

CAROLINA BEACH

Town Council Workshop Day Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 28, 2020 @ 9:00 AM
Council Chambers
1121 N. Lake Park Boulevard
Carolina Beach, NC 28428

ASSEMBLY

A Workshop meeting of the Town of Carolina Beach Town Council meeting was held on Tuesday, April 28, 2020, at 9:00 AM at Council Chambers.

PRESENT: Mayor LeAnn Pierce, Mayor Pro Tem Jay Healy, Council Member Lynn Barbee, Council Member Steve Shuttleworth, Council Member JoDan Garza

ALSO PRESENT: Town Manager Bruce Oakley, Assistant Manager Ed Parvin, Finance Director Debbie Hall, Town Clerk Kim Ward

1. MAYOR PIERCE CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER

2. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. COVID-19 Update by Town Manager Bruce Oakley

Mr. Oakley gave an update on COVID-19, including closures and restrictions that are extended to May 8. Council also discussed how the situation will affect the usual slate of summer events planned for the Town and the possibility of phased approaches to reopening parking lots.

b. Budget Discussion

Mr. Oakley gave an introduction on the FY 20/21 budget. He noted that balancing a budget during a pandemic was challenging due to shortfalls and uncertainties, which would require tough decisions. He also reviewed dates for upcoming budget meetings.

Mr. Oakley's remarks were followed by presentations from the following department heads: Police, Fire, Public Utilities, Public Works, Parks & Recreation, Planning, and Administration.

POLICE

Police Chief Chris Spivey presented budget proposals for 510-Police and 630-Beach Maintenance. He went over the current organization chart, which contains 32.5 positions: 30 full-time sworn, 2 full-time civil, and 1 part-time sworn.

Highlights and accomplishments for FY 19/20 are on pause due to COVID-19 but will resume after things get back to normal. They are:

- Host Community Safety & Wellness Workshops
- Continue Carolina Beach Police Department's Citizens Academy
- Sponsor Carolina Beach Police National Night Out
- Continue Carolina Beach Police Department's Bike Rodeo

Chief Spivey also reviewed 2017, 2018, and 2019 statistics for officers on streets, including state citation charges, incident reports, arrests, civil citations, and reports of vehicle collisions. He said there were no significant or unexpected changes in the numbers.

For 510-Police, the total proposed budget is \$2,837,832, an increase of \$40,384 from the current fiscal year. Takeaway points were:

- Personnel increase due to COLA/Merit and increase in State LEO retirement percentage
- Increase in maintenance for vehicles and tires – now budgeted in department
- Year 5 of 5-year pay installments on radio upgrade \$39,720
- Increase in supplies to cover cost of two MDT's - \$4,000
- Overall increase of \$21,350 in contract services for Lexipol and Digital Forensic Software

Capital highlights were:

- Upfront decrease due to leasing of two (2) Dodge 4X4 trucks for patrol needs
- Additional funding needed for LiveScan Fingerprint System

For 630-Beach Maintenance, the total proposed budget is \$ \$294,373, a decrease of \$16,117 from the current fiscal year. The takeaway point was:

- Personnel increase due to COLA/Merit and increase in State LEO retirement percentage

Chief Spivey said the strategic budget goals for FY 20/21 remain the same as in previous years:

- Recruitment/retention
- Training and professional development
- Community outreach
- Enhance digital investigations and forensics

The summary for the proposed budgets for 510-Police and 630-Beach Maintenance is as follows:

- Overall Increase of \$24,267
- Personnel increase due to COLA/Merit increases and % increase of State LEO Retirement
- Decrease in Capital Improvements Outlay

Council Member Shuttleworth expressed concern about the loss of room occupancy tax revenue due to COVID-19. He asked to see a breakdown of what the Town had spent in the past few years on budget-specific Town benefits such as lifeguards, bathrooms, bike racks, and beach maintenance. Mayor Pierce asked to see a breakdown of Freeman Park revenue for previous years.

FIRE

Fire Chief Alan Griffin presented budget proposals for 530-Fire and 520-Ocean Rescue. He went over the current organization chart, which contains personnel costs of \$1,231,961 for 530-Fire and \$417,052 for 520-Ocean Rescue.

