

**TOWN OF BURGAW BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL MEETING - WORK SESSION**

DATE: August 27, 2024
TIME: 2:00 PM
PLACE: Burgaw Town Center
108 E Wilmington St
BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Olivia Dawson
Commissioner Bill George
Mayor Pro-tem James Malloy
Commissioner Jan Dawson
Commissioner Bill George
Commissioner Michael Pearsall
BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Commissioner William Rivenbark

1. Call to Order

Mayor Dawson called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM.

2. Invocation

The invocation was led by Commissioner Malloy.

3. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was said by all.

4. Work Session - Priorities and projects of the town

Mayor Dawson advised the purpose of this meeting was to discuss the priorities and projects of the town. She said one of the priorities for discussion is sidewalk improvements in the downtown area.

Downtown Sidewalk Improvements

Chief Hock reminded the board that \$100k was allocated in the FY 2024-2025 budget for sidewalk improvements. Prior to the budget, the board requested a quote for sidewalk replacement along Wright Street between Bridgers Street and Satchwell Street, as well as Courthouse Avenue. He said the quote received for those areas came in at approximately \$214k. This includes sidewalks on both sides of Wright Street between Bridgers Street and Wilmington Street, the west side sidewalk of Wright Street between Wilmington Street and Satchwell Street, half of the block of Wright Street on the east side sidewalk between Fremont Street and Satchwell Street, and both sides of the Courthouse Avenue. Chief Hock said if the board wishes to move

forward with the project as quoted, an additional \$114k is needed to be appropriated from the general fund to cover the full cost of the project. Commissioner Pearsall commented on doing the improvements in phases and looking at how much it would cost to do each section. Mr. Gantt reminded the board that the quote only includes removing the current sidewalk and pouring new concrete; there would not be any additional work such as underground utilities, stamped concrete, pavers, etc. He said if the board wishes to look at other improvements in the area, such as those things mentioned, then that needs to be taken into consideration when allocating additional funding for the project. Mr. Gantt said there are ongoing discussions with Duke Energy regarding underground utilities. Wright Street looks to be the best option for underground power lines. Fremont Street and Courthouse Avenue do not look favorable for underground utilities because of the extensive amount of lines and transformers, etc. After further discussion, Commissioner Malloy said his main concern is how much additional money is going to be allocated so we will know how much the board has to work with to get this issue resolved. Commissioner Dawson thinks at least \$100k needs to be appropriated (in addition to the \$100k already approved in the budget) for the improvements. There were comments on how much the general fund would be impacted if \$150k was appropriated. Ms. Pope said it would not affect it tremendously, based on a two-million dollar fund balance. Commissioner Pearsall said there are no lines that go under Fremont Street, so looking at the worst areas, he asked how much that would cost. He said he likes to tackle the easiest projects first. He said we know Courthouse Avenue is going to be treacherous and the amount of money Commissioner Malloy is looking for may go up because of the transformers and wires. Commissioner Pearsall asked what the cost would be to go down Fremont Street first. He said the residents would see what we are doing and how we are trying to beautify and fix things up. He suggested to determine the cost for that first, then move to Courthouse Avenue. He said if we appropriate \$150k and tackle the smaller things first, people will see we are moving. Commissioner Pearsall said he does not see Courthouse Avenue moving anytime soon. Mayor Dawson said this is the issue, we keep putting it off; there is growth down there and the more we put it off, the worse it is going to get. Commissioner Dawson said the board has desired for underground utilities on Courthouse Avenue for a long time. Mr. Gantt said he does not see this being feasible at any point in the foreseeable future, due to the number of lines and main power sources in the area for the downtown buildings. Mr. Gantt said we need to look at what we can do within our budget from a town standpoint; he does not see underground utilities as an option at this point for Fremont Street or Courthouse Avenue. He said Wright Street is a possibility in the future, but would be very costly. Commissioner Dawson said other towns do this and suggest looking into grant funding. Mr. Gantt said some grants are not available to us because of our good economic status in Pender County. Mr. Gantt spoke about placing bricks in the areas around the curb cuts so there could be easy access to future underground utilities. Commissioner Malloy said again he wants to know how much total amount of money the board is going to spend on the sidewalk improvements so we can prioritize what needs to be done. Commissioner Pearsall made a motion to allocate an additional \$100k. Commissioner Dawson said \$150k, but wants to know the percentage of the fund

