



BOARD OF ALDERMEN BUDGET RETREAT #2

Wednesday, April 16, 2025 at 9:00 AM

Landis Board Room

MINUTES

PLEASE SILENCE ALL CELL PHONES

Present: Mayor Meredith Smith, Mayor Pro-Tem Ashley Stewart, Alderman Ryan Nelms, Alderman Tony Corriher, Alderman Darrell Overcash

Staff Present: Town Manager Michael Ambrose, Human Resources Director/Town Clerk Madison Stegall, Deputy Town Clerk Maddalyn Shuffler, Parks and Recreation Director Jessica St. Martin, Public Works Director Blake Abernathy

1. INTRODUCTION:

1.1 Call Meeting to Order

Mayor Meredith Smith Called the meeting to order at 9:00AM.

1.2 Welcome

Mayor Smith welcomed those in attendance.

1.3 Adoption of Agenda

ACTION: A MOTION WAS MADE TO ADOPT THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED.

Moved by: Ashley Stewart, seconded by Darrell Overcash

Motion Passed: 4-0

Voting For: Ashley Stewart, Ryan Nelms, Tony Corriher, Darrell Overcash

2. PRESENTATIONS:

2.1 Consider Discussion of the Results from the Raftelis Wastewater Wholesale Study (Project 25-51)

Town Manager Michael Ambrose presented the results of the Raftelis Wastewater Wholesale Study. He explained that the Town of Landis currently receives sewer treatment from the City of Salisbury under an agreement dated July 20, 1983, which was updated in 1986 and 1991. The current rate is \$6.07 per 1,000 gallons of treated sewer.

Manager Ambrose stated that a study conducted by Raftelis compared rates of nearby municipalities and found that Salisbury's rate was at the higher end. The study recommended reducing the rate to \$5.39 per 1,000 gallons based on operations and maintenance costs and capital investment for 2 million

gallons per day capacity. He noted that Landis only uses about 400,000 gallons per day, so the rate could potentially be even lower at \$3.91 per 1,000 gallons for 1 million gallons per day capacity. Mayor Smith provided additional context at previous meetings with Salisbury officials regarding the sewer rates. She explained that Salisbury was unwilling to adjust their rates or provide specifics on future capacity charges when asked. This has led Landis to explore other options, including working with Kannapolis on developing a system. Mayor Smith expressed frustration that Salisbury uses the same rate study system (Raftelis) but was unwilling to run the numbers for Landis specifically when requested. She noted that unlike other municipalities served by Salisbury, Landis maintains its own sewer lines but pays the same rate. Mayor Smith emphasized the importance of having capacity for future growth and the challenges of negotiating with Salisbury given the lack of transparency. She mentioned exploring the idea of a regional water/sewer board to give Landis more of a voice in decisions. Manager Ambrose added that the feasibility study for a wastewater treatment facility for Landis is nearing completion, with an estimated 50-month lead time if pursued. The board discussed the need to have a short-term plan in place with Salisbury while exploring long-term options, given the current contract expires in December 2025. Mayor Smith stated she would not support anything longer than a 5-year term, preferring a 2–3-year agreement with the option to renew. The board unanimously agreed with Mayor Smith’s proposed renewal terms.

2.2 Scott Shelton and Rod Crider - Rowan County EDC

Scott Shelton and Rod Crider from the Rowan County Economic Development Commission (EDC) provided an update on their activities.

Mr. Crider outlined the EDC's three main objectives: growing existing businesses, attracting new businesses, and ensuring Rowan County is competitive for new opportunities. He presented data on job creation, capital investment, and wage goals for the past year and five-year period.

Notable accomplishments highlighted included:

- 276 new jobs created (against a goal of 500)
- \$41 million in new capital investment (against a goal of \$70 million)
- Average wages of \$24.81/hour for new jobs

Mr. Crider discussed several major project wins over the past 5 years, including Macy's, Chewy, and Hexagon Agility. He noted that about two-thirds of leads received result in proposal submissions.

