



**Town of North Topsail Beach
Board of Aldermen Budget Workshop**

**Wednesday, April 08, 2026, at 9:00 AM
Town Hall - 2008 Loggerhead Court, North Topsail Beach, NC 28460
(910) 328-1349 | www.northtopsailbeachnc.gov**

*Mayor - Richard Grant
Alderman - Kip Malcolm
Alderman - Larry Strother
Town Manager – E.L. Faison*

*Mayor Pro Tem - Connie Pletl
Alderman - Mark Barefoot
Alderman - Laura Olszewski
Town Clerk – Alexis Stanfield*

I. Call to Order

Mayor Grant called the meeting to order at 9:00AM.

II. Overview of Principles and Assumptions

Manager Faison reviewed the agenda for the Board and confirmed that Doug Carters of DEC Associates would be attending the meeting at 11:00AM. Wayne Johannessen, Finance Director, review the different tax rates the budget options presented were formulated with. One of the presented budget options included was a revenue neutral tax rate. Manager Faison reviewed the sales tax revenue projection and the ad valorem tax projection. He vocalized to the Board that ad valorem revenue is better for the Town. Furthermore, he stated that private tax rates would have marginal impacts on sale tax receipts. Onslow County and the City of Jacksonville’s rates will have the largest impact.

III. Department Budgets

Governing Body

The Board of Aldermen 2026-2027 budget was reviewed first. The budget saw a decrease in the Professional Services line and a small increase in the training, travel, and supply line. The Board gave a consensus of approval.

Administration Department

The Administration Budget saw a \$400,000.00 reduction under the Contracted Services line. The Accounts Payable Administrator position that is currently being contracted out was added as a permanent position. Alderman Olszewski recommended making the receptionist position permanent as well. MPT Pletl reminded Board members that the hiring and fire of positions, including creating positions from temporary roles, is under the purview of the manager. The Board gave a consensus of approval.

IT Department

Ricky Schwisow, IT Director, presented his budget. Alderman Olszewski asked questions regarding website contracts and updates associated with the website. Schwisow addressed the Alderman's question, stating the website is updated every five years including this year. The IT budget saw a significant increase in the Phone and Internet budget line. Schwisow explained that the Town simplified the budget by routing all Phone and Internet funds through the IT budget rather than having a Phone and Internet line in each department budget. The Board gave a consensus of approval.

Planning Department

Deb Hill, Planning Director, presented the Planning Department budget. Hill reported the only change in her budget was a \$11,000.00 increase to the salary line for future staff reclassification. The Board gave a consensus of approval.

Permitting Department

Deb Hill, Planning Director, presented the Permitting Department budget in lieu of the Building Administrator position being vacant. Hill reported that the Permitting Department budget saw a small increase under the Training, Salary, and Dues and Subscriptions budget lines. The Board gave a consensus of approval.

Building and Grounds

Chris Huckaby, Public Works Director, reported that \$50,000.00 had been added to the budget to repair the Town Hall deck. The Board, manager, and Huckaby engaged in conversations regarding which fiscal year the deck work was supposed to have begun.

Insurance

Wayne Johannessen, Finance Director, reported the insurance budget was increased by ten percent (10%) to account for any increases. Insurance costs have not been released to the Town at this time.

Police

Andrew Page, Interim Chief of Police, presented the Police Department Budget. Page reported there was a \$13,600 increase to the employee training line and a \$52,000.00 increase to the salary line in the budget. Page explained the increases are an effort to make officers' salaries more competitive and encourage them to continue their education.

Public Works

Chris Huckaby, Public Works Director, reported the salary line in the budget increased by \$12,851.00. He requested the Board include in his budget an additional \$8,000.00 for gas, \$3,000.00 for departmental supplies, and an additional \$1,000.00 for tires. Huckaby also recommended the Public Works Department budget for the purchase of two vehicles.

DEC ASSOCIATES

Doug Carter and Dilan Gangopadhyay of DEC Associates spoke to the Board about the Fund Balance and beach projects. Carter reported that seventy-three percent (73%) of the General Fund costs are from the beaches. Carter explained that the cost of the current proposed projects would be more than the General Fund has. Carter reported that without significant third-party help, the Town would not be able to afford the projects. The best way for the Town to move forward on beach renourishment project at this time would be to have on-going projects paid over years through installments. The Board discussed the option of the Town proceeding with smaller projects that were more affordable for the Town but would have the same result as one large project.

PUBLIC WORKS

Chris Huckaby, Public Works Director, answered questions regarding the Public Works budget from the Board. Mayor Grant questioned funds that were added via budget amendment. Huckaby reported that funds were added for the streetlights, parking lot striping, and five crosswalks. Alderman Barefoot vocalized that he felt the price of the crosswalks was high and requested more background information regarding those quotes. The Board recommended reaching out to the County to see if they could provide some funding for crosswalks in County-owned beach access areas and to have staff apply for grants. Huckaby reviewed the Capital Outlay budget line for the Board.

SANITATION

Staff reported the main adjustment to the Sanitation budget was to accommodate the base request for carts.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Chris Huckaby, Public Works Director, reported the budget included \$30,000.00 for park maintenance and \$55,000.00 for the dock and boardwalks.

FIRE

Jarrett Harley, Fire Captain, presented the Fire budget to the Board. Harley reported on the full time and part time salary line item, which increased by \$58,600.00 and \$4,800.00 respectively. The Capital Outlay line increased from \$22,000.00 to \$1 million. This amount includes a rescue boat (\$400,000.00) and ladder truck (\$600,000.00). The Board vocalized that they would not approve a \$1 million Capital Outlay budget line. Staff reported that the funds would not be spent but put in a reserve for a different fiscal year when they can pay the full amount. The Board requested the \$1 million budget line be removed.

FUND 10

It was agreed that Fund 10 would be redone after the meeting to accommodate the revenue and rate changes. The rates presented to the board were \$.43, \$.40, and \$.36. These rates included the revenue neutral rate. Alderman Olszewski requested staff review alternative measures to generate revenue outside of property taxes. MPT Pletl vocalized she would not approve a budget with a rate over \$.30.

IV. Budget Calendar

The Board of Aldermen discussed the addition of budget meetings before adopting next fiscal year's budget. The Board agreed to hold a budget work session at the end of the regular meeting on May 13, 2026, and a final meeting on June 24, 2026, at 9:00AM to adopt the budget. This will be presented as a change in the regular schedule on the May 13th regular meeting agenda.

V. Adjournment