



Town of Beaufort, NC

701 Front St. - P.O. Box 390 - Beaufort, N.C. 28516
252-728-2141 - 252-728-3982 fax - www.beaufortnc.org

Town of Beaufort Board of Commissioners Work Session Meeting 4:00 PM Monday, November 22, 2021 - Zoom Meeting due to COVID-19 Pandemic Minutes

Call To Order

Mayor Newton called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Elizabeth Lewis, Town Clerk, called the roll.

PRESENT

Mayor Newton
Commissioner Carter
Commissioner Hagle
Commissioner Harker
Commissioner Hollinshed
Commissioner McDonald

Agenda Approval

Mayor Newton asked if there was a motion to approve the agenda.

Commissioner Hagle made a motion to approve the agenda.

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

The motion was approved unanimously.

Public Comment

There was none.

Project Updates

Greg Meshaw, Town Engineer, gave an update on current projects. He informed the group there were currently 15 active projects going on, those projects include:

- Cedar Street Park
- FY20 Street Rehabilitation & Construction
- Turner Street 100 Block Pedestrian Improvements
- Town Wide Sidewalks (Part 5-FY20 Street Rehabilitation & Construction)
- Downtown Parking
- Turner Street- Broad Street Traffic Calming Improvements
- Campen Road Waterline Extension/Upgrade
- USDA Funded Utility Project (Water, Sewer & Stormwater)
- Wastewater Asset Inventory Assessment
- High-Rate Infiltration System Permit Reacquisition
- ECHS Sewer Pumping Issue Investigation
- Wastewater Design Unit Flow Reduction Request
- PruittHealth Sewer Service Construction
- Meeting Street Drainage Improvements
- Fire Station No. 2 Renovation

Mr. Meshaw said the project they have finished since last month's update is the Stormwater Project. He noted that the big one was the USDA-Funded Utility Project and reported he will be meeting with the consultant the week of November 29th to discuss the design thus far, noting it would probably take multiple sessions. Mr. Meshaw said the ultimate goal is to have final plans ready for review by staff in March 2022.

Mr. Meshaw discussed the Campen Road Water Line Extension project and explained a contractor had put in a six-inch waterline from Carraway Drive down to the apartments on Campen Road. He said almost everything was complete, the remaining work included pavement patching, pressure testing, disinfection, and certification; they expect pressures and flows down around the apartment area to improve, particularly fire flow.

Mr. Meshaw discussed the Wastewater Design Unit Flow Reduction Request. He said the ultimate intent was to get rates that are reflective of what the true wastewater usage in the Town of Beaufort is on a residential basis, as well as commercial and heavy commercial industrial if possible. Mr. Meshaw explained all of this would help when it comes to allocating capacity out to folks, because they will be allocating out flows that are more reflective of what they think they will actually be doing, rather than the regulatory rates. They wouldn't be using the conservative rates that quickly build up in terms of total allocation that have been committed to various entities around town. Mr. Meshaw reminded the group that in the October update, he reported they assembled WWTP flowmeter calibration records; documented past infiltration and inflow studies, and corrective actions; and compiled daily WWTP influent flow records from 2018 to present. He said since the October update, they had determined the number of sewer customers on a month-by-month basis as well as residential vs. non-residential; with that, it was discovered they needed to do a deeper dive into the building records, in hopes that individual usage data on heavy commercial/industrial accounts can be examined closer. Mr. Meshaw said all of this would lead to design flow rate determinations, there will be more than one, and once they anticipate formalizing a request to NC Department of Environmental Quality to let the us use rates than are more reflective of what is going on in Town.

Mr. Meshaw briefly discussed the Lennoxville Road Pond project, reminding the group of the bank stabilization that was done in July 2020. He explained there was a pipe that goes through the old railroad bed, and at the top of that railroad bed was a sinkhole, indicating that the joints of the pipe had separated, and it was sucking in dirt. He reported that the pipe had been replaced and the project will be considered complete, provided they get a ground cover on the berm. Mr. Meshaw said the Town administered the project, but it is being funded by Blue Treasure, so we will be seeking reimbursement from them once billing from the contractor is received.

Mr. Meshaw gave updates on the Turner Street 100 Block Pedestrian Improvements and informed the group of the completed crosswalk that was recently installed. He said he envisioned that staff will be putting out some signs in the future to go along with the crosswalk; the Turner Street traffic project will be complete once the bump-out at Middle Lane is done, and all the crosswalks are marked there. He said they are still working with the contractor to get a final number on that and once it is done, they plan to go forward with getting all the pedestrian improvements complete, certainly before the new tourist season starts. Mr. Meshaw spoke on downtown parking, he reminded the board they requested staff look at parking in the downtown area. He

discussed the pavement markings and how they are sized according to what the ordinance calls for, which is 22-foot-long spaces. He said they have been remarking spaces along 100, 200 and even 300 blocks between Cedar and Front Street, Moore Street and Live Oak Street. He said the project is nearly complete, there is a punch list that provides more details; there are a number of places they tried to paint, and cars were parked there, so they have to come back for that. There are a few markings that are sort of squiggly, so they are going to come back and rework those; there have been a few requests from citizens relative to some things the Town was unaware of regarding their property, that will result in adjustment of very few spaces. Mr. Meshaw suggested that overall, the project is nearly complete.

Mr. Meshaw also notified the group that staff had set up four-way stops at Pine-Pollock and Mulberry-Pollock intersections. He said another project staff has been doing is marking crosswalks throughout Town; to date, staff has repainted 46 crosswalks and 10 stop bars. He said they would continue doing this as weather permits and as the paint holds out. Mr. Meshaw concluded his presentation and asked if there were any questions.

Mayor Newton complimented Greg on the presentation and went down the roster to see if there were any questions or comments.

Commissioner Carter said it looks like they have been working hard; she asked if it was a possibility to extend the diagonal parking along Front Street out beyond Live Oak Street.

Mr. Meshaw said he was drawing a blank.

