



**MINUTES OF THE
TOWN COUNCIL 1st BUDGET WORKSHOP
Wednesday, 4/1/20 - 6:00 P.M.
Held Remotely via ZOOM
200 Dover St., Pineville, NC**

The Town Council of the Town of Pineville, NC, met in a Budget Workshop on Wednesday, April 1, 2020 @ 6:00 p.m. The meeting was held remotely utilizing ZOOM. The clerk took the roll call and the following individuals were connected into the meeting:

ATTENDANCE

Mayor: Jack Edwards
Mayor Pro-Tem: Melissa Davis
Council Members: Amelia Stinson Wesley, Les Gladden and Joe Maxim
Town Manager: Ryan Spitzer
Town Clerk: Barbara Monticello
Finance Director: Richard Dixon
Fire Chief, Mike Gerin

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Jack Edwards called the meeting to order at 6:11 p.m. and asked for a motion to open the meeting. Mayor Pro Tem Melissa Davis moved to open the meeting at 6:11 p.m. seconded by Council Member Amelia Stinson-Wesley. There were ayes by all and the meeting was opened.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

A. GENERAL FUND BUDGET

1. **Overview:** (Ryan Spitzer) Town Manager, Ryan Spitzer, gave a general overview of the budget, stating the new Library/Town Hall project was not included in this budget because technically it won't be completed until the next budget cycle. That it when it will be reflected in the budget. He stated that the town would be operating in the red for FY21-22 but then be operating back in the black as of FY23-24. He added that it looked like we would meet our numbers this year even though the occupancy tax & prepared food taxes will decrease because of the Stay at Home Order due to the Coronavirus fallout. He still expected to exceed \$16M in projected revenues with most of the Covid-19 effects being felt in the following year. As of now, however, the town was in good shape but would have to keep a close eye out to see how the occupancy and food taxes pan out over the next few years.
2. **Revenues:** Mr. Spitzer continued, stating that money was taken out for the repairs on Lakewood and Lynwood roads, estimated to cost about \$2.6M, with \$1M of that coming out of Storm Water reserves. He planned this project to be completed in three phases.

The sale of the mill property will be shown in a project budget. The sale of the ladder truck for \$150,000 will be split with ½ going toward this fiscal year and the other half going into next fiscal year. Council Member Joe Maxim asked if there would be any issue in being paid the first \$75,000 due to complications caused by the fallout of the coronavirus. If the purchasing town was hit hard because of it, it may delay or alter payment to the town in some

way. Fire Chief, Mike Gerin, stated he would reach out to the town that is purchasing the truck from us to see if there would be a problem.

Council Member Amelia Stinson-Wesley asked for clarification on a comment made earlier regarding storm water funds. She asked if \$1M came out of that fund for the repairs to Lakewood and Lynwood roads, leaving only \$700,000 in that budget, did Mr. Spitzer feel comfortable with that amount. Mr. Spitzer indicated that he was fine with it.

- 3. Fire Department Budget:** Mr. Spitzer noted a major increase from last year's budget in the Fire Department due to increased travel/training expenses, an increase in the stipend paid to the chief and maintenance of vehicles which increased by \$15,000. He also budgeted \$500,000 to purchase property for a new fire station and a request for \$207,000 worth of equipment which he is reviewing. Mayor Edward asked about the land that Carolina Fire was looking to purchase off of Lancaster Hwy. Chief Gerin stated that the plan fell through. Mayor Pro Tem Melissa Davis asked why the town would purchase more property when we already owned several parcels. Manager Spitzer stated that none of the property the town currently owned was centrally located to place a fire station. He added that the property the fire station was currently on was part of the properties that could be purchased by US Developments after it is vacated. This piece of property was suited for development and in line with US Development's plan to expand downtown commercial development beyond Main St. to College St.

Ms. Davis asked if we were to keep the current fire station on Church St., could we have a satellite station somewhere else. Council Member Les Gladden, speaking as an ex-fire fighter, noted that it would be easier to man one fire station than it would be to man two. Manager Spitzer added that the county was no longer looking to fund Carolina Fire and would most-likely come to Pineville or Charlotte to cover that area. Chief Gerin noted that there were benefits to both a single fire station and multiple ones. He added that the best location for a fire station would be somewhere in the vicinity of Lowry St. to Carolina Place Pkwy.

Mayor Pro Tem Davis asked about the homes in McCullough and existing and planned developments south of the railroad tracks on NC51 and whether the town would be able to find a piece of property for \$500,000? Council Member Gladden stated that it was just a starting point and they would most-likely spend a lot more but they needed to start with something. He added that for those areas they would utilize the mutual aid agreement they had with Flint Hill Fire Department.

