



Town of Beaufort, NC

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Town of Beaufort Board of Commissioner Work Session Meeting 4:00 PM Wednesday, January 29, 2020 - Town Hall Conference Room, 701 Front Street Minutes

Call to Order

Mayor Newton called the meeting to order.

Roll Call

Deputy Town Clerk Rachel Johnson called roll and declared a quorum present for the meeting.

PRESENT

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

ABSENT

Commissioner Ann Carter

Agenda Approval

Mayor Newton asked for the agenda to be amended by removing the Closed Session and to add an Item for Discussion of a Resolution Supporting Beaufort Middle School.

A motion was made to approve the agenda as amended.

Motion made by Commissioner Hagle,
Voting Yea: Commissioner Harker, Commissioner McDonald, Commissioner Hollinshed, Commissioner Hagle

Public Comment

No public comments were made.

Items for Discussion and Consideration

1 Draft minutes of the January 13, 2020 Regular Monthly Meeting

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

2 Correction to Pay Plan – Engineering Intern

Town Manager Day indicated the Pay Classification plan needed to be amended to change the Engineer Intern position to a PE position. Mr. Day indicated the request was to change the pay grade from 20 to 22.

Commissioner Hollinshed asked why this change was not made at the time of the hiring phase. She indicated the request was coming after the fact and not at the time of hiring.

Town Manager Day indicated it was quicker to poll the board at the time of hiring than to go through this process and get the change made.

Mayor Newton indicated he remembered the discussion of the credentials and the level of experience. He indicated he did come in at a higher rate of pay than was anticipated.

Commissioner Harker indicated she understood that, but the agreement was for his to come in at the mid-range in Grade 20. She continued by asking how this would impact the budget since the taxes were raised to address the shortfall in the budget.

Town Manager Day indicated taxes were raised the first year for streets and last year taxes were raised to address the salaries. Commissioner Harker indicated that was to address the shortfall of the budget to increase salaries. Town Manager Day indicated he did not ask for a tax increase to address salaries but to increase the tax rate for the market adjustment. Commissioner Harker continued to ask how this change would impact the budget in the future.

Town Manager Day indicated all issues were discussed prior to his hiring, but the change was not made which is what should have happened. Commissioner Hollinshed indicated it did not look good it was being done after the fact.

Commissioner McDonald asked if we did nothing on salary change would the town lose this person? Commissioner Hagle indicated we probably would because there is not growth room for salary at the present grade.

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

3 Application for USDA Financing/Grants for Utilities Improvements – Contract with Rivers and Associates

Town Manager Day indicated the board had requested more discussion prior to approving the contracts and work to be performed. He reported the proposal is for Rivers & Associates, Inc. to do the preliminary engineering report and environmental assessment report. He indicated it could be done in house which would take twice as long than if done by Rivers. Rivers & Associates, Inc. can do the work in six months.

Commissioner Hagle stated he understood that mid-year 2022 would be the earliest any work could be completed.

Commissioner Hollinshed asked about going a different route to obtain the money which may be quicker. Town Manager Day indicated that was another project and indicated the engineering piece still needed to be done. Commissioner Hollinshed asked about going to a bank to get the funding for the project.

Town Manager Day indicated if the USDA route is taken then the interest rates are considerably lower because of the qualification of income ratios compared to borrowing the money from a conventional lender. Additionally, he indicated the term for a conventional loan is 15 to 20 years and with USDA funding repayment could be as long as 40 years. Town Manager Day reminded the board members there is a possibility of getting grant funding from USDA of \$2 million up to \$4 million.

Commissioner McDonald asked why it was being handled outside of staff since we have people that can handle the work. Town Manager Day indicated because the Rivers staff is larger, and our staff is limited due to other projects. Town Engineer, Greg Meshaw indicated he could do the work and has done so in the past but since he has been with the town he has been in catch up mode with projects that needed work and those that had been let go.

Commissioner McDonald asked if one of the staff engineers would be required to spend time in the field watching the work. Mr. Meshaw indicated yes, an engineer would need to be in the field reviewing the work but there were staff members in Public Works and Public Utilities available to also reviewing the construction work as it is being completed.

Commissioner Hagle indicated our staff should be able to provide information to Rivers & Associates that will help to reduce the gathering of information by Rivers. He continued by saying he hoped the costs for the engineering and application submission would not cost as much as originally quoted. Mr. Meshaw indicated the staff would still need to oversee the information and work.

Commissioner Hagle asked about the cost difference for Rivers to complete the documentation. Town Manager Day indicated the \$87K would go away but the cost would be an additional year and a half.

Commissioner Hagle asked about the FY20 budget and if the \$15-18 million was included. Town Manager Day indicated the receipt of grant funding would help with the cost.