Commissioner Carter said past Marsh Street, down to Live Oak, there is parking on the south side where they took out part of the median and actually put parking spaces there. She said she did not know if it could be extended any further down on Front Street, is there enough land to do it? She said it was a thought for additional parking.

John Day, Town Manager, said they could certainly check see what the property and right away looks like there.

Commissioner Carter said they are always looking for an extra parking place.

Commissioner Hagle said it would be controversial.

Commissioner Carter said when they extended it past the Wheatly house, it was controversial.

Commissioner Hagle said I am sure it was.

Commissioner Harker thanked Greg for a great presentation and said it seemed like each time he reported, he was able to say the word "complete" more often, which was a great thing. She said recently walking up and down Turner Street, the raised crosswalk presented concern at night. She said there are a few people who said they were unable to see it. She asked if there was any way to put some form of reflective paint to notify someone it is there, because at night they are still going over them pretty quickly.

Mr. Meshaw said yes, we could put something on the asphalt; if you have been on Pine Street at Marsh Street, where we redid a crosswalk, there is a new paint scheme with some arrows. He said they could put some reflective arrows at the base of the concrete, to let people know they are about to approach an incline.

Commissioner Harker said especially at night, during the day I think they might be able to see the signs; she said she walks that area at night and vehicles have been flying over it, catching air. She said thank you for the stop signs at Pollock, Pine and Marsh; there have been people speeding through the area, digging up asphalt they were going so fast. She said there are kids who play in that neighborhood, and it was a good safety measure to add the stop signs. Commissioner Harker also commended the great work with sidewalks, she said it looked really nice and thanked staff for what they have done from Campen down to the Speedway area.

Mr. Meshaw said they were still progressing along; if you have been on Campen headed towards the library, we are not finished there yet; we have done one section of that sidewalk and right after the Sinclair Motors car lot, we are going to do another run of raised sidewalk on down onto the next drive and then we are going to do

some markings down at the other end. He said he did not want people to think they were done there because we do not want it to look like we turn people out into that parking lot, road area. Mr. Meshaw said their contractor is coming back to that and he is looking forward to getting that done.

Commissioner Harker said it makes the whole corner look neat and being able to go around and walk down on Highway 70 is a great addition.

Commissioner McDonald said he was pleased with what he is seeing happen all over Town; in every community there is work being completed and he really appreciated that.

Mr. Meshaw said it comes from all of us...it is the board, who had visions for these projects; the Town Manager and a lot of staff that is involved in accomplishing these things, so my hat is off to everyone, myself too.

Commissioner Hollinshed said she did like the crosswalk that is on the lower end of Turner and suggested that marking it would be a good idea for bringing it to everyone's attention.

Mr. Meshaw said I would encourage you to look at the markings at 3rd Street and the one we did recently at Pine, so you can see the arrows I am talking about.

Commissioner Hollinshed said she saw them.

Commissioner Hagle said good report and great progress, particularly on the USDA and the Wastewater Flow Reduction work. He said that would be very important for the Town in the future, and it is great to see the progress on that and all the other projects. He reported that he had a call from one person regarding the parking spaces on Pollock; they were concerned about the loss of parking spaces, people who used to have room for two spaces now only have one.

Mr. Meshaw said that person did reach out to him; the marking was based upon the Town's standard of 22 feet and then we brought to the board some recommendations, in terms of setbacks for driveway entrances so they would have vision of the street. He said we did go out and look at it and I think what we are going to do, after seeing the old tick marks, is paint one long box there and not subdivide it into small spaces. The individual homeowner is not partially worried about sight distance; so, one of the lines will probably end up scrubbed out and then moved closer to the driveway and marked that way.

Commissioner Hagle said thank you very much, that sounds like a great plan. He also added that the traffic light at Cedar and Live Oak needs to be adjusted; people are sitting there so long they are running the red lights. He said it is still setup for lots of traffic to turn right, west on Cedar, like it was before the bridge change. He said during most periods of the day there is not much traffic at that intersection and people are getting impatient with the wait, resulting in them running the traffic light all the time.

Mr. Day said he would get with DOT about that.

Commissioner Hagle said it could almost be a four way stop.

Mayor Newton said thank you and moved on to the items for discussion and consideration.

Items for Discussion and Consideration

1. COVID Numbers in Carteret County and Emergency Leave Policy Extension

Mayor Newton reported from last Friday to date, there was an increase from 72 to 88 cases. He said the hospitalization rate had decreased from two down to one and the positively rate increased from 3.7% to 4.3%; while the county is maintaining 55% fully vaccinated.

Mayor Newton said let's go down the roster to see if you want to continue the current policy with in-person meetings and also with the emergency leave policy extension.

Commissioner Carter said she thought they had previously discussed stopping this as of December 1st; people that are going to get vaccinated have been vaccinated. She said I think we need to eliminate the extension of the COVID Leave Policy completely; and not even have a COVID Leave Policy.

Mayor Newton said he would caution you doing that, because there is supposed to be another increase in cases because of the holidays; timing similar to what happened last year, maybe not the same magnitude but they are still forecasting an increase based on the holidays.

Commissioner Carter asked if there were many people taking advantage of this.

Mr. Day said fortunately, among those who have been vaccinated, we haven't had any people who have needed to as far as I know. He said again, one of the points of this was to encourage people to get vaccinated; I don't know if that has happened or not, but certainly having it available has been advantageous. He added we do not want to do anything to discourage people from getting vaccinated.

Commissioner Carter said absolutely not, if we are going to keep it in place, by all means, it needs to be for those vaccinated.

Commissioner Harker said I think you have a two-part question; do we want to look at meeting in person, that is part one. I think with the stabilization of the rates, especially the rate of transmission, we are far better than where we started. I think we should really start exploring looking at meeting in-person. I think we are still waiting for some of the hybrid equipment to come in for those who do not feel comfortable attending in-person meetings, they would still be able to participate. I think if we did it in December, I don't see the participation being too huge; I don't see too many people flooding the Train Depot for an in-person meeting, but I am okay with that. I think it is time, but we will see how others feel. As far as the emergency leave policy extension, if we can just keep that in place for one more month at least, we can see how it plays out over the holidays.