Highlights and accomplishments for 530-Fire for FY 19/20 included statistics for calls for service and training.

For 530-Fire, the total proposed budget is \$1,452,561, an increase of \$170,662 from the current fiscal year. Takeaway points were:

- Personnel increase due to merit, insurance, carryover of additional shift personnel from last year
- Decrease in maintenance and operations due to decrease in SAFER Grant match

The capital highlight was:

- Update training props for in-house training of staff

Chief Griffin said the strategic budget goals for FY 20/21 are:

- Enhance public education and fire prevention
- Enhance recruitment and retention
- Enhance in-house training

Highlights and accomplishments for 520-Ocean Rescue for FY 19/20 included statistics for calls for service.

For 520-Ocean Rescue, the total proposed budget is \$460,452, a decrease of \$17,282 from the current fiscal year. The takeaway point was:

- Overall decrease of all line items from last year's budget

The capital highlight was:

- Purchase 2 new 4-wheelers

Chief Griffin also reviewed the 10-Year Master Plan for Vehicle Replacement and Replacement Engine Background, the latter of which included the following:

- NFPA recommends front-line engine to be 10 years or less, reserve engines to be 20 years or less.
- The Town purchased two fire engines in 2003 and 2005 due to extreme need. This created 2-year separations that if not spread out would cost \$1 million in purchases over a short period.
- Identified response gaps: Command Post, Mobile Air Supply, Scene Lighting, and Additional Salvage and Overhaul Needs.

Council Member Shuttleworth asked Council to reach out to anyone who might be able to help facilitate the Town obtaining state and federal dollars to help offset budget shortfalls as a result of COVID-19. He also asked Town staff to identify where dollars are and track how discussions are going and where allocations are going.

PUBLIC UTILITIES

Public Utilities Director Mark Meyer presented budget proposals for 800-Public Utilities Administration, 810-Wastewater Treatment, 811-Wastewater Collection, 812-Water, 813-Water & Sewer Fleet Maintenance, and 565-General Fleet Maintenance. He went over the current organization chart, which contains 24 full-time positions, including 1 that is vacant.

Highlights and accomplishments included 2018 and 2019 statistics for water and sewer taps, water produced, and wastewater treated.

For 800-Public Utilities Administration, the total proposed budget is \$1,353,164, an increase of \$124,006 from the current fiscal year. Takeaway points were:

- Would like to replace the vacant billing position
- Working on a better online billing process
- Would like to add Tap Verification charge to Rates and Fees
- The increase in M&O is \$90k increase for MOTSU soil sampling

Council Member Shuttleworth asked that Town staff find ways to educate people that it is not necessary for them to come in to pay utility bills. He would like to figure out a way to encourage all residents pay utility bills online, thus cutting down on the need for staffing. Council Member Garza said it would be useful to set a deadline and in the meantime help those who might need some assistance with the transition.

For 810-Wastewater Treatment, the total proposed budget is \$1,044,842, an increase of \$172,228 from the current fiscal year. Takeaway points were:

- Increase of Chlorine and sulfur dioxide +\$13,830
- Increase of sludge removal +\$18,000
- Tertiary Filter project, Blower replacement, EQ Basin Flow, and Valves +\$115,000

Council Member Garza asked Mr. Meyer to provide information at an upcoming meeting on his top six or seven priorities for next year.

For 811-Wastewater Collection, the total proposed budget is \$1,679,415, a decrease of \$66,649 from the current fiscal year.

For 812-Water, the total proposed budget is \$1,337,218, a decrease of \$6,616 from the current fiscal year. The takeaway point was:

- Working on Water Study

For 813-Water & Sewer Fleet Maintenance, the total proposed budget is \$254,000, a decrease of \$10,000 from the current fiscal year.

For 565-General Fleet Maintenance, the total proposed budget is \$251,250, a decrease of \$34,150 from the current fiscal year.

