

Zebulon Board of Commissioners
Work Session
Meeting Minutes
February 24, 2025

Present: Mayor Glenn York, Jessica Harrison, Beverly Clark, Shannon Baxter, Amber Davis, Quentin Miles, Gilbert Todd, Jr.-Manager, Lisa Markland-Town Clerk, Kellianne Williams-Asst. Town Manager, Bob Grossman-Police, Sheila Long-Parks & Recreation, Sam Slater-Attorney

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Commissioner Miles requested to add the Community Garden topic for discussion.

Commissioner Baxter made a motion, second by Commissioner Davis to adopt the agenda as amended. There was no discussion, and the motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Budget And Retreat Planning Discussion

Town Manager Todd presented five questions to the Board regarding the budget process and asked each commissioner to provide their thoughts.

1. What aspects of past budget processes have been most effective?
 - Hearing from department directors and their priorities
 - Seeing both the requested department budgets and the Manager's recommended budgets
 - Department directors to present at work sessions what they are asking for and why
 - Incorporate and present alternative funding sources
 - Budget presented in sections and not all at one time
 - Incorporate alignment of Strategic Plan with department requests when presenting
 - One on one discussions with the department directors as needed

There was discussion about strategic goals and the Strategic Plan and how the budget process worked with those documents and desires.

2. Where do you see the greatest opportunities for improvement in the budget process, and what specific changes would you suggest?
 - Earlier involvement of the Board in the budget process
 - More community engagement and input
 - Increased work sessions on specific budget topics
 - Information on potential grant funding for projects

- Presenting fewer departments per work session
 - Ensuring staff input is incorporated
3. How should the budget reflect our strategic goals and the community's priorities?
- Hosting town halls for citizen input
 - Revisiting and updating strategic goals
 - Conducting community surveys
 - Ensuring inclusivity and diverse representation
 - Exploring multiple avenues for citizen feedback
4. How can staff best support the Board during the budget process to ensure informed decision making?
- Breaking down information into smaller increments
 - One-on-one meetings with department heads as needed
 - Additional meetings to improve the process
 - More information
 - Why departments want what they are asking for
 - One on one meetings with Manager
 - Better communication from Manager
 - Two-way communication between staff and board
 - Updates on past budget spending and project timelines
 - Budget should meet the needs of the community
5. Do you agree that the upcoming budget retreat should focus on identifying the Boards top budget priorities for the next fiscal year?

The Board expressed interest in having separate retreats - one for visioning/team building and another specifically for budget priorities.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Strategic Plan Grant Updates

Assistant Town Manager Kellianne Williams provided an update on the strategic plan grant. She informed the Board that the grant application was now live, and a promotion campaign would begin soon. The grant would also be mentioned at the upcoming Talk with the Town event.

Mrs. Williams directed the Board's attention to page 5 of the new grant policy, which outlined the new grant timeline. She explained that a new email address (clerk@townofzebulon.org) had been set up for grant-related inquiries, and that while the clerk would normally handle the process in conjunction with the finance department, Parks and Recreation may assist due to extended leave in the finance department.

Mrs. Williams reminded the Board that each commissioner would have the opportunity to appoint a committee member for the grant review process, and she would follow up with the Board, via email, to get that information. She emphasized that the process allowed for direct representation in the review process and ensured multiple levels of vetting before recommendations come before the Board.

GENERAL

Community Garden Discussion

Commissioner Miles initiated a discussion about implementing a community garden in Zebulon. He expressed a desire to start the conversation and get feedback from fellow commissioners on what a community garden might look like for the town. Commissioner Miles emphasized that the project should be community-driven with minimal staff involvement.

Commissioner Baxter suggested that the Sustainability Board should be tasked with this project. She noted that site selection, creating parameters and rules, and determining the application process should be part of their responsibilities.

There was discussion about the need to survey the community to ensure there was interest and support for a community garden. Town Manager Todd confirmed that a question about prioritizing a community garden was included in an upcoming budget survey.

After some debate, the Board reached a consensus to task the Sustainability Board with developing a plan for a community garden. They agreed that as the Sustainability Board requested information from staff, it will be provided. The Board also decided to mention the community garden initiative at the upcoming Talk with the Town event on February 27th and inform citizens about the opportunity to apply for the Sustainability Board.

Lisa Markland, Town Clerk, asked for a moment of the Board's time. Lisa Markland announced her retirement effective April 1st, with her last day being March 21st. She thanked the Town of Zebulon for the opportunity to serve the community and citizens for nearly 27 years, expressing that it has been an honor and privilege to serve the citizens and employees of the community. She stated that almost all of her 27 years with the Town had been great but 2025 had not been and that was the reason for her retirement.

CLOSED SESSION

Commissioner Baxter made a motion, to go into closed session as allowed per NC General Statute § 143-318.11 for the purposes of Personnel discussions, Economic Development, and Property Acquisition. There was no discussion, and the motion was approved by consensus.

Mayor York declared a 5-minute recess.

NOTE: In closed session, Commissioner Davis made a motion, second by Commissioner Harrison to come out of closed session.

ADJOURN

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

Adopted this the 7th day of July, 2025

SEAL




Glenn L. York – Mayor


Ana Gomez Rindahl – Town Clerk