Mr. Day said he just received confirmation from the HR Manager, that there has been one person who has experienced a breakthrough case and did use the leave.

Commissioner McDonald said keep it in place at least for the next 30 days or so, until after the holidays.

Mayor Newton reminded the group that the current policy that the board has approved is to wait for in-person until after the hybrid equipment has been received, expected to be in towards the end of December. He asked Commissioner McDonald if he was okay with that.

Commissioner McDonald said yes.

Commissioner Hollinshed said yes, I will go along with that, keep the policy in place and take a look and see if that equipment will be there and installed. She said, I agree with you Mayor, we are probably going to look at some breakthrough and spreaders over the next 30 days.

Commissioner Hagle said keep the emergency paid sick leave extension in place and he hoped to get the hybrid equipment installed as quickly as possible after it is received. He asked Mr. Day if he had heard anymore on delivery.

Mr. Day said he had not heard anything but is pretty confident as soon as it is delivered, they will be in touch as they are being billed for it and will want their money.

Commissioner Hagle asked if Mr. Day had any kind of idea what type of installation it would be, complicated or fairly quickly?

Mr. Day said it is less than a day job.

Commissioner Hagle said it sounded like if they could get it done in early January at the latest, they would be able to go back to in-person meetings.

2. Minutes- May & July 2021 Meetings

Rachel Johnson, Parks & Events/PIO/Deputy Clerk, asked the board to please consider approval of the budget meetings on May 17th, 20th and 26th; the May 24th work session; the July 12th regular meeting, and July 21st Special Meeting. She reported there are still five sets of minutes they are working to catch up on, but there is progress being made.

Mayor Newton confirmed Ms. Johnson was asking for approval for the May and July meeting minutes this evening.

Ms. Johnson said yes, that would be wonderful, then they could officially be posted and updated.

Mayor Newton asked the Commissioners if they had enough opportunity to take a look at those?

Commissioner Hagle made a motion to approve the minutes.

Mayor Newton said the motion has been made to approve, is there any discussion? If not, let's go down the roster for a vote.

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

The motion passed unanimously.

3. Minutes - October 25 & November 8, 2021

Ms. Lewis presented the most recent minutes, from the October 25th work session and the November 8th regular meeting and asked that both be placed on the consent agenda.

Mayor Newton said let's make sure we have consensus from the board on consent.

The board agreed unanimously to place the meeting minutes under the consent agenda.

4. Pay and Classification Study

Mr. Day explained soon after hiring Barbara Cooper, Human Resources Manager, the Town contracted with the North Carolina League of Municipalities (NCLM) to conduct a Pay and Classification Study, they will also be preparing an updated Human Resources Policy Manual. The Pay and Classification Study performed by the MAPS Group in association with the NCLM, is complete and ready for adoption. The policy manual will be completed at a later date and presented to the Board for its consideration and adoption then. All town employees in the Local Government Employees Retirement System (i.e., those who work at least 1000 hours per year) completed job questionnaires, and at least one employee with each different set of duties as described in the questionnaires was interviewed on-site, regardless of job titles. Mr. Day explained there was not a position classification plan, so this was a very important part of the process. Salaries from nine municipalities of similar characteristics, and/or in Beaufort's job market, were surveyed. After comparison and analysis, Beaufort's job classifications were allocated to a salary schedule, and an implementation plan was prepared. The study implementation will also take steps to address salary compression resulting from previous compensation practices. The annual implementation cost is \$174,664, plus benefits. Implementation is recommended in January, 2022, and a budget amendment for \$108,758 is attached to fund the total implementation cost through the end of the fiscal year.

Mr. Day welcomed Becky Veazey, President of The MAPS Group. He asked that the board consider adopting this now, for the same kind of reasons of continuity that they have heard before. The new board coming in will of course not really be familiar with this and three of them will have had no local government experience, so I ask if you would, please consider this tonight.

Ms. Veazey presented her findings and recommendations related to the study. She described the results through the documents referenced in the agenda meeting packet. She explained that pay and classification studies are like looking at two sides of the coin. The classification side is looking at what the duties of a job are, whereas the pay side tries to place each job into a competitive salary range. She informed the group that she has been in HR and local government for over 40 years, and she had never seen the market as tight and competitive as it is right now. She explained how the 2019 pay study was a good step and got the Town closer in terms of competition, but when it was implemented, it was implemented by bringing most employees to the very beginning part of the salary range. This meant that long term employees and newer employees were very close together; that is what we call compression. She explained that compression can create some dissatisfaction and make it hard to hire people who are really well qualified because you might need to place them at or above your own long-term fix. She said spreading employees back out across the salary range is part of what they are trying to address in the study. She said, as John mentioned, there is more to come; the contract includes the materials before the board now as well as a new Personnel Policy, Benefits Comparison, Management Recommendations, and new job descriptions. She explained that the Town's compression analysis was not horrible but was something that needed to be addressed. She explained

the organizational charts they recommended for the Town and spoke on the report summary section that was listed by each department and how they make recommendations on salary grades for each job. She shared the organizations they surveyed and the pay ranges they had; the average of all those ranges was 53% and the range they recommend for the Town of Beaufort is 55%; she added that the pay grades are 5% a part. She also discussed implementation and explained the pay table; she paused her presentation to see if there were any questions so far.

Mayor Newton went down the roster to see if there were any questions.

Commissioner Carter had no questions.

Commissioner Harker had no questions.

Commissioner McDonald said he had some questions but didn't want to confuse himself. He said he is hoping this pay plan is based upon what Beaufort needs, not compared in depth with other communities, because they may be in a position to do more or less. He said what we need to do is what we can do for our employees to keep them here; we have been a training ground for so long, in every department, that is because we have always been one of the underdogs in paying. We have had some very educated, professional people come through the Town of Beaufort to work and we lost them to other departments because we weren't paying. He said we need to do what is best for Beaufort, comparison should be based on needs of Beaufort, more so than surrounding areas and what they are doing. He explained Beaufort is a very quaint, unique, and delightfully different town. He said we should treat our employees the same way, we should treat them like they are a pot of gold to us; pay raises and things of that nature. He said, we have someone in office now that I think will help promote it and that is Ms. Cooper. I think she will help push those things forward and let the employees know what is best for them. He said we must do our jobs as Commissioners; we can't just sit back and not pay our employees because we will lose them again and be right back on the bottom on the totem pole, and we have been there too long, that is all I have to say.

