



**BELVILLE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL BUDGET MEETING MINUTES**

5:00 p.m.

April 28, 2026

Board of Commissioners Present:

Charles Bost, Mayor
Ryan Merrill, Commissioner
Hunter Smith, Commissioner
Lee Alexander, Commissioner

Board of Commissioners Absent:

Morgan Mehler, Commissioner

Staff Present:

Athina Williams, Town Manager
Sharon Niemann, Town Clerk
Norwood Blanchard, Town Attorney
Kerry Wooding, Deputy Finance Officer
Kemmy Goodson, Town CPA
Brenda Williams, Deputy Town Clerk/ Finance Clerk
Vince Matthews, Director of Communications

ITEM #1 – CALL TO ORDER / APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Charles Bost called the BOC Special Meeting to order at 5:00 p.m., welcomed all, a quorum was present.

ITEM #2 – FY2026-27 Budget Discussion

The topic of discussion was the '*No Donations Policy*.' The Town is looking for ways to cut the budget, and one item of consideration is approving a "*No Donations Policy*". After checking with many towns in the area, we discovered that the following do not make Donations:

Town of Navassa, Town of Wrightsville Beach, Town of Shallotte, and Town of Leland. Brunswick County does not donate outside of agreements that they have with certain non-profits for services. The Town has had a "No Donations Policy" in the past (2004), which was shared in the Agenda Packet, and adopted a "*Community Funding and Donations Policy*" in June 2012, which allowed a maximum donation of \$1,500 per applicant.



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Mayor Pro Tem Ryan Merrill asked what we budgeted the previous year, and Town Manager Athina Williams replied, \$10,000. We had five organizations that applied for donations this year. Mayor Pro Tem Merrill suggested we donate half of our normal, which would give \$1,500 to each group that requested a donation. Mayor Charles Bost agreed that we should show no partiality and would like to give them all the same amount. Commissioner Lee Alexander stated perhaps \$1,250 per organization could be equally distributed to the five requesters, which would bring us closer to half the amount. Discussion ensued among the board members.

ACTION – Mayor Pro Tem Ryan Merrill **MADE THE MOTION** to donate \$1,250 to each of the five applicants for the Fiscal Year 2026-2027, a total of \$6,250. The applicants were: Brunswick Family Assistance, Brunswick Community College Foundation, Boys and Girls Club of Southeastern North Carolina, the YMCA of Southeast North Carolina, and the North Carolina Rice Festival. **VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.**

The Board of Commissioners discussed changing the resolution R26-20 Resolution by the Belville Board of Commissioners Approving A “*No Donations Policy*” which will begin July 1st, 2027, for the Fiscal Year 2027-2028, and will continue in perpetuity, or until such time as the Town can afford to give away money.

ACTION – Mayor Pro Tem Ryan Merrill **MADE THE MOTION** to **adopt Resolution R26-20 - Resolution by the Belville Board of Commissioners Approving A “No Donations Policy” which will begin July 1st, 2027, for the Fiscal Year 2027-2028.** **VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.**

Town Manager Athina Williams asked the Board to turn to the **Governing Body tab** for the next budget item. To her knowledge Representative Frank Iler is still working on our bill, to change the charter, so the election figure remains in the budget for now.

The board discussed Parks and Recreation Board, and whether or not they should be paid. We currently pay them \$50 per board member and \$75 for the Chairman, once monthly for the meetings. Mayor Bost discussed that we are one of the only Towns that pay our boards. He opined that the Planning Board must do a lot of technical work, and he thinks they deserve a stipend, as they have to attend classes, make tedious amendments, etc. Discussion ensued among the Board members. They discussed that some of the members of the Parks and Recreation Board are employees of the Town.

Commissioner Hunter Smith wondered if we would have any problem getting board members if we did not pay them. Mayor Bost conveyed that we are trying not to raise taxes, so we are looking for ways to cut costs, and this seems like the solution other towns have come up with. We are also looking to reduce some of our events, which would require fewer hours of their time.



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ACTION – Mayor Charles Bost **MADE THE MOTION** to remove the stipend from the Parks and Recreation Board. **VOTE WAS NOT UNANIMOUS.** Mayor Charles Bost and Commissioner Lee Alexander Voted to remove the Stipend. Commissioner Hunter Smith and Mayor Pro Tem Ryan Merrill Voted not to remove the stipend. **THE ACTION WAS NOT UNANIMOUS, IT HAD A TIE VOTE.** The board will review this item again on another date.

The next budget item is **Administration.** Town Manager Athina Williams stated that Administration is the largest department, Kerry Wooding and I last year reviewed the group health insurance, presented it to the Board, and the Board made the decision to leave the NCLM, which formerly had competitive prices, and we went with Blue Cross and Blue Shield. We are looking into pricing now for the upcoming year.

Kerry Wooding, Deputy Finance Officer, indicated our current invoice for insurance is about \$166,000 per year, we were informed it will increase about 20%. Aging is one of the factors, our broker does not have prices available yet, but we should be able to get some pricing soon. Commissioner Hunter Smith, said this is a normal increase in the industry, and it is good to check other sources and compare them, but all prices are going up. The board tasked the staff with looking into other sources for insurance.

The board looked at the Parks and Recreation budget request.

The board looked at the Planning Department's budget request which includes money for a Unified Development Ordinance which requires some outside consulting and lists the plans that we hope to update in the years ahead. Town Manager Athina Williams calculated the total of the surplus with the changes we made, and announced it is at \$30,250.

The next meeting would be starting soon, so Mayor Bost asked for adjournment.

ACTION – Mayor Charles Bost **MADE THE MOTION** to adjourn the Special Meeting.
VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.

Minutes compiled by Sharon A. Niemann

SIGNED:

Charles Bost, Mayor

ATTEST:

Sharon A. Niemann, Town Clerk