



ORIGINAL

**BELVILLE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
BUDGET WORKSHOP MINUTES**

April 13, 2026

Board of Commissioners Present:

Charles Bost, Mayor
Morgan Mehler, Commissioner
Hunter Smith, Commissioner
Lee Alexander, Commissioner
Ryan Merrill, Mayor Pro Tem

Board of Commissioners Absent:

None

Staff Present:

Athina Williams, Town Manager
Sharon Niemann, Town Clerk
Chad Staradumsky, Town Planner
Kerry Wooding, Deputy Finance Officer
Kemmy Goodson, Town CPA
Brenda Williams, Deputy Town Clerk/ Finance Clerk
Greg Bannerman, Grounds Maintenance Supervisor
Brenda Hewlett, Administrative Support Specialist
Richard Trexler, Human Resources/ Finance Clerk
Jace Sanchez, Administrative Assistant
Adrienne Harrington, Planning Consultant
Vince Matthews, Director of Communications
Norwood Blanchard, Town Attorney

Others Present to Address the Board:

Allison Dixon, Belville Elementary School, Principal
Kyle Abrams, Brunswick Family Assistance
Greg Bland, Brunswick Community College Foundation
Allison Crowley, Boys and Girls Club of Southeastern North Carolina
Ann Wilson, YMCA of Southeastern North Carolina
Kamili Anderson and Nan York, NC Rice Festival
Mark Wilde-Ramsing, Representing Belville Rowing

**ITEM #1 – CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE / APPROVAL OF
AGENDA**



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Mayor Charles Bost called the April 13, 2026, BOC Regular Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. A quorum was present. Mayor Charles Bost led the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

ACTION – Commissioner Morgan Mehler **MADE THE MOTION** to approve the Agenda. **VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.**

ITEM #2 – PRESENTATIONS

2a. Donation to Belville Elementary School

Mayor Charles Bost invited principal of Belville Elementary School, Allison Dixon to come forward and asked for a motion to approve Resolution R26-14.

ACTION – Mayor Pro Tem Ryan Merrill **MADE THE MOTION** to approve **R26-14 Resolution by the Belville Board of Commissioners Expressing Thanks and Appreciation to the Teachers and Principal of Belville Elementary School, as we Donate the Proceeds from the Second Annual Belville Classic Charity Golf Tournament. VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.**

Mayor Charles Bost read the Resolution and presented Ms. Allison Dixon with a giant check, and a real check in the amount of \$5,000, the proceeds from the Second Annual Belville Classic Charity Golf Tournament. Ms. Dixon thanked Mayor Bost and the Town for the generous check and promised to follow up to let us know how the funds are spent.

2b. Volunteer Recognition Program, Ashton Locklear

Commissioner Hunter Smith who worked with UNCW intern Ashton Locklear on this program, told the board that Ashton could not be with us tonight, but we have tasked her with creating a program to recognize volunteers for their work in our community, but she will be presenting later this month.

ITEM #3 – 2026/2027 FISCAL YEAR DRAFT BUDGET DISCUSSION

3a. Donation Requests

Mayor Bost asked Town Manager Athina Williams to direct this discussion. Manager Athina Williams clarified that the Donations Requests are under the ‘**DONATIONS**’ tab in your notebooks, and introduced our first presenter is Kyle Abrams, Executive Director of Brunswick Family Assistance.

a1.) Kyle Abrams of **Brunswick Family Assistance** thanked the Town for our past donations and expounded on the mission of Brunswick Family Assistance (BFA), which is



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giving critical assistance to those living in crisis. He elucidated the numbers of people who request assistance, the amount of food distributed, and how BFA has provided money for rental assistance and utilities for those in need. He reminded the board that with rising costs, many families are living from paycheck to paycheck and your investment in BFA will come back fully in the community.

a2.) Greg Bland, Vice President of **Brunswick Community College Foundation** expressed his appreciation for considering the scholarship request. Workforce training includes certification for HVAC, welding, electrical line workers, carpentry, machine technology, OSHA, medical assistance and phlebotomy. Your contributions help strengthen community by helping those in our area get certifications, and those students can then work right here in our community, which helps our economy. Your previous donations have helped our workforce candidates with scholarships, and he enumerated the numbers of students who received certifications. Town Manager Williams thanked Vice President Bland for the OSHA and CPR classes the town has participated in.