Mr. Shelton provided details on recent project submissions for Landis, particularly related to the new Landis Ridge Industrial Park. He highlighted the types of industries showing interest, including electrical components, automotive, logistics, and medical device manufacturing.

The EDC representatives discussed their focus on existing business growth, including regular company visits, manufacturing network meetings, and workforce development initiatives. They also outlined product development activities across the county to create more available sites and buildings for prospective companies.

Challenges mentioned included infrastructure needs, housing availability, childcare, and transportation. The EDC emphasized the importance of maintaining a business-friendly environment and continuing to support growth.

Mayor Smith and the board thanked the EDC for their work and discussed potential collaboration on addressing railroad crossing needs in Landis to improve access for industrial sites.

Mayor Smith requested a 10-minute recess.

ACTION: A MOTION WAS MADE FOR A RECESS AT 9:53 AM.

Motion Moved by Darrell Overcash, seconded by Ashley Stewart

Motion Passed: 4-0

Voting For: Ashley Stewart, Ryan Nelms, Tony Corriher, Darrell Overcash

ACTION: A MOTION WAS MADE TO COME OUT OF RECESS AT 10:02 AM.

Motion Moved by Darrell Overcash, seconded by Ashley Stewart

Motion Passed: 4-0

Voting For: Ashley Stewart, Ryan Nelms, Tony Corriher, Darrell Overcash

2.3 Public Works - Public Works Director Blake Abernathy

Public Works Director Blake Abernathy provided a brief overview of the accomplishments of the Public Works and Utility Billing Departments for Fiscal Year 2025. Highlights included the implementation of inventory management systems across all departments; transitioning commercial vehicle inspections and CDL certifications in-house; securing electric service for Building 2 at Landis Ridge; increasing substation capacity from 11 MW to 14 MW; completing water and sewer line extensions to support new developments; and obtaining permits to expand lift station capacity.

Director Abernathy also outlined the department's projected needs for the next four fiscal years. For Fiscal Year 2026, he requested funding for several key pieces of equipment to support operational efficiency, including a Material Handler Bucket Truck for \$298,944, a 4-Drum Pulling Rig for \$182,424, a Bull Wheel Tensioner for \$67,725, a Bobcat T86 Compact Track Loader for \$136,059, a ¾ Ton Service Pickup Truck for \$59,000, a CAT 308CR Excavator for \$174,000, a Tandem Axle Dump Truck for \$149,900, a Deck-Over Trailer for \$20,000, and a 12-foot Shoring Box for \$15,000. Looking ahead to Fiscal Year 2027, Director Abernathy identified larger infrastructure and system-wide needs. These included a new Garbage Truck for \$235,000, construction of a 33 MW Substation for \$4,100,000, a GIS Mapping Study for electric and water utilities for \$200,000, Tie Deliveries #2 and #3 for \$500,000, Gate Valve Installations for system isolation for \$5,000,000, the addition of two Elevated Storage Tanks for \$6,000,000, completion of the North Chapel Street Sewer Line Extension for \$1,600,000, and a Stormwater AIA Study for \$1,500,000.

For Fiscal Year 2028, the department's focus shifts to further electric, wastewater, and stormwater improvements. Requested items include a 12 kV Conversion on the northwest side of town for \$1,000,000, a Sewer and Stormwater GIS Mapping Study for \$200,000, building or reconductoring the line to the Wastewater Treatment Facility for \$500,000, removal of Lift Stations 6 and 7 with a sewer connection to the sub-regional lift station in Irish Creek for \$250,000, a Pack Arm Truck for \$220,000, a Directional Boring Rig for \$180,000, and a major capital investment in a new Wastewater Treatment Facility for \$25,000,000. Additionally, he proposed redesigning the Town's dump site at a cost of \$150,000.