Council Member Amelia Stinson-Wesley asked for clarification on the number of radios Chief Gerin was requesting. Chief Gerin stated he needed 25 more at a cost of \$160,000. The department had purchased half the amount they needed in this fiscal year from Motorola but wanted to purchase the remainder that they needed in the coming fiscal year. This will put the department at capacity for the total amount they needed. He continued, stating that the SCBA equipment needed to be replaced and the cost to do that was \$13,000. Additionally, he would like to replace the 30-minute RIT bags with 60-minute ones with an estimated cost of \$2,400 to do that. Three other items, an addition of Edraulics to Squad 8, a Forcible Entry door prop, and a side-by-side (vehicle) completed the list of items he requested.

Council Member Les Gladden, asked Chief Gerin if he thought he could sell any of his old equipment to get money to pay for some of the new equipment, specifically the edraulic equipment. Chief Gerin thought they could possibly but didn't know for sure how much they could get for it. Mayor Pro Tem Davis asked what the side-by-side was for. Chief Gerin responded that since they could not get vehicles down into the greenway, they needed some type of means to go in and get people if there was an emergency and the side-by-side was what he was proposing to do that with. Mr. Spitzer added that a portion of the greenway was expected to be completed by next fiscal year.

Chief Gerin then reviewed his **Performance Initiatives and Goals** from last year. While the EMS Turn Out times remained the same as last year, there was improvement with Fire calls by 5 seconds. The main Community Service event that the fire department participated in was the Read Across America program, providing four fire fighters to assist in this program at Pineville Elementary School. However, a new tool is needed to be put in place to better

track this initiative. The ladder company response fell short of its 75% goal and was only at 63.64%, mostly due to the ladder company being out of service.

The conversation turned towards department goals and a discussion ensued regarding grants. Chief Gerin explained that it was difficult to apply for and get grants due to the competitive nature of the grant programs. Many are intended for small, rural areas with less funds. Some of the federally funded grants require a professional grant-writer to apply because they needed to be done exactly right. Clerk Monticello added that she had attended a grant-writing workshop and discovered the same thing – that they were time-consuming to research, aimed at poorer/more rural areas and were difficult to get because every “t” needed to be crossed and every “i” dotted. She did add, however, that smaller grants offered by independent organizations such as the NCLM, were easier to get.

The fire department’s ISO rating did improve significantly with the last inspection. The department’s rating went from a 5/9S rating to an ISO Class 3 rating. Additionally, Chief Gerin listed all the training that was conducted for his department during this last fiscal year. There was one additional question from Mayor Pro Tem Davis regarding the large increase in the technology line of the budget for the Fire Department. Manager Spitzer stated that the increase was to replace laptops and ipads in the trucks if council chose to replace them.

- 4. 8 Year CIP Projects:** Mr. Spitzer continued with the meeting, discussing the last topic on the agenda – the 8-year CIP. He indicated that the town still had some computers operating on the Windows 7 platform which will not be supported in the near future and will need to be changed out with new computers utilizing Windows 10. Some had already been replaced while others had not and will need to be this year. He added that this would be the last set of computers that needed to be upgraded. Mayor Pro Tem Davis suggested that we stay on top of this issue so that we don’t get behind on it again. Mr. Spitzer stated that we may look into getting laptops that act like desktops but can also be taken home if necessary, especially since currently being under a “Stay at Home Order” due to the spread of the Coronavirus.

Next year will be when we would start the \$2M payment of the new town hall. A total \$19M was budgeted for this project but that figure should decrease. We also expected to receive \$125,000 from a CBDG grant to engineer the sidewalks and the rest to construct them the next year. The town’s match is \$15,000 the first year and the remaining \$35,000 the following year. The \$600,000 that was planned for the railroad Quiet Zone was pushed back until 2022-2023.

Mr. Spitzer continued, stating that we should be replacing 9 police vehicles this year. It would be several thousand dollars cheaper to purchase an unmarked vehicle to be used for speeders. Council Member Gladden requested to talk more about this when Chief Merchant presents his budget. Finance Director, Richard Dixon, added that it costs about \$52,000 to outfit a police vehicle. Council Member Amelia Stinson-Wesley asked if we traded old vehicles in for new ones to which Mr. Spitzer replied that we purchased police vehicles using a state contract to get a discounted price but we did not trade in vehicle but sold them as surplus items on an online government website.

Town Manager Spitzer noted that Enterprise Rentals had a new program out for municipalities that allowed them to lease vehicles. Council Member Gladden stated he knew a firm on Downs Rd. that was utilizing that program and suggested that Mr. Spitzer contact that company to see how they like the program.

In the Public Works Department there are a number of projects such as installing a right-hand turn lane from Lowry St. onto Polk St., doing a mobility study once we receive the funding for it so that we can begin new sidewalks and other mobility plans, and replace the street sweeper with a smaller one at a cost of \$282,500. The smaller truck is for the purpose of getting into and sweeping the alleyways. Some of them are privately maintained, but not all, so we would be responsible for them.

