

**Zebulon Board of Commissioners  
Work Session  
Minutes  
February 17, 2022**

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

Mayor York called the meeting to order at 4:00pm.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

Joe Moore gave an overview of the topics to be discussed at the meeting. The creation of the Zebulon 2030 Strategic Plan was detailed and how the budget requests fit with the Zebulon 2030 Strategic Plan. The vision and mission of the Zebulon 2030 Strategic Plan were stated along with the Salary Market Study.

**COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT: POLICE, FIRE, PARKS & RECREATION**

*POLICE*

Jacqui Boykin spoke about the capacity and capability requirements to serve a growing and diversifying community within the Vibrant Downtown, Small-Town Life, and Growing Smart focus areas of the 2030 Strategic Plan. There were examples given of the implications of the Police Department being short-staffed.

There was discussion about the Police Department's needs in diversity, recruiting, succession/retention, training, and policy management/accreditation. The budget request included two patrol officers and a police planner. The Town could apply for The Governor's Highway Safety Program grant which would fund a portion of the officer's salary, benefits, patrol car and equipment.

The demands for police services were changing and Chief Boykin spoke about the benefits of an accreditation program.

There was discussion about how to prioritize domestic calls. Chief Boykin explained law enforcement was asked to do things outside of their profession and was open to having discussions about alternative resources for domestic calls.

*FIRE*

Chris Perry spoke about the purpose of the fire department and the services they provided. Call volumes increased almost 20% in 2021. The response time goal was five minutes and thirty seconds. The Fire Department's goal was 90% which was met 84% of the time. The goal was only

met 41% of the time with simultaneous calls. There was discussion about the response from volunteers and other supporting departments. There were examples given of calls where there were limited firefighters on scene. The department faced challenges such as high turnover/low retention, weak succession plan, recruitment challenges/lack of applicants and wage compression. The salaries were much lower in Zebulon than in surrounding areas. Chris Perry spoke about the pay compression issues in the department and ways to address inadequate staffing and pay issues. It would cost \$165,000 to add two additional firefighters in FY 23. The County's share would be \$61,000 and the Town's share would be \$104,000. Three additional firefighters were proposed for FY 24 which would provide one additional firefighter per shift. The current salary schedule and an example of a future salary schedule were shown.

The cost associated with the Child Seat Safety Program was the certification and recertification cost and the Fire Department performed approximately 75-100 inspections per year.

There was discussion about a Fire Department administrative position.

#### *PARKS & RECREATION*

Sheila Long spoke about the primary services of the Parks and Recreation department. The vision goals were explained and how they tied into the Town's strategic plan goals.

There was discussion about the capacity and capability of the department to serve a Town of 18,000.

Some of the budget requests included a full-time parks maintenance employee, athletics support, recreational opportunities and a downtown concert series.

The recommended projects and positions for FY 24 through FY 28 were detailed.

It was explained the Town had a Joint Use Agreement with the two elementary schools to use their outdoor courts. There was discussion about renting indoor courts at the schools.

Sheila Long passed out a draft of 2022 calendar events.

Staff was looking for opportunities for neighborhood-based events.

There was interest among the Board for the Town to organize a downtown concert series.

Joe Moore gave a summary of each department's budget request at the meeting. The next community assessment work sessions were scheduled for March 17 and April 21. The budget work sessions were May 10, 18 and 26 with a budget ordinance public hearing on June 6.

#### **FIRE/EMS STATION: MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

Chris Perry gave a presentation and spoke about the various services provided by the Zebulon Fire Department. In 2021, the Fire Department saw a 20% increase in call volume due to the growth of the community. The response time goal was five minutes and thirty seconds. A map showing the

travel time was shown. The current fire station would not continue to meet the service demands as the Town grows.

The current fire station facility deficiencies were stated. Some of the options from 2017 for a new fire station were shown. The 2018 Brooks Innovative Solutions Study was given to the Board at their 2018 retreat and their recommendations were summarized. It was recommended to upgrade and relocate Fire Station #1 to a more centralized location. There was discussion about the opportunity to retain a Wake County EMS station in Zebulon by co-locating at the same site. It was explained how the consultant evaluated potential fire station sites and why the GSK site was the one chosen. The GSK site was in the target area, accessible and the most affordable site. There was an agreement on funding partnership with Wake County and they have agreed to manage design and construction. Wake County would contribute 49%, 20% would be from EMS and 29% would be fire tax. The next steps were outlined and included:

- A Memorandum of Understanding with Wake County for a station design
- Public engagement was included in the design project
- Design costs were included in the current budget and shared by Zebulon and Wake County

Chris Perry answered frequently asked questions he received included building a smaller substation, the municipal complex site, consequences on waiting to build the station and concerns about building on Judd Street.