Commissioner Harker asked about the streets rated as failed and if the cost of the project would include upgrades for infrastructure. Mr. Meshaw indicated the cost included the failed streets and some of the streets identified as poor.

Mayor Newton indicated the USDA opened up more funding for grants and loans to help with the infrastructure replacements and paving. Town Manager Day indicated this was not enough money to make all of the repairs. He indicated if the board wished to fix all of the issues, then utility rates as well as taxes would need to be raised again.

The Mayor and Commissioners indicated a good timeline needed to be presented to the community about all projects and the stages of completion and/or work to be performed.

Commissioner Hollinshed asked about the boardwalk project. Town Manager Day indicated staff had applied for a grant but was not approved. He indicated staff did not reapply for funding because there seemed to be more pressing issues. Mr. Day indicated the bulkhead is settling on one end and the cap is deteriorating because of being exposed. He indicated there was no need to replace the boardwalk until the bulkhead is repaired.

Mr. Day indicated one of the discussions for the retreat will be the expiration of the lease for the docks in 2024. He also asked if the time of change in oversight would be the best time for dock work it will be a major undertaking.

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

4 Capital Reserve Fund Amendment #1

Finance Director Christi Wood indicated the board approved the Capital Reserve Fund for projects last May. She indicated the request was to move money out of the CRF to the Utility Fund for projects part of the utility line projects that must be completed prior to the street repairs and infrastructures can be started.

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

5 FY 20 Budget Amendment #5

Finance Director Wood indicated this budget amendment was for an infrastructure pipe on Professional Park Drive. Town Manager Day indicated this work needed to be completed prior to the big repair project.

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

6 December Financial Report

Ms. Wood indicated the financial report does not include December tax collections due to a software issue at the county. She indicated she did not have any major concerns to bring to the attention of the commissioners.

Town Manager Day indicated the tax assessor's office has been working to establish the revaluation information and provided the property ad valorem average rate increase would be 30%.

7 Year End Parking Program Report

Scott Walker, Parking Supervisor for the Town of Beaufort, gave a presentation recap of the 2019 Paid Parking season. He indicated the 2019 goals were to create a friendly environment for residents and visitors, successfully manage the transition from contract services to in-house management, emphasize the safety for customers, residents, staff and visitors and to provide friendly and responsive customer service to residents and visitors.

Town Manager Day discussed the net revenues for 2018 and 2019 and why the 2019 figures were lower. He indicated the difference was due to reduced hours and fewer parking spaces.

Mr. Walker indicated that paid parking was a large revenue stream with the parking fees accounting for the majority and violations also being considered. He also reported in 2018 80% of the violations were paid with outstanding revenue at \$17K. In 2019 75% of violations were collected with \$11K still outstanding.

The method of payment by visitors and citizens were coins, credit at terminal and pay by phone. Town Manager Day indicated payment by coin decreased in 2019 and would possibly be removed in the future as a payment option.

Mr. Day also reviewed information comparing the actual revenues each by day, hour, street zone and parking lots. (The power point slides are included below.)

In closing their presentation, Town Manager Day and Parking Supervisor Walker made a recommendation to not make any changes for the 2020 paid parking season. Mr. Walker indicated some implications of policy change were the cost of new signage, additional operational charges, difficult to make comparisons each year and more difficult to analyze data and identify trends.

After discussion of different topics, the commissioners decided to keep the paid parking program for 2020 the same as 2019.

Commission / Board Comments

Mayor Newton asked for the commissioner's approval to draft a resolution supporting the Beaufort Middle School breezeway for safety precautions. The board agreed for the Mayor to draft a resolution.

Commissioner Harker thanked Scott Walker and Christi Wood for their work on the Paid Parking presentation. She also urged members of the community to participate in the ADA Online Survey.

Commissioner Hagle thanked Mr. Walker for his report and his work. He indicated he was looking forward to another good season. He indicated the discussion held during the meeting was good since the board was starting to look into the future for planning needs.

Commissioner Hollinshed urged fellow commissioners and staff to please make sure the citizens know about projects and information relevant to town. In response to a question regarding the Spouter Inn, Mr. Garner indicated the town was waiting the final decision from the county Fire Marshall.

Commissioner McDonald stated he felt the meeting was very good and hoped everyone would continue to look into the future and still move forward.

Mayor Newton indicated letters had been delivered to the fire departments and towns who helped with the Spouter Inn fire. He continued by saying the board members and town staff needed to push out information regarding projects so everyone will have the correct information.

Closed Session Pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(a)(6) for the Permitted Purpose of Personnel

The Closed Session was removed from the agenda.

Adjourn

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 6:00 pm.

Motion made by Commissioner Hagle.

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

Mayor Everette S. (Rett) Newton

Michele Davis, Town Clerk