7:14 p.m.

Submitted By:

Approved By:


Town Clerk


Mayor