Commissioner Hollinshed had no questions.

Commissioner Hagle said he had some questions, but we can debate those later.

Ms. Veazey continued with her presentation and discussed the current market. She explained in July, 2022 most of the same places they surveyed will be increasing their ranges and it will be important for Beaufort to look at that again as well. She said Mr. Day mentioned he has already built in the cost of benefits in his budget amendment. She discussed the recommendation of the Town Manager having flexibility to withhold any adjustments for employees with documented disciplinary action and are not performing as needed in the position. She explained how the classification implementation adjustments are sometimes referred to as "catch ups", not raises because you are catching people up to where they should be already. She added if somebody is not doing their job, they recommend their "catch up" be delayed until their performance improves. She said so again, what we're recommending is taking each employee into the pay grade, that rate reflects the market for their job, to at least minimum, and then one and a half percent per year of service, above that minimum, to address compression. She concluded her presentation and said the classification and pay plan, recommended pay grade, and the recommended salary for each job title is essentially what they would be adopting.

Mayor Newton asked if there were any questions.

Commissioner Carter said she had no questions.

Commissioner Harker said she was glad they were able to get the job classification done and liked the fact they were able to eliminate the compression, which is very detrimental to many organizations, as it is not fair for somebody to come in making a similar salary and not have worked as long. She asked how often this needed to be reviewed, in Ms. Veazey's opinion.

Ms. Veazey said the rule of thumb for stable organizations is every five years, and that is both the classification and pay side. She explained it was very depended on how much growth and change was going on within the organization.

Commissioner Harker brought up the process of notifying staff of the job descriptions and commented they looked more in-depth. She asked how different they were from what staff was doing now or was it cleaning it up some.

Ms. Veazey said she had not written the job descriptions yet, that was something she still owned them, and the descriptions were typically two to three pages, mostly two pages. She said there were a number of title changes and there would be substantial differences in what they were writing, to reflect more modern times in terms of technology and skill requirements. She said these would also be really helpful in writing recruitment ads and selecting interview questions, it will be a much more accurate guide for HR.

Mr. Day added currently there really were no job descriptions, he said there might be a few, but suggested they were incomplete and not particularly accurate. He said as you all probably know, in local government we all do very similar things; so, when you are going through a process like this you can know by looking at these job descriptions that have been filled out and how they fit into what the normal sorts of categories, making it fairly easy to do the job titles. This allows you to begin to survey and perform adjustments, but the actual tweaking of these descriptions to fit a specific organization takes a little bit of time. He added that there is always some sort of uniqueness into how the job is setup or designed and suggested Ms. Veazey is really starting from scratch on developing the ones we will have here.

Commissioner Harker asked if any of the job classification would end up changing the pay scale of a person?

Ms. Veazey said what you are getting is a completely new pay scale. She said they are recommending a pay plan that reflects the current jobs that you have, up to date titles for those jobs, and is meeting the current competitive market.

Commissioner McDonald said at this point he has no questions and said it was a touchy situation to him. He also said, I think our greatest commodity is our employees; we should not have anyone working for us that is on welfare, if we do then shame on us. He said those are the types of things we should be looking at; we look at paying our top people a lot of money but the people who do the hard work, we don't look at, resulting into costly turnover. He said let's do what is best for Beaufort to keep our employees.

Mayor Newton said I think, if you recall, Commissioner McDonald, a couple years ago, we went through this iteration. Not as deep as what Becky's providing today, but to give

competitive wages, and to set a \$15 minimum wage, and that is exactly in line with what you're talking about as far as taking care of our employees; this is just kind of now next level identification, job descriptions and pay scales.

Commissioner McDonald said you are exactly right Mayor, but you have to stop and think now, when that was done Hardee's and Burger King were not starting people out at \$15 an hour.

Commissioner Hollinshed said I understand a little bit about what she's doing, and some of it, I am trying to grasp the comparative models that were used. I am also looking or thinking about the other side, you can describe it over here and do everything you want to, but it seems like we haven't had much of a problem on recruiting people. I know John Day has come to us from time to time and said he would like to go to the top level of a range or something and then justify why he would like to do that, and I don't think that's been denied. I would like to also point out that I'm looking at the outcome of the work rather than the titles; it doesn't really matter about your title, I want to make sure that the outcome of what they are describing that they should be doing is good work and that it does help the town. She said, that is where I am with this and who is paying for it? When we did our last increase, we had that long session in budget where we put another tax penny or two in order to get to that point; so, who is paying?

Mayor Newton said that is probably a good question for John; what is the cost of this and what is this going to do to our budget?

Mr. Day responded, as I said earlier, the cost for six months I believe was \$109,000; so double that for an entire year. He said this is an instance where the conservative budgeting that has been done allows for this to happen without any additional impact; I don't see that there are any issues, no tax increase that is going to be necessary. He said one of the things that we had done, and budgeting conservatively is to make sure that what we see are trends and not anomalies; I think what we're seeing now is in fact a trend. He said when you looked at the financials, you saw our sales tax revenues are still up considerably and above what was collected last year, and our budget numbers are much more conservative than that. So, there is no need to make any revenue adjustments for this, the only adjustments that would need to be made is just appropriating what is already there; what has come in but hasn't been budgeted.

Commissioner Hollinshed asked what about next year, and the year after that?

Mr. Day replied, like I said, I think what we are seeing is a trend rather than an anomaly, and that trend allows for it to happen. He said I am not expecting for these revenues to decline; of course, that can always happen depending on what the global and national economy turns out to be, but at least at this point, there is no indication that there is a concern to have about this.

