

Zebulon Board of Commissioners
Minutes
June 3, 2024

Present: Mayor Glenn York, Quentin Miles, Amber Davis, Jessica Harrison, Shannon Baxter, Beverly Clark, Joe Moore-Town Manager, Lisa Markland-Human Resources Director, Chris Ray-Public Works, Jacqui Boykin-Police, Chris Perry-Fire, Sheila Long-Parks & Recreation, Bobby Fitts-Finance, Michael Clark-Planning, Kaleb Harmon-Communications, Eric Vernon-Town Attorney

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The pledge of allegiance was led by Commissioner Harrison.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Baxter asked to amend the agenda to pull Ordinance 2024-47 from consent and to add a closed session for personnel discussion.

Commissioner Miles asked to add the Vikings to speak.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Alla Smith spoke about how the lights and signs were not working at Town shopping centers and how Zebulon Middle School needed to be up to par of other local schools.

Milton Robinson asked the community for support for the youth.

Brooke Evans, Miss Zebulon, spoke about her experience with bullying and her upcoming competition at the Miss North Carolina pageant in June.

Kayden Brown, Miss Zebulon Teen, spoke about her STEM community service project.

CONSENT

A. Minutes

Commissioner Baxter made a motion, second by Commissioner Harrison to approve the March 4, 2024 regular meeting minutes. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Baxter made a motion, second by Commissioner Harrison to approve the April 1, 2024 regular meeting minutes. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Baxter made a motion, second by Commissioner Harrison to approve the Wake County tax report for March 2024. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Baxter made a motion, second by Commissioner Harrison to approve Resolution 2024-25 – FY 2025 Appointment of Tax Collector. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Baxter made a motion, second by Commissioner Harrison to approve 2024-48 Budget Amendment Request – Contract Services IT. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING

A. FY '25 Budget

Joe Moore reviewed the statutory requirements of adopting the budget, the budget schedule and process, and budget message. The goals and features of the budget were based upon the strategic plan and implementation plans. It was explained how the budget met the focus areas of vibrant downtown, small town life and growing smart that were outlined in the strategic plan.

The demand for service had increased and new positions were requested including two Police Watch Commanders, Police Detective, three Firefighters, a Fire Administrative Assistant, Public Works Project Manager, Public Works Stormwater Manager, Transportation Planner II, Parks and Recreation Program Coordinator, Parks and Recreation Parks Maintenance Technician, Parks and Recreation Facility Maintenance Technician, Budget Analyst, Part-time Administrative Assistant for the Governing Board.

There was a diagram shown to reflect the market conditions for recruitment. Joe Moore gave an example of the four vacant police positions. The Police Chief had suggested raising the starting salary for the police positions up to \$52,500, however the increase introduced problems within the organization. The salary compression issue was explained in detail and the adjustment that would need to be made if the starting salaries were raised to \$52,500. The Directors and other departments would also be affected by the increase and would increase compression significantly. A graph showing the market conditions for directors was shown. With the Police salary increase it would cause a Police Captain to make more than a majority of the Directors.

The FY '25 budgeted included a solution to the issue and gave time to perform a comprehensive market study to fully address the compensation issues. All employees would receive a 3% increase to allow other positions time to provide career ladder moves and give greater separation.

Examples from the Planning Department showed the recruitment and retention issues within the department. The small-town life goals, hurdles and budget features were explained.

Joe Moore spoke about the differences in the FY'25 proposed budget and FY'25 proposed budget. The property tax rate remained the same. There was an increase in the operating and capital budgets causing expenditures to be \$28.5M. The new debt service was \$0. The revenue-neutral tax rate was explained in detail. Staff recommended a tax rate of 57.5¢ in the FY'25 budget. The rate would help focus on the Town's Strategic Goals and projects, support citizens needs and support employees to meet citizens' needs.

