

MINUTES
BOARD OF ALDERMEN
SPECIAL BUDGET MEETING
MARCH 10, 2020

Mayor Mills called the Special Budget Meeting to order at 8:34 a.m. in the Town Hall Conference Room.

Attendance: Mayor F. Darryl Mills, Mayor Pro Tem Henry E. Miller III, Alderman Jeff DeGroot, Alderman Ken Dull (by phone), and Alderman Vivian (Zeke) Partin; together with Town Manager Timothy W. Owens and Town Clerk Sylvia J. Holleman. Department Heads Present: Information Technology Manager Raquel Ivins, Finance Director Melissa Norton, Public Works Director Bill Squires, and Planning and Parks Director Tony Wilson.

BUDGET OVERVIEW BY THE TOWN MANAGER

Mr. Owens reviewed the summary document in the draft budget book and said we were \$485,000 short. He said the Department Heads were ready to present their budgets.

GOVERNING BODY by Mr. Owens

- The Flotilla asked for \$45,000 this year; we left it the way it was (\$29,000).
- CIP items: \$500,000 for beaches and inlets, \$20,000 for paving the Historic Preservation area, and \$5,000 for Mason's Inlet Assessment.
- Professional Services went up; we added some for the Town Attorney.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION by Mr. Owens

- Basically the same this year.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY by IT Manager Raquel Ivins

- There are a few changes for projects (Public Safety Training Room audio visual).
- Additional cameras in budget.
- Departmental Supplies are up mainly due to extra software.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT by Public Works Director Bill Squires

Public Works Administration

- Three employees and associated expenses.
- Contracted Services up slightly.

Public Works Fleet Maintenance

- Three employees and associated expenses.
- Typical expenditures to fix vehicles
- Will schedule time for Board members to see the garage – we need a plan to fix short term and a plan to replace long term.

Public Works Building Maintenance

- Maintenance for Town buildings.
- Rent for the bathrooms until November.
- Town Hall Improvements: \$125,000 put away; could do engineering this year.

POLICE DEPARTMENT by Town Manager Tim Owens

- Salaries are more because of the Retention Program.
- The rest is normal operating expenditures.

- Chief House consolidated some things in Maintenance.
- Vehicle Replacement Schedule: Buying two vehicles one year and three the next. We may lease vehicles at some point.

FIRE DEPARTMENT by Fire Chief Glen Rogers and Ocean Rescue Director Dave Baker

Fire – Emergency Preparedness

- Basically no change.
- The Town Attorney is working on a contract with the County for a switch to be used at the emergency Library location.

Fire Department

- There is a line item for holiday pay in conjunction with a change in the Personnel Policy that would pay the employees to work instead of using comp time.
- There is a bump in dues and subscriptions because this used to be paid by the Relief Association. Overall increases are small.
- Ladder Truck – we will discuss at the Board’s regular meeting on March 12th.
- Career Development Program: Chief Rogers said, “We are proposing something similar to the one in the Police Department. For us, the main issue is recruitment. We have been successful in getting qualified people from other departments but it is getting harder and harder. We looked at a ten-county pay study and came up with something that would bring us close to where the Police Department is. Financial impact: \$80,000 wages; \$15,000 change in fringe; \$100,000 change in budget.” Alderman Dull asked if a comparison could be done with the Wrightsville Beach Fire and Police Departments and our regional peers.

Fire – Ocean Rescue

- Ocean Rescue Director Dave Baker said, “One huge change in salaries. In 2009, lifeguards were making \$9.29 an hour; now they are making \$10.75 an hour. We are an advanced agency – 25,000 man-hours in eighteen weeks. We want to go up \$1.25 per hour so it would be \$12.00 per hour. We do not have much beach – we cannot use ATVs at high tide. We will need more people. We are asking for an extra two weeks due to the density and use of the beach. The season now goes past Labor Day. We have the ability to scale down. I am proposing an increase of two weeks plus an increase of \$1.25 per hour to provide the protection that we need. The rest of the budget is basically the same.”

PUBLIC WORKS: STREETS by Public Works Director Bill Squires

- Not too many projects. Wages increased by \$21,000.
- Two trucks in the CIP; backhoe replacement; annual street paving. We look at curbing and other things when we look at paving. Mayor Pro Tem Miller asked who would fix the hole in front of Mellow Mushroom. Mr. Squires said that would be the Dept. of Transportation and he would call them again. Alderman Partin asked if there was any way to make the area under the drawbridge more attractive. Mr. Squires said that area belongs to the Dept. of Transportation. He said we replaced the fence but there is too much saltwater infiltration.

PARKING by Town Manager Tim Owens

- Everything is basically the same.

PUBLIC WORKS: SANITATION by Public Works Director Bill Squires

- Capital Outlay: Replacing a vehicle; buying new strand wagon.
- CIP: putting money away for two loadpackers.
- We are about revenue neutral in this department.

PLANNING & INSPECTIONS DEPARTMENT by Planning & Parks Director Tony Wilson

- Not much change.
- We are looking at a part-time Ranger.
- We need a new flood map.
- Patiently waiting for Pay and Classification Study for my employees.

Meeting recessed at 9:55 a.m. and reconvened at 10:00 a.m.

PARKS & RECREATION: PROGRAMS by Program Supervisor Katie Ryan / Mr. Owens

- Mr. Owens said, “The appraisal for the Parks & Rec building will not show enough money. Do we want to get back in that building and keep chipping away? It would take two-to-three years to get back in. We can only do 49.9% each year.” When asked if we could exempt ourselves, he replied, “Not from flood.” Mayor Pro Tem Miller expressed the need to look at the whole place and have a plan. Mr. Owens said it would be one of John Sawyer’s plans (for 850 square feet). Mayor Pro Tem Miller suggested having a workshop to come up with a long-term plan. Mr. Owens said they could set a date at the upcoming Board meeting.
- Ms. Ryan said there was not much change in the rest of the budget. She said some of the items were in the Master Plan.

PARKS MAINTENANCE by Parks Maintenance Supervisor Evan Morigerato

- \$20,000 less than last year.
- Will be taking money out of the CIP for gator replacement.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT by Public Works Director Bill Squires

Public Works – Water

- Mainly operating expenses; mostly maintenance.
- Replacing generators; vehicles in CIP.

Public Works – Storm Water

- Myrtle Court infrastructure - \$250,000 cost from Chris Ford. Infiltration at every joint. Would like to do one thing at a time.
- Mayor Mills asked about the NEI Capital Cost. Mr. Squires replied, “We pay part of the NEI costs to the County. They think we are 11% of the system so they charge us 11% of the costs.”
- Mayor Mills referenced the generators and said we should not over-buy.
- Alderman Dull requested a plan or strategy for water and sewer improvements for next year.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, THE BUDGET MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 10:35 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sylvia J. Holleman
Town Clerk