a3.) Allison Crowley of **Boys and Girls Club of Southeastern North Carolina** thanked the Town for our past support and described the three after school programs they have in Brunswick County and informed all that last year they started a Summer program at Lincoln Elementary School, which will continue this Summer, and the funds they receive will help with that Summer program. Grants received will be applied to Summer programs i.e., health and wellness, education, leadership, sports and recreation, arts, and workforce readiness. Costs for the summer program are \$3,500 per child.

a4.) Ann Wilson, **YMCA of Southeast North Carolina** elaborated on the programs tied to Brunswick County. Of the 1080 members in the 28451 zip code, 30 percent receive funds through the Pathways program. The YMCA has after school program at Belville Elementary School. Forty-three families rely on after-school care, and twenty-five of those receive financial assistance. Twenty percent of adults report no physical leisure activity and 26% of adults are obese. Need-based residents can access programs at both YMCAs in Wilmington. Every dollar donated will go toward residents here in your zip code.

a5.) Kamili Anderson, of **NC Rice Festival** described the activities of the Rice Festival, whose mission is to celebrate the contributions of the Gullah Geechee people and share the history of rice cultivation with others. Your support helped us to have two stages of performers and speakers at the events. The festival generated a huge amount in tourism for the area. We had over 70 vendors, and 5,000 attendees. The festival is a cultural experience, with dancers,



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storytellers, historians, singers and it receives local, state and national support with visitors from our area, and many from outside the state.

In Summary, Town Manager Athina Williams mentioned that last year our total donations were \$10,000, and the requests this year from these five organizations total \$22,000. We have until June 30th for the Board of Commissioners to decide how we will allocate those funds, and our past donation amounts are in your Budget books.

3b.) Contract Requests

b.1) Kemmy Goodson, CPA

Kemmy Goodson of **Goodson & Taylor, CPAs** presented his contract and reminded the board of his role in accounting support, providing financial statements and payroll taxes, stating that we have been training Kerry Wooding to take over some of his responsibilities, and he is now doing the payroll, and Accounts Payable. Kemmy would like to continue his contract. Kemmy mentioned our goal is to increase Kerry's responsibilities and decrease Mr. Goodson's..

b.2) Mark Wilde-Ramsing, a representative of the **Belville Rowing Club** has been enjoying the Belville Riverwalk along with the rowing club almost daily in this beautiful location. The Club takes pride in providing volunteers to help off-loading during your activities. We would like to continue our contract, our membership is increasing, and we enjoy working with UNCW crew club.

b.3) Town Manager Athina Williams indicated that Barry Johnson of **Johnson Environmental** is the last contract on your list. He was unable to be with us, but he is a long-standing contractor with the Town who provides the Phase II Vegetative Debris Removal and Construction and Demolition Contract in the event of the storm over the past years and has been very successful in helping vet the proposals and selecting contractors. Staff requests that we renew the contract. Mayor Bost asked if the cost is the same. It has gone from \$3,900 last year to \$4,368 this year.

Town Manager suggested that we take a five-minute recess.

ACTION – Mayor Charles Bost **MADE THE MOTION** to take a recess. **VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.**

The previous speakers departed the meeting.



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Mayor Bost called the meeting back to order.

3c.) FY 26-27 Budget Discussion

Town Manager Athina Williams delivered the budget presentation. FY25-26 accomplishments included: various residential and commercial projects, completed drainage study, increased return on investments, explored funding for downtown revitalization project, relocated the municipal operations center. We have nine full-time and six part-time employees. Kemmy will outline the revenues.

FY 26-27 Projected Revenues:

Property Tax	\$	654,000 revenue	.15 cents/100 valuation
Past revenue	\$	12,000	
Ad valorem prev yrs	\$	500	
Sales and use tax	\$	1,100,000	from the state
Powell Bill	\$	57,000	
Beer and Wine	\$	10,000	
Utility Franchise Tx	\$	75,000	
Zoning Fees	\$	12,000	
ABC Board	\$	350,000	
Grants		- tbd -	
Int Earned on Invstmt	\$	15,000	
Miscellaneous	\$	20,000	
Gate Keys	\$	1,500	
Farmers Market	\$	7,500	

Anticipated Revenues \$ 2,314,500 prior to Grants

Mayor Pro Tem Ryan Merrill asked why the DMV figure decreased \$5,000? These amounts are provided by the county, Town Manager Williams will investigate. She estimated 2,100 cars in Belville, and revenue projections are in your budget book, with estimates, should you decide on a car tax.

