



MINUTES
Town of Atlantic Beach, North Carolina
Town Council Meeting
125 W Fort Macon Road and
Electronically via Zoom
Monday, April 24, 2023 – 4:00pm



The reconvened meeting of the Atlantic Beach Town Council was held Monday, April 24, 2023 at 4:00pm in the Council Meeting Room, 125 West Fort Macon Road, Atlantic Beach, North Carolina.

Members Present: Mayor A. B. Cooper, III; Mayor Pro Tem Austin Waters; Councilmembers: Joey Dean, Danny Navey, Joseph Starling

Members Absent: Councilmember Renea Baker (via Zoom)

Others Present: John O'Daniel, Town Manager; Katrina Tyer, Town Clerk; Sabrina Simpson, Admin Services Director; Sarah Currie, Finance Director; Jeff Harvey, Police Chief; Jennifer Ansell, Planning Director; Marc Schulze, Public Service Director; Mike Simpson, Fire Chief

FY23-24 BUDGET WORKSHOP (Continued)

Mayor Cooper reconvened the meeting continued from April 12, 2023 at 4:06pm.

Mayor Cooper thanked Manager O'Daniel for presenting a budget and leaving the hard decisions for Council to consider and make the decisions on how to close the gap in the \$640,000 deficit.

Councilmember Dean asked O'Daniel for a clear understanding on why there is a deficit and to review the decisions Council needs to consider this year. Councilmember Dean asked for an explanation on Resolution 22-01-02 setting an unassigned fund balance policy and how it pertains to their decisions.

Councilmember Starling wants to make sure that all board members understand the loan and terms we currently have for the fire truck we are awaiting delivery.

O'Daniel presented options to balance the budget including a tax increase to fund the new fire truck, reduce COLA from 6.5% to 5% or a flat \$3,000, increase debris pickup \$2, increasing water rates to help save for future large repairs to the aging system, cutting the proposed code enforcement officer position, cutting the current UNC water testing contract and the public safety complex cleaning contract.

There was discussion on the proposed water rates increase and tax increase, we are still the lowest on both in the area. An increase in the paid parking rate from \$3 to \$4 would generate an extra estimated \$104,000. It was the consensus that if the parking rate is increased, we could reduce the proposed tax rate. It was the consensus to increase the hourly parking rate by \$1 and to extend the parking past August 31.

Once we receive the new fire truck, we can sell the old one for a small amount, approximately \$50,000. There was discussion on paying off the loan to reduce the debt service totals.

Councilmember Starling supports the \$3,000 raise for all staff, rather than the percentage, this will help the lessor paid employees more.

Councilmember Baker stated she supports the parking rate increase and asked Chief Harvey to explain the decision to purchase SUVs this year instead of sedans. He explained the manufacturer is no longer making sedans. The proposed SUVs will not be 4-wheel drive.

It was agreed the current Code of Ordinances needs to be updated before hiring a code enforcement officer.

Councilmember Baker asked if there was any way to not have a tax increase. Councilmember Starling asked the town manager to look at the proposed tax increase, the .08 increase for the fire truck makes sense and he agrees with increasing the parking rate. Councilmember Navey feels we should be making some cuts before imposing a tax increase, maybe a police vehicle, it

has to be fair for everyone. We need to take a serious look at the projects and their costs. He understands and supports a tax increase to help pay for the fire truck. Mayor Pro Tem Waters feels a .02 tax increase is higher than he expected, he wants to look at other options. He doesn't want it to be higher than .015.

Mayor Cooper wants to see if operational cuts can be made in other departments, even the small cuts add up. O'Daniel was instructed to start with a tax increase of .015 and see if departments can cut back to balance the budget and have it ready for presentation on May 1.

Councilmember Starling requested a special meeting to discuss the boardwalk so that everyone understands the status of the grant applications, purchase of the properties, boardwalk design and funding. O'Daniel would like this special meeting to also be a projects workshop to discuss the pending grants and funding commitments. Councilmember Starling feels approval of the Resolution for the PARTF Grant on the 6:00pm agenda should be postponed until the special meeting. Mayor Pro Tem Waters thinks this grant will get the ball rolling and build something.


ADJOURN

There being no further action taken or business before Council the meeting stood recessed. The time was 5:45pm.

These minutes were approved at the May 22, 2023 meeting of the Atlantic Beach Town Council.

TOWN OF ATLANTIC BEACH

ATTEST:

(seal)

Katrina Tyer - Town Clerk




A. B. Cooper, III - Mayor