



**MINUTES OF THE
TOWN COUNCIL 4th BUDGET WORKSHOP
Monday, May 4th, 2020 - 6:00 P.M.
Meeting Held via Zoom
200 Dover St., Pineville, NC**

The Town Council of the Town of Pineville, NC, met in a Budget Workshop on Monday, May 4th, 2020 @ 6:00 p.m. The meeting was held remotely utilizing ZOOM. Those that participated in the meeting were as follows:

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

Also, in attendance were Department Heads: Travis Morgan of Planning & Zoning and Police Chief Rob Merchant and Tammy Watson from the Pineville Police Department.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Jack Edwards called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. Mayor Pro Tem Melissa Davis motioned to begin the meeting, seconded by Council Member Amelia Stinson-Wesley. There were ayes by all and the meeting commenced.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- **911 Dispatch** – Town Manager, Ryan Spitzer, advised they would begin the meeting with 911 Dispatch. Funds of \$55,000 were budgeted for a Radio Maintenance Contract with Harris but \$22,000 of that money was not accounted for, which if not spent, goes into Fund Balance under the Capital Equipment Outlay budget. Money was budgeted for headsets for the Telecommunications Department, as well as new chairs for them. Money was also budgeted for backup Control Stations with Radio ID's to enhance officer safety issues. The question was asked of Chief Merchant when the Radio Maintenance Contract begins. He responded that it begins on July 1st, 2020. The 911 Board allocates a portion of the money to each town and we will probably use it for this contract. Council Member Amelia Stinson-Wesley asked if the money allocated was based on what we spent last year or over the last five years. Tammy Watson responded that it was an aggregate over the last five years.

Mayor Pro Tem Melissa Davis asked if Council was aware of the maintenance agreement. Chief Merchant replied that the first year was free due to all the issues they experienced but going forward we will have to pay for it.

- A. POLICE DEPARTMENT BUDGET:** Town Manager Ryan Spitzer explained the overtime line item of \$90,000 was in general overtime but was pulled down to the overtime line item. There was an equity pay issue with SWAT as they were not paid correctly but we are now going to pay them for being on call as opposed to answering a call. Also, \$9,000 was budgeted specifically for focused traffic speed enforcement. That is the reason why the overtime line item increased from \$15,000 to \$164,000. Council Member Amelia Stinson-Wesley wanted to know if the money that was moved into overtime accounted for the entire 993.33%? Mr. Dixon replied that it did.

Mayor Pro Tem Melissa Davis asked if officers were paid out of the Fall Fest account if they worked that event or the Rockin' and Reelin' events. Finance Director, Richard Dixon, replied that it did. He stated that he wasn't sure about Rockin' and Reeling but he will check on that. Mayor Pro Tem Melissa Davis asked that he be sure it was coming out of the right fund.

Town Manager Ryan Spitzer said money was budgeted for an AC unit for the server room in the Police Department due to overheating in that room with the computer equipment. This comes out of 5100.1500.10 account which is for maintenance and building repair. Chief Merchant stated that there was an AC unit in there but it was old and needed to be replaced. Council Member Les Gladden said the AC unit was about ten years old and asked that a couple more bids for it be obtained as it should only be about \$3500 to \$4500. Council Member Amelia Stinson-Wesley asked that the information be shared with council as well. Manager Spitzer agreed to do so.

- **SPECIAL OPERATIONS:** This budget line increased by \$95,000 and is made up of restricted funds. This money needs to be spent. The Police Department looked into purchasing a Bericat vehicle at about \$250,000. It would be used jointly between three municipalities – Matthews, Mint Hill and Pineville. They also looked into the cost of a robot that would enter rooms with cameras attached to it to check for suspects, weapons, etc. before officers entered the room and got ambushed. Mayor Pro Tem Melissa Davis wanted more information on the Bericat vehicle and asked if it was like a tank or an armored car? Chief Merchant said yes, it is like an armored car with good wheels/tires/protection for officers. Mayor Pro Tem Melissa Davis asked where the vehicle would be stored. Chief Merchant said it would be shared with the other two municipalities and that the cost of the Bericat would also be shared amongst the three municipalities.

