

SHALLOTTE BOARD OF ALDERMEN

RECESSED MEETING

January 20, 2026

3:00 P.M.

The Shallotte Board of Aldermen met for a recessed meeting on January 20, 2026 at 3:00 p.m. in the meeting chambers located at 110 Cheers Street with Mayor Art Dornfeld presiding.

Aldermen present: Gene Vasile, Bobby Williamson, Larry Harrelson, Karmen Custer and Jimmy Bellamy (3:19)

Staff present: Mimi Gaither, Robert Waring, Natalie Goins, Isaac Norris, Adam Stanley, Paul Dunwell, Dan Formyduval, Megan Bellamy, Ashley White and Robert Gravino.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Dornfeld called the meeting to order. A motion was made by Gene Vasile seconded by Karmen Custer to open the meeting. Motion carried 4 yes 0 no.

II. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Mayor Dornfeld asked if any member of the Board had a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest with regard to any item on the agenda. None identified.

III. AGENDA AMENDMENTS & APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Gene Vasile seconded by Bobby Williamson to approve the agenda as submitted. Motion carried 4 yes 0 no.

IV. POLICE DEPARTMENT AWARDS

Police Chief Adam Stanley presented the 2025 Volunteer of the Year award to Sally June Kuka and the 2025 Officer of the Year award to Detective Heather Newman.

V. TOWN HALL COMPLEX PRESENTATION

Rusty Miller, Project Manager with Creech & Associates, began the PowerPoint presentation of the municipal complex project summary. He explained the process that began in 2023 with a space needs assessment and forecasting to determine the future needs of the Town. He presented three design options that were considered and detailed the layout of the final, cost-savings 2.5 design.

David Bollenbacher, Regional Vice President for Samet Corporation's Wilmington office, highlighted the company's values, emphasizing accountability. He explained the Construction Manager at Risk (CM@R) project delivery method and its advantages over traditional bidding. The CM@R process involves collaboration with stakeholders to design, price, and schedule the project collectively. He also clarified the concept of a guaranteed maximum price, ensuring no additional charges.

Jason Lovelace, Preconstruction Project Executive for Samet, outlined the design development phase, explaining that they have enough information to create an accurate budget with floor plans and department layouts. He presented a \$17.4 million budget with \$780,000 in contingency. He emphasized active outreach to engage small local subcontractors.

Roger Morrell, Senior Project Manager with Samet, noted his role for the project would be to protect the budget, protect the schedule, and maintain a relationship with the board members. He reaffirmed the importance of involving local trade partners as well as student involvement.

(A copy of presentation is attached to and made part of these minutes)

VI. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

The Town Hall Complex presentation team addressed numerous questions and concerns of the Board, including the following:

- Square footage per floor of the 2.5 option: Approximately 10,000 sq. ft. per floor.
- Population growth projections and potential impact on space needs: The design allows for future expansion if needed.
- Property size: The site plan consists of 2 acres total and includes 19 parking spaces.
- Construction timeline: Estimated 16-18 months following permitting.
- Percentage of currently unoccupied space and alignment with staffing projections: Growth rates vary by department with designated space for future expansion.
- Square footage cost: \$599 per square foot, reflecting hardened structure requirements.
- Geothermal options: Not currently considered for this project; would require soil analysis.
- Definition of “site furnishings”: Code compliance items like benches and trash receptacles.

VII. BREAK

The Board took a 10-minute break.

VIII. FINANCIAL DISCUSSION

Town Manager Mimi Gaither reviewed the town’s fiscal history (2014–2025), noting property valuations increased from \$653 million in 2016 to \$1.1 billion in 2023, while the tax rate was reduced from 35 cents to 29 cents. She reported fund balance growth overall, explaining that years without growth coincided with major capital expenditures, including property acquisition, Riverwalk funding, and fire apparatus purchases. She stated that, accounting for these investments, the fund balance has increased each year.

Current town debt consists of USDA loans for the fire station and police department totaling \$884,000. The town’s cash balance is approximately \$11 million, exceeding 100% of the annual budget, reflecting fiscally prudent management. Discussion also included the value of riverfront property and existing buildings that could be sold to offset costs.

IX. NEXT STEPS

A motion was made by Karmen Custer seconded by Gene Vasile to move forward with the town hall complex project and review the contract at the next meeting. Motion carried 5 yes 0 no.

X. PUBLIC UTILITIES – SEWER EXPANSION PLAN

Public Utilities Director Dan Formyduval presented maps identifying areas under construction or with growth potential that may require sewer service. Following discussion, the Board was in agreement for Dan to present the sewer growth plan to Brunswick County to support a request to increase flow capacity.

XI. ADJOURN

A motion was made by Jimmy Bellamy seconded by Karmen Custer to adjourn at 6:06 p.m. Motion carried 5 yes 0 no.

Respectfully submitted,

Natalie Goins,
Town Clerk