Mr. Meyer said the strategic budget goals for FY 20/21 are:

- On-site training
- Continue professional development (CE hours and growth)
- Enhance billing (parking permits, re-entry pass, WS bills, planning permits)
- Community outreach and communications
- Long-range capital improvement plan

Council Member Shuttleworth said he hopes a utility rate increase will not be necessary. Mr. Meyer said they are proposing a 5% increase. Council Member Garza said he would like to see a tiered system be presented to Council.

PUBLIC WORKS

Public Works Director Brian Stanberry presented budget proposals for 493-Public Works Administration, 560-Powell Bill, 580-Environmental, 630-Beach Maintenance, and 900-Stormwater. He went over the current organization chart, which contains 12.5 Public Works full-time staff, 3 Public Works seasonal staff, and 7.5 Stormwater full-time staff.

Highlights and accomplishments for FY 19/20 were:

- Replacement of Raised Planters at Boardwalk Gazebo
- Heavy Maintenance and Preparation of Facilities Prior to Summer
- Flood Control and Prevention
- Pedestrian Safety Improvements at All Existing Crosswalks
- Extension of Lake Pump Intake Lines
- Refurbishment and Repurposing of 1708 Canal for Parking Office
- Replacement of Tidal Valves on Canal Drive and Eastern Side of Lake
- Installation of 32 New Bike Racks Throughout Town

Mayor Pierce asked about the possibility of using room occupancy tax funds to do Boardwalk maintenance, such as the planters, rather than paying for that through the General Fund. She said she thinks the Town has not been spending all of its room occupancy tax funds and should look at that.

For 493-Public Works Administration, the total proposed budget is \$116,700, an increase of \$1,199 from the current fiscal year. Takeaway points were:

- Electrical contracting \$45,000
- Oversight of emergency debris/solid waste management and facilities/grounds

For 560-Powell Bill, the total proposed budget is \$645,000, an increase of \$461,113 from the current fiscal year. Takeaway points were:

- Paving of Carolina Beach Avenue North \$ 550,000
- Street Supplies/Signals/Signage \$ 35,000

For 580-Environmental, the total proposed budget is \$3,464,250, an increase of \$34,114 from the current fiscal year. Takeaway points were:

- Waste Industries Contract (no increase this year) \$1,792,510
- Landscaping Contract (w/Ryder Lewis, Greenway, Mulching) \$268,000
- Replacement of (1) Truck \$42,000
- Staining of Boardwalk and Western Marina Walkways \$50,000
- Replacement of Knuckleboom Truck for Curbside Debris \$Debt Service
- Replacement of Boardwalk Overhead and Railing Lights \$31,000

Council Member Shuttleworth said he would like to explore the possibility of allowing residents to bring their vegetative debris to the facility off Dow Road so the Town can use it to create

mulch. He said right now the Town is paying someone to pick up and haul off that debris, and he wants to see a more efficient long-term plan for this.

Council Member Garza said he wants to see the contract from tree maintenance go out for RFP right now so the Town can get a good deal. Mayor Pro Tem Healy said now is a good time to bid out everything across the board, not just in this department.

Council Member Shuttleworth said volunteer groups can work on some of the beautification projects to save the Town money so taxes don't have to be raised.

For 630-Beach Maintenance, the total proposed budget is \$923,791, a decrease of \$159,875 from the current fiscal year. Takeaway points were:

- Replacement of Broyhill Can Machine \$Debt Service
- Campsite repairs \$3,000
- Toilet paper and chemicals \$5,000
- Parking lot improvements \$10,000
- Misc. improvements/repairs \$25,000

Council Member Shuttleworth asked about a \$35,000 bill from New Hanover County for inlet dredging. He said he thought the shallow draft inlet fund was supposed to be paying for this. There was some confusion about exactly what this bill is for. Mayor Pierce said Town staff needs to find out why we're getting a bill, why it's going up, and who else is paying.