Mr. Spitzer continued, stating that under Contract Services, \$26,000 was budgeted for maintenance of the 911 System. There was also a quote in the Clear Gov System for a new camera system.

Mayor Pro Tem Melissa Davis asked for the cost to outfit each police car with equipment for. She had been provided with a total amount but wanted a break down per car. She also requested a list of all the vehicles and their mileage. Manager Spitzer asked her if she was looking for costs per car for all the equipment put into the vehicle minus the cost to install it to which Ms. Davis replied, "yes". Mr. Spitzer then clarified that Council had to look at whether Dependable would continue to install the equipment on the police vehicles or have some other company do it. This was to be discussed further at Council's next meeting.

- **POLICE DEPARTMENT VEHICLES:** Town Manager Ryan Spitzer stated that six new police vehicles were budgeted for next year. Even though there were currently nine cars with over 100,000 miles, only six new ones could be budgeted for the coming year.

Mayor Pro Tem Melissa Davis was concerned because of the revenue that that town stood to lose because of the Stay-at-Home orders and no money coming in from classes, trips and events. She asked if all six cars would be purchased at once or half now and half later. Manager Spitzer said police vehicles were hard to come by being that they were purchased through a co-op with better prices. If the town waited too long, they would likely be gone and we'd run the risk of losing out on getting them. In fiscal year 2023 and 2024 we should only have to purchase two cars because we should be on a schedule by then.

Council Member Les Gladden stated he knew of three detectives' cars that had over 100,000 miles on them but they wouldn't be fully outfitted with equipment so the cost should be less for them. Chief Merchant agreed that if they got six cars, two would go to CID and would not be fully outfitted. Mayor Pro Tem Melissa Davis asked Chief Merchant to send something out to Council on the goals of the Police Department tomorrow. She then asked Chief Merchant if they were actively researching grants. Chief Merchant stated that due to Covid-19, the Governors Grant had been pushed out to October. He stated that they had gotten a traffic grant and were able to get two zero bikes from that grant.

Chief Merchant stated the need for a Capitan's position which the police department did have several years ago but seems to have gone by the wayside. He stated that it's a much-needed position although Mayor Pro Tem Davis reminded the group that there was a reason why the position was eliminated. Chief Merchant stated that he had someone in mind and that of the three lieutenants, one person really stood out to him. Mayor Pro Tem Davis asked

him if the next police chief should be the one to make that decision. In 2013 with the retirement of the previous captain and the subsequent elimination of that position, she was under the impression that was the end of the captain's position. Chief Merchant agreed and stated that had come out of the ISS Study.

Mayor Pro Tem Davis asked if the decision was already made or if all three lieutenants had a shot at it. Chief Merchant replied that they would all have an opportunity to be interviewed. Council member Les Gladden stated that if the chief had someone in mind and was confident about that person in the role of captain, it would be better for him to make the decision now. Council Member Joe Maxim just wanted to be sure that an interview process would take place to which Chief Merchant replied that it would. Council Member Amelia Stinson-Wesley asked when the last time was that they had a captain's position. Chief Merchant advised that it was 2013. He stated that the responsibilities of the captain's position were still being done, only they were being done currently by one of the lieutenants.

- B. PLANNING & ZONING BUDGET:** Town Manager, Ryan Spitzer, noted the goals/objectives and performance measures for Mr. Morgan after which, Mayor Pro Tem Davis asked if he had applied for any grants. She was aware that his planner, Brian Elgort, was working on one but wanted to know if Mr. Morgan was working on any. He responded that he had turned all grant projects over to Brian. The realignment of Johnston Road, a new Mobility Plan and new sidewalks along Sabal Point were all grant-related projects that fell under the Planning & Zoning Department. In order to qualify for the CDBG grant, new sidewalks have to be in the correct "Census" zone and the only area that qualified for this grant was along the road in front of Sabal Point apartments. Mayor Pro Tem Davis commented that the state should have completed the sidewalk there when they redid the bridge.