Moving onto to the Culture and Tourism budget, Mr. Spitzer stated that \$118,000 had been budgeted for paving the Belle Johnston Community center parking lot. Additionally, \$58,000 was budgeted for the splash pad to complete it and to provide shade for the seating as parents have complained about how hot it gets out there. Most people would like to see some sort of a “bucket” feature on the splash pad. He stated that council would need to let him know if

they want him to proceed with this project and also if they wanted to keep the park bathrooms open in the winter. If so, they would need to be heated to keep pipes from freezing.

Council Member Joe Maxim asked if there was enough seating and would there be enough shade for all of the seating? Mr. Spitzer replied that there would be two shade features which should be enough to provide shade to all the seating. Council Member Les Gladden asked if the shade feature would be canvas or a hardtop. Mr. Spitzer replied it was canvas but could be taken down in the winter. Council Member Gladden asked Mr. Spitzer to obtain a quote for a hardtop canopy just to compare. If we had to replace the canvas frequently, it may be more cost effective in the long run to go with a hardtop shade feature. Mr. Spitzer agreed to provide a quote to council members. Council Member Gladden was OK with moving forward with completing the Splash Pad.

An additional \$14,000 was budgeted for a storm drainage problem in P&R. Water ponds on the playground by the lake. The engineer firm, LaBella, provided the town with a schematic to alleviate the water from ponding there. Council Member Gladden asked if that was a project that could be done in-house which Mr. Spitzer would check on. Paving of the maintenance building was pushed out to the following year because a new oven/range was needed for the Belle Johnston kitchen, along with replacement of the vinyl floor at the BJCC as well as replacement of the HVAC system at the Hut.

Council Member Stinson-Wesley asked how old the vac truck was. Both Mr. Spitzer and Dixon thought it was about 6 years old. Council Member Gladden asked if just the back part of the truck could be replaced with a smaller unit rather than purchasing an entirely new truck. Mr. Spitzer will investigate the possibility. Mr. Spitzer added that the next roads on the list to be paved were Centrum Parkway, Rodney Street and Park Road extension. Additionally, he would continue to program money into the budget for sidewalks. Fifty thousand dollars was budgeted for a cross-walk by Bucca di Beppo restaurant to connect to the greenway. He added that these would be Project Budgets that would be voted on so that they could track the projects and funds being spent.

Mr. Spitzer continued, stating that a professional company will be hired to obtain R-O-W's from 49 residents pertaining to the Lakeview/Lynwood Lane stormwater project. Both Mayor Pro Tem Davis and Council Member Gladden asked if that was something we could do ourselves to save some money. Mr. Spitzer stated that it was, but there were 49 properties to get R-O-W easements from which was a sizable amount and there were always a few holdouts for more money than the town was willing to pay so it was best to have professionals handle it. They were expecting to payout an estimated \$500 to each homeowner. A total of \$2.6M dollars were budgeted for this project.

The town hall/library project will also be set up as a Project Budget to track. We had committed to a total of \$3.8M dollars for the project which includes demolition of the mill. Any discussion for the telephone and electric departments will be held off until they meet with those departments on April 23, 2020. The \$7.1M in the General Fund matches the 5-year CIP projection. Council Member Gladden asked if we were still a healthy fund balance to which Mr. Spitzer replied that we were. Both Mayor Edwards and Mayor Pro Tem Davis asked to have "read-only" access to the Clear Gov program so they could open up the files and read along with the discussions/presentations. Mr. Spitzer will send an email out to Council with log-on information to gain access to Clear Gov.

Mr. Spitzer provided an update on the situation with Ashley Furniture. They were still open and conducting business. A resident complained about them and the town went over to shut them down. Their lawyer called Mr. Spitzer who referred him to the EOC. Council Member Gladden added that a used car dealer was also open. Mr. Spitzer will have it checked out on Thursday but added that they were allowed to sell cars by appointment only. He was not certain if the county ban would be extended or they would allow it to expire at the end of the month but they were now talking about closing parks. All courts such as basketball, volleyball, tennis courts, etc. have been shut down in an effort to keep people away to reduce the number of people catching the Covid-19 virus. Mr. Spitzer will talk to Chief Merchant to break any games up if they are playing at the courts.

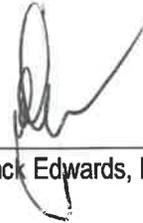
Discussion turned to the number of people in the parks and congregating under the shelters. Mr. Spitzer asked which council members were in favor of shutting them down. Responses were:

- Council Member Les Gladden – close the shelters

- Mayor Pro Tem Melissa Davis – close them
- Council Member Joe Maxim – close them
- Council Member Amelia Stinson-Wesley – close them

The vote was unanimous to close the park shelters. Also, council would like Mr. Spitzer to have Parks and Recreation take down any signs that are on our poles and to be sure all walkers/joggers around the lake are moving in the same direction. Mayor Pro Davis, along with Council Member Stinson-Wesley asked that the tables under the shelters be moved out from under the shelters so that families could still use them but not under the sheltered area.

ADJOURNMENT: At 8:49 p.m. a motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. There were ayes by all and the meeting concluded.



Jack Edwards, Mayor

ATTEST:



Barbara Monticello, Town Clerk

