

Zebulon Board of Commissioners
Work Session
Minutes
February 15, 2024

Present: Mayor Glenn York, Jessica Harrison, Quentin Miles, Beverly Clark, Amber Davis, Joe Moore-Town Manager, Chris Ray-Public Works, Bobby Fitts-Finance, Jacqui Boykin-Police, Michael Clark-Planning, Sheila Long-Parks and Recreation, Kaleb Harmon-Communications, Shannon Johnson-Community and Economic Development, Eric Vernon-Attorney

Absent: Shannon Baxter

Mayor York called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.

Mayor York stated Commissioner Baxter would not be in attendance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

FY '25 REQUESTED BUDGETS

Joe Moore gave an overview of the items to be presented at the meeting and gave dates for budget items.

POLICE

Jacqui Boykin spoke about the goals and priorities of the department. There were details given about the applicant pool and job openings. The department received a low number of applications. Local agency salaries were shown to compare to the Town's current police salaries. It was explained how officers were leaving to go to other departments and some of the reasons why they left. Jacqui Boykin explained to increase the applicant pool and remain competitive the base salary needed to be increased. The department's demographics and the efforts being taken to diversify the department were explained.

The service metrics were shown. The calls for service had more than doubled, average daily road trips increased by 50% and the population had doubled. There was a need for more personnel in the department to keep up with the increase in service calls. The department would be requesting five additional employees in the FY '25 budget. Those requested positions included two patrol officers, two lieutenants, and a detective. Chief Boykin spoke about minimum staffing and additional positions necessary. Examples of how minimum staffing affected the department were given. There were increases in operational lines to accommodate for the new position requests. Chief Boykin spoke about the CARE initiative.

Commissioner Harrison asked about the goals of the CARE initiative. Chief Boykin explained how children who witnessed trauma often become offenders and the CARE initiative will allow social workers to intervene early with children and families at the first incident of trauma. The detective and social worker interns would work together, and the interns would manage resource referrals.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Sheila Long spoke about the needs of new residents and how the department was responding to growth. The growth was affecting capacity, and the needs of the community were changing. An example given was programs were being capped due to not having enough space available. Registration in summer camps and programs increased significantly and the department was near capacity. It was explained why a new programmer was needed.

There was information given about the parks and facilities the department supported. Ms. Long spoke about the Tree City USA and Bee City USA initiative. A sustainability intern was hired to engage the public and assess internal operations. Staff recommended establishing a sustainability committee and details of that committee were given.

Staff spoke about the need for two maintenance workers and a facility maintenance worker position to help meet the needs of the community. For the department to meet the vision goals of the master plan a Park Planner position would be needed and staff spoke about how they would support park planning and project management. Details of the Gill Street playground engagement process was given. A park planner would lead a playground engagement project.

The CIP highlights were shown and included fleet and equipment, disc golf course enhancements, pickleball courts, Whitley Park playground, ZES improvements, Gill St. Park, ZCP bridge and trail head, Community Center floor replacement, property acquisition, open space standards, and fields at Whitley Park expansion.

Mayor York stated there would be a ten-minute break.

The meeting reconvened at 6:37pm.

Commissioner Harrison asked about the possibility of Gill Street Park becoming a community park. Sheila Long explained a community park was 20 acres or more and spoke about having conversations to assess the needs of the citizens. Other items could be added to provide for community needs.

Commissioner Davis inquired about a second community center. Sheila Long stated the master plan included a second facility which was needed and spoke about the next steps.

PLANNING: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Shannon Johnson spoke about the creation of the economic development strategic plan. A draft plan would go before the Board by May to offer feedback to the consultant. The findings of the community survey and engagement sessions were explained. The overall themes included infrastructure, business, and quality of life.

The actions and activities for economic development were detailed by staff with examples of short-range, mid-range and long-range actions. Some additional projects included managing studies to determine project feasibility, tasks related to the HUD Downtown Revitalization grant, and the National Register Historic District – Barbee Street project.

Commissioner Miles asked for more details about the Barbee Street project. Shannon Johnson explained there were several phases to a historic district and the first would be a research phase.

Joe Moore explained the HUD Downtown Revitalized grant was a congressional earmark the Town secured through Representative David Price to revitalize downtown. Mr. Moore also gave details about the funds that were available to move forward with the National Register Historic District.

Commissioner Davis left the meeting at 7:30pm.

MAIN STREET PROGRAM: MUNICIPAL DISTRICTS

Shannon Johnson explained Municipal Service Districts (“MSD”) and stated it was a way to generate consistent funding for additional services and projects at a greater extent than those provided on a Town-wide basis. Information of the legal foundation of MSDs and a chart of MSDs in North Carolina were shown. MSDs fund breach erosion and floor and hurricane protection work, downtown revitalization, urban revitalization, transit-oriented development projects, sewerage collection and disposal systems, off-street parking facilities, and watershed improvements, drainage, and water resource development. Staff explained how districts can be managed. Some similar towns with MSDs were Kinston, Smithfield, Wake Forest, and Wilson. Staff stated the average MSD tax rate was \$.25/\$100.

The current Main Street boundary was shown on a map, but the boundary was able to be modified. The different tax rates were shown to give an example of the tax revenue based on \$.06, \$.09 and \$.12 tax rates. Staff proposed a modified Main Street boundary and gave an example of the tax revenue based on \$.06, \$.09 and \$.12 tax rates. Staff spoke about ways to leverage funds and gave a 10-year outlook.

The steps to establish an MSD were to complete a feasibility report, staff to present the report to the Board, staff to update report based on feedback. Commissioners review boundaries and tax implications, Commissioners schedule a public hearing, the Town to mail notices to all property owners within the proposed MSD to include the proposed boundary map, Board to review petitions for exclusion from the proposed MSD, hold another public hearing, vote on an ordinance establishing the MSD, and the tax levy would be effective July 1 following the establishment of the MSD.

Commissioner Miles asked about the cost of a feasibility study. Shannon Johnson stated she would research the costs for the Board.

FIRE STATION

Chris Perry gave background of the Zebulon South Fire Station Assessment. Chief Perry spoke about the location, site and cost.

Commissioner Miles asked if the site was close to the cemetery. Michael Clark explained the site was not near the cemetery.


Commissioner Harrison stated she wanted to know if the site could be used as a fire station before the Board moved forward with the Zebulon South development.

Commissioner Harrison made a motion, second by Commissioner Clark to approve Ordinance 2024-33. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

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

Adopted this the 6th day of May 2024.


Glenn L. York—Mayor




Lisa M. Markland, CMC—Town Clerk