Manager Spitzer said there was a \$47,000 increase to contract services due to a state mandated request for a comprehensive, time-sensitive plan. Mr. Morgan went on to explain additional Zoning Ordinance updates will be necessary because recent legislation combined chapters 160A and 153A to form Chapter 160D. This will require not only Zoning Ordinance updates but Town code updates as well.

Council Member Les Gladden asked if a request for a Quiet Zone could be put on the Capital Plan to which Mr. Spitzer replied that it was already on there for next year but if Council wanted to move it to this year, they could. Council Member Gladden was fine leaving it where it was.

- C. ADMINISTRATION:** Manager Spitzer moved next to the Administration's Budget beginning with the **Governing Board** stating that the largest and only increase was adding half of the clerk's salary to Council's Budget since much of what she does is for Council.

Next up for discussion was the **Clerk's Budget**, a line item within Administration's Budget. Town Clerk, Barbara Monticello, explained the increase in her budget was due to a request for new recording/agenda management software which would make agenda preparation automated and quicker than doing it totally manually. Changes to the agenda are common and can be numerous during the process of assembling a Council packet but with an automated system, those frequent changes can be done more easily with automated programming. Additionally, the recording software that she had been using was the same since she had started working for the town and never updated. There were newer, better performing recording packages being offered now, some of which are incorporated with the automated agenda software packages. After sitting through 5 or 6 demonstrations, the Clerk was favoring the program offered by MuniCode. Council was in agreement to approve the funds for new, automated recording/agenda management software of up to \$7,000.

The conversation turned to the town's newsletter. Some residents still wanted to receive a hard copy in the mail, particularly those that do not own or wish to use a computer to view it online. However, everyone understood the cost involved in printing and mailing it out so a compromise was worked out. It was agreed upon to do a quarterly newsletter mostly highlighting Parks and Recreation events but also a monthly, one-page stuffer to go in with the Electric bills that contains important news, events and dates to make residents aware of. There should be no impact to the cost of mailing the bills out with the additional 8 ½ X 11 page, per an email from the company that actually stuffs the bills. There is, however, a charge to print the page to be included in the bill.

Before moving on to the Capital Outlay items, Mr. Spitzer pointed out to Council that the Strategic Goals that were set in place at their first Retreat, are what actually drive what the budget is currently reflecting. Those goals reflect items that are hitting the budget and will be reevaluated at their next retreat in July.

CAPITAL OUTLAY: Mr. Spitzer stated that Capital Outlay included improvements to downtown, transferring over the Lynwood/Lakewood storm water project, and \$50,000 budgeted to replace old windows operating systems on computers to a newer version of the windows operating system. Council Member Joe Maxim recognized that this needed to be done sooner rather than later. Mr. Spitzer explained that some of the old computers are operating Windows XP and Windows 7, which are no longer supported. Council Member Joe Maxim reiterated the need to move on this immediately and stated that it should be done in this budget year. He expressed appreciation to Mr. Spitzer for jumping on this quickly.

Council Member Les Gladden agreed with Council Member Maxim and stated we should be looking at upgrades and replacements on a regular basis. Mr. Spitzer stated that, moving forward, we would be on a regular rotation once the old equipment and programs were replaced. Council Member Les Gladden asked if all of our servers were communicating now, to which Manager Spitzer replied that they were.

Town Manager, Ryan Spitzer, was proposing a 1.5% COLA increase, noting that this would keep us up with inflation. In addition, employees can earn up to a 3% merit increases. Manager Spitzer provided a synopsis of what other towns were doing. Mayor Pro Tem Melissa Davis asked Manager Spitzer if he was still overseeing the evaluations to which he replied that he was reviewing most of them. She then asked when the new performance evaluation software would go into effect.

Manager Spitzer asked Human Resources Director, Dornessa Froneberger to explain. She stated that she would provide Mr. Spitzer with four competencies for each classification and hoped to have it up and going July 1st, 2020. Anniversary dates will be moved to once a year with annual reviews all being done in April. This should make it easier for all.