Commissioner Lee Alexander asked about a couple years that are missing on this page, FY 22/23 and FY19/20. We will add those back in, some columns were reduced to accommodate for the space allowed.

Richard Trexler, Vice Chairperson of the Belville ABC Board, came forward to ascertain the expected revenues from the board, and agreed with the expected revenue amount Kemmy Goodson mentioned earlier, \$350,000. Mayor thanked Joe Henson and Richard Trexler,



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acknowledging that we know the ABC Board is incurring a lot of expenses with the new store, and appreciate that the projected amount has not changed.

Town Manager asked about the tax rate. Our next budget session will be held at 5:00 p.m. on the 28th, so we can review those items before the meeting. Commissioner Morgan Mehler revealed he will not be in attendance.

Planning Consultant Adrienne Harrington explained how the funds from various sources have to be broken down by fiscal year, which can be a little complicated, and elaborated that some funds require us to pay in advance and then be reimbursed, all of which needs to appear in the budget.

Ms. Harrington talked about funding requests that were submitted to Representative Rouzer and explained he will recommend some requests. Our request is specifically for economic development, and we will find out if we make the list in May. Then the recommended requests will have to be approved at the federal level. She detailed how some of our projects have funding for a specific percentage, i.e. 80 percent, and the Town pays the balance. Town Manager Athina Williams explained that dividing the funds into years is complex, as you are not sure how many years the project will take. Some of the funds work on reimbursements, where the Town must pay the contractors and then get reimbursed.

Ms. Harrington mentioned that we have other projects at the park, such as overhauling the playground equipment that will need funding. We may be able to look for PARTF grants, which have an annual cycle. Ms. Harrington would like to have a brainstorming session to see if this is an urgent need, or how long we have to get the funding.

Commissioner Lee Alexander asked for explanation on costs for the 2026-2027 fiscal year. Town Manager Williams illustrated how the recent Multi-use Path took over ten years to complete. We try to divide the funds into the expected number of years to develop these figures.

Mayor Charles Bost, who just attended the School of Government's training, mentioned that the Board needs to be more involved in input, and next year he would like to have a Budget Retreat early, so the Board of Commissioners can help set the vision and priorities, and be more involved in setting our direction and strategic plan.

Action is needed on the following items:



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Town Manager Athina Williams mentioned there are several proposals under the Parks and Recreation section.

- **The Observation Deck** is in need of repairs, which would be estimated at \$50,000, but complete replacement would be \$350,000. Right now, the capacity is no more than 50 people; signage has been placed on the observation deck.
- Moving the amphitheater down closer to the water was an option in the NC State Vision, which may replace the observation deck
- **Erosion study** has several recommendations, including removal of some trees between the parking lot and the rowing club area. Greg Bannerman, Grounds Maintenance Supervisor, addressed the board about removal of 15 trees, estimated at \$9,000 - \$10,000, which could be replaced by shrubbery. Town Manager Athina Williams stated if we do not want to remove the trees, the alternative would be to add a retaining wall, which is very expensive. Estimates are included in your budget book. Greg Bannerman offered to show them the trees, if they can drop by the park.
- **The Larger Playground is in need of repairs.**

Update Website

Town Manager Athina Williams stated the Mayor asked us to look into pricing for a new website. Mayor Bost also mentioned that Websites now need to be ADA compliant. We have been given an extension on compliance. A conservative estimate is \$50,000, but we will get back to you before next meeting. We have a meeting with **civic.com** who develop websites for municipalities, like Burgaw and Whiteville. Town Manager Williams said an audio form of the website has been activated for now, but more changes are needed. Mayor Bost mentioned some of the smaller towns may have to shut down their website.

Finance Software

Town Manager Athina Williams conveyed that the Finance Department desperately needs new software. We currently use CSI, a very old software. We will provide some proposals for that before the next meeting.

Parks and Recreation Presentation

Vince Matthews, Parks and Recreation Board Chairman indicated that Founders Day, Fall Festival & Christmas Festival are our three main festivals, and we have the costs for all the



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events broken down in the Parks and Rec section of your budget books. The events budget amounts to a total of \$34,900. Some of these events get sponsors, however, we include the money in the budget, as we might have to supply funding in advance of receiving the sponsor money. Mr. Matthews stated that we give the money in this budget right back to the community by supplying events free of charge.

Governing Body

These section includes: Planning Board, Parks and Rec Board, Board of Commissioners, Ribbon cuttings, and Donations.