balance if we appropriate this amount. Ms. Pope said we were at 64% at the end of fiscal year 2023. She said the way it looks right now, it will be about 42%, but this is based on current year expenditures, etc. Ms. Pope briefly explained the process on how the audit determines the percentages. Commissioner Malloy said he wants to make sure we do things right so we don't have to do it again. He said things need to get done so the people see us getting things done. Commissioner Malloy said we need the amount determined so we can decide how we are going to get things done. Commissioner Pearsall commented about waiting on Duke. Mayor Dawson said that is on us; we either leave it as is, or pursue doing it in the future, but it is going to cost a lot of money. Commissioner Pearsall said while we are waiting in the meantime, maybe we can start on Wright Street or Fremont Street. Commissioner Pearsall said do we allocate the money and let it sit there, with no plan, and not do anything until Duke does something, or do we look at something smaller. Commissioner Dawson said Courthouse Avenue is in much worse shape than Fremont Street and Wright Street, so we need to do something about that. Commissioner Pearsall agreed. There was much discussion about Courthouse Avenue and what improvements need to be made, including issues with the higher curb on one side, stormwater, etc. Mr. Gantt said the sidewalks need to go back like it is because if not, it will create more issues with steps going into the businesses and drainage issues. Chief Hock said the quote for sidewalk replacements on both sides of Courthouse Avenue is approximately \$63k. Commissioner Dawson said we need to take care of Courthouse Avenue. Mr. Gantt asked if the board wanted only concrete, or incorporate brick pavers, etc. There was discussion about Mr. Westbrook's plan he previously presented to the board. Mr. Westbrook was present and spoke briefly about his ideas for the improvements along Courthouse Avenue. Mayor Dawson commented on solar powered lamp posts. Commissioner Pearsall commented on Mr. Gantt's statement about new concrete going on Courthouse Avenue and if the town did something later on, then we would have to dig up the concrete. He said we are looking at spending \$60k plus on Courthouse for concrete and goes against what Mr. Gantt stated previously about putting pavers down in case we need to change something in the future regarding power lines, etc. Commissioner Pearsall agreed bricks would be a great idea. Mayor Dawson said this is what the board needs to decide; how we want it to look and what we want. Commissioner Pearsall said he is concerned with the powerlines, as Mr. Gantt previously stated. Mayor Dawson reiterated that the underground powerlines are not going to happen anytime soon, possibly 10-20 years down the road unless we come up with several million dollars. Commissioner Pearsall said hopefully we wouldn't be wasting money and if we can't get the lines underground any cheaper, then he said to do the bricks. Mayor Dawson said there are other sidewalk areas in town that citizens are concerned with, not just the downtown area, but she thinks Courthouse Avenue must be done. Mr. Westbrook voiced his opinion on not replacing the sidewalk in front of his business and to spend the money on Courthouse Avenue, starting with the end closest to the depot. He wants to make sure the board does what is right with the money we have. Commissioner George spoke about the building at the back of Dees Park that the town tried to purchase years ago. After brief comments, Mayor Dawson said this is something we need to look at again. The board agreed.

Commissioner Malloy said he will contact the owner. There was discussion about the sidewalks on Wright Street between Wilmington Street and Bridgers Street. Mr. Gantt and Commissioner Malloy said there are some rough areas for trip hazards and tree roots. After discussion, the board agreed Courthouse Avenue is priority. Mr. Gantt spoke about the brick pavers. He said the cost of all concrete verses some concrete and some brick, might be about the same cost, or cost more with brick. Mr. Gantt said, if the board wanted to include brick, he suggested to place the brick pavers from the curb into the sidewalk about a foot or so. Mayor Dawson proposed to the board to dedicate \$100k to Courthouse Avenue and see how far that money can go with improvements on that street. Additional funds can be used in other areas of town that need improvement. Mr. Gantt said he could have Public Works staff inspect the sidewalks throughout town for the areas that need attention. It was clarified that the quote for replacement on Courthouse Avenue does include curb and gutter replacement as well. Mr. Westbrook requested the board to only concentrate on Courthouse Avenue between the alley and the depot. There was discussion about parallel parking and the width of Courthouse Avenue.

After much discussion, Commissioner Pearsall reiterated his motion from earlier in the conversation to allocate an additional \$100k to the \$100k already in the budget for sidewalk improvements. Commissioner Dawson and Commissioner Pearsall voiced their concern with the fund balance percentage. Ms. Pope said the auditors will report more of an accurate fund balance in October once the FY 2023-2024 audit is complete. At that time, we will have a better idea of what kind of impact the appropriation will have on the budget. Commissioner Dawson and Commissioner Pearsall said we could look at the budget at that time to determine if we are able to allocate additional funds for improvements. Commissioner Dawson seconded the motion and carried by unanimous vote. Commissioner Malloy made an additional motion to make Courthouse Avenue sidewalk replacements the first priority with the \$200k, then proceed with the remaining funds to replace other areas in town as needed. The motion was seconded by Commissioner George and carried by unanimous vote. Mr. Gantt asked the board how they would like to proceed with the design of Courthouse Avenue. Mayor Dawson suggested to get pricing on lampposts and bring back more information to the board. The board agreed to incorporate brick pavers along Courthouse Avenue. Mr. Gantt will look into options and bring more information back to the board. Commissioner Malloy said he would like to add additional funding for sidewalk repairs each budget year to build this line item up.