Manager Spitzer then asked Council if they were all ok with 1.5% COLA and up to 3% merit increases. Mayor Pro Tem Melissa Davis stated that she would like to discuss it at the Budget wrap up meeting. Manager Spitzer stated all departments will be allocated a "pot" of money. Council Member Les Gladden asked if anything over 2% be flagged for Ryan to look at. Mr. Spitzer replied that it could be done. He added that once we did the new performance evaluations, we would experience a bell curve. Evaluations up through October/November will be done the old way and anything thereafter would be done using the new evaluation process beginning in April, 2021.

Staffing – Manager Spitzer stated there was no new staffing in the budget currently except for the Police Captain's position in the Police Department. This spurred further discussion on the matter of reinstating the Captain's position at the Police Department and whether one should be hired prior to Chief Merchant's retirement or to wait until a new Chief is selected so that person could choose who would be captain.

Mayor Pro Tem Davis asked if there would continue to be three lieutenants and one captain. Manager Spitzer answered yes. Council Member Les Gladden suggested that information on how other departments in the area handle their command structure, be sent out to Council. Manager Spitzer stated Cornelius, Davidson and Matthews all have a Captain position. Most were more top heavy than Pineville. Mayor Pro Tem Davis asked to discuss this more at the wrap-up budget meeting and asked that everyone be provided a copy of the ISS recommendations. Mr. Spitzer agreed to send out the ISS report to all. The ISS study explains what each position is responsible for and what other municipalities are doing.

Council Member Amelia Stinson-Wesley stated that it would be helpful to have the ISS report with job descriptions, organizational chart, etc., and asked who initiated the request to bring ISS in originally. Manager Spitzer said it was Council's decision to bring them in due to past personnel issues. Council Member Stinson-Wesley suggested ISS come in and evaluate the department every so often. Manager Spitzer agreed that the recommendations made by

ISS in regards to staffing movements at the Police Department, have made a difference and has helped that department out.

The Fire Department was requesting a Full Time Fire Fighter/Driver. Mr. Spitzer reviewed with Council Members, what it would cost to add a person at \$15.00 an hour (\$190,000) or at \$12.50 an hour (\$166,000) to the budget vs. just replacing a person with a driver at \$15.00 an hour (\$51,000) compared to replacing a person hired at \$12.50 an hour (\$18,000) to the budget. Council Member Les Gladden explained the need for someone with experience or a retired fire fighter in this position.

Mayor Pro Tem Melissa Davis asked if the town was heading toward a paid staff at the Fire Department. Council Member Les Gladden explained, from his experience as a fire fighter, in order to keep the truck maintained properly, the way to go with this is to hire a retired person with experience. Otherwise it is not a financial benefit to the town. Mayor Pro Tem Melissa Davis asked if the newly hired person would be on the town's payroll. Manager Spitzer stated yes. Mayor Pro Tem Davis wanted to be sure that the town didn't forget the volunteers or junior firemen.

Council Member Amelia Stinson-Wesley asked what line item this would add to. Manager Spitzer said a new line item would be created since this would technically be a town position. Richard Dixon, Finance Director, explained that a new salary/benefits line item would be created just like the other departments. He will prepare a sample budget with these ideas in place so council could really look at it to make comparisons.

Manager Spitzer explained that a maintenance worker would need to be added to the Public Works budget; one with plumbing and electrical service experience. Over the last two years about \$25,000 was spent on these things, but the only way it could work, would be as a replacement for someone that has left. Mayor Pro Tem Melissa Davis asked if they would need to be a licensed plumber or electrician. Council Member Les Gladden responded that they didn't need one if the person would only be replacing light switches, fixing stopped up drains, changing filters, etc.

Mayor Pro Tem Davis was not disagreeing, but wanted to be sure the town was hiring the right people to do the work we're hiring them to do. Manager Spitzer stated that the job classification could be moved up to hire someone and then added that Council needed to also discuss whether to contract or do in house maintenance, grass cutting, etc. Council Member Amelia Stinson-Wesley said she is open to whatever is best for the town.

