



## **Town of Beaufort, NC**

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### **Board of Commissioners Work Session 4:00 PM Monday, March 27, 2023 Train Depot, 614 Broad Street Beaufort, NC 28516 Minutes**

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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  
Mayor Pro Tem Hagle  
Commissioner Oliver  
Commissioner Cooper  
Commissioner Hollinshed  
Commissioner Terwilliger

#### **Agenda Approval**

Commissioner Hollinshed made a motion to approve the agenda.

The motion carried unanimously.

#### **Items for Discussion and Consideration**

##### **1. FY 2023 Audit Contract**

Christi Wood, Finance Director, requested approval to execute the FY 2023 Audit Contract. She shared the auditor was the same company as the prior year, Martin Starnes & Associates, and noted \$29,035.00 was the total amount associated with the contract.

Commissioner Hagle made a motion to approve the contract as presented.

The motion carried unanimously.

## 2. Oceanview Cemetery Update

Ms. Wood provided background information on Oceanview Cemetery. She explained a surveyed map had been completed to determine the remaining burial plots available for sale, which depicted 174 burial plots. She explained staff was seeking the Board's approval to resume selling cemetery plots based on the survey map, as well as several recommended policy/ordinance updates, as referenced in the meeting packet.

There was discussion regarding burial plot purchases on installment plans. The Board consensus was for that section of the ordinances to remain the same, allowing the Town Manager to approve purchases made through installment plans.

Commissioner Terwilliger questioned the terminology regarding the resale of a lot.

Town Attorney, Arey Grady, explained the process of amending the cemetery ordinance, should the Board wish to do so.

Commissioner Hagle suggested staff review the current ordinances and bring back a recommendation of amendments at a future meeting.

Commissioner Cooper made a motion for the Town to resume cemetery plot sales immediately, under the current ordinances, and to approve the corresponding survey map which references current availability. He amended the motion to include direction for Town Staff to follow an administrative lead on concerns regarding the addition of trees, shrubs and benches, until the Cemetery Ordinance can be updated to address these issues.

The motion carried unanimously.

## 3. FY 24 Budget Schedule

Ms. Lewis proposed the below FY 24 Budget schedule:

- Introduce proposed FY 24 Budget at May 8th BOC Regular Meeting- 6:00 p.m.
- May 9th Special Meeting (Budget Workshop #1)- 4:00 p.m.
- May 17th Special Meeting (Budget Workshop #2)- 6:00 p.m.
- June 12th Regular Meeting (Public Hearing/Adoption)- 6:00 p.m.

Commissioner Hagle made a motion to approve the proposed schedule.

The motion carried unanimously.

## 4. Beaufort Fire Rural District – Proposed District Change for Stanton Landing

Tony Ray, Fire Chief, shared Carteret County desired to move the Stanton Landing Development from the North River Laurel Road Volunteer Fire District and is requesting the Town of Beaufort consider a formal request for approval. He noted that since Beaufort Fire Department is now staffing Fire Station 2, residents of Stanton Landing have made numerous requests to the County to be part of the Beaufort Fire District. He explained that Beaufort Fire Station 2 is staffed with First responder EMT level care 24-hours a day, is located closer to Stanton Landing by road miles, and has a ISO Class 4. He went on to explain North River Fire Station is located five miles from the entrance of Stanton Landing, while Beaufort Fire Station 2 is just one mile away. He said that Stanton Landing is currently ISO Class 9s by North River's most recent ISO rating 5/9s. He explained with Beaufort Fire's ISO Class 4 rating, Stanton Landing would receive approximately a 30% hazard insurance premium reduction. He noted the nearest fire hydrant is greater than 1,000 ft from the entrance to the neighborhood. He noted North River's Fire District had a tax rate of seven cents, while Beaufort's Fire District Tax Rate was ten cents; if the proposed change was approved, it would be an approximate \$22,000 increase to Beaufort

Fire Department's County Revenue. Chief Ray shared that County Officials have met with the North River Fire Chief and presented the proposed change. He also noted the proposed change of service level would not require additional staffing at this time.

