



**Town of Beaufort, NC**

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**Board of Commissioners Work Session  
4:00 PM Monday, February 24, 2025  
Train Depot, 614 Broad Street**

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**Call To Order**

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

**Roll Call**

Elizabeth Lewis, Town Clerk, called the roll.

**PRESENT:**

Mayor Harker  
Commissioner Gillikin  
Commissioner LoPiccolo  
Commissioner Oliver

**ABSENT:**

Commissioner Cooper  
Commissioner Spiegler

**Agenda Approval**

Commissioner Oliver made a motion to approve the agenda.

The motion carried unanimously.

**Items for Discussion and Consideration**

1. Piedmont Triad Regional Council- 2024 Pay Study Results

The Board received a pay study presentation from David Hill with the Piedmont Triad Regional Council. He explained the results from the Town's recent pay study and shared the expected study outcomes were to determine and make recommendations regarding the geographic market placement for the Town of Beaufort to support employee recruitment and retention initiatives. He shared all employees participated in the study and noted several market comparison examples. His presentation highlighted the overall averages for pay grade ranges were 0.49% above market average and employees salaries were 2.73% above the market average. He shared recommendations which include eliminating the hire rate in the current pay plan, as it is no longer competitive in the market. He also suggested assigning each position to the market supported pay grade

and establishing employee salaries utilizing one of two implementation options: years of service option or equal weight to TIP and YOS

The Board discussed the results and took no action on the proposed implementation options. It was noted this would be a going discussion topic during budget preparation, as ideally if a plan was adopted it would be effective July 1, 2025.

2. 400 Pollock Street Update

The Board discussed the status of 400 Pollock Street and the owner who purchased the property through Preservation North Carolina. Mr. Burgess shared his understanding was that the hold up on any improvements to the building was related to an encroachment agreement for the covered porch area on the second story of the building, which hangs over the Town's sidewalk. He noted that there was not a timeline for renovations, even after he asked Preservation North Carolina as well as the property owner. The group discussed they and the community were ready to see movement on the renovations.

Mr. Grady shared his suggestions related to a proposed encroachment agreement, noting the importance of construction deadlines and other milestones related to the properties improvement. Mr. Garner shared that he was under the impression the owner wanted to apply for the building to be on the National Register of Historic Places and the state would require the porch be there due the the architectural features of the building and that is why they are asking for an encroachment agreement.

Mayor Harker confirmed there was no guarantee the building would be placed on the National Registry and pointed out the application had not been submitted. The Board discussed the idea of a universal development agreement that would have specific goals to be met by the property owner within a set time or they could face repercussions. It was noted the structure was still considered condemned, but the demolition order was revoked in 2021, according to Board action. Staff explained the demolition process should they decide to go that route again in the future.

Mayor Harker shared she was not happy at the pace the owner and/or Preservation North Carolina has taken to redevelop the building. She expressed the need to reach some type of agreement to move the project along and shared her dissatisfaction with Preservation North Carolina's position throughout the entire process.

Mr. Grady summarized the discussion by noting that the Town is willing to sign an encroachment agreement, with specific outlines of the redevelopment plan provided by the owner and/or Preservation North Carolina. He discussed the need for the owner to provide liability insurance to the Town for the area associated with the overhanging porch.

The Board suggested the Town was showing good faith by considering an encroachment agreement, but they needed to have a detailed timeline showing how and when the property is going to be rehabilitated. The Board instructed staff and the Town Attorney to move forward with facilitating an encroachment agreement, to include appropriate deadlines and conditions as discussed, with failure of those terms to result in moving forward with demolition of the property. The importance of collecting and monitoring any liability insurance policies associated with the area would also be part of that documentation process.

3. George Aswad's Request for a 10-year, 3 Slip Commitment on Beaufort Waterfront

Mr. Burgess explained that George Aswad was requesting a 10-year lease commitment to operate three ferry vessels, associated with Island Express Ferry Service LLC, from Beaufort waterfront as he currently operates. The request comes following the recent National Parks Service Prospectus to operate as concessionaire to Cape Lookout and Shackleford. Mr. Burgess noted he anticipated a contract would be drafted and discussed at the March 10th Regular Meeting, if it was the Board's desire to move forward with the request.

The Board discussed the economic impact of the ferry service and the need to ensure market rates for dock usage. Commissioner Oliver suggested the contract includes the option of operating from Gallants Channel.

Mr. Burgess noted that Mr. Aswad would be assuming responsibility for the maintenance of the docks as well as the additional insurance and those factors should be considered when discussing monthly rates.

The Board suggested staff research the market rate further and bring a proposed contract to the next meeting, if possible.

4. Notice to Proceed with Design/Installation Details for Fuel Tanks on Beaufort Waterfront

Mr. Burgess shared the fuel tank interview committee rated four different companies and ranked IPSFV as the number one respondent. He asked for approval from the Board to move forward with the design and permitting processes. He noted the west parking lot was the ideal choice for the fuel tanks to be installed.

The Board confirmed notice to proceed with the next steps as explained by Mr. Burgess. He noted the associated legal documents would be coming before them as quickly as possible.

**Staff Comments**

Mr. Bell shared information on the Professional Park Stormwater Study web portal and asked the Board provide feedback at their convenience.

Mr. Garner provided a quarterly update on the progress of the Compass Hotel. He noted the contractors were at least a month ahead of schedule.

Ms. Lewis shared the Town received an application for voluntary annexation and sewer allocation from the County for 2303 Highway 70, a proposed location for the new jail site.

**Adjourn**

Commissioner Oliver made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.

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Sharon E. Harker, Mayor

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Elizabeth Lewis, Town Clerk