

CAROLINA BEACH

Town Council Workshop

Tuesday, November 17, 2020

Multi-Purpose Room, 1121 N. Lake Park Blvd, Carolina Beach, NC



MINUTES

MAYOR PIERCE CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 9:00 AM

COUNCIL PRESENT

Mayor LeAnn Pierce

Mayor Pro Tem Jay Healy

Council Member Lynn Barbee

Council Member Steve Shuttleworth

ALSO PRESENT

Town Manager Bruce Oakley

Assistant Town Manager Ed Parvin

Town Clerk Kim Ward

EFFICIENCY STUDY PRESENTATION BY EVERGREEN SOLUTIONS

Bruce Oakley introduced Dr. Linda Recio with Evergreen Solutions.

Dr. Recio gave a brief overview of the efficiency study results. She stated there were four significant themes that emerged as critical to meeting the challenges the Town faces. They include:

- Improve Customer Service
- Consolidate/Eliminate Council Appointed Committees
- Improvements in Public Safety
- Increase Efficiencies in Finance and Human Resources

The significant recommendations in administration and organizational leadership include:

Consolidate committees of the Town Council which have overlapping responsibilities and delete ad-hoc committees which are no longer needed.

Develop and implement a comprehensive performance evaluation tool for the Town Manager, and include a requirement for use of this accountability tool in the Town Manager's contract.

Reorganize Town government to be more effective, especially regarding administrative functions.

Develop a comprehensive policy manual for the Town of Carolina Beach with policies adopted by the Town Council.

Develop a comprehensive five-year Strategic Plan for the Town of Carolina Beach.

Reduce legal expenditures and develop an approval process for use of attorney with approval authority resting only with Town Council or Town Manager.

Conduct agency-wide training on customer service.

Develop a customer service plan for the Town of Carolina Beach

The significant recommendations in operations include:

Conduct an internal and external assessment to determine specific information technology shortcomings and needs of staff and other stakeholders (residents, visitors, commercial).

Assemble a summary of major technology issues to share with the current vendor and develop plans to addressing concerns.

Develop a business case for how best to provide information technology services at the end of the current vendor's contract in 2023.

Develop and launch a simple social media plan to increase community awareness and involvement.

Expand the "I want to..." section of the Town website to provide residents a central resource for learning more about the Town, services offered, and key contacts.

Develop and launch a web-based summary of Town accomplishments around the theme of how the Town is improving quality of life, opportunities in the community, and efficiently leveraging citizen tax dollars.

Analyze the "request for service" issues and utilize other request or issue data to develop more proactive community communication and issues resolution plan for each year based on the previous year's data.

Develop an information technology recovery strategy for the Town's data.

Increase utility rates to cover debt services.

Complete the implementation of cloud-based billing and collections system

(InvoiceCloud) and shift more customers over to an automated format.

Use CityWorks reports and metrics to assess efficiency, resource allocation, and project priorities.

Develop a plan for addressing the current water meters that cannot be collected electronically.

Increase stormwater rates to cover operational cost and debt obligations.

Assess the feasibility of Freeman Park being a carryout site for refuse, taking into account financial savings, customer service issues, and customer compliance.

Provide training and ensure compliance of storm water staff on using CityWorks to track and resolve work orders.

Recommendations in Public Safety include the following:

Unfreeze the Captain's position and have the newly hired Chief determine the best person for the role by opening the hiring process to internal and external candidates.

Expedite the hiring process for the new Chief to ensure an overlap of 30 days between the incoming chief and outgoing Chief.

Maintain current staffing levels across operations and administration.

Increase utilization of the Town's individual career development plan policy under the

Strengthen the comprehensiveness of training offerings by developing a training plan particularly addressing the areas of anti-bias, de-escalation, and active shooter and require that the relevant trainings be mandatory for all patrol and CID staff.

Assess technical options for augmenting the Internet access so that utilization of County networks and systems can be more efficient.

Maintain the current staffing levels at the Fire Department.

Explore adoption of the Lexipol policy system consistent with the Police Department.

Increase utilization of the Town's individual development plan policy under the performance appraisal program.

Develop and implement a Community Risk Reduction Plan.

Adopt automated software for scheduling staff and tracking hours which allows for submission of timecards to Payroll.

Adopt a digitized approach to performing daily inventory checks.

Maintain its current fire-suppression fleet at the existing three pumpers and one aerial truck.

Develop and implement a comprehensive fire data plan.

Recommendations in other departments and services include:

Maintain the current full-time staffing level through FY 2021.

Maintain full-time staffing levels and continue collaboration on department-wide projects in the Parks and Recreation Department.

Evaluate future part-time staffing needs with the evolving needs of the Parks and Recreation Department.

Reduce the hours of operation at Freeman Park to daylight hours.

Curtail legal expenses for Freeman Park.

Continue the Boardwalk Fish Tiles and Independent Contract Instructors programs to generate revenue.

Evaluate the long-term cost-effectiveness of the Boardwalk Fish Tiles and develop a long-term maintenance plan for existing Boardwalk Fish Tiles.

Create an administrative assistant position for the Town Clerk.

Adopt a tax rate based on current and future needs for the Town of Carolina Beach.

Consider restructuring the Town's current process for financing Capital Improvements using a tax set aside and the issuance of general obligation bonds.