Commissioner Carter said question here too...If we are looking at salary increases, but we do not have the positions written out, don't you think we need to wait until we have the positions all written out before we start applying a salary? She added at this time, we might be all over the place; this might be something to leave for the new board and the new manager because it is going to affect his budget.

Mr. Day said I think Becky can probably address this, but what I was trying to convey earlier is that there has been sufficient work done already to answer that question. Becky, do you want to just pick up from there?

Ms. Veazey said in the report narrative that you saw was basically a paragraph on each different job, that captures the essence of those jobs really boiled down. She said what I will be doing with the job descriptions is just expanding that some, and you will actually have those, if this goes into effect in January.

Commissioner Carter said we have a new manager coming in, and he will be coming in around January, since this is rather a complex process, my suggestion is we need to leave it for him because he is the one that is going to have to deal with it.

Mr. Day said I think I can speak for that, at least to some extent, being a manager and having been one for a pretty long time. He said I think that the manager will be grateful it has already been done by the time he gets here; I would say I am about 99% sure that would be the case.

Commissioner Hagle asked for clarification on the employee range chart and the note and the bottom that discussed making an adjustment that is either greater than 1.5% or a year of the average total service and positions service. He suggested that some people would not see an adjustment, and some would and asked if his interpretation was correct.

Ms. Veazey said that is correct, what that is looking at is the catch up; some of the employees are much closer to where they should be, others are much further away. She said what this is doing is bringing everybody closer to where they should be.

Commissioner Hagle asked if the histogram included all positions and if the percentage are percentages above the mid-range.

Ms. Veazey said they were above the beginning; so, that zero there in the very first left-hand column is hiring range and then the next one says 5% and that is the minimum that references probation completion. She said the next one you see would be 10% into the hiring; mid-point would be between 25-30% and you don't have very many people at all above mid-point.

Commissioner Hagle said two-page job descriptions seem very complex; he said in his former life, they did not try to define down to the nitty gritty of what people did, there was a certain range of activities that someone did, and you want those people to expand beyond that if they possibly can to benefit their organization. He said there are so many boxes in this system, it seems like fewer categories would be spreading more of a higher range that would give people a chance to grow in a job versus putting up so many boxes. He said the title should be across the organization, regardless of which department they were in, making it more consistent. He asked if that would be true, could that happen?

Ms. Veazey said the job descriptions were not intended to be limiting in any way. She said a good third to half of what is on the job description are recruitment guidelines. For example, what knowledge, skills and abilities should the town be looking for if they have to fill the position; what education and experience; what certifications are needed to do the job. She said all of this becomes really helpful for the hiring process and it also can help if the Town decides to update the performance evaluation system, because it is helping identify what

those knowledge, skills, and abilities are that you want to be assessing as part of the employee's performance.

Commissioner Hagle said that knowledge skills and ability are important, I agree, but some person that is working at a mechanical type of job or some job in public works is no different than somebody doing a similar kind of mechanical work in another department; it seems like the titles should be the same and the skill range should be similar.

Ms. Veazey said their bottom-line principle is that we are trying to help the Town of Beaufort create equal pay for equal work; if you have employees that are operating at the same skill level, similar kinds of duties (not significantly different) than we have recommended putting them into the same pay grade.

Commissioner Hagle said there are a lot of job classifications, 25 or 30.

Ms. Veazey said that is not unusual.

Commissioner Hagle said I guess my experience is different; you are sort of putting people in a box and not giving them a chance to grow and develop.

Ms. Veazey said we are very careful not to do that in these.

Commissioner Hagle said that the job titles on the organizational charts are different for every department, and I know in Police and Fire that might be different, but it seems like we use some real special titles for jobs that are very similar in nature where you could call them the same job title.

Ms. Veazey said I think if we do that, it would be doing the employees a disservice because there are different kinds of skills and responsibility and I think people deserve to be recognized for what they are actually doing.

Commissioner Hagle said that somebody who does mechanical work in Public Works is doing the same kind of mechanical work in Public Utilities.

Mr. Day said actually those are very different and the market typically reflects that in the payment is because basically, doing mechanical work in utilities is kind of like plumbing and you have people that are doing plumbing except on a really big scale. He said the folks in Public Works do not have those skills, the skills they have in many cases has to do more with maintenance of roads and what we do in house is pretty minor with that; so, there are some considerable differences.

Commissioner Hagle said I guess I am coming from a different position where we help people; if there is a piping problem, we have someone who could make that repair if it didn't require a master plumber for example, versus waiting for somebody to come that has that title and skill.

Mr. Day said given that it is a public water and sewer system, we want to have people who are familiar, experienced, confident, and competent at what they are doing.

Commissioner Hagle said they can learn that.

Mr. Day said we have people that advance from one position to another. He said there have been several instances since I have been here, where people have gone from Public Works to a higher-level more skilled position in utilities as a way of advancement and that is another aspect of this that I think is important to consider. Also, one of the things that is kind of interesting here is that we are a small organization, but we do essentially the same services that a large city does and so what happens in a large city is that 2,000 or 3,000 are divided across these basically same job classes, and it looks a lot different because we are small; we do the same jobs, it is just a matter of scale.

Commissioner Hagle said I understand, I just came from an organization where if somebody was doing an operational kind of job and you had a mechanical problem and they had the skill and training to do it, they did, rather than waiting for a mechanic to come make the repair.

Mr. Day said we also have extensive certifications for this type of work; many go through the School of Government and there are different levels of training received; anyway, it is differences in industry I suppose.

Commissioner Hagle said it is.

Commissioner McDonald said he would like to remind the board that it has not been too long ago where they were looking for someone to come in and do some work; they were lucky enough to find someone to come in and do the job high class and we are not paying any benefits. He said you cannot do that with every department, we were just lucky in that incidence. He said we have to the right thing by our employees, and this should not be a long debate; we should be just as much concerned about our employees as we are about the infrastructure that is going on.

Mayor Newton said thank you; John has asked that we look at approving the pay plan and the budget amendment, what is the pleasure of the board?