Mayor Bost said that we need to provide training for the Board of Commissioners, some of which will require lodging, he thinks we should allocate \$10,000.

Planning Board

FY2026-2027 Work Plan – Town Planner Chad Staradumsky summarized some of the updates made by the Planning Board this year.

Town Staff is recommending a priority of including funds for an outside consultant to help us with a Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). Our next priorities would be a Future Land Use Map and Comprehensive Plan which we may be able to combine with downtown planning along such as a 2030 or 2045 Vision Plan. Outside consultant estimates are below:

Planning staff are requesting UDO	\$50,000 this year, and \$50,000 next year.
<u>Future requests</u>	
For the Future Land Use Map and Plan	\$45,000 -\$ 60,000 (not asking this year)
2030 or 2045 Vision Plan.	\$25,000 - \$40,000 (not asking this year)

Mayor Bost thinks we need to have a strategic plan, so we can decide where the funds will be spent.

Public Safety

Town Manager Athina Williams relayed that our Budget for Public Safety is small, this covers Animal Control, contracted and security services. The Mayor has been in discussions\about potentially adding a fire department. Should any costs take place in this fiscal year, we should



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add those funds to the budget. The discussion over the fire fees is ongoing, and some funds may need to be supplemented by the Towns.

Capital Outlay

Town Manager -

Please note: We did not include any funds for the future Municipal complex, as we do not have funds available. The Town is debt free and is in good standing, in case we need to get a loan for this. Very conservative estimate would be \$2 Million, but may be well below actual costs.

Commissioner Alexander asked about the \$20,000. Town Manager Athina Williams explained this is budgeted in case we have to get a new server.

Mayor Bost asked about Public Works. Town Manager Williams answered we have not supplied figures for **Administration, Public Works or Parks and Recreation** yet, but will have those done by the next meeting.

Public Works money comes from the Powell Bill, and a portion of this will need to be spent for road improvements before June 30th. The state notifies our Town how much is allocated and has to be spent for the fiscal year. Last year we had \$28,000 to allocate to road repairs.

Town Manager Athina Williams stated that Staff is requesting two strategic planning sessions with the Board, so we can review these figures in detail and make decisions. A calendar invite will be sent for a brief meeting, sometime before the next meeting.

ITEM #4 – RESOLUTION FOR DISPOSAL OF PROPERTY

Town Manager Athina Williams informed the board that we purchased a Town boat back in 2022, and Mayor Bost directed us to sell it. We paid \$15,500 initially, and the boat has been in the repair shop often. We are asking for authorization for a private sale. Mayor Pro Tem Ryan Merrill asked what we are using the boat for. We are not authorized for rescue. We had it just in case we needed to assist anyone at the Riverwalk. The Resolution would also allow us to dispose of mobile homes on Blackwell Road. It allows the Town Manager to sign a contract if the price of less than \$30,000.

Commissioner Hunter Smith asked how we will determine how much we sell it for. We have a list of repairs we have already done, and it needs a new motor. Joe Henson mentioned he may like to put in a bid.



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ACTION – Mayor Pro Tem Ryan Merrill **MADE THE MOTION** to approve **R26-15, RESOLUTION BY THE BELVILLE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS AUTHORIZING THE DISPOSAL OF PROPERTY. VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.**

Town Manager Athina Williams asked the board to let us know if you have anything else you would like us to direct our attention to regarding the Budget..

Mayor Bost asked how we will proceed with the Planning sessions. Ms. Williams will send a poll with possible dates.

Town Manager Athina Williams asked the Board to look under **General Fund** at the tax rate. Mayor Pro Tem Ryan Merrill opined he is not in favor of raising the tax rate. Mayor Bost is not in favor of raising taxes, either.

Next year will be a revaluation year, and limits may be imposed on how much the property tax can change. This is an effort to provide relief for people who are dealing with substantial increases.

Another scenario, without raising taxes is to consider DMV Town registration taxes per car. There is a sheet in the budget book showing estimates for this. The maximum you can charge per car is either \$25 or \$30. Town Manager mentioned that registration can be tied in to branding, with stickers provided. Maximum would be about \$63,000. Discussion ensued. Commissioner Morgan Mehler mentioned that this is an even fee, no matter how much a car is worth, everyone is taxed the same.

ACTION - Commissioner Morgan Mehler **MADE THE MOTION** to adjourn. **VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.**

Minutes taken by Sharon A. Niemann

SIGNED:

Charles Bost, Mayor

ATTEST:

Sharon A. Niemann, Town Clerk

