



Town of Beaufort, NC
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Board of Commissioners Work Session
4:00 PM Monday, August 26, 2024
Train Depot, 614 Broad Street

Call To Order

Mayor Harker called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Elizabeth Lewis, Town Clerk, called the roll.

PRESENT:

Mayor Harker
Mayor Pro Tem Cooper
Commissioner Gillikin
Commissioner Oliver
Commissioner Spiegler
Commissioner LoPiccolo, *joined the meeting late.*

Agenda Approval

Mayor Harker asked for an amendment to the agenda, to add an update from the Beaufort Waterfront Operations & Finance Committee, noted as number three under items for review and discussion.

Commissioner Cooper made a motion to approve the amended agenda.

The motion carried unanimously.

Presentations

1. Beaufort Housing Authority (BHA) Annual Audit

Rachel Carroll, Executive Director of the Beaufort Housing Authority (BHA), presented the annual audit report and provided the Board with hard copies of the document. Ms. Carroll highlighted that there were no audit findings for fiscal year 23, with an increase in net position by \$141,607 reaching a total of \$1,850,024. She shared that operating revenues increased by \$116,4780 due to higher rental income and federal grants, while operating expenses decreased slightly. Ms. Carol mentioned the authority's commitment to affordable housing and its reliance on HUD funding for operations.

Commissioner Oliver requested the audit and any associated documents be provided by the BHA in advance of the meeting to allow adequate review time for the Board. He asked if all BHA facilities were insured for their replacement cost.

Ms. Carroll confirmed they were all insured for their replacement cost.

Commissioner Cooper asked questions regarding rent and social security increases.

Ms. Carroll explained residents always pay 30% of their income, minus any deductions.

Commissioner Gillikin praised Ms. Carroll for the work she has done for the BHA.

Mayor Harker thanked Ms. Carroll for her presentation and congratulated her on the clean audit.

2. Beaufort WWTP Capacity, Expansion Options, and Discharge Limits Update

Mayor Harker introduced Sam Bell, Interim Town Engineer and Greg Churchill of Rivers and Associates, to discuss the Beaufort's Wastewater Treatment Plant capacity and expansion options.

Mr. Bell provided an update on the current wastewater treatment capacity and the High Rate Infiltration Basin (HRIB) permitting efforts. He mentioned that the average daily flow to the wastewater treatment plant has stayed about the same, but the reserved capacity has been reduced. He highlighted specific lift stations and developments that are close to or over capacity. He discussed future flow projections and the potential need for additional capacity in three to five years.

Mr. Bell outlined the options for wastewater treatment capacity expansion, including the HRIB and increased discharge to Taylors Creek. He explained the challenges associated with the HRIB, including the need for redesign and permitting. He emphasized the need for careful tracking of capacity allocation requests to avoid exceeding the 80% limit.

Both Mr. Bell and Mr. Churchill discussed the potential for increasing discharge limits to Taylors Creek and the requirements for such a project.

Mr. Churchill provided a recap of a previous meeting with NCDEQ, where he, Town of Beaufort representatives, and other entities were present to discuss current capacity versus permitted capacity of the Town's WWTP. He provided historical context on the wastewater treatment plant, including its completed construction in 2010 and the initial capacity of 1.5 million gallons per day. He explained the upgrades made to the plant were increased pump capacities, weir sizes, and additional piping. He mentioned the potential plans for a 350,000 gallon per day expansion and what additional improvements would need to be made to achieve the expansion, noting there were aspects already in place to support a capacity of 1.85 million gallons per day. He discussed the requirements for dual disinfection and the changes in regulations that affect the HRIB. He also highlighted the Town's efforts to improve the sanitary sewer collection system and reduce inflow and infiltration.

Mr. Churchill spoke on past dye studies and shellfish sanitation concerns. He emphasized the importance of addressing shellfish sanitation concerns and the potential for a long-term solution for wastewater treatment capacity. He suggested having another dye study performed in the future. He discussed compliance with copper limits and future actions associated with long-term solutions to meet regulatory requirements.

Commissioner Spiegler asked if modifying the actual discharge into Taylors Creek would be a long-term solution.