Director Abernathy explained that the requested equipment is essential for bringing more utility work in-house, which would reduce reliance on contractors, lower overall costs, and improve response times for repairs. He also noted that having this equipment would support employee retention by providing staff with opportunities to engage in more varied and skilled work. During the discussion, the Board considered the potential benefits of leasing some of the equipment instead of purchasing it outright. They also requested a comprehensive inventory of the Town's current vehicles, including their ages, to better assess and prioritize future replacement needs.

2.4 Parks & Recreation - Parks & Rec Director Jessica St. Martin

Parks & Recreation Director Jessica St. Martin presented an overview of the department's accomplishments for the current year, as well as its future needs. Key achievements included the installation of mini-split HVAC units in the cabins at Lake Corriher Wilderness Park, renovation of the boardwalk leading to the park office, resurfacing of the pool deck, and vegetation removal from Lake Landis Dam. Additionally, the department successfully hosted three-disc golf tournaments and implemented the Clover payment system at both the pool and the park to streamline transactions and improve customer service.

Looking ahead to Fiscal Year 2026, Director St. Martin outlined several major funding requests. These include a Campground Shower house for \$90,000, \$15,000 for landscaping at the entrance to Kimball Road Park, fencing around the playground at Lake Corriher Wilderness Park for \$8,500, \$100,000 for the installation of automatic entrance gates at the park office, campgrounds, and pool, and \$15,000 for new pool awnings to enhance visitor comfort. Additional requests include \$5,000 for updated trash cans throughout the park system and \$16,000 to replace an aging ATV/UTV used for park operations. For Fiscal Year 2027, proposed investments focus on enhancing visitor amenities and maintaining recreational infrastructure. Requests include \$15,500 for new patio furniture at the park office, \$12,000 for a new lawn mower, and \$80,000 to resurface the community pool. The department is also seeking \$25,000 to develop a dog park and \$90,000 to construct four new picnic shelters, expanding capacity for outdoor gatherings and events.

In Fiscal Year 2028, the department plans to further invest in facilities and equipment. Requests include \$250,000 for the construction of a new community building, \$25,000 for a custom commercial pool cover to extend the life of the pool, and \$8,500 for an events trailer to support mobile programming. Additional funding needs include \$40,000 for a new parks truck and \$20,000 to revitalize Linn Field, including the installation of new bathrooms and dugouts.

Looking further ahead to Fiscal Year 2029, the department proposes a \$300,000 investment to revitalize the South Beaver Playground and Shelter Area. This project would include refreshing the existing shelter, relocating the playground for improved access and safety, and adding a multi-sport court that accommodates tennis, pickleball, and basketball.

During the discussion, the Board considered the possibility of moving up the timeline for resurfacing the pool, which is currently scheduled for Fiscal Year 2027. Board Members also explored the idea of redesigning the entire pool area to enhance its appeal and functionality. This could include the addition of a splash pad and new picnic shelters, creating a more family-friendly and versatile recreational space for the community. The Board expressed interest in gathering community input regarding the plans for South Beaver Street Park and discussed the possibility of holding a neighborhood meeting at the location to engage residents. Additionally, Director St. Martin highlighted the importance of maintaining certain properties as recreational spaces due to requirements from past grant funding which includes South Beaver Street Park, Lake Corriher Wilderness Park, and a section of the pool property. Mayor Smith suggested that the Board take a field trip to visit some of the proposed project areas in person before finalizing budget decisions, ensuring that all perspectives are considered.

3. CLOSING:

3.1 Motion to Adjourn

ACTION: A MOTION WAS MADE TO AJOURN AT 11:49 AM.

Motion Moved by Ashley Stewart, seconded by Darrell Overcash

Motion Passed: 4-0

Voting For: Ashley Stewart, Ryan Nelms, Tony Corriher, Darrell Overcash

Respectfully Submitted,

Madison T. Stegall, Town Clerk