Commissioner Cooper expressed his concern with future growth if Beaufort picks up the proposed area. He noted the importance of North River trying to improve their ISO rating. He asked questions regarding the potential revenue loss for North River Fire Department. He suggested the County could offer a better deal than what they are proposing.

Commissioner Oliver confirmed the request being made by the County, and the insurance savings that would be available for Stanton Landing homeowners. He also expressed concern regarding a potential reduction in North River's revenue from the County.

Chief Ray explained the County Commissioners set the Fire Districts, and reminded the group the Stanton Landing residents requested this proposed change.

Commissioner Hagle noted the change would be advantageous to the Stanton Landing homeowners. He suggested reduced revenue for North River Fire Department would be a County issue, and they will have to decide how to fund that volunteer department.

Commissioner Cooper suggested the Town Manager and Fire Chief have another conversation with the County regarding the proposed district change.

Commissioner Hollinshed asked if North River was staffed with EMTs.

Chief Ray confirmed they were not.

Commissioner Hollinshed suggested that response times and life safety were the most important factors, not money.

Commissioner Terwilliger suggested homeowners of Stanton Landing moved to the area knowing the situation and limitations. He shared his concerns with the County continuing to add fire coverage responsibilities to the Town of Beaufort's umbrella. He commended the North River Fire Department for their efforts during Hurricane Florence. He also expressed concerns with the County reducing their revenue contributions. He suggested the Town contact the County to express the Board's concerns, noting there should be a way to help both Stanton Landing and North River.

Mayor Harker shared her thoughts on the importance of improving response time for all, asking questions about Beaufort's current response to calls at Stanton Landing.

Chief Ray shared that Beaufort Fire Department automatically responds to calls in the Stanton Landing area, as well as North River and Harlow.

Mayor Harker deemed a consensus from the Board to direct Town Staff to reach out to the County for a solution to help both Stanton Landing and North River Volunteer Fire Department.

## 5. Walking Tour Permit Application

Ms. Lewis shared Frank and Lynn Jarman, owners of Beaufort's Southern Stroll have submitted a Walking Tour Application with the Town of Beaufort. Attached is the application, which includes details regarding the tour, a map of the routes, schedule of rates, and a copy of liability insurance. The applicants have also provided a suitable background check and paid an application fee of \$50 to the Town. According to the Town of Beaufort Code of Ordinances, Section 90.30, the Board of Commissioners must conduct a public hearing on the application. Staff is requesting the Board of Commissioner's review the application and set a public hearing date.

Commissioner Hollinshed commented on the general requirements for walking tours, referenced in Section 90.31 of the Town's Ordinances. She noted the importance of enforcing the requirement of maximum group sizes; which currently reads no more than 15 people per tour group, excluding the tour guide.

Mayor Harker deemed a consensus to set a public hearing date for April 10, 2023, the Board's Regular Meeting.

6. Report on Recommendation for a Financial Advisor

Ms. Wood provided background on the Town's search for a financial advisor. She shared it was staff's recommendation to select First Tryon. She explained staff was seeking the Board's approval to draft a budget amendment for consideration at the April 10th Regular Meeting and subsequently authorize the Town Manager to enter into a contract for services with financial advisor, First Tryon.

Mayor Harker deemed a consensus to place the budget amendment on the April 10th Regular Meeting agenda, under items of consent.

7. February Financial Report

Ms. Wood provided a financial report for the month of February. She noted that Carteret County is currently submitting estimates for property tax collections. The estimate for January collections was \$794,949. This payment was received in February. Staff has received a few preliminary reports from the county for billing and collections and estimated values. She shared motor vehicle taxes for January was received in February, and totaled \$24,702. She made note the sales and use tax distribution for March was \$235,472; a 9% increase from the distribution in March of the prior year. She shared balances of the general fund, utility fund, and capital reserves, as of February 28, 2023.

**Closed Session**

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

Commissioner Hagle made a motion to enter closed session, pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (3).

The motion carried unanimously.

**Adjourn**

Commissioner Hagle made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:40 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.

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Sharon E. Harker, Mayor

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Elizabeth Lewis, Town Clerk