



**BELVILLE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL MEETING**

MINUTES

**BUDGET WORKSHOP
March 21, 2024**

Board of Commissioners Present:

Mike Allen, Mayor
Chuck Bost, Mayor Pro Tem
Ryan Merrill, Commissioner
Morgan Mehler, Commissioner
Hunter Smith, Commissioner

Board of Commissioners Absent:

None

Staff Present:

Athina Williams, Town Manager
Sharon Niemann, Town Clerk
Jim Bucher, Parks and Recreation Director
Kerry Wooding, Deputy Finance Officer
Brenda Hewlett, Administrative Support Specialist
Ian McLeod, Parks and Recreation Assistant
Kemmy Goodson, Town CPA
Jace Sanchez, Administrative Assistant
Kim Cranford, Administrative Support
Robin Spinks, Economic Development Consultant
Adrienne Harrington, Planning Consultant

Others Present to Address the Board:

Teresa Nelson, Brunswick Community College Foundation, Executive Director
Joe Henson, ABC Board Chairman

ITEM # 1 – CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Mike Allen called the Thursday, March 21, 2024, BOC Special Budget Workshop Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Welcomed all, a quorum was present.

ITEM # 2 – INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Allen led the invocation asking for guidance for our Town, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

ITEM #3 – APPROVAL OF AGENDA



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Mayor Allen welcomed all and thanked everyone for attending the Budget Workshop meeting.

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

ITEM #2 – PRESENTATIONS

Town Manager Athina Williams gave a brief presentation of the budget indicating what has been accomplished this year with 8 full-time, 9 part-time employees and outside consultants. This included projected revenues: \$350,000 from ABC Store profits, \$875,000 from sales tax and \$1.7 million from grants. To accomplish our current budget, we would need \$191,000 from the General Fund. She also discussed some figures from NCLM on insurance increases (17.5% increase for property) (6.5% increase for health) and (worker's compensation would decrease by 10%).

Mayor Allen commented that we have about the lowest taxes anywhere and try to be fiscally responsible with the Town funds, taking care of our needs without raising taxes. As we grow, we may need to look at increasing our services (police and fire) so we are taking a look at this.

a. Donation Requests, Resolution and Reports

*1. **Donations** - Teresa Nelson, Brunswick Community College Foundation, Executive Director is requesting a \$4,000 donation. Discussion ensued. Commissioner Ryan Merrill will sustain from the vote, as he works for the college, but mentioned that 90% of the staff give back to the foundation, as it is such a worthwhile cause. The requested donations from all three charities amount to \$9,500, which is more than we initially allotted.*

ACTION - Mayor Mike Allen **MADE THE MOTION** to authorize \$9,500 in donations to fulfill the requests. The vote was **NOT UNANIMOUS**. Mayor Pro Tem Chuck Bost voted 'Nay.' Commissioner Ryan Merrill Sustained. The donation was approved 3 'Yays'; 1 'Nay'; 1 sustained.

ACTION – Mayor Mike Allen **MADE THE MOTION** to give \$4,000 to Brunswick Community College Foundation. **VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.** The other two donation requests will be tabled until the next meeting.

b. Contract Requests

Town Manager Athina Williams presented the Contracts. All three contractors were used in our current budget.

- Accountant – Kemmy Goodson of Goodson & Taylor CPA's
- Debris Contract Administrator – Barry Johnson of Johnson Environmental
- Auditor – Thompson, Price, Scott, Adams & Co., P.A.

ACTION – Mayor Pro Tem Chuck Bost **MADE THE MOTION** to approve all three contracts. **VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.**



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c. Budget Requests –

1. *Parks and Recreation Budget and proposed increase in fees*

Brenda Hewlett, Parks and Recreation Secretary presented the Parks and Recreation Board Budget in the amount of \$22,500. There are four new events this year. Two Senior Fishing Days, a Charity Golf Tournament, and Trunk-or-Treat for Halloween. Last year we had 13 events, and most were self-funded through donations. This year we added \$1000 for meals for those employees or board members working at the events. We held two fundraisers last year, and a trip to Nashville, and solicited donations.

Ian McLeod, Parks and Recreation Assistant gave a brief explanation of RecDesk, our new software, and presented a possible increase in fees spreadsheet. The Board suggested that the fees be simplified, and they would like to see how they compare with other towns before going forward.

