TOWN OF BURGAW BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL MEETING
STRATEGIC THINKING RETREAT

DATE: February 15-16, 2022
TIME: 9:00 AM
PLACE: Historic Train Depot, 115 S. Dickerson Street
BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Olivia Dawson
Mayor Pro-tem Wilfred Robbins
Bill George, Vernon Harrell, James Malloy, Jan Dawson
STAFF PRESENT: James Gantt, Town Manager
Kristin J. Wells, Town Clerk
Zachary Rivenbark, Town Attorney
Kimberly Rivenbark, Deputy Town Clerk
Wendy Pope, Finance Officer
Tiffany Byrd, Deputy Finance Officer
Cody Suggs, Parks & Recreation Director
Jayna Augst, Recreation Coordinator
Andrea Correll, Planning Director
Alan Moore, Public Works Director

<u>February 15, 2022 – Day 1</u>

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Dawson at 9:00 AM.

Mr. Gantt gave an overall presentation on recent and on-going projects, as well as goals and objectives for the town in regard to the budget planning process. He also spoke about the CPI and sales tax revenue.

There was much discussion amongst the board and staff regarding strengths, weaknesses, goals, and challenges regarding the town in general.

Mr. Gantt gave the board members a CIP handout with departmental requests.

DEPARTMENTAL PRESENTATIONS

Inspections Department: Louis Hesse, Inspections Director, gave an overview of his budget requests. He said he has an additional Inspector in the budget, as years past. He also spoke about the roof on the Inspections building, as well as the roof on Town Hall. He advised the roof on the Inspections building will last a little longer, but the roof on Town Hall has been failing over the years and will need attention soon. Mr. Hesse also added the roof at the Depot will need a UV coating soon.

Parks, Recreation & Tourism Department: Cody Suggs, Parks & Recreation Director, presented his budget requests by Power Point (see attached). He reviewed the mission and vision of the department, as well as completed and pending projects, short-term, medium-term and long-term capital projects.

BREAK 10:28 AM-10:43 AM

Planning Department: Andrea Correll, Planning Director, presented her budget requests by Power Point (see attached). She reviewed her departmental goals and objectives, as well as completed projects, training and requested budget items.

Fire Department: Jim Taylor, Fire Chief, presented his budget requests by Power Point (see attached). He reviewed capital budget requests and advised there is a safety concern with bay doors and requested they be fixed. Chief Taylor also reviewed fire vehicles and timeline on replacements, as well as an increase in personnel. Upon completion of the presentation, Commissioner Malloy asked Chief Taylor to prioritize his requests along with the Town Manager. There was brief discussion regarding the pay and benefits for full-time firefighters.

Police Department: Jim Hock, Police Chief, presented his budget requests by Power Point (see attached.) He reviewed the duties and services of the department. He also reviewed personnel requests, vehicle replacements, and equipment requests. There were comments regarding the old radios, as well as discussion regarding the new jail proposed by the Pender County Sheriff's Office.

There was discussion regarding the vehicle lease program. Commissioner Harrell asked staff to compare the vehicle costs with and without the lease program and inform the board with this information.

Public Works Department: Alan Moore, Public Works Director, advised the department is responsible for street maintenance, sanitation, drainage, cemetery maintenance, fleet, water lines, sewer lines, transmission line, etc. He gave an overview of what was done over the past year, and what is currently underway. Mr. Moore advised his department is asking for the replacement of the backhoe, replacement of the street sweeper, replacement of the dump truck, upgrades to the public works facilities, and add two new employees.

Chief Taylor and Mr. Moore spoke about insertion valves needed at fire hydrants around town. There was discussion on how many of the valves are needed. Mr. Moore advised none of the hydrants in the downtown area have insertion valves.

Commissioner Malloy spoke about the upgrades to the Public Works facilities. He said we need to consider putting money behind updating the facilities for the employees. Mr. Gantt said staff is working on getting estimates and options on upgrading the facilities.

Commissioner Robbins commented on the situation on North Cowan Street with the need of replacing the sewer line. He said we need to look at replacing the line before paving the street.

Commissioner Harrell said he would like to see projects such as the fire hydrant valves be spread out over time.

Mayor Dawson stated the meeting would be continued until February 16, 2022 at 9:00 AM. Day one meeting ended at 12:00 PM.

February 16, 2022 – Day 2

Mayor Dawson stated the meeting is a continuation of the February 15, 2022 meeting. The meeting reconvened at 9:15 AM.

Mr. Gantt reviewed the discussions from the day one meeting.

Commissioner George commented on the parking concern in regards to the renovation of the former EMS building. Mr. Gantt said the plan that is laid out contains about 60 parking spaces around the building. There was discussion about this and the future plan from NC DOT in regards to the improvements at the intersection at Wilmington Street and Walker Street.

There was discussion regarding the list of concerns presented by Commissioner Harrell at the February 8, 2022 board meeting regarding the renovation of the EMS building. After much discussion regarding the renovations, it was the consensus of the board to allow Mr. Gantt to make changes as needed to save money. Commissioner Harrell asked Mr. Gantt to inform him of the suggestions by the architect, Sam Guidry.

Commissioner Robbins commented on the mural that is on the side of the EMS building. After some discussion, it was the consensus of the board to remove the mural, offer to the Pender County Arts Council, and store at Public Works for a certain amount of time. If it is not picked up in a timely manner, it shall be disposed of by the town.