For 900-Stormwater, the total proposed budget is \$1,427,784, a decrease of \$640,691 from the current fiscal year. Takeaway points were:

- Pump Servicing and Maintenance Contracts (Lake, Greenville, Texas) \$20,000
- Marina Outfalls Backflow Valves \$30,000
- Stormwater Repairs to Alleviate Drainage Issues \$80,000
- Canal Drive Feasibility Study \$66,000
- Greenville Pumpstation Generator (Not Performed in CY Budget) \$125,000
- Replacement of Stormwater Service Truck \$40,000
- Dedicated Auxiliary Pump for Texas/Snapper Pumpstation \$65,000

Mr. Stanberry said the strategic budget goals for FY 20/21 are:

- Budget goal: to reduce expenditures where possible, while providing for the health, safety, and welfare of the Township.
- To provide for safe, attractive, and clean facilities, beach strand, and roadways, management of solid waste, and stormwater management for the Town.
- The goal for the upcoming year is to improve customer response and satisfaction, reduce the occurrences of preventable flooding, continued improvement of building permit review turnover.
- Continue efforts to improve the aesthetic qualities of the Town in an economically viable manner.
- Thank you to Council for their continual support, year after year, and for their efforts to champion Public Works staff for their dedicated service to our community.

PARKS & RECREATION

Public Works Director Eric Jelinski presented the budget proposal for Parks & Recreation. He went over the current organization chart, which contains 6 full-time employees, 2 part-time year-round employees, and 3 part-time seasonal employees.

Accomplishments for FY 19/20 were:

- Continued increase in Recreation Center memberships and program participation
- As of February 2020, department revenue was up YTD from FY 18/19 (pre-COVID-19)
- Recapture rate of roughly 28% of overall budget
- Installed over 90 new LED sports light fixtures at Mike Chappell Park
- Received rebates of \$19,400 from Duke Energy
- Installed new beach wheelchair storage
- Installed new ballfield equipment shed at Mike Chappell Park
- Replaced unsafe fencing at Mike Chappell Park
- Renovated turf on sports fields at Mike Chappell Park
- Replaced unsafe playground equipment at McDonald Park (community build)
- Installed light-duty vehicle and pedestrian bridge at Joseph Ryder Lewis Jr. Park
- Repaired leaking roof in Recreation Center and currently patching water-damaged insulation

The total proposed budget is \$950,711, a decrease of 4.7% from the current fiscal year.

Takeaway points were:

- Resurface tennis/pickleball courts with polyester fabric \$25,000
- New bathroom on south side of Mike Chappell Park \$60,000
- New storage building at Mike Chappell Park \$15,000
- New youth flag football program \$10,000 (revenue-generating)

Mr. Jelinski said Parks & Recreation is considering applying for a matching LWCF grant for a new playground at Lake Park. The grant application deadline is July 1 for award in fall 2020. The grant would provide half the cost, and the Town would need to match the other half. The playground is not in the proposed budget. If the grant is awarded, the Town could revisit the decision to accept and move forward with the project. The playground was one of the most requested amenities from the Lake Park master plan process. The consensus of Council was to move forward with applying for the grant. Council also requested a detailed plan for the total cost of the project.

Mayor Pierce asked Mr. Jelinski to look into fundraising efforts to help cover the cost of the playground and other projects.

Council Member Garza asked Mr. Jelinski to come up with a plan for the farmers' market, which is scheduled to open for the season on May 16. Mayor Pierce said she would encourage him to plan to move forward with that event as scheduled.

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Planning & Development Director Jeremy Hardison presented the budget proposal for Planning & Development. He went over the current organization chart, which contains 8 employees. The proposal moving forward would be for a staff of 7 after reorganizing some duties.

The total proposed budget is \$626,235, a decrease of 29% from the current fiscal year.

Council Member Shuttleworth pointed out that much of that savings was due to moving Assistant Manager Ed Parvin out of Planning & Development and into Administration, so it was not money that the Town was saving overall.

Mr. Hardison reviewed statistics for permits, new businesses, expansions, and upcoming projects.

Highlights and accomplishments for FY 19/20 were:

- Increased public and golf cart parking spaces
- New website
- Published and managed GIS Viewer
- Completed Watershed Management Plan
- Public portal
- Cityworks
- CAMA static line exception reauthorization
- Pigs are allowed
- Clarified that thongs are allowed

Planning goals for FY 20/21 are:

- Complete Land Use Plan
- Grants for flood mitigation
- Joint Land Use Study implementation
- Buildout
- Workshops
- Short-term rental registration program
- Reduce flood insurance premiums

Mayor Pierce asked about the short-term rental registration program. Mr. Hardison the plan was for it to come before Council within the next few months.

ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Oakley presented the budget proposal for Administration, which includes Executive, Legislative, Clerk, Human Resources, Finance, Marina, and Parking. He went over the current organization chart, which contains 13 positions, including a Human Resources intern.

The total proposed Non-Departmental budget is \$394,406, a decrease of \$22,934 from the current fiscal year. The takeaway point is:

- Covers nonprofits, CBP3, Wave, and other similar expenses

Mr. Oakley said the allocation to most nonprofits had been cut in half.

The total proposed Debt Service budget is \$861,961, a decrease of \$15,250 from the current fiscal year. Takeaway points are:

- Refinancing of loans reduced FY 20/21 debt by \$14,265; \$62,927 over the life of the loans

- Two loans mature in FY 20/21: burial of power lines and fire boat
- Two new loans included for FY 20/21: Knuckleboom and Can Machine

The total proposed Legislative Maintenance budget is \$262,199, a decrease of \$393,560 from the current fiscal year. Takeaway points are:

- Decrease travel and training expense
- Enhance automation

The total proposed Executive budget is \$1,218,830, an increase of \$60,175 from the current fiscal year. Takeaway points are:

- Manages parking, MOTSU, IT, all departments, project/grants, room occupancy tax, marina, public information, and customer services/relations
- Expanded from 3 full-time staff to 5 full-time staff over the past 2 budget years

The total proposed Clerk budget is \$160,322, a decrease of \$11,486 from the current fiscal year. Takeaway points are:

- Reduced cost of meeting management and live streaming by \$6,000
- Reduced cost of document storage by \$12,080
- Continued progression with innovation in meeting management

The total proposed Finance budget is \$403,370, an increase of \$22,041 from the current fiscal year. The takeaway point is:

- Decrease in costs and continued enhancements in efficiency

Council Member Barbee asked about studying ideas from other places regarding how to best handle online bill payment to make sure the Town is maximizing its use of technology.

The total proposed Human Resources budget is \$499,939, an increase of \$57,018 from the current fiscal year. Takeaway points are:

- Utilize MPA fellow to assist staff in program management \$15,000
- Increase in retiree Medicare health insurance expense
- Implementation of various COVID-19 emergency FMLA policies and provisions

Council Member Shuttleworth wants to see automation with payroll and the employee time clock. He said handwritten timecards are outdated and leave room for error. Mayor Pierce asked for the next Council meeting to include an item about putting out an RFP for an efficiency study by a third party.

Council Member Garza asked Town staff to look back at numbers from the last recession to see what the pattern was for the years after. He then left for a previously scheduled appointment.

The total proposed Marina budget is \$99,282, an increase of \$65,145 from the current fiscal year. Takeaway points are:

- Establishing new marina management program
- Increased costs for repairs and utilities

Council Member Shuttleworth questioned whether it was necessary to expand the marina management position, which has previously been contracted, into a full-time Town position.

The total proposed Parking budget is \$379,024, an increase of \$29,374 from the current fiscal year. Takeaway points are:

- Costs split with Beach Management account
- Added two new lots
- Pay by app and pay by phone options added

3. NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Council Member Barbee asked if committee meetings would go on in May. Mayor Pierce she would rather hold off in May until staff comes back. Other Council members said they agreed. Council Member Barbee said there should not be committee meetings while Town Hall is closed.

Council Member Barbee asked whether marina fees would go back to normal in May. Mr. Parvin said they are allowed to go out on charters, so it was the consensus of Council to charge normal fees for May.

Council Member Barbee asked for clarification about the vacant lot north of the gazebo. He wanted to know if it was for Boardwalk employees or patrons. Mr. Parvin said the intent was for employees and patrons to use the lot when going to local businesses but not for going to the beach.

Council Member Barbee asked why some parking spaces on Carolina Beach Avenue North were bagged. Mr. Parvin said he would look into it.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Pierce made a motion to adjourn at 2:00 PM. Motion passed unanimously.