



Town of Beaufort, NC

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Town of Beaufort Board of Commissioners Work Session Meeting 4:00 PM Monday, April 27, 2020 - Town Hall Conference Room, 701 Front Street, Beaufort, NC Minutes

Call To Order

Mayor Newton called the meeting to order.

Roll Call

Mayor Newton called roll and declared a quorum present for the meeting.

PRESENT

Mayor Everette Newton
Commissioner Sharon Harker
Commissioner Charles McDonald
Commissioner Ann Carter
Commissioner Marianna Hollinshed
Commissioner John Hagle

Agenda Approval

A motion was made to approve the agenda as presented.

Motion made by Commissioner Hagle.

Voting Yea: Commissioner Harker, Commissioner McDonald, Commissioner Carter, Commissioner Hollinshed, Commissioner Hagle

Public Comment

Bucky Oliver made the following comments.

My name is Bucky Oliver, 2401 Front Street

A BUCKYISM: For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction

I believe Greg Meshaw has identified and provided costs estimates for Beaufort's infrastructure needs.

Two recent infrastructure Bids (that were less than 1% apart) confirmed unit. With the CV-19 tragedy there has never been more money available for Public Works through Grants and Debt alone. So, here is my suggestion: On or before Memorial Day 2023 (3 years and one month): Beaufort completes all its underground and road surface repairs. 1st month (May 2020) Plan developed by a Task Force--Months 2-37 Bids issued and work accomplished.

These projects are about the same value and scope as we accomplished in building the hotel. That is why I am confident that it can be done IF we put our minds to it, don't worry about giving credit for its accomplishment and think outside the box. Timing is very important.

I personally pledge \$1M to its success, most likely in the purchase of bonds.

I will work with you if this is of interest to the Town.

Thank you for your time

Items for Discussion and Consideration

- 1 Draft Minutes for the March 30, 2020 Work Session and for the April 13, 2020 Regular Meeting

This item was placed on the agenda under Consent.

- 2 Resolution Designating Applicant's Agent required by NC Department of Emergency Services for FEMA 4487-DR-NC

Finance Director Christi Wood indicated the resolution was a requirement for FEMA and state funding related to COVID-19. She indicated it gave she and Town Manager John Day the authority to act on behalf of the Town of Beaufort. This item was placed on the agenda under Items of Consent.

- 3 March Financial Report

Ms. Wood reported the taxes collected amount in the report was for February 2020 and March 2020. In response to a question, she indicated it was too early to estimate the sales taxes that would be received during the recent months.

Commissioner Hagle asked about the payment in lieu of taxes and franchise taxes. Ms. Wood indicated the town was still waiting for the payment in lieu of taxes from the Beaufort Housing Authority. She indicated the franchise fees should also be close to the same as before.

- 4 FY 20 Budget Amendment #12

Ms. Wood indicated the amendment for the General Fund requests an appropriation of:

Other Revenues- Insurance reimbursement for Engine #4 \$14,354; Sales of Surplus Property for Public Works vehicle replacement \$14,882; Miscellaneous Police Department Revenue for Crime Prevention \$7,800; Appropriated Restricted Fund Balance (Public Safety- Fire Department) – for vehicle maintenance and repair \$3,421; Appropriated Fund Balance- for expenditures related to COVID-19 \$100,000; Contingency for any unexpected expenditures that may occur prior to June 30, 2020 \$100,000.

For the Utility Fund - This amendment requests the appropriation of: Water and Sewer Tap Fees to fund the purchase of new water meters being installed in new developments, \$23,625; Fund Balance as a contingency for any unexpected expenditures that may occur prior to June 30, 2020, \$25,000.

Commissioner McDonald asked how the town got reimbursed for the new water meters. Ms. Wood indicated the tap fees cover the costs of the meters.

Commissioner Hollinshed asked Ms. Wood to please provide a listing of the COVID-19 expenses at the next meeting. She indicated some of the expenses were overtime for the Police Department and Fire Department since they worked a seven day shift, supplies and barriers.

Commissioner Carter asked if the insurance reimbursement was money that had already been paid out. Ms. Wood confirmed for Commissioner Carter.

Mayor Newton asked how much would be reimbursable from FEMA. Ms. Wood indicated hopefully all of it.

This item was placed on the agenda under Items for Discussion and Consideration.

5 Revised Budget Calendar

Town Manager Day reported with all of the issues faced with the COVID-19 pandemic the preparation for the FY 20-21 Budget was not ready for presentation at the May regular board meeting. He proposed changes be made in the calendar with presentation to take place at the June 8, 2020 regular meeting with work sessions as needed.

Commissioner Hollinshed asked if consideration would be given to extend the budget required deadline due to the COVID-19. Mr. Day indicated the board could adopt an interim budget but he believed it could be completed before the deadline of June 30, 2020.

This item was placed on the agenda under Items of Consent.