There was discussion about future murals in town. Mr. Gantt advised there should be a plan in place for murals, including maintenance, time frame, etc. Commissioner Malloy commented the town needs murals; they are an attraction. Commissioner Harrell agreed with Commissioner Malloy and said we have a very vibrant community. Attorney Rivenbark reminded the board of the West Side Trail project and an easement the town is attempting to obtain from Rochelle Whiteside. A portion of the trail will cross over her property and she has indicated to Attorney Rivenbark she is willing to give an easement to the town as long as she can maintain use of her property. Attorney Rivenbark commented he feels Ms. Whiteside intends to have some type of an art walk on her property along the trail. After some discussion, the board expressed their interest in continuing art pieces around town.

Mr. Gantt commented on the CIP prioritizations. He asked the board what their top items are for the upcoming budget year. *A budget list was distributed to the board so they may mark their priorities.* Commissioner Harrell stated he is not in favor of raising taxes. He also commented on past issues with sleeping quarters and additional firefighters. Mr. Gantt explained the fire department has adequate space for additional employees.

Commissioner Robbins said he likes all of the priorities and thanked Mr. Gantt and Ms. Pope for the way the budget was presented this year. Commissioner Robbins said he supports everything on the list but we really need a new street sweeper. There was discussion on how it could be purchased, whether it could be paid for from the water and sewer fund, or if it would have to be paid from the general fund. Commissioner Malloy asked if the sweeper is used downtown only or town-wide. The street sweeper is used on any street in town that has curb and gutter. Commissioner Dawson asked if it was possible to lease or finance a street sweeper. Mr. Gantt will look into this option.

There was brief discussion on police cameras being on the CIP for the upcoming years, as well as brief discussion on the Public Works facilities. Mr. Gantt said he asked Mr. Moore to get him plans and ideas for upgrading the facility, but have not received anything from Mr. Moore yet. There was also comments regarding the old vehicles behind the Public Works garage that were seized years ago by the Police Department. Attorney Rivenbark stated he and staff are continuing to work on getting the cars removed.

There was discussion regarding the fire hydrants that were spoken about during the day one meeting.

There was discussion regarding infrastructure needs in town. Commissioner Malloy commented on ditches needing cleaning out. Mr. Gantt explained the process of checking the status of pipes, cleaning ditches, etc. There was also comments about a water line in need of attention near the elementary school. Commissioner Harrell thinks this needs to be near the top of the list.

Commissioner Harrell commented on the dump truck replacements on the list. There were also comments on additional Public Works employees in the upcoming budget years, as well as new police and fire personnel proposed.

Commissioner George said we need to be thinking about land to put the fire department and police department building. There was also discussion regarding parking in town and possible parking on the railroad right-of-way.

Commissioner Robbins said he believes Parks and Recreation need the requested utility trailer. He also said the roof at town hall is a major ticket item.

BREAK 10:59-11:13 AM

There was discussion regarding the replacement of Chief Taylor’s truck. Mr. Gantt explained the lease program with Enterprise.

There was much discussion regarding the future growth of the west side of town. Commissioner Robbins said curb and gutter would improve the look down West Fremont Street. Mayor Dawson also added since we have an extra “Welcome to Burgaw” sign, that it would nice to place it in NC Highway 53 West area. Mr. Gantt will look into possible locations for this.

There was discussion regarding personnel. Commissioner Robbins said we need to add one fireman. Mr. Gantt suggested the Fire Department work heavily on their volunteer program, as well as looking at a junior volunteer program.

Commissioner Robbins commented on the requested personnel for Public Works. There was discussion about a green team. Mr. Gantt suggested the board look at appointing a committee for beautification improvements, including board members, TDA members, staff, etc. Commissioner Robbins agrees with Mr. Gantt and thinks this is the best way to move forward with getting things done.

Commissioner Robbins thinks some of the board members need to meet with the county to discuss the planting of trees on the Courthouse Square. The issue would be who would maintain them. There is also question on what to do with the holly trees around the square. Commissioner Malloy suggested to place hedges in the place of the holly trees. Commissioner Harrell reminded the board of Johnny Westbrook's tree plan on the Courthouse Square.

It was the consensus of the board to create a committee to handle the beautification and landscaping needs for the town. Commissioner Harrell said he would like to see members from the public on the committee. It was agreed upon that Mayor Dawson and Commissioner Dawson serve on the committee. Mr. Gantt will work on this and bring it back to the board.

Mr. Gantt advised he received a call from our NC DOT representative and they requested the board to choose an alternate for the Transportation Advisory Committee. Commissioner Harrell currently serves in this capacity and would like to continue as alternate. The board agreed to continue with Commissioner Harrell serving on the committee as an alternate.

There was discussion regarding the request of an additional Detective position with the Police Department. Mr. Gantt advised there would not be a need for any additional equipment. After some discussion, no one was opposed to this request.

There was discussion regarding the town requesting a Pender Central Fire tax increase to the county. Mr. Gantt explained justification for this request and the board was in favor. There were also comments made regarding the fire tax for St. Helena. It was agreed upon the board for Ms. Pope to inform St. Helena they will be requesting an increase of the county so they are aware.

Commissioner Dawson asked about a cost of living adjustment. Mr. Gantt advised the consumer price index is currently showing a 7.8% increase. He said he will not know numbers until closer to completion of the budget.

There were comments about paving. Mr. Gantt said this year's paving projects are in progress. He said we allocate funds each year to cover costs of paving needed areas.

Adjournment

Commissioner Harrell made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dawson and carried by unanimous vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:32 PM.

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G. Olivia Dawson, Mayor

Attest:______________________________
Kristin J. Wells, Town Clerk