Commissioner Carter said she recommended they delay and let the new manager and the new board handle it.

Mayor Newton asked if that was a motion.

Commissioner Carter said, yes sir.

Mayor Newton said the motion has been made, let's go down the roster for a vote.

Voting Yea: Commissioner Carter, Commissioner Hollinshed

Voting Nay: Commissioner Harker, Commissioner McDonald, Commissioner Hagle

Mayor Newton said Commissioner Carter's motion fails.

Commissioner Harker made a motion to approve the plan and budget amendment.

Voting Yea: Commissioner Harker, Commissioner McDonald, Commissioner Hagle

Voting Nay: Commissioner Carter, Commissioner Hollinshed

The motion passed with a 3-2 vote.

5. Lions Club Bridge Run 2022

Ms. Johnson presented the application submitted by David Daly regarding the 2022 Lions Club Bridge Run on November 5, 2022; she explained they are seeking the boards consideration and approval of the event.

Mayor Newton asked if there were any questions.

Commissioner Carter had no questions.

Commissioner Harker had no questions.

Commissioner McDonald no questions.

Commissioner Hollinshed had no questions.

Commissioner Hagle asked if the start and finish line were at Middle Lane or Front Street.

Ms. Johnson said the start and finish line is technically Front and Turner, but where they will gather prior to the start is Middle Lane, so it will be closed off. She said the First Citizens Bank used to be where everybody gathered and that is no longer an option, so Middle Lane is what they are asking to use.

Commissioner Hagle asked if there would be a single lane across the bridge

Ms. Johnson said yes.

Commissioner Hagle asked if traffic would be on the other side.

Ms. Johnson said that is correct and they always bring in an outside organization that helps cone off everything prior to the start, it is very professionally ran.

Commissioner Hagle asked if there were any safety issues.

Ms. Johnson said no and this was their third year and everything has gone very smoothly, without incident.

Commissioner Hagle said that is the biggest concern here, the potential for a safety incident on the bridge.

Mayor Newton asked if there was consensus to put it on the consent agenda.

The board agreed unanimously to place the item under the consent agenda.

6. Case # 21-25 Staff Initiated Rezoning Eastern Avenue from TCA to B-1

Kyle Garner, Planning Director, presented the request and asked that the case be placed as a public hearing item. He said it was a rezoning request and it was at the recommendation of the Town attorneys as well, to clean up a housekeeping item from years ago.

Mayor Newton went down the roster to see if there were any questions.

Commissioner Carter had no questions but confirmed that the Planning Board recommended this as well.

Mr. Garner said they did, unanimously.

Commissioner Harker had no questions.

Commissioner McDonald had no questions.

Commissioner Hollinshed had no questions.

Commissioner Hagle had no questions.

The board agreed unanimously to set the public hearing.

7. Delinquent Utility Accounts

Mr. Day explained early in the Pandemic an executive order was enacted prohibiting utility disconnections for non-payment. This order has expired, but Beaufort, like nearly all local governments, continued to honor it. Currently there are 120 accounts that are about \$99,000 past due. American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) funds may be used to alleviate all or part of the past due amounts, if the board so desires; also, the Town has great flexibility in structuring payment plans for past due accounts. We are asking you all consider this and provide the staff with some direction, as to whether you want to continue the current "non-disconnection" policy and whether to use ARPA funds to mitigate delinquencies.

Mayor Newton asked if there were any questions.

Commissioner Carter said this is something that has really irritated me, I recommend we stop doing it immediately and start re-enforcing collections and also setup policies. She said I understand there are business in here; how come? She said it had never gone on this long, we were told about it months ago and it was just recently that we finally got some information on it. She said her recommendation was that the Town immediately implement a collection policy with each individual, it will take some time to do that, and that we no longer allow people to go unlimited time without paying a bill, unless they have made some arrangements with the Town; this is just not a way to do business.

Commissioner Harker said it appears that the past due amount took places during the period of COVID, correct?

Mr. Day said it does not appear that there were any businesses involved.

Commissioner Carter commented that the list sent said four businesses.

Mr. Day said he did not have it in front of him.

Commissioner Harker said the delinquency occurred during the time of COVID, they just never collected on that.

Commissioner Carter said no attempt has been made to collect, evidently.

Mr. Day said there was a notice that went out to people, asking them to consider calling the Town to make payment arrangements, but there has not been much response to that.

Commissioner Harker asked if they were still getting past due bills.

Mr. Day said it shows up on the bill as past due, yes.

Commissioner Harker said we should probably start implementing something where we collect these; I understand that during COVID time frame people are still playing catch up. We often talk about how many people are still out of their homes from Florence. This is not necessarily the Town's money that we are using to correct this situation. It does give us an opportunity to use the funds for our citizens, and we have heard this before, if it could help them out and catch us up, but no longer continue with that, I would like to look at that as an option.

Commissioner McDonald said he certainly thought they should start collecting those past due accounts; however, he did not think it needed to start immediately. He said maybe they should notify the people after the holidays. He said if we could inform them that we are going to start collecting at that point, and we could forcefully do so, I would certainly recommend that; I don't see pressing the issue in the next 45 days.

Commissioner Hollinshed said she tended to agree with Commissioner McDonald, we need to come up with a policy, no more carrying of past due accounts; in other words, do not continue this policy. She said if somebody is still in dire straits, they need to come in and explain their situation, but there should be a policy in place to collect the past dues; even if it is as we do on those taxes that we see every session, where somebody pays three or four dollars a month until it gets paid off. She added, I believe when they started their accounts, they had to put a deposit down, so it could be that some of that deposit could be used, just throwing out a suggestion.

Commissioner Hagle agreed they needed to start some type of collection process that is fair and give enough notice for people to know that we are going to start that. He said he did not know about the use of the recovery funds, there would have to be some sort of fair way to do that.

Mayor Newton said the economic data from this past year far exceeds the data from the 2018-2019 timeframe. Carteret County and Beaufort, we are booming. We are very fortunate to be in the position that we are in right now; but what that does is it masks those people that are really struggling right now; struggling from Florence, struggling from Dorian and now the pandemic has made the gap wider and deeper, and to me this is exactly what

the American Rescue Plan should be doing, helping people that are really struggling. John, what do the mechanics of this look like?

