

Zebulon Board of Commissioners
Work Session
Minutes
May 27, 2021

Present: Robert S. Matheny, Beverly Clark, Annie Moore, Glenn York, Shannon Baxter, Larry Loucks, Joe Moore-Town Manager, Lisa Markland-Town Clerk, Chris Perry-Fire, Michael Clark-Planning, Sheila Long-Parks and Recreation, Chris Ray-Public Works, Bobby Fitts-Finance, Jacqui Boykin-Police, Eric Vernon-Attorney

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Loucks made a motion, second by Commissioner York to approve the agenda. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

WORK SESSION #2 FOLLOW-UP

Bobby Fitts provided follow-up from the second work session on the general fund fund balance. The spending projections for the year and the operating and recurring expenditures were given.

STREETS AND SIGNALS

Chris Ray stated streets and traffic signals will be a big challenge over the next five to ten years and was trying to get ahead of the Town's needs. Chris Ray stated the Town had 28.70 miles of streets and paved 1.44 miles annually. The Town had a 50% increase in streets since 2015. Chris Ray spoke about street health and the streets to be paved in 2022.

The Shepard School roadway and traffic signal project and Green Pace and Arendell Avenue roadway and signal project timelines and costs were given.

Commissioner York asked how much the Popeye's restaurant was contributing to the cost. Staff stated Popeyes was widening the road to the property lines.

The LED lighting conversion Phase II project was explained. This project included 182 high pressure sodium lights in Weavers Pond I and II, Braemar and some spot locations.

The Jones Street connector project was explained. The project would ease traffic congestion on Arendell Avenue. The Cook-out fee-in-lieu was approximately \$285,000 toward the project.

Mayor Matheny inquired about the Powell Bill balance. Bobby Fitts stated the Powell Bill revenue was \$127,000 and \$220,000 would come from Powell Bill reserves.

PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION PREVIEW AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Sheila Long stated Parks and Recreation projects were being pulled from Property Management and added to the Parks and Recreation department. This change would help the Town with grant

agencies and gave transparency of the cost to operate the Parks and Recreation projects. Sheila Long spoke about how the budget requests met the Town's goals of the 2030 Strategic Plan.

The FY 22 highlights included adopting and implementing the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and creating and adopting a Parks and Recreation CIP. Sheila Long gave a preview of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The vision of the plan was given. The vision subsystems were given and Ms. Long spoke about each subsystem which were:

- Neighborhood parks and open spaces
- Community parks and athletic facilities
- Natural areas and sustainability
- Programs, community health and special events
- Connectivity and access

One project requested in the FY22 budget was a renovation to Gill Street Park. The request included a basketball court renovation and dispersed picnic areas.

Commissioner Baxter asked how many picnic areas were included. The proposed estimate included three picnic areas.

The next project was Little River Park. A Phase 2 archaeological study was a required next step for FEMA funding. The request also included eradicating eight acres of kudzu to make the area usable for the community.

Commissioner Baxter inquired about the type of herbicide that would be used to treat the kudzu. Sheila Long would follow-up with the types of herbicides recommended from the forestry service.

There was discussion about using goats to eradicate the kudzu and maintain the area. The Tree Board was in support of eradicating the kudzu.

Sheila Long stated the Whitewater Park Feasibility study was not recommended in the budget. Staff had discussions with the City of Raleigh Park Planner, Wake County's Parks and Recreation Director, and consultants from McLaughlin Whitewater and Restoration Systems regarding the possibility of a whitewater park. The costs to construct a whitewater park were very high. The City of Raleigh had moved from the whitewater park concept to focus on a river park concept.

There was discussion about water play options at Little River Park.

Staff spoke about the recommended infield rehab rotation schedule at Community Park to address safety concerns from wear.

The Master Plan implementation was requested in the FY22 budget. The Board would decide how they wanted to approach the project and the phasing for the plan. Possible uses for FY22 would be branded park signs, grant development and/or match, project design, and to advance a project noted in the outyears.

Commissioner York suggested using parks or open spaces for cultural opportunities.

MARKET STUDY

Joe Moore stated the market study was not included in the FY22 budget but may come before the Board mid-year. The study began in FY21. The consultant was hired through TJCOG, questionnaires were completed by employees, and employees had an option to talk with the consultant.

Each department was affected differently. Some departments had issues with turnover, career progression and succession planning. Joe Moore spoke about the capital budget history and how the Town faced shortcomings in various years.

The Fire Department's labor shed was shown. Most Fire Department applicants were from East and South of Zebulon. The department has had fluctuations of turnover over the years. The reasons for fire turnover included more money, closer to home, desire to work for a larger department and medical reasons.

Commissioner Loucks asked if the turnover total of 11 employees included Fire Department employees who had retired. Staff would follow-up with the retirement number.

The high cost of turnover was explained, and examples were given. Fire recruitment had decreased over the years. Out of the 14 hires since August 2013, only six remained employed by the Town of Zebulon. It was stated 78% of employees hired since 2019 were from outside Wake County.

Increasing the starting salary would make the Town more attractive to potential applicants, reduce likelihood of personnel leaving for more money, reduce time spent in recruiting and new employee training, and allowed staff to become more experienced, seasoned, and prepared for staff succession.

Mayor Matheny asked if Wake County was helping fund the Fire Department positions. Wake County was contractually required to increase their budget when the Town increased salaries.

It was explained the Town did advertise positions all over the state and exit interviews were done for all employees.

PUBLIC INPUT

No one was present to speak, and no comments were submitted.

QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, REQUESTS

Commissioner York asked about the cemetery plot fee. Bobby Fitts stated the cemetery fees have been the same for the last 20+ plus years. There were approximately 10 to 20 plots left. Most of the remaining plots were unusable because of large tree roots and rocks. There was discussion about the cost of the cemetery plots. Staff would look into cemetery fees in surrounding towns.

MANAGERS COMMENTS

Joe Moore stated the Budget Ordinance would be in the June 7, 2021 agenda packet.

Commissioner Loucks made a motion, second by Commissioner Baxter to adjourn. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

Adopted this the 13th day of September 2021.




Robert S. Matheny—Mayor


Lisa M. Markland, CMC—Town Clerk