6 Voluntary Annexation for Old Seaport Development, LLC (153 Aqua 10 Road and 103 Aqua 10 Road) Doug Brady

Town Clerk Davis indicated she had completed the investigation into the request for Voluntary Annexation for Old Seaport Development, LLC and certified the sufficiency. She indicated the request was to accept the certification and set the public hearing for the regular meeting on June 8, 2020.

This item was placed on the agenda under Items of Consent.

7 Changes in Personnel Policy Compensation During State of Emergency

Town Manager Day reported the change was to allow more flexibility in work locations, work hours and compensation during times of emergency declarations. He indicated the COVID-19 pandemic had brought about issues that were not covered in the current personnel policy. All commissioners expressed concern over some of the wording such as "may be paid overtime" and "exempt employees will be paid overtime". Town Manager Day reminded everyone the request was only for things options to be available during a declared state of emergency for the town. He indicated as the policy was currently written, it did not allow for the option of employees to work from home and closing public buildings as was currently being done. Additionally, he informed the board members the wording allowed the town to meet requirements for FEMA reimbursement.

A motion was made to approve the Personnel Policy Changes but for consideration to be given again to the topic after the COVID-19 situation was over.

Motion made by Commissioner Hagle.

Voting Yea: Commissioner Harker, Commissioner McDonald, Commissioner Carter, Commissioner Hollinshed, Commissioner Hagle

8 Case 19-12 Text Amendment - Lower Live Oak Overlay District

Mayor Newton indicated this item and the next item were tabled during the March 30, 2020 work session until this work session for a decision of when to hold the public hearings.

Town Planning Director Kyle Garner indicated he knew of two projects on hold until a final decision had been made on the text amendments and the overlay district.

The board members were in agreement to move forward and place the item on the agenda under Public Hearing.

9 Case 19-13 Lower Live Oak Corridor Overlay District

This item was placed on the agenda under Public Hearing.

10 400 Pollock Street/Preservation NC

Commissioner Harker made a motion to recuse Commissioner McDonald for the discussion on 400 Pollock Street. The vote was unanimous.

Building Code Administrator Tobbie Bowden provided input as to how the building needs to be secured for weather proofing. She indicated the windows would need to be covered with Tyvek for a temporary basis which would last about 20 to 30 days and then replacement would possibly need to be done. She reported to completely weather proof the structure, exterior siding would need to be put back on the second level as well as new windows.

Commissioner Hollinshed indicated the short term fix would be to weather proof with participation by Preservation NC (PNC) and the family.

Commissioner Carter asked if there was an estimated cost for the weather proofing and was the family able to pay. Town Planning Director Garner indicated we did not have an estimated cost. In response to a question regarding the family's ability to pay and whether or not PNC will have to pay, Town Manager Day reported it would be between the two parties as to how it would be paid.

Town Attorney Grady indicated he drafted the motion since there was some confusion as to who would be performing the short term fix whether the family or PNC. He indicated in his mind there was a 30 day time limit to get it done as long as the family and PNC got it done. Commissioner Hollinshed indicated they needed to get it done.

Commissioner Carter indicated another problem was the length of time for the Tyvek before needing replaced. Ms. Bowden indicated the replacement would need to be done possibly in thirty days. Commissioner Carter asked if they would be responsible for replacement if there is a delay.

Commissioner Harker asked if the weather proofing was done between May and June if approved at the May meeting and then the purchase possibly taking place by July that gives them another month. Can the weather proofing be done and then get an extension for PNC to purchase. She indicated she understood PNC did not want to put that much money into the project without the property getting purchased. She continued by saying can the town get the the family or PNC to quickly get it covered and then when that is completed and PNC purchases we can tell them they need to replace the siding and the windows.

Town Manager indicated he believed the board had the authority to require it be covered within 30 days. He indicated it was relatively inexpensive in order to get it wrapped all around the top and then get them to cover the broken windows on the bottom floor. He indicated the motion could be modified to say the covering needed to be completed in thirty days and still have the original time limit for the purchase to take place.

Town Attorney Grady indicated the wording currently states for the initial weather proofing to be completed by June 1 with a July 31 date of staying the order. He indicated that was the 90 day period PNC indicated would be needed to get the purchase completed. As far as the reimbursement for the asbestos remediation he indicated how long that would take to accomplish. He suggested that be paid by the end of the year.

Commissioner Hollinshed asked about using 30 pound felt instead of the Tyvek. Ms. Bowden stated the felt could be used in place of the Tyvek. Ms. Bowden indicated repairs would need to be made all during the project. Commissioner Hollinshed indicated she liked the way the motion was worded as far as the definite dates provided.

Commissioner Hagle indicated he felt the Tyvek would last for a short period of time. He indicated the dates were alright by him.