Mr. Churchill said he thought it would.

Commissioner Oliver asked questions related to the measurement of flow of the wastewater treatment facility.

Mr. Churchill explained the Town of Beaufort's Wastewater Treatment Plant has both an influent flow meter, where raw wastewater is coming into the plant and it also has an effluent flow meter, where it leaves the plant.

Commissioner Oliver asked exactly where it is measured on the input side.

Mr. Churchill confirmed it was at the wastewater plant, noting the operator has a choice of which to report by; typically, the report is based on effluent flow meter. He further discussed the relationship between water treatment quantities and sewer capacity.

Commissioner Oliver went on to further express his opinion that the Town had an inflow and infiltration problem rather than a capacity problem.

Mr. Churchill agreed the Town had an inflow and infiltration problem. He elaborated on the inflow and infiltration processes and the variables associated with each area.

Commissioner Oliver suggested the Town discuss the things that they can proactively do to work on inflow and infiltration, because the capacity issue is a distraction.

Mayor Harker noted the need for an updated inflow and infiltration study.

Mr. Churchill explained chasing the reduction of inflow and infiltration is a never ending process.

Commissioner Oliver suggested the Board stop talking about capacity and start concentrating on inflow and infiltration.

Mr. Churchill suggested performing a study after improvements are made.

Commissioner Oliver recommended each pump station should be evaluated as well.

Commissioner Cooper asked for further clarification on the dye study and shellfish sanitation concerns. He also asked what the feasibility of the HRIB permit would be.

Both Mr. Bell and Mr. Churchill explained there were a lot of unknowns, extra work, and added costs associated with pursuing a potential HRIB permit.

Commissioner Gillikin expressed the need to develop a strategic growth plan, as it would directly affect any future expansion of the plant. She also noted the need to have an inflow and infiltration study done. She suggested the Board be careful issuing sewer reservations until those items were complete and the Town had a better understanding on related information and growth factors.

Items for Review and Discussion

1. FY 2025 Budget Amendment #2

Christi Wood, Finance Director shared the amendment requests the appropriation of Fund Balance for purchases and professional services budgeted in FY 24 but not completed prior to June 30, 2024. The total associated with the General Fund was noted as \$350,430. The total associated with the Utility Fund was noted as \$77,200.

Commissioner Oliver made a motion to approve the proposed budget amendment.

The motion carried unanimously.

2. Balloon Release Ordinance

The Board reviewed a draft ordinance, as provided in the meeting packet, which would regulate balloon releases.

Keith Riittmaster, Director of Bonehenge Whale Center, spoke about the dangers of balloons to marine life.

The Board provided a few grammatical suggestions to the draft ordinance and noted their support of adopting the ordinance. The consensus of the Board was to place it on the consent agenda at the next regular meeting, September 9, 2024.

3. Update from the Beaufort Waterfront Operations and Finance Committee

Commissioner Spiegler shared the below statement:

As you all may be aware, on August 15th, Mayor Harker established the Beaufort Waterfront Operations and Finance Committee to review and update the

recommendations of the Harbor and Waterways Advisory Committee, and to determine an action plan for the town's waterfront.

Commissioner Gillikin and I were directed to lead the committee and choose members that represent areas of expertise that will allow us to find solutions that reflect the desired character of the town and docks while meeting financial expectations. Additionally, as needed, we will consult with other subject matter experts to provide input. We'd like to take this opportunity to announce the committee members, who have all committed to participating.

Steve Bishop, Mike Bradley, Vic Fasolino, Dexter Matthews, Ted Morris, Becky Newton, Barry Slade, Craig Souza, Miriam Sutton, and Weymouth Tillet.

We want to also thank Rachel Johnson for acting as our staff liaison for the committee. We are working with Rachel to schedule our first meeting coming up in September.

These meetings will be public, so stay tuned for the schedule to be released. We're excited to get started and for our community to follow along.

Closed Session

1. Pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (3)

Commissioner Cooper made a motion to enter closed session pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (3). The motion carried unanimously.

Adjourn

Commissioner Cooper made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:37 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.

Sharon E. Harker, Mayor

Elizabeth Lewis, Town Clerk