Commissioner Hagle said, what about people who did not pay their bills before the pandemic, do we give them grace too?

Commissioner Carter said they are included now and people that are just deadbeats are included and a lot of people, I suspect there are people that are in trouble, but they have the right to call the Town and set up a plan. The Town should be considerate of that, but if you forgive gross abuse of a situation, you are creating a dependency that you will never overcome; it is just not good business.

Mayor Newton said, I take exception to your term, deadbeat; people are struggling.

Commissioner Harker said, I take great exception to that as well.

Commissioner Carter replied, I understand that, and there are a few is what I said.

Commissioner Harker said there are more than a few that are out there, although you may not look at that; you have people that you are asking to put on a payment plan for things that are almost a year old. That is going to put a major struggle on them; I guarantee if they could have, they would have paid for them. Once again, this is not our money that we are trying to negotiate, it is not coming out of our budget. There are a lot of families here, a lot of children and when you put them behind, even five dollars extra a month on a bill that would take almost a year for them to catch up on, and continue to pay for that service, you have to think about that. Just because, as the Mayor said, it looks like the economy is looking good, but even those four businesses that we have; we have had businesses all around the nation close for many reasons. If they happen to survive, great, but there are families out there that are connected to this more than you can imagine. So, I really applaud that you would kind of think heavily about that, and there are those individuals that are going to give the whole thing a bad record, but you don't want to sacrifice the good for those that are not doing well, and I think that is exactly what you would do if you do not consider this.

Commissioner Carter said remember that there were those not doing well before and we still enforced the cut off plan, and the other thing is, when they are not paying their water bill are they not paying their trash pickup? We are paying that, and that is coming from taxpayers, and money that is not coming into the sewer department is also money that is going to ultimately come from taxpayers or from people that are paying the utility bills. You have got to think about fairness all the way around, and nobody wants to put a burden on anybody that is in bad shape, but we didn't think about it before, and we still did it.

Commissioner Harker said we did not have this many numbers of individuals before, everybody knew what the playing field was; there was no unusual circumstances, there were no loss of jobs, or having to work three or four jobs. The numbers did not warrant us to have this conversation two years ago.

Commissioner Carter said CP&L stopped it a year ago, they stopped it a considerable time ago; so, we don't know what the status of our people are but when you have a business, and I did here, I think one of the numbers that was given to us on a business was \$8,000; now a business that ran that kind of bill up needs to be questioned. We made no effort to talk to them and say can you pay us? Are you having a problem? We do not know who is

really having a problem and who is saying, well they are not going to collect, so I am just not going to pay; we do not know.

Mayor Newton asked if the consensus of the board was to put this on the discussion and consideration for the December meeting, and to have options available, or do you want to start collecting? Is that what I am hearing, Commissioner Carter?

Commissioner Carter replied, the first thing I'd say is stop doing it and the next thing is I would put it on the new board coming in and let them make a decision on this.

Commissioner Hagle said he would like to suggest both aspects of the Mayor's comments; I think we need to see if payment plans can begin and come back with some options on the use of this money for those impacted by the pandemic. I think we need to be fair and this money is available, but it is not free money, it may not be the Town's money but it is taxpayers money of our country. I would like to see if there is a fair and equitable way to use some of the funds to help those in need, but we need guidance in the plan.

Mr. Day said there have been instances where application processes have been developed for similar sorts of uses. I know in Durham, there is a rent assistance program that was developed using ARPA money for those who are in need, and so certainly something similar to that can be developed for the for this purpose as well.

Commissioner Carter said that is a good idea.

Commissioner Harker said I think that we should really look hard at enforcing the policy, if you are going to be late. We definitely need to take a look at how we can help out those individuals, although we don't know who they are, it does not make a difference. I think we have an opportunity to use money in order to help our citizens get back into a whole position and start there. This is very limited use for the ARPA money and if we could use that to help our citizens, then I think we should, but if we want to leave it up to the next board then I am fine with that as well.

Commissioner McDonald said I think that we should put something in place to collect the fees by notification of those people who are in the red and make it effective after January 1, 2022.

Commissioner Hollinshed said, I tend to agree with some components of that; to do it across the board, it is not fair to make sacrificial payments during this period to keep their water running. She said it wouldn't be rocket science, I don't believe, to come up with a plan that could be equitable to recoup some of this money, because it is Town citizen's money. She added that the charges were never answered about solid waste, was that forgiven? Was the whole bill forgiven, or just the water and sewer part?

Mr. Day said none of it had been forgiven and that he was just informed by the finance director that the people who were delinquent on utilities were also delinquent on their solid waste charges as well.

Commissioner Carter said we had to pay those, the Town did, correct?

Mr. Day said that the Town pays for the collection and disposal fees.

Commissioner Carter said that is coming from taxpayers, for sure.

Mr. Day said if there is not enough in the fee revenue to pay it, yeah.

Commissioner Hagle said he would like to recommend what Mr. Day said, try and develop some sort of practice to help people in some mechanism, by developing some kind of application process.

Mayor Newton said, the consensus I am hearing is to put in on the discussion and consideration for the December board meeting.

Commissioner Hollinshed added, and maybe give some options.

8. Organizational Meeting

A motion was made by Commissioner Hagle to set the organizational meeting for Monday, December 6, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

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

The motion passed unanimously.

9. Financial Notes

Christi Wood, Finance Director, discussed the October Financial report and said she would be happy to answer any questions.

Commissioner Carter had no questions.

Commissioner Harker had no questions.

Commissioner McDonald had no questions.

Commissioner Hollinshed had no questions.

Commissioner Hagle said he noticed that the Fire Department's workman's comp was fairly high and asked if that was a onetime event?

Ms. Wood said, yes sir, we pay that at the beginning of the year.