I move that the demolition order previously adopted by the Board regarding the property located at 400 Pollock Street, Beaufort, NC, be stayed until July 31, 2020, in order to give Preservation NC the opportunity to purchase same, provided that the building is weather-proofed and sealed in a manner as directed by the Town's Chief Building Inspector by June 1, 2020, by either Preservation NC, the owners of said property, or a combination thereof, and that (i) upon the full remediation of the code violations of the exterior of the structure located at said address and (ii) upon reimbursement of the Town of Beaufort's costs incurred for asbestos remediation for said structure, both to occur no later than December 31, 2020, the demolition order outstanding for said property be rescinded and cancelled of record. The owner or owner's representative is further directed to provide updates on the status of this matter on a monthly basis to be presented as part of the "public projects" report submitted to the Board of Commissioners at regular monthly meetings.

Motion made by Commissioner Hagle.

Voting Yea: Commissioner Harker, Commissioner McDonald, Commissioner Carter, Commissioner Hollinshed, Commissioner Hagle

11 Paid Parking 2020 Season

Town Manager Day asked the commissioners if they would like to delay the start of paid parking or suspend it for the season. The season is scheduled to begin on May 20, 2020. Mayor Newton reminded the paid parking was implemented as a means for parking management rather than a revenue stream for the town. He asked Town Manager Day of the implications of delaying or suspending.

Town Manager Day indicated there were fixed costs such as parking manager and debt service on equipment. He reported he could have Finance Director Wood provide some projections on the impacts.

Commissioner Hollinshed indicated if the business owners would police their own employees and their parking then having enough parking spaces for visitors may not be an issue. She indicated she felt the Beaufort Development Association should be asked about the delay or suspension.

Commissioner Carter indicated she felt it should be delayed until July 1, 2020. Town Manager Day indicated it would take approximately 4 weeks to get ready to begin the implementation.

Commissioner Harker indicated she felt it should be delayed until after July 4, 2020 in order to give as much time as possible to be prepared.

Commissioner Hagle indicated he would like to hear the input from the BDA by the end of May. Additionally, he indicated visitors should not be showing up until the Phase 1 process is over.

A motion was made to delay the implementation of paid parking for 2020 until a date could be decided at a later meeting.

Motion made by Commissioner Hagle.

Voting Yea: Commissioner Harker, Commissioner McDonald, Commissioner Carter, Commissioner Hollinshed, Commissioner Hagle

Mayor/Commission Comments

Commissioner McDonald commented he was impressed to hear the board having discussions and taking the time to make good decisions.

Commissioner Hollinshed had no comments.

Commissioner Carter had not comments.

Commissioner Harker indicated the first week of May was drinking water week. She thanked the water department for their hard work to have good drinking water. She indicated she was not able to hear all of Mr. Oliver's comments and urged the board members to take a look at what he had to offer. She encouraged one to still practice social distancing and be safe.

Commissioner Hagle thanked the staff for their continued work during uncertain times. He commented the water plants and wastewater treatment plants were critical for the town.

Mayor Newton made the following comments.

Monday, April 27, 2020...A New Phase in Beaufort COVID-19 Response

This past weekend, April 24th through 26th, was calm and controlled in Beaufort, and that is exactly what we need to continue our COVID-19 fight. As many of our residents and business owners have articulated, if everyone would just use social distance and hygiene measures, the additional measures would not be necessary.

In Carteret County, there have been 28 total positive COVID-19 cases and three deaths. There has been a consistent reporting of 5-6 active positive cases, and that has not shifted much over the last few weeks. This data should be considered a minimum number since only the most severe cases are tested.

This Thursday, April 30th, we will enter a new phase in this fight. Our March 29th Proclamation will expire on April 29th, and Governor Cooper's executive orders will be the framework for our COVID-19 measures. This is an easing of our Beaufort measures that were more restrictive than the governor's. Since Governor Cooper's executive orders are still in effect, this is not a total re-opening. Stay at home, limited travel, social distance, hygiene, and essential business criteria are still defined by Executive Orders 121, 131, and 135. These orders will be enforced by state, county, and local authorities.

Throughout this crisis, many of our Beaufort businesses have gone above and beyond to protect their employees and their customers. But unfortunately, some have not. It is important to emphasize that Executive Order 131 details requirements for retail establishments to include maximum occupancy, social distance markings, and cleaning and disinfection procedures.

COVID-19 is still a substantial threat. Social distancing and emphasis on hygiene will continue for the foreseeable future. If we start to see a significant increase in positive cases or an influx of people that are not taking this threat seriously, we will not hesitate to increase our Beaufort measures to protect our community. Now is the time when we must work together, the citizens, second home owners, business owners, employees, churches, schools, civic groups, and non-profits of Beaufort, to ensure everyone in our community is taking appropriate precautions in this fight. Summer 2020 in Beaufort will be a big challenge.

Adjourn

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 5:14 pm.

Motion made by Commissioner Harker.

Voting Yea: Commissioner Harker, Commissioner McDonald, Commissioner Carter, Commissioner Hollinshed, Commissioner Hagle

Mayor Everette S. (Rett) Newton

Michele Davis, Town Clerk