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Staff spoke about the Town's fund balance. The total fund balance was \$23,499,603. Of that total \$10,310,700 was unassigned fund balance. There was information given about how the bond rating was determined. The Town ranked strong/very strong with credit trends but was ranked weak with economy/tax base since there was not a diverse housing product. GSK represented \$1,677,000 in personal property tax and BB&T represented \$1,237,000 in personal property tax.

Mayor York stated there would be a 10-minute recess.

The meeting reconvened at 7:48pm.

Commissioner Baxter asked Joe Moore to explain how the tax base has changed through the years with the breakdown of businesses vs houses changing the tax base. Joe Moore explained GSK and BB&T were not the majority of the tax base but still made up 38% of the tax base.

The items the Board introduced for the FY '25 budget included a splash pad at Whitley Park. It was explained the park was a 4.8-acre neighborhood park and the splash pad would cost approximately \$1.4M. A concept plan would need to be performed to provide a more accurate estimate and to determine if Whitley Park was the best park for the amenity.

Another added item was installing bathrooms at Gill Street Park. There was already \$30,000 included in the FY '25 budget to perform site planning and community engagement. The bathroom project would cost an estimated \$500,000 to start design and assessment. The initial soil assessments came back with elevated lead counts that exceeded the EPA's residential lead requirements. The Town had soil sampling done on the entire site with results showing lead counts above EPA standards on the west and north side of the property. The costs would be dependent upon contaminants being cordoned off, capped, or removed and replaced.

Dugout shades at Zebulon Community Park were added by the Board. Options from staff included raising the fence and applying custom screenings. The cost would be approximately \$30,000.

The Board expressed interest in raising the starting salary for the Police Department with a 15% increase to \$52,500. The increase would cause ramifications in all departments and would cost \$650,000. Adding an additional police officer would be \$105,000 with benefits and equipment.

The additions would cause expenditures to rise to \$31.3, the operating and previous debt service to be \$19.6M and capital to be \$11.6M. The property tax rate would increase to a little over 3¢. If all the changes were made it would cause the fund balance to drop below the 30% floor.

Mayor York asked the Vikings to come to the podium to speak.

VIKINGS PRESENTATION

Udo Jones, Vice President of Zebulon Vikings, spoke about how the program started, details about the program and asked for funding from the Board. Commissioner Baxter asked Mr. Jones to email the Board the total number of kids on the team who are from Zebulon.

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Sam Bulston, Vikings Board member and coach, thanked the Board for their time and the opportunity to lead youth in Zebulon.

Commissioner Harrison asked if the Vikings were part of the Cougar organization. Mr. Jones stated the Cougars were no longer an organization and spoke about tying in the history and legacy of the Cougars. There were currently 70 kids registered in the program. Commissioner Harrison asked if the organization was a 501(c)(3) and Mr. Jones explained they had been identified by the IRS as a 501(c)(3).

FY '25 BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING

Mayor York opened the public hearing.

Mayor York asked if there was anyone who wished to speak in favor. There were none.

Mayor York asked if there was anyone who wished to speak in opposition.

Nicholas Walton spoke in opposition to spending impact fees for the intersection improvement at Shepard School Road, Old Bunn Road and Proctor Street. There were no pedestrian crossings and explained it would not solve traffic issues.

Mayor York asked if there was anyone who wished to speak neither for nor against.

Dr. Crohan expressed concerns about increasing taxes or adding a bond.

Scott Carpenter stated the Board should give the Zebulon Police Department what they need with an increase in salary.

Gregory Selix stated his priority was the park system and was for the splash pad but did not like the investment for the bathrooms at Gill Street without the lead issue being addressed. Mr. Selix stated all the departments needed more funding and hopefully with more business coming in the salary issues could be addressed.

Ayanna Glaize wanted to see investments in public transportation, public event spaces, green connectivity, infrastructure, stormwater drainage system and downtown. Ms. Glaize also wanted to see more mixed zoning use in Town, a truck stop, efforts to clean Gill Street Park to ensure it is safe and staff salaries to be addressed for Town staff.

