

**TOWN OF BURGAW BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
SPECIAL MEETING  
STRATEGIC THINKING RETREAT**

**DATE:** February 21, 22, and 24, 2023  
**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  
Kimberly Rivenbark, Deputy Town Clerk  
Jim Hock, Police Chief/Assistant Town Manager  
Wendy Pope, Finance Officer  
Tiffany Byrd, Deputy Finance Officer  
Cody Suggs, Parks & Recreation Director  
Gilbert Combs, Planning Director  
Alan Moore, Public Works Director  
Louis Hesse, Building Code Administrator  
Jim Taylor, Fire Chief

*Note: This retreat was a total of 9.5 hours. Audio recording is on file in the clerk's office for reference.*

**February 21, 2023 – Day 1**

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Dawson at 9:00 AM and the invocation was led by Commissioner Malloy.

Mr. Gantt gave an overall presentation on recent and on-going projects, as well as goals and objectives for the town in regards to the budget planning process. There was discussion amongst the board and staff regarding strengths, weaknesses, goals, and challenges regarding the town in general.

**DEPARTMENTAL PRESENTATIONS**

The following department heads presented their requests for the upcoming budget year:

- Building Inspections
- Parks, Recreation & Tourism Department
- Planning Department
- Fire Department
- Police Department
- Public Works Department

*During the departmental presentations, there was a break between 10:20 AM – 10:35 AM. Commissioner Malloy left the meeting at 11:30.*

Mayor Dawson recessed the meeting at 12:00 PM until 9:00 AM on February 22, 2023.

### **February 22, 2023 – Day 2**

*All board members were present; Commissioner Malloy arrived to the meeting at 9:35 AM.*

Mayor Dawson reconvened the meeting at 9:00 AM.

John Westbrook, 410 E. Fremont Street, was present and requested to speak. He advised he has spoken with the church members at Burgaw Presbyterian Church regarding the possibility of a shared parking lot for public use. Mr. Westbrook advised the church members seem supportive and said they would like the parking lot to be paved with parking bumpers. He wanted to inform the board of this matter in case paving the parking lot needed to be included in the budget process. Mr. Westbrook also spoke about the landscaping along Wright Street.

Mr. Gantt and the board discussed the following personnel requests from departments:

- Planning Department: Requested a part time or fulltime employee; Commissioners Robbins, Dawson and Harrell were not in favor of adding additional personnel at this time. Everyone agreed to work towards an intern provided by UNCW for additional help within the Planning Department.
- Fire Department: Requested three (3) company officers and one (1) entry level firefighter. After discussion, it was decided to work with what we already have on staff in the Fire Department. Mr. Gantt said he does not think we need someone specifically for fire inspections.
- Public Works Department: Requested four (4) fulltime employees. Commissioner Dawson said the Assistant Public Works Director is doing a great job and needs a raise. Mr. Gantt said this can be handled through the merit pool. There was discussion about Damon transitioning into a facilities maintenance type position and hire a Utility Technician to take his place. Commissioner Malloy said something needs to be done about the ditches on the west side of town. Mr. Gantt explained the roles of the town landscaper and advised we are looking at trying to get inmates to assist with various projects in town, such as ditching. After much discussion, the board decided to create a Facilities Maintenance position and hire a Utility Technician to take Damon's job. The board also said they would like more training for the equipment operator so that work can be done on the ditches.
- Parks, Recreation & Tourism Department: Requested one (1) part time staff member to help with special events when needed. The board was in favor of this request.
- Inspections Department: Mr. Hesse said he would like to have someone hired to train prior to his retirement coming within the next 2-3 years, but this position can wait until next budget year.

**Break 10:35 AM – 10:51 AM.**

The board decided to finish talking about departmental requests during this portion of the meeting and continue with the capital requests on February 24, 2023 at 9:00 AM.

**Other items discussed at the meeting:**

Mr. Gantt mentioned the civil penalty from the rain incident (possible sewer overflow) has been reduced and will be paid.

Mr. Gantt gave the board a draft policy on traffic calming/speed bumps in town. Commissioners Malloy and Harrell said they would like the speed bumps installed on Satchwell Street before waiting on approval of the policy. Commissioner Harrell said he would like for us to make a final decision on Friday regarding the installation of the speed humps on Satchwell Street, as recently requested.