Eliminate/Consolidate committees

Worker's Comp needs to protect the employees to allow them to come back to work on light duty.

Town needs to review insurance policies each year and put them out for bid.

General Discussion:

Dr. Recio suggested the Town establishing a policy on a minimum fund balance. She said the national average is 20%.

Council cautioned using some discretion in putting a policy in writing. They were concerned that some of the verbiage could become restrictive for the Town.

Dr. Recio suggested to better organize the Town policy so that it is easier to search for specific topics.

Dr. Recio said that the Town needs to conduct a pay study every 5 years to include benefits. Council was concerned that benefits were not evaluated in the last pay study.

Mayor Pierce asked to receive a report on employee retention.

Dr. Recio said that Human Resources should be reviewing the turnover rates and reporting them to Council on an annual basis.

She also suggested that job descriptions be reviewed regularly. There were a few positions that did not have an accurate job description.

Evaluations should be conducted annually and should be used for more than just pay increases. They should be more interactive and not considered an event.

Council Member Barbee added that they should include measurable goals and that he had a good evaluation form that he would share with the manager.

Dr. Recio said that there needs to be more documentation on seasonal employees.

The Town has some major technology issues. Dr. Recio suggested bringing IT in house. She said that 5 years is too long for a technology contract.

Council Member Barbee said that we need someone in house to own it and be accountable for it.

Dr. Recio said the Town needs a summary of accomplishments on the website.

Council agrees that Town does not sell itself.

MPT Healy said he did not think that the website was the appropriate place for that. He feels there are other avenues to highlight the Town's accomplishments.

Council Member Shuttleworth feels that you can oversaturate customer service which can be tasking on staff.

Dr. Recio said that the online billing process is not easy to use.

Council Member Shuttleworth feels that the Town needs to move to a completely automated system and not take payments in-house.

Dr. Recio suggested raising utility rates. 10% is needed which would generate \$500k.

Council Member Shuttleworth said that he would not vote for another increase in utility rates.

Dr. Recio said that CityWorks needs to be utilized more.

She stated that water meters are not reading properly causing more work for staff.

Council wanted to know who holds the vendor accountable. They want to know what staff member is going to own these contracts when they are signed, and the vendor fails to perform.

Council Member Barbee suggested having another vendor to work with VC3.

Dr. Recio feels that Lexipol should also be used by the Fire Department for their policies.

Council Member Shuttleworth asked how to reduce the number of committees.

MPT Healy said some committee members bash the Town on social media.

Council Member Barbee would like to have a workshop to discuss committees.

MPT Healy would like committee chairs to come in and report on what their committee is focusing on.

Dr. Recio concluded her discussion with Council and said that the contract with Evergreen Solutions allows Council to contact her team for up to one year regarding the findings of the study.

BRIEFING ON POTENTIAL TEXT AMENDMENT

Miles Murphy presented zoning language that will be presented at the December Council meeting.

DISCUSSION WITH LOBBYIST MIKE MCINTYRE

Former Congressman Mike McIntyre shared some items his firm has been working on for the Town.

He is holding a long-range meeting December 4, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. with MOTSU.

He is also proposing a 5-year renewal of an easement effective January 1 for the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Mr. McIntyre said the Town may be able to continue to use dredge material to build the headworks.

He feels that the Army is not going to allow the spoils on their property. The only option was if they donated the land to the Town. They have that option if land is not in use. They would have to evaluate the explosive arch. If they donated the land, they would have to have an easement for the explosive arch. This decision may have to go to a four-star level.

Mr. McIntyre explained the chain of command and how decisions are made in the Army. He said that the new Colonel is willing to entertain requests, but he must get approval from his chain of command as well. He added that the big question is, does it interfere with the Army's mission. They have three criteria that must be met to allow use of their property.

Mr. McIntyre said that his mission is to find out who makes the decisions and get to that person.

Council Member Shuttleworth suggested that the best avenue is to focus on health, safety and welfare. That would be flood mitigation at the lake.

Mayor Pierce said the Town needs to find a way that this benefits the Army.

Council suggested building a berm for the Army with the spoils from the lake.

Freeman Park is the other issue that the Manager has tasked Mr. McIntyre to look at it. He said that he does not want to run interference on the current litigation. Hopefully in another month they will know their options to secure easements for storm damage reduction.

Council Member Shuttleworth mentioned that we would need easements by the spring, so time is tight.

Mayor Pierce said Council's main concern is to obtain these easements.

Mr. McIntyre asked Council for names that may be interested in purchasing the property.

Council Member Shuttleworth said he is not opposed to finding a loan to purchase the property.

Mr. McIntyre asked for an estimated timeline on when the case may go to court. He also would like to know the dollar amount that is being proposed for the purchase of the property.

NON-AGENDA ITEM

Mr. Oakley presented a budget request to appropriate \$500,000 from the general fund to the utility fund to cover the cost of the Stier Construction vs. Town of Carolina settlement.

Mayor Pierce made a motion to appropriate \$500,000 from the general fund to the utility fund to cover the cost of the Stier Construction vs. Town of Carolina settlement. Motion passed unanimously 4-0.

ADJOURN

Mayor Pierce made a motion to adjourn at 12:30 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.