Council Member Joe Maxim was more in favor of bringing on someone with the needed skills but restated his needs to know why there was so much turnover in that department and if there was something else that needs to be addressed. This started more discussion on the best way to manage the operations of that department – bring grass cutting back inhouse but then the town still needed employees to address storm water, collect trash, and maintain the town's vehicles. The department was currently down the fleet position as well as a storm water position.

There were different thoughts on how this should be done. Mayor Pro Tem Melissa Davis stated they were doing a really good job at the cemetery which was currently being maintained by the Parks and Recreation Department but that maintenance should be under one supervisor and kept with Public Works. Manager Ryan Spitzer thought that the maintenance part of storm water could be done inhouse but then contract out the harder work. Mayor Jack Edwards idea was that maybe it wasn't a salary issue at all but the supervision and management. Council Member Joe Maxim expressed that was his sentiment as well; getting feedback on supervisor and management was important as there may be an issue. Council Member Les Gladden said he would like to see this moved into an executive session to discuss it further. Manager Spitzer stated the cost range to do an employee satisfaction survey would be \$2500 to \$5000 and that Human Resources Director, Dornessa Froneberger, would be doing a presentation on it at the next meeting.

Mayor Pro Tem Melissa Davis suggested the town do a Government or Civics 101 Class for residents. It could be a 10 or 11-week course with minimal cost but suggested "testing" the interest level of residents first to be sure there is enough interest to hold a class. Mr. Spitzer stated that each week or month a department would give a synopsis of what that department did. Mayor Edwards stated that it was a great idea and that anything we could do to educate

and communicate with the public is a good idea. Council Member Joe Maxim stated that it should be a minimum group of people, maybe 10, to learn about one department each week or each month.

Additional comments/items discussed included:

- Mayor Pro Tem Melissa Davis commented on the Christmas lights on Main St. being old and are two different colors of white. She would like to see them all one color. Mr. Spitzer responded that the town was looking to go with different colors around wreaths to break up the white lights.
- Camp Counselors – Mr. Spitzer has posted rates of who makes what and what other towns make. Mayor Pro Tem Melissa Davis asked if we could break down what \$0.25 vs. \$0.50 an hour per week would amount to. Council Member Amelia Stinson-Wesley was fine with the higher rate. Council Member Joe Maxim suggested tiered raises depending on length of employment and experience.
- Hazard Pay – proposing \$1.00 an hour for Hazard Pay for Police and Fire; this would equate to \$5,000 – the Fire Department has the money there – we can put \$5,000 towards Hazard Pay for Police and then bring them back to regular pay on May 11th. We would end Hazard Pay on May 11th, when everyone else comes back.
- Rest of departments come back on May 11th with two shifts: 7am-4pm and 8am-5pm. Council Members Amelia Stinson-Wesley and Joe Maxim, along with Mayor Pro Tem Melissa Davis were OK with this. Each person should use only one vehicle.
- N95 Masks – working on getting them for the Police Department and Communications. In the office there is no need for a mask but he would like employees to wear them in communal areas. Mayor Pro Tem Melissa Davis suggested going over hygiene to wipe down handles, steering wheels, keyboards, etc. Mr. Spitzer said the Fire Dept. converted air packs to sanitizing sprayer for the cars, desks and keyboards, etc. Council Member Les Gladden asked if everyone was coming back on May 11th. Mr. Spitzer confirmed that was correct with Parks and Recreation, Public Works and Communications working staggered schedules.

Council Member Les Gladden asked when the Town Hall Building would be open to the public. Manager Spitzer stated that when Phase Two of the Governor's order passes, that is when we will reopen the building to the public. At the May 12th Council Meeting, Council will need to approve a Covid-19 Policy. Don Mitchell of Electricities will be presenting a rate study to increase electric rates.

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Pro Tem Melissa Davis made a motion to adjourn with Council Member Joe Maxim seconding it. All agreed and the meeting was adjourned at 9:25 p.m.



Jack Edwards, Mayor

ATTEST:



Barbara Monticello, Town Clerk