ACTION – Mayor Pro Tem Chuck Bost, **MADE THE MOTION** to approve the Parks and Recreation Budget request for \$22,500. **VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.**

d. Economic Impact Analysis / Grants

Robin Spinks, Economic Consultant explained the differences between the figures from 2021 and 2024 Economic Impact Analysis for a proposed mixed-use development in the Future Belville Downtown. This scenario would have retail, a hotel, office and medical offices on the lower level, and residences on the upper level, similar to Mayfaire in Wilmington, N.C. Population is increasing and there is more leakage (folks shopping in Wilmington); while construction costs and real estate costs are consistently increasing.

Planning Consultant, Adrienne Harrington, walked us through a presentation looking at current grant usage and project status, to help with budget expectations. Mayor Allen commented that we have excellent grant writing, which helps us with these large projects,

e. Belville ABC Board Report

ABC Board Chairman, Joe Henson forecasted giving the Town \$350,000 in revenues for next year, but is hoping it will actually be \$384,000. ABC Board is working to build a new store, as rent is increasing.

Mayor Allen thanked Joe Henson and the ABC Board for all they do for the Town.

f. FY 2024-2025 Planning Board Work Plan

Dean St. John, Planning Board Member presented the FY 2024-2025 Work Plan which showed which projects were completed by the Planning Board, and which ones are projected for the upcoming year. Dean has been on the Planning Board six years, and is proud to have members who take the board seriously. Town Manager Athina Williams thanked Mr. St. John and the Planning Board for all they do.

Mayor Mike Allen requested a 10-minute recess.



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ACTION – Mayor Mike Allen **MADE THE MOTION** to recess for 10 minutes. **VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.**

ACTION – Mayor Mike Allen **MADE THE MOTION** to come back into Session. **VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.**

ITEM #3 – 2024/2025 FISCAL YEAR BUDGET DISCUSSION

Town Accountant Kemmy Goodson gave the revenue report of what we have and what revenues we expect to receive for the upcoming fiscal year and reviewed the most recent finance report. We expect property tax revenue to be \$350,000, from our rate of \$.11 per \$100 of valuation, with no proposed property tax increase. \$16,000 from DMV taxes. We expect Sales Tax Revenue of \$876,500, which is our biggest revenue source, \$60,000 from Powell Bill funds; Grant funds expected: WMPO \$14,000 street widening project; \$500,000 PARTF grant funds for the Park and \$93,100 for the stormwater study \$80,000 for the NC133 crossing. State taxes: Beer and Wine \$10,000; utility franchise tax \$75,000; permit and zoning \$13,000; donations about \$8,000; ABC Board \$350,000. Miscellaneous revenues about \$22,100. \$191,000 we will take from Savings; SCIF money from the park, we will move that to the checking account when we need to pay for these items. Mr. Goodson talked about our current Cash balances. We know we have upcoming expenses, so we set aside that money, and also money that we expect, but is not on hand yet.

Town Manager Athina Williams added that we have received some interest on the SCIF money, which will bump up our total, and we will make those changes to review at our next meeting. Town Manager Athina Williams summarized the proposed Expenses. She informed the Commissioners that the numbers in red are question marks for you, and we are asking for your approval/opinion.

Town Manager will change the amount of Donations to \$9,500. She went over the General Administration costs, Public Safety. April 17th is the Fire Fees meeting, but we don't anticipate increases. We are looking into Police and Fire services in the future as we grow, but as of now, we are contracting these services. Public Works has three part-time employees and this category includes expenses for drainage, stormwater, etc.

Town Manager Williams will be adding the new insurance amounts 6.5%, and summarized the departments, and indicated if there are any proposed changes. Discussion ensued. We are setting aside funds for GIS database.

Parks and Recreation Director Jim Bucher described some additions to the 2nd garage which is to be built at the park. This department also includes some money for upgrades to the park. They would like to add a bathroom in the garage since there is not one on this side of the park, which will require a connection to the main line and a pump, a backhoe, and eventually acquire a grinder/wood chipper for debris.

The Board tasked the staff with updating a few revisions in the Budget Books for our next meeting.

ITEM #4 – CLOSING COMMENTS / ADJOURNMENT



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Town Manager Williams thanked all the staff for their help with putting together the Budget Books.

ACTION – Commissioner Ryan Merrill **MADE THE MOTION** to adjourn the meeting. **VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.**

Minutes Compiled by Sharon A. Niemann

SIGNED:

Mike Allen, Mayor

ATTEST:

Sharon A. Niemann, Town Clerk