*Commissioner Dawson left the meeting at 11:09 AM.*

Mr. Gantt and the board discussed the following departmental requests:

- Inspections Department: Roof on Annex Building and Depot needs fixing/replacing. The board was in agreement to include these two roofs within the budget. Mayor Dawson also requested we look at reconditioning the upstairs at the Old Jail.
- Planning Department: There was discussion about the Main Street program and the requirement of 20+ hours a week to be dedicated to the program.
- Public Works Department: There was discussion about picking up leaves around town. Mr. Gantt recommended we look at a vacuum system. There was also discussion about educating the public about not blowing grass clippings/leaves into the street, etc.
- Parks, Recreation & Tourism Department: There was discussion about a skate park and dog park. There was a concern voiced about land acquisition. After some discussion, it was suggested by the board to allow Mr. Gantt to look into the former golf course property. The board agreed to include the dog park in the upcoming budget. There was also discussion about the need for replacing the picnic tables at the parks; the board agreed to include this within the budget. Installation of gutters on the pavilion at Rotary Park also needs to be done; the board agreed to include this within the budget.
- Facilities and Maintenance: Routine maintenance of the depot and the community house will be included within the budget as usual.

**February 24, 2023 – Day 3**

*All board members were present.*

Mayor Dawson reconvened the meeting at 9:00 AM and the invocation was led by Commissioner Malloy.

Prior to continuing the discussion regarding the budget, Commissioner Malloy made a motion to appropriate \$11k for the installation of the speed humps on West Satchwell Street, as a result of

the recent discussion regarding speeding concerns voiced at prior meetings. Mr. Gantt presented a policy regarding speed humps for this matter, but Commissioner Malloy included within his motion to discuss the policy at the March board meeting and get the speed humps on West Satchwell Street installed as soon as possible. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Harrell and carried by unanimous vote.

### **Continuation of budget discussion**

**Landscaping:** There was much discussion about the landscaping around town. Commissioner Dawson said she was not pleased with the current job being done by the contract landscaper. Commissioner Robbins suggested seasonal flowers need to be included with the contract. After discussion, the board agreed to bid out landscaping services for the town to include mowing of all town properties except for the railroad right-of-way and cemetery, which would both be handled by Public Works staff. Commissioner Harrell suggested we hire locals if possible.

**Beautification Committee:** Mayor Dawson said the committee would like to request at least \$20k this year. There are lots of things that need to be done and purchased, including new Christmas décor, bows, flowers, landscaping, new Santa, organization for storage of décor, and more Christmas lights. There was also discussion about the NC Blueberry Festival storage at Public Works. The board agreed to give the festival a deadline after this year's festival for removing their items from the town's facility. This space is needed for the storage of Beautification items.

**Dees Park:** Mr. Gantt said the grant period for this project is opening on March 1<sup>st</sup> and will reapply for grant assistance. Commissioner Robbins asked about expediting the installation of restrooms at the park. After some discussion, Commissioner Robbins requested Mr. Gantt to work with Mr. Hesse and get a cost of the project to have the restrooms installed.

### **BREAK 10:11-10:24 AM**

**Public Works:** There was discussion about the purchase of a lift. Mr. Gantt will check on pricing. There was discussion about water and sewer priorities. Mr. Gantt commented on the painting of the water tower at the Community House that will need to be done in the next couple of years. He said the tank has lead based paint and will need to be draped and paint removed. He said this will cost around \$300k. There was also discussion about street paving. Mr. Gantt will get cost estimates for the street paving priorities. Commissioner Harrell said we need to make sure we take care of the water and sewer lines and culverts before paving.

**Fire Department:** The board was in favor of moving forward with the process of replacing Squad 15. There was discussion about active shooter vests and helmets, as well as a vehicle for the Deputy Chief. The board agreed to include the vehicle as part of the 2024-2025 budget.

**Police Department:** Radio replacement was discussed, as well as normal rotation of replacing patrol vehicles.

### **Other items**

There was discussion about outside organizations requesting funding from the town. It was suggested that staff bring back an application to the board for consideration so that we have record when an organization wants money from the town. Commissioner Robbins said he would like the board to have the ability to look at the organization's financials and know what the money is being spent on. Commissioner Malloy said he thought the 1865 Society requested reoccurring funding each budget year. Mr. Gantt said organizations need to request funding each budget year. After much discussion, the board agreed there needed to be a cap on the funding and to make sure the issuance of funds is consistent.

There was brief discussion about the façade grant funding. Mr. Gantt asked if there were any other priorities for the budget that needed to be included in the CIP. Commissioner Harrell requested to include land acquisition for multipurpose. Also requested was the project on Courthouse Avenue. Mr. Gantt also spoke about the debris site we currently have for burning debris. We need to be looking at other locations in the future.

### **Adjournment**

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

The meeting was adjourned at 12:28 PM.

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Kristin J. Wells, Town Clerk

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G. Olivia Dawson, Mayor