TOWN OF BURGAW BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL MEETING - BUDGET RETREAT

DATE:	February 27, 2024
TIME:	9:00 AM
PLACE:	Burgaw Town Center 108 E Wilmington St
BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:	Mayor Olivia Dawson Mayor Pro-tem James Malloy Commissioner Jan Dawson Commissioner Bill George Commissioner Michael Pearsall Commissioner William Rivenbark
BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:	

1. Call to Order

Mayor Dawson called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

2. Invocation

The invocation was led by Commissioner Malloy.

3. Manager Comments & Recap of Previous Year

Town Manager James Gantt reviewed the previous year and requested the board discuss the SWOT analysis once again. Since there are a couple of new commissioners on the board for this budget work session, Mr. Gantt briefly explained the process. The board discussed the town's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). The following notes were taken for each word:

Strengths: Communication, establishing a new agenda software, keeping minutes updated on the website, constructing of the Burgaw Town Center, diversity, employees, departments, Parks, Recreation & Tourism staff working with seniors, liability, Planning and Inspections Department working with code enforcement.

Weaknesses: Land acquisition, communication, electrical needs for the downtown area for Christmas/events.

Opportunities: Increase development in the industrial park, possibility of the rail coming back through town, partnerships with other organizations, business growth, grant funding, work along with the Downtown Business Association regarding the appearance of downtown buildings.

Threats: The appearance of downtown buildings and drainage issues throughout town.

After discussion regarding the SWOT analysis, Commissioner Pearsall suggested a brochure be created to encourage business owners to paint and improve the appearance of their buildings.

4. Departmental Items

The following Department Heads presented budget requests from their departments. Their presentations are attached to the minutes for reference.

- Jim Taylor, Fire Department
- Damon Stanley, Facilities & Grounds Manager
- Louis Hesse, Inspections Department
- Gilbert Combs, Planning Department
- Cody Suggs, Parks, Recreation & Tourism Department
- Jim Hock, Police Department
- Alan Moore, Public Works Department
- James Gantt, Administration

Mayor Dawson spoke about the downtown masterplan and Commissioner Malloy commented on the concern of parking for residents above the businesses.

Following the staff presentations, Mayor Dawson ended the discussion on February 27, 2024 at 1:05 PM and called for the meeting to be continued to February 28, 2024 at 9:00 AM.

5. Budget Discussion

Mayor Dawson reconvened the meeting at 9:00 AM on February 28, 2024. Commissioner Dawson was absent. The invocation was led by Commissioner George.

Commissioner Malloy stated he would like to see things from last year's budget that were accomplished, and if not, explain why. Mr. Gantt gave a brief status overview of projects that were included in the prior year's budget. Commissioner Pearsall asked if status of all of the projects are available for viewing at any given time. Mr. Gantt said he plans to build this into the website in the future.

Commissioner Malloy said we need to look at the drainage issue near Rainbow International at Satchwell Street. Mr. Gantt said the stormwater master plan will look into this area and see if culverts are needed. There was discussion about flooding issues and drainage throughout town.

There was discussion regarding the Burgaw Town Center expenses related to the parking lot and digital sign.

Mayor Dawson called for a break between 10:23 AM and 10:33 AM.

There was discussion about Christmas decorations. Mayor Dawson requested the board to appropriate the funds to purchase the large Santa and two (2) street banners that need replacing. Everyone agreed to this request. Ms. Pope will bring a budget ordinance to the March meeting for official approval.

There was discussion about the digital sign to be placed next to the Burgaw Town Center. Everyone agreed to appropriate $50k for the sign and electrical needs.

The following department budget priorities were discussed:

Everyone agreed to push off the 2030 Plan and not make it a priority right now.

It was agreed upon to make the fork lift and UTV a high priority for Public Works. The board made the mini vac a low priority on the list.

There was discussion about renovating the second floor of the Old Jail. It was agreed upon to make this project a medium priority.

The board agreed to begin the process of more detailed quotes and information related to the Police Department expansion, making it a medium priority.

There was discussion about the rotary clock as previously mentioned by the Beautification Committee. Everyone agreed to move forward with this if the county includes a portion of the purchase in their budget as well.

The board discussed the depot dock railing as requested by Mr. Stanley. The railing needs replacement with either cable or aluminum railing. The board requested Mr. Stanley get formal quotes for the project and agreed to replace the railing with cable if the budget allows.

The board agreed to include $15k in the budget for the Beautification Committee.

There was discussion about the proposed pavilion at Dees Park. The board agreed to move forward with the proposal of bathrooms and decided to make this a high priority.

The board said the electrical needs at the Courthouse Square is a high priority. Mr. Stanley is to work on getting a quote.

The board agreed the West Side Trail project is a high priority. Mr. Suggs is to work on a formal proposal and bid process.

Public safety items, such as PPE, body worn cameras, handguns, etc. are all high priorities and are reoccurring budget items each year.

There was discussion about the Fire Department items. The board agreed to make the fire extinguisher training prop a medium to high priority. They agreed to make the requested locker upgrades and radio headsets for Engine 15 a high priority.

The board agreed to replace three (3) police vehicles if the budget allowed.

Mr. Gantt spoke about the radio replacement project. He said the county is still looking at the municipalities having a lease agreement with the county and they purchase all of the needed radios in bulk.

There was brief discussion about the repainting of the downtown water tower and the possibility of adding the town logo. The board agreed to make this a medium priority.

The board agreed to make the ground penetrating radar for Public Works a high priority.

There was brief discussion about the insertion valves and the bypass valves being ongoing for aging fire hydrants.

The board said the SCADA system should be medium to high priority.

The board agreed sewer man hole rehabilitation, the water and sewer masterplan, drainage improvements and the stormwater masterplan should all be high priorities.

There was brief discussion about the IT maintenance being on-going, as well as the Police Department computer replacements.

The board discussed a town-wide camera system and agreed to start adding more cameras each year.

There was discussion about paving streets. McNeil Street and E. Taylor Street are both high priorities.

The board discussed a downtown masterplan, including both parking and streetscape. Sidewalk improvements were determined to be high priorities. Commissioner Malloy said the sidewalk between Wilmington Street and Fremont Street needs replacing. Mayor Dawson requested we do minor upgrades, such as painting of the crosswalks.

There was discussion about personnel requests for the upcoming budget. The board agreed to advertise for a Building Inspector immediately. The board said they would try to include Fire Captains, but wants to see if the county will be providing funding towards the Burgaw Fire Department, as requested. The board agreed the town needs a full-time IT Manager and directed Human Resources to begin advertisement immediately. The board decided to hold off on a Planner position since Mr. Combs is leaving the town shortly. Mayor Dawson said we need to consider a Project Manager in the future.

Prior to adjournment, Mayor Dawson said she would like to hold quarterly board work sessions to discuss projects and items in detail, outside of the regular meeting.

6. Adjournment

Commissioner Malloy made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:39 PM. The motion was seconded by Commissioner George and carried by unanimous vote.