Commissioner Hagle said it was notable that the revenue for Building and Inspections was at 54%, and we are not even halfway through the year, so that is great. He added there must be a run-on cemetery lots, as it is at 150% revenue.

10. Resignation of Commissioner Harker

Commissioner Harker shared her letter of resignation that read:

I write to formally submit my resignation from my appointment as a commissioner with the Town of Beaufort, NC. My last day will be Monday, November 22, 2021. It has been a tremendous honor to work with my fellow commissioners as we served the citizens of

Beaufort. I look forward to continuing to serve our town as the Mayor of Beaufort once sworn in.

Kindest Regards,

Sharon Harker

Mayor Newton accepted the letter of resignation and commented on Ms. Harker's great track record as a commissioner.

11. Appointment to Vacant Commissioner Seat

Mayor Newton said there are different options available, I have seen applications in other communities, but it seems to me the best way to do this would appoint the next person with the most votes in the recent election.

Commissioner Carter said I agree with you, since it is so close to the election, I think we should really follow the will of the people and appoint the person with the next highest number of votes.

Commissioner McDonald said he would go along with the flow, however I was hoping I would have the opportunity to share this great time with Commissioner Harker. I have worked with her so long prior to becoming a Commissioner and you know, it is a bittersweet situation for me; I wish her the best, she is very capable of doing the job as Mayor and the Town of Beaufort will move forward.

Commissioner Hollinshed said yes, I agree.

Commissioner Hagle agreed to follow what the citizens said.

Mayor Newton asked if there was a motion to designate Bob Terwilliger to replace Commissioner Harker.

Commissioner Hagle made the motion.

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

Mayor/Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Carter said it has been a pleasure and I have enjoyed working with all of you, so thank you very much.

Commissioner McDonald said he echoed what Commissioner Carter said... I have certainly enjoyed being a Beaufort Commissioner and serving the good citizens of Beaufort throughout all my adult life, not only as a Commissioner, but also as Chief of Police. I have really enjoyed the opportunity.

Commissioner Hollinshed said, my vote tonight regarding the pay scale is not to say our valued staff is not deserving; I do have questions about the methodology and the towns selected for comparison. I also have a question about the fact that we are only seeing half of the policy, and that was the reason for my hesitation and voting in opposition.

Commissioner Hagle said I would like to thank Commissioner Carter and Commissioner McDonald, it has been a great honor and pleasure to serve with you for several years, and I will miss you both. We all come with different perspectives; every time I hear a different commissioner talk, it causes me to think and sometimes have a different perspective and that is what this is all about. I really do appreciate it and it has been an honor to serve with you, and the same thing goes with you, Mr. Mayor, it has been a pleasure to be with you too, thank you for all of your great leadership. Also, congratulations to soon to be Mayor Sharon Harker, I know you are going to do well. It is an honor to continue to work with you and do well serving the citizens of Beaufort. I would like to thank Elizabeth Lewis, for completing the minutes from our last two minutes; that means we are up to date with our current minutes, and I hope that we can continue that trend. I would also like to thank Rachel and others for all the hard working catching up on the delinquent meeting minutes. I wish you all the best of holidays and be safe while you are out traveling, remember this is one of the busiest highway traffic times of the year; stay alert, focus on your driving and avoid the hazards of the highway.

Mayor Newton read the following:

Despite the challenges of hurricanes and a pandemic, our Board of Commissioners and extraordinary Town Staff professionals have worked very hard to provide stability for our wonderful community. We have invested in our town, have cleaned up our waterways, are fixing above- and belowground infrastructure, are building and improving parks, and we now have a five-year plan that provides immense stability for Beaufort. As I've often stated, Beaufort is not great because of our government...our town government just provides the stability for greatness to occur. The true greatness of Beaufort is due to our amazing coastal ecosystem and our citizens, businesses, non-profits, civic groups, museum, research institutes, schools, and churches. We thank Commissioners Ann Carter and Charles McDonald for their decades of service as they depart the Board of Commissioners. They have made difficult decisions and are leaving Beaufort in far better shape than they found it when first elected. With the current stability of the town, the hiring of new town manager Todd Clarke, the installation of Mayor-elect Sharon Harker, Commissioner-elect Melvin Cooper, Commissioner-elect Charles Oliver, and Commissioner-designate Bob Terwilliger, the future of Beaufort is very bright! The new board members all bring extraordinary skill sets to their leadership roles and will serve our town well. And while we've made extraordinary progress over the last four years, there are still significant challenges ahead for the new board to consider to include resilience measures to protect our community from the effects of climate change, and complex land use and harbor management planning. These topics are critical for the continued health and prosperity of Beaufort. The unprecedented success of Beaufort today is not by chance. Prior to my tenure as mayor, my predecessor and all of the current commissioners hired John Day as the Beaufort Town Manager. Once I was elected, it was crystal clear to me that John has vast experience, extraordinary vision, proven leadership skills, and unquestioned integrity. John has never sought the limelight but on a daily basis he has patiently analyzed our critical challenges, responded to numerous crises, and he has strived for incremental progress that, over his five-year tenure as manager, has culminated in the amazing community we have today. This success can be measured objectively and felt subjectively... people want to work here, live here, and play here. John is retiring over the next few months but he leaves a spectacular legacy in our town, and he clearly represents the very best of Beaufort.

Closed Session

1. Personnel

Mayor Newton asked for a motion to go into closed session, in accordance with North Carolina General Statute 143-318.11

Commissioner Hagle made a motion to go into closed session to discuss a personnel matter.

Voting Yea: Commissioner Carter, Commissioner McDonald, Commissioner Hollinshead,
Commissioner Hagle

Adjourn

Commissioner Hagle made a motion to extend an offer to Todd Clark, for the Town Manager position, with the terms discussed in closed session and to delegate authority to the current Town Manager and Town Attorneys,

to finalize an employee agreement with Mr. Clark; and finally, to authorize the Mayor and the Town Clerk to execute and deliver an employee agreement with Mr. Clark once finalized.

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

The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Hollinshed made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

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

The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Mayor, Sharon Harker

Town Clerk, Elizabeth Lewis