There was discussion about the required lot size for a fire station. Collaborating with EMS provided the Town with funds to build the fire station and ensured the Town had an EMS station close by. The fire station could cover 85% of calls if the station was in the right location, but a second station would eventually be needed with the growth of the Town. Wake County would participate in the building of one station. There was a cost share methodology with the County about operating expenses.

It was stated the GSK property was selected as the primary fire station location and discussion about other possible locations for the fire station.

There was consensus from the Board that more information on the fire station and other options needed to come back before the Board.

#### **UTILITY ALLOCATION POLICY**

Michael Clark explained water allocation was a means for the Board to incentivize land use development that reflected a vibrant, growing community that maintained its small-town charm and heritage. The presentation provided a “report card” concept that Commissioners could use to grade proposed developments against their attainment of policy goals (ex. Comprehensive Land Use Plan, Parks and Recreation Master Plan). Michael Clark explained the structure of the policy and gave examples of the point structure. The goals of the policy were stated:

- Raise the bar on new development
- Incentivize target developments
- Leverage finite resources
- Shift the burden for land to be provided for future parks and greenways

- Focus on quality of life

A Water Allocation Policy was scheduled for presentation at the Joint Public Hearing on March 14, 2022 with a possible adoption in April.

It was stated the policy was comparable to the water and utility policies in Wendell, Knightdale and Clayton.

#### **FIVE COUNTY STADIUM: PLAYER DEVELOPMENT & LEASE AMENDMENT**

Chris Ray presented an overview of Major League Baseball's Player Development requirements and how they could influence the alteration of Five County Stadium. Some of the costlier items included field replacement and upgraded lighting. The County was working with the consultant to bring data to the Wake County Board and Zebulon's Board of Commissioners to meet the new standards.

The Town's financial contribution would be determined after receiving the report then through negotiations with the County and the Milwaukee Brewers.

It was explained an ADA Accessibility project was done by adding additional bathrooms and ADA access and would be included in the assessment.

Commissioner Loucks asked if the Town's usage of Five County Stadium could be increased. Chris Ray stated that could be revised in the new lease agreement.

Eric Vernon spoke about the following concerns with Five County Stadium:

- Existing lease
- Mudcats' desire to extend the lease
- Major League Baseball's improvement initiative
- Cost of compliance
- Next steps

Mr. Vernon presented the details of the proposed lease amendment for the Mudcats use of Five County Stadium.

The Wake County Commissioners would consider the lease extension at the February 21, 2022 meeting.

#### **BOND REFERENDUM: BOND COUNSEL, FINANCIAL ADVISOR, ENGAGEMENT**

Bobby Fitts followed-up on questions raised at the Board's December work session and offered more detailed information about the role and cost of bond counsel, financial advising, and public information messaging associated with the bond referendum process. The services to be provided by the financial advisor were explained.

Examples of public engagement videos from Fuquay-Varina and Garner were shown. Bobby Fitts explained that the Town and staff could not advocate for the bond, only educate.

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There was mention of Senate Bill 265 which was a Bond Transparency Act. A summary of the costs was shown, and it was explained any fees could be rolled into the bond issuance.

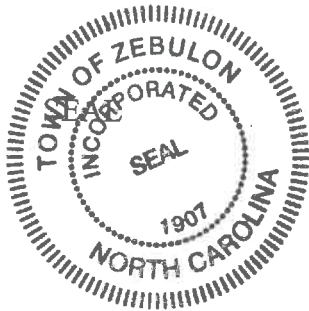
The Town's bond rating was AA3.

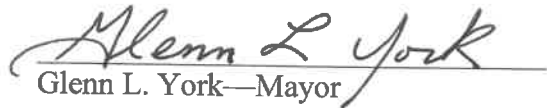
If the Board wanted the bond referendum added to the November ballot, a decision would need to be made soon.

There was discussion about the prices for a stormwater infrastructure update.

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

Adopted this the 4<sup>th</sup> day of April 2022.



  
Glenn L. York—Mayor

  
Lisa M. Markland, CMC—Town Clerk