

**Mayor**  
Jack Edwards

**Mayor Pro Tem**  
Ed Samaha

**Town Manager**  
Ryan Spitzer



**Town Council**  
Les Gladden  
Amelia Stinson-Wesley  
Chris McDonough

**Town Clerk**  
Lisa Snyder

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**BUDGET MEETING #6**  
**MAY 2, 2023**

The Town Council of the Town of Pineville, NC, met in a Budget Workshop on Thursday, May 2, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. The meeting was held at the Town Hall Council Chambers.

**ATTENDANCE**

Mayor: Jack Edwards  
Mayor Pro-Tem: Ed Samaha  
Council Members: Amelia Stinson-Wesley, Les Gladden and Chris McDonough  
Town Manager: Ryan Spitzer  
Town Clerk: Lisa Snyder  
Finance Director: Chris Tucker

Mayor Jack Edwards called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

Mr. Tucker welcomed everyone to Budget Session #6 and gave a brief recap of the previous discussions. He said that we really want to concentrate our efforts on bringing our general fund together and what tax rate we want to support and what level of service we want to provide.

There were two big things that don't fit very easily in the budget (the HVAC and the rates). We had a pivot on Friday and Mr. Tucker asked Council to please ask questions. Our target is our public hearing at our June 13<sup>th</sup> council meeting. Ten days prior to that we have to have the budget available for viewing in the Clerk's office and on the Town's website. Town Manager Spitzer added that we also have to advertise what council wants our tax rate to be and our revenue neutral is.

In the current budget, there are two new positions. One is for Stormwater Tech, and one is half a year for a Training Sergeant. There is also 8% COLA with 2.5% merit. Last year we did a 3% COLA and 2.5% merit. People around us did more than that, so this 8% really reflects us trying to catch up. As part of the 8% COLA, we are working with a compensation person, remove the first grade of the PD steps to make the starting pay comparable to other localities. There was general discussion on the steps involved.

Mr. Spitzer has had discussions with department heads about non-budget benefits that we can give our employees that won't tax our budget, and they stated that having the day off for their birthday, and some time off rewarded if they haven't called in sick each quarter, or some period of time.

Tax rate .245 is revenue neutral and we are at .33 now. Each penny that we talk about is \$365,000. Mr. Spitzer reviewed line items within the department's budgets that could be cut.

Council Member Les Gladden thinks we're doing a good job of getting grants. Mr. Spitzer will be talking to someone who has a lot of experience obtaining grants; however, she will get a percentage if the grant is approved. We are using Jordan Williams as our pseudo liaison to talk to downtown merchants. It's not a true downtown person that can get the merchants together and working on the same page. When he attended the NCLM Conference recently, he discovered that 98% of downtown programs are run by the downtown locale.

Mr. Spitzer reviewed areas where we can save money. He also reviewed council topics, including having a lawyer present at each meeting and other miscellaneous items.

Asset forfeiture (Police Department). Council Member Gladden feels that we can't keep taking large portions of money out of this fund or we will run out of money. The increase he's requesting for training and travel is exorbitant. He went from \$19,000 to \$79,000. That's a \$60,000 increase from last year. He feels that a lot of what he requested are wants vs needs. Mr. Spitzer reminded council that this affects the asset forfeiture fund not the general fund. There was general discussion on asset forfeiture.

Mr. Spitzer said that Council Member Stinson-Wesley wants to discuss having a lawyer at every meeting. Currently we do not do that. The hourly rate is \$255 per hour. For two meetings, six hours of time equals about ten hours per month times twelve months comes to \$130,000 annually. The State Code requires having one attorney as your dedicated attorney. In 2015, council selected Janelle. If council wants to get an attorney for each meeting, they should probably stick with one for all matters. We're budgeting \$100,000 annually right now. Janelle's expertise is general advice and employment law. Scott McClatchy only does police work.

The Town Manager cannot hire the attorney; Council has to hire an attorney. They would not have to reappoint each year if they use the same one. Attorneys work for the pleasure of the Board. Dealing with one attorney would be easier and would be beneficial to the Town. The attorney would not be an employee of the Town. Council can do an RFQ or they can interview candidates. Attorneys can be paid hourly or by a retainer. Mr. Spitzer will start working on this and build a number in the budget.

Finance Director Chris Tucker discussed the tax rate presented ranging from 0.245 to 0.33. Everything that's been presented so far can be supported by 0.28 tax rate, or 0.275, if we cut out things. As a side note, there's not a lot that can be cut on the operations side. Capital is the only place to get a bigger chunks of money, but we might have to start cutting into the "needs" stuff. He asked Council what their tax rate ceiling is? He added that we have a healthy fund balance for a town this size.

Town Manager Spitzer added that when the new Fire Department hits, we'll need to be at about 0.32. He made the comparison that Huntersville's penny is a million dollars, or three times what ours is, and Cornelius' is based on several million-dollar homes that their tax rate is based upon. Council Member Gladden feels that we have not worked hard enough to say "no." We have been spoiled for several years. We cannot be scared to say "no."

Mr. Spitzer continued by adding that we are still expecting to receive approximately \$6 million more dollars between the Mill property and the downtown.

Salaries were discussed. Mayor Edwards would rather give the firefighters money and take care of the guys who are working the calls all the time. Council is agreeable with giving Klem \$2.00 per hour, but not the \$45,000 salary.

Town Manager Spitzer recapped:

- 0.285 % tax rate
- Pay for HVAC system with cuts from the PD
- Look for where to get money for the 911 system
- Look for \$200,000 to start putting in future debt

- Adding \$30,000 to the budget for an attorney


Finance Director Tucker said the next step is to have the Budget hearing in June. Our goal is to have the budget ready for the Work Session at the end of the month.

Mayor Pro Tem Ed Samaha moved to end the budget meeting and Council Member Chris McDonough seconded the motion. All ayes.

**ADJOURNMENT:** At 8:20 p.m. the meeting adjourned.

  
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Jack Edwards, Mayor

**ATTEST:**

  
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Lisa Snyder, Town Clerk