The sidewalk improvement discussion ended with clarification that there is now \$200k allocated for sidewalk improvements, with Courthouse Avenue being top priority. This includes sidewalk replacement on both sides of Courthouse Avenue with possible enhancements of brick pavers and lampposts; no street improvements are proposed at this time. Mr. Gantt will bring back additional information regarding the enhancements. After completion of Courthouse Avenue, the remaining funds of the \$200k will be used in other areas of town where sidewalk replacement is needed.

Drainage Issues

Commissioner Malloy said he spoke to Mr. Gantt about an issue during a recent rain event. He said he believes this will be handled by the town and NC DOT to resolve the issue. There were brief comments about the corner of Smith Street and Bridgers Street, as well as other ditch areas that need cleaning out by the town and/or NC DOT. Mr. Gantt said a lot of the drainage areas and issues will be looked at during the Stormwater Masterplan update by engineers. Mayor Dawson commented on the overgrown ditch next to the new ABC store. Mr. Gantt said he has brought this issue to the engineer for review.

Street Signs

There was brief discussion about replacing street signs that are old and faded. Mayor Dawson said that the East Bridgers Street sign off of US Highway 117 needs replacing. Mr. Gantt said he would like to have funds allocated each budget year for sign replacements. Commissioner Malloy commented on the welcome signs coming into town. He said it would be nice to have brick signs. Mayor Dawson said the Beautification Committee is working on getting quotes for a brick welcome sign at US Highway 117 and South Walker Street, similar to the one at Johnson Park. In the meantime, Mr. Stanley is working on having the two welcome signs at the north and south US Highway 117 entrances refurbished and painted. Commissioner Malloy would like to come up with a way to begin allocating funds to have a brick welcome signs at the entrances of town in the future.

Yard Debris Policy

Mayor Dawson asked the board if everyone was in agreement with the revisions to the yard debris and white goods collection policy updated by Mr. Moore recently. Commissioner Malloy voiced his concern with whole house clean outs, that are so large it takes staff a long time to pick up. He said we should not be responsible for picking up whole house clean out items. Mr. Gantt said we have to be careful with what is considered as "whole house clean outs". There was discussion about the amount of debris that sometimes gets placed by the street. Mr. Gantt said he doesn't want to see large amounts of yard debris sitting by the streets for long periods of time.

Mural Discussion

During the construction of the Burgaw Town Center, the board previously spoke about a standing mural that could be changed throughout the year and placed on the vacant lot next to the Burgaw Town Center. Commissioner Malloy said he would like to see us look at this. There was discussion about having various art structures and a mural to utilize the green space next to the building. Mayor Dawson said we would need to come up with a program on the process of choosing the mural, how long it stays up, etc. Mr. Gantt will look into what other towns are doing. Commissioner Pearsall said a

gazebo or pergola would be nice.

Other items

Commissioner Dawson asked for a status of fixing the Old Jail from leaks of a recent rain event. Mayor Dawson said Mr. Stanley has been working hard to see where the problems are and it seems that water is coming in through the stucco walls.

Mayor Dawson asked about the areas that the town needs access to for cleaning out ditches, etc. Mr. Gantt said the Stormwater Masterplan will identify the best way to get water out of town. He feels a lot of the areas will be discovered during the plan. Once the areas are identified, the town can work towards getting easements so we can perpetually clean the areas, not just a one-time clean-out. There were brief comments about the prisoner program where prisoners come in and clean out ditches, etc. No one was opposed to Mr. Gantt looking into this program.

Commissioner Dawson asked the status on the box culvert for North Walker Street. Chief Hock said we are still waiting for it to be delivered.

Daniel Wedlock was present and voiced his concern about pedestrians walking along NC Highway 53 between Timberly Lane and US Highway 117. Commissioner Dawson and Mr. Gantt said this was looked at before but it would be difficult to put in a sidewalk due to easements and space.

5. Adjournment

Commissioner Malloy made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:35 PM. The motion was seconded by Commissioner George and carried by unanimous vote.