Barkeiya Ormond encouraged the Board to perform a salary study to invest in current employees.

Milton Robinson spoke about investing in the youth.

Lisa Markland read comments from Cindy Mallard thanking staff for their work and was happy to see transportation as a priority in the budget.

Lisa Markland read comments from Jonathan Segaski who supported park and greenway expansion.

Commissioner Baxter thanked everyone who came to the meeting and thanked those who spoke.

Mayor York closed the public hearing.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Budget

i. Budget 2024-2025 (Ordinance 2024-48)

Joe Moore stated the Board completed all statutory requirements and staff recommended the recommended budget.

Commissioner Baxter stated the Board heard a lot at the meeting and had not fully hashed out all the details from the last work session. More time to further review the budget was requested by Commissioner Baxter.

Commissioner Baxter made a motion, second by Commissioner Harrison to table Ordinance 2024-48 to the June 11, 2024 work session. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

B. Parks and Recreation

i. Sustainability

a. Ordinance 2024-49

The Board expressed a desire to join Bee City USA and spoke about what a Sustainability Board would address. Initially the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board will act as the Sustainability Board until one is established.

Commissioner Baxter explained she liked the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board acting temporarily as the Sustainability Board and thanked staff for their work.

Commissioner Baxter made a motion, second by Commissioner Clark to approve Ordinance 2024-49. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

b. Resolution 2024-26

Commissioner Harrison made a motion, second by Commissioner Baxter to approve Resolution 2024-26 There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

ii. Street Closure – Back to School Event – Resolution 2024-27

Sheila Long stated the Town was approached by Mt. Zion Holy Church to hold a Back-to-School event in the Gill Street area. Staff proposed closing Gill Street from E. Stronach to Cemetery Road on August 3 to hold the event.

Commissioner Baxter asked what he estimated costs would be. Staff stated this event was new and still in the planning process with Mt. Zion. It was also asked if the church would allow attendees to use their restroom. Sheila Long stated she would ask the church if their restrooms would be available.

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Commissioner Miles made a motion, second by Commissioner Harrison to approve Resolution 2024-27.

Commissioner Baxter asked staff to come back before the Board with the fiscal analysis and if the church agreed to use of their restroom facilities for the event.

There was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

Mayor York stated there would be a five-minute recess.

The meeting reconvened at 9:07pm.

C. Administration

i. Board Appointments

Mayor York stated the application for David Hughes did not make it to the packets and needed to be added.

The applications submitted were:

Planning Board – one ETJ vacancy

- Laura Johnson
- David Hughes

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board – two vacancies

- Garrett Underhill

Board of Adjustment – three in-Town, one ETJ, one ETJ alternate vacancy

- Dr. Crohan – in-Town

Commissioner Miles stated he knew of people in the ETJ who submitted applications but did not see their names listed. Lisa Markland explained there were some applications received who did not live within the ETJ and were notified.

David Hughes, Garrett Underhill and Dr. Crohan spoke about their reasons for wanting to serve on an appointed board.

There was discussion about Planning Board applications. Lisa Markland explained she would review all the applications received to ensure those that were left out were not located in Town or within the ETJ.

Commissioner Clark made a motion, second by Commissioner Harrison to appoint David Hughes to the Planning Board as an in-town member. There was no discussion and the motion failed with a vote 2 to 3 with Commissioners Clark and Harrison voting in favor and Commissioners Baxter, Miles and Davis voting in opposition.

Commissioner Baxter made a motion, second by Commissioner Davis to instruct staff to bring forward any eligible Planning Board applications at the June 11, 2024 meeting. There was no discussion and the motion passed 3 to 2 with Commissioners Baxter, Miles and Davis voting in favor and Commissioners Clark and Harrison voting in opposition.

