

MINUTES
BOARD OF ALDERMEN
SPECIAL BUDGET WORKSHOP
MARCH 9, 2022

Mayor Mills called the Special Budget Workshop to order at 8:30 a.m. in the Town Hall Conference Room.

Attendance: Mayor F. Darryl Mills, Mayor Pro Tem Hank Miller, Alderman Jeff DeGroot, and Alderman Vivian (Zeke) Partin; together with Town Manager Timothy W. Owens and Planner I Robert O'Quinn. Department Heads: Finance Director Melissa Norton, Information Technology Manager Raquel Ivins, Public Works Director Bill Squires, Police Chief David Squires, Interim Fire Chief Chinn, Ocean Rescue Director Dave Baker, Planning and Parks Director Tony Wilson, Recreation Program Supervisor Katie Ryan and Parks Maintenance Supervisor Evan Morigerato.

Absent: Alderman Ken Dull due to a scheduling conflict and Town Clerk Sylvia J. Holleman due to illness.

BUDGET REVIEW

Mr. Owens introduced the budget package and said the goal was to have Department Heads present their budgets. He then reviewed the salaries from the Governing Body and wages and professional services for General Administration.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) BUDGET

The Information Technology Budget was presented by IT Manager Raquel Ivins.

PUBLIC WORKS BUDGET

Public Works Director Bill Squires gave the following review:

- Reviewed staffing availabilities and presented a proposal to reallocate wages from a vacant position to increase the overall department's wages.
- Reviewed the mold remediation since June 2021 and the Public Works offices being in disrepair.
- Reviewed increase in Administration due to salary increases and supplies. He noted that the proposed budget was very close to last year's budget.
- Reviewed the Fleet Maintenance Budget. He talked about structural conditions with the building and the siding that was in disrepair. He noted that the proposed budget was lower than last year; the only change was in the Capital Outlay to repair the I-beams and to temporarily repair the Fleet Maintenance building.
- The Building Maintenance proposed budget had quite an increase due to a quote from ServiceMasters to clean public restrooms and offices. He said he would probably not fill the vacancies that cleaned the restrooms.
- Reviewed the fuel station for vehicle fleet.

POLICE DEPARTMENT BUDGET

Police Chief David Squires gave a presentation that included the following:

- Review of recruiting challenges. Wages and benefits only reflect COLA increases. Presented a proposal with three models for increasing sergeant salaries. He said he had three recent resignations and two pending resignations and he was holding four applications. He noted that starting pay is an issue and said the cost of living was rising faster than salaries in most fields and housing costs were also rising.

- Reviewed proposal to create a new position entitled “Police Officer Recruit” that would be two grades below the Police Officer position. He said they were doing this in Raleigh, Charlotte and Wilmington in order to keep people employed and retained.
- Reviewed Professional Services, Supplies, and Travel and Training.
- Expressed the need for cell phones to go up. He said he would like to drop the Motorola Service Agreement.
- Reviewed the issues with the Sally Port Gate in the Public Safety Building and said it was out of date and it would be cheaper and easier to replace rather than repair.
- Mr. Owens said he would like to invest in the recruitment process sooner rather than later.
- A brief discussion followed regarding the cost of the Police Academy.

FIRE DEPARTMENT BUDGET

Interim Fire Chief Chinn gave the following budget overview:

- The department is currently fully staffed.
- Presented a Pay Study that found that we are 5.6% below every jurisdiction regionally. He noted that Wilmington is proposing 10% and New Hanover County is proposing 12%.
- Supplies and Materials – up slightly.
- A lot of our personal protective equipment is out of date.
- Our defibrillators are older. We would like to replace one this year.
- Our radios are not holding a full charge. We would like six new radios.
- Travel and Training: We are losing people and we need to pay for travel and training for replacements.

OCEAN RESCUE BUDGET

Ocean Rescue Director Dave Baker presented the following:

- Proposed an increase based on the comparison to other beaches. Proposed \$15 per hour starting and \$16 per hour for returning lifeguards. A 42k increase (46k after FICA).
- Reviewed the following statistics: 390 water rescues, 53 major medical, 189 minor medical, and 36 lost and found individuals.

PUBLIC WORKS – STREETS BUDGET

Mr. Squires said this budget contains the salaries for Building Maintenance and Street Maintenance. He said there were no major changes this year.

PARKING MANAGEMENT BUDGET

Mr. Owens reviewed the budget for Parking Management.

PUBLIC WORKS – SANITATION BUDGET

Mr. Squires said the Sanitation budget was the same as last year. Mr. Owens explained what it would look like if we contracted out Sanitation.

PLANNING AND INSPECTIONS BUDGET

Planning and Inspections Director Tony Wilson presented the departmental budget. He said there was a slight increase in overtime for the Rangers. He then gave an update on building permits.

PARKS AND RECREATION – PROGRAM BUDGET

Recreation Program Supervisor Katie Ryan presented the departmental budget. She said they took out the Valentine Run and added the Sounds of Summer Concerts.

PARKS AND RECREATION – PARKS MAINTENANCE BUDGET

Parks Maintenance Supervisor Evan Morigerato presented the Parks Maintenance budget. Alderman Partin asked if they could find \$5k for mulch.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

- Mr. Owens discussed the need for the Town to purchase water. He expressed the need to talk about raising rates.
- Mr. Squires discussed the storm water rates and suggested raising the storm water fees.
- Mr. Owens stated that the Water and Sewer Budget was balanced.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, THE BUDGET WORKSHOP WAS ADJOURNED AT 10:30 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sylvia J. Holleman, Town Clerk
(From Minutes compiled by Planner I Robert O'Quinn)