Commissioner Baxter made a motion, second by Commissioner Clark to re-appoint Garrett Underhill to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Baxter made a motion, second by Commissioner Miles to appoint Dr. Crohan as an in-Town member to the Board of Adjustment. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Harrison suggested moving Scott Carpenter from an in-Town alternate to an in-Town regular position on the Board of Adjustment. Commissioner Baxter asked if the Town was legally required to have alternates on the Board of Adjustment. Michael Clark stated 160D required regular and alternate members to serve on the Board of Adjustment.

Scott Carpenter stated he wanted to be a regular member on the Board of Adjustment.

Commissioner Harrison made a motion, second by Commissioner Clark to appoint Scott Carpenter as a regular in-Town regular member on the Board of Adjustment. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

ii. Bond Order – Resolution 2024-29

Bobby Fitts introduced Ashley Anderson from Sands Anderson. Ms. Anderson spoke about the next steps and process for the bond order.

Commissioner Harrison made a motion, second by Commissioner Clark to acknowledge the bond order that was presented on June 3, 2024. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Miles made a motion, second by Commissioner Baxter to approve Resolution 2024-29 to set a Public Hearing on the Bond Order for June 18, 2024 at 6:00pm. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

iii. Budget Amendment Request – Contract Services IT – Ordinance 2024-47

Commissioner Baxter asked for an understanding of the request. Lisa Markland explained it was a transfer to cover the IT services for the rest of the year.

Commissioner Baxter made a motion, second by Commissioner Miles to approve Ordinance 2024-47. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

BOARD COMMENTS

Commissioner Davis congratulated all graduates and wished all dads a Happy Father's Day.

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Commissioner Clark stated it was a great turnout and thanked all those who attended the meeting.

Commissioner Harrison stated in November the Board will attend the City Summit for the National League of Cities and the Town was able to take two young people to attend the Summit with the Board. Staff was asked to bring back information about the youth council and ways to identify the two young people to attend.

Commissioner Baxter stated it would be best to discuss and get a fiscal analysis on the youth's participation at the City Summit. Commissioner Harrison stated more information was forthcoming.

Commissioner Baxter spoke about the upcoming Juneteenth Celebration and spoke about going before the Wake County Commissioners to ask for help to build a youth center to help engage youth.

Commissioner Miles thanked those who came to the meeting.

Mayor York stated Chris Tuggle, the Director of the Boys and Girls Club, last day will be June 21, 2024.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Michael Clark gave a monthly development update.

Bobby Fitts reported the following budget transfers:

Finance:

Moved \$2,000 from Insurance & Bonds to Contract Services- Wake Co. Tax Collections;
Moved \$10,000 to Retiree Insurance - \$2,100 from Salaries, \$3,100 from Group Insurance,
\$4,100 from Printing/Copying, and \$700 from Professional Services

Property & Project Management:

Moved \$2,000 to Public Works Maintenance Shop Roof from Parks & Rec Maintenance Building Roof;
Moved \$10,000 to Police Station HVAC - \$4,500 from Generator, \$1,190 from Light Tower, \$610 from Mowers and \$3,700 from Parks & Rec Maintenance Building Roof;
Moved \$10,000 from Salaries - \$3,000 to ZCC/Maintenance Building Maintenance, \$2,000 to ZMC Maintenance and \$5,000 to Buildings & Grounds Maintenance.

Operations:

Moved \$2,500 from Part-time Salaries to Salaries (Overtime)

Mayor York stated the Board would go into Closed Session as allowed by GS § 143-318.11 (a)(6) – for the purpose of personnel discussions.

Commissioner Baxter made a motion, second by Commissioner Miles to go into closed session. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

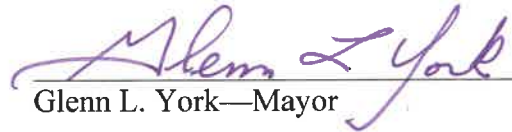
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NOTE: In closed session, Commissioner Davis made a motion, second by Commissioner Harrison to come out of closed session. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

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

Adopted this the 4th day of November 2024.




Glenn L. York—Mayor


Lisa M. Markland, CMC—Town Clerk