

February 29, 2023 (Recessed Meeting - Retreat)

Minutes of the recessed meeting of the Mayor and Board of Commissioners of the Town of Elkin, February 29, 2023, 9:00 a.m., at the Heritage Center.

Present: Mayor Sam Bishop, Commissioners Cicely McCulloch, Robert Ball, Jeff Eidson, Will Gwyn and Alvin Hayes.

Also present: Town Manager Brent Cornelison, Assistant Town Manager/Director of Recreation and Parks Adam McComb, Finance Director Dina Reavis, Assistant Finance Director Lori Dexter, Town Manager Assistant Missy Calhoun, Public Works Director Travis Butcher, Police Chief Joey Vanhoy, Police Captain Josh Tulbert, Fire Chief Kevin Wilson, Planner Sarah Harris, Economic Development and Planning Director Leslie Schlender, Town Attorney Raymond A. Parker and Town Clerk Darla Parker.

Welcome– Mayor Bishop

Convened the recessed meeting at 9:00 am and welcomed everyone.

Turned meeting over to Town Manager Cornelison:

We will give you a forecast of where we are, what has happened and what we need to move forward. Reminded everyone of the order presentations would be heard.

Financial Update

Dina Reavis, Finance Director gave an update of all balances as of January 31, 2024. (See attached statements).

The expenses have exceeded the revenue currently for 2023. Expenses are higher currently due to the purchase of the new fire truck among other big-ticket items. There has been a slight increase in sales tax revenue of 4%. Since 2018 we have received 18 million in grant monies. The fund balance is currently at 52%. We have collected approximately \$170,848 in delinquent taxes of years 2010-2022.

The current tax collection rate for 2023 is at 95%. Current interest earnings are approximately \$31,800 per month but interest rates will start coming down to around 2.25%.

Town Manager – Brent Cornelison

- ❖ The girl scouts have terminated the lease for the use of the girl scout building on Memorial Park Drive. The Foothills Arts Council plan to use it for future classes.
- ❖ WithersRavenel Engineers are conducting an inventory assessment of water lines, stormwater structures, etc. All lead and copper water pipes in town will need to be replaced when a new future law goes into effect and this will be at our expense. Veolia Water Technologies will continue to operate the water plant. Travis Butcher is currently the only one certified to run the water plant.
- ❖ Brent presented to the board a pay study completed by the NC League of Municipalities and discussed the needed salary increases for all employees which will include a cost-of-living increase and department heads will give, if

warranted, merit raises. Elkin is currently 17% to 35% lower in pay than other towns based on our population and demographics. After some discussion the board was in agreement of a 7.5% cost of living raise and up to a 1% merit raise.

Police Department

The police department is in need of 12 new vehicles. The options presented were the purchase of 12 or 6, paid for completely out of FB or finance the cars for 3, 5 or 6-year terms. The vehicles will be Ford Interceptors, \$49,500 plus outfitting at \$21,333. After some discussion it was decided that the vehicles will be purchased and financed for a 6-year term at 4.95% with no penalty for early payoff. A list of starting pay along with whether or not a car is taken home each day from surrounding towns and counties was presented to the board. A car taken home will mean more security, faster response times due to the officer not having to go to the police department to retrieve a vehicle before responding to a call if not on duty. After some discussion it was decided that take home cars would be allowed but we will need to look at our current car policy and make changes if needed.

10:00 a.m. Mayor Bishop recessed the meeting for a 15-minute break.

10:15 a.m. Mayor Bishop reconvened the meeting.

Special Projects for Consideration in Next Fiscal Year (See attachments)

Town Manager Cornelison referred to the Retreat Priorities 2023 handout and explained to prioritize each item from 1 to 5, 5 being the highest priority. Brent made a recommendation that we install additional security cameras in the downtown area at a cost of \$10,000.

Economic Development, Planning, Tourism & Main Street

Leslie Schlender went over notable projects for the upcoming 2024-2025 year as well as updates on planning and code enforcement. (See Attached)

Police Department

Chief Vanhoy has requested a canine officer along with training for the upcoming budget year. This is in addition to the police vehicles discussed previously.

Fire Department

Chief Wilson is requesting a new fully equipped F350 pickup truck for emergency responses. They are currently having to share one truck and sometimes they have 2 calls simultaneously.

Recreation and Parks

Adam McComb presented slides along with explanations and discussion for the capital improvement projects including pickleball court expansion, replacing (2) park storage buildings and a soccer complex feasibility study. This study will be a grant of \$60,000 with a \$30,000 match. The department is in need of additional staff and is asking for a new position of a Recreation Center Supervisor at approximately \$58,000 salary including benefits.

Public Works 2024 Projects

Travis Butcher presented slides along with explanations and discussion for the purchase of a wheeled excavator/right of way mower, pickup truck, and a new salt spreader. The wheeled excavator cost could be split between the water fund and public works.

Water Plant Projects would include the installation of waste valves, new lab cabinets, service truck, directional drill and the cost of a water plant planning assessment for future replacement of the west water plant. Veolia Water Technologies will continue operating the water plant for this upcoming year.

Various Topics

1. Jeff Eidson presented a sketch of the proposed Explore Elkin Community Garden that will be located on the property at the corner of N. Bridge Street and Market Street. The proposal includes structural art, metal letters, an art style reading area and artificial turf.
2. Robert Ball and Jeff Eidson have purchased a vacant lot at the lower end of E Main Street and has future plans of constructing a building. There is a 26' easement which they would like to deed to the town after they construct a stairwell and improve the vacant grassy area. This will give additional access to Main Street from the parking lot behind the buildings on E Main St. The town would be responsible for the lighting, maintenance and insurance of the stairway.
3. G & B Energy has purchased the building at the corner of Market Street and N. Bridge Street (old Habitat). Future plans for the building will include closing a portion of the alley behind the building and constructing a stairway at the back of Larry Irwin's parking lot. This will give access from the building to Main St.
4. Brent gave an update on Town owned land that could be sold if agreed upon. A parcel off of Edgewood Dr. is 2.85 acres and has a sewer line going across the property. This parcel has no road access. A small parcel surrounded by Westover Dr. and S. Edgedale Dr. is available but is too small to build on. The Town owns 5 acres of land outside the city limits on AZ Phillips Rd. that has a non-directional beacon on it that is no longer in use.
5. Sarah Harris presented a slide explaining our landscape ordinance showing details of how and why we have these requirements. (see attached) This ordinance only applies to commercial property or a change in use.

Surry County Economic Development Update

Mr. Blake Moyer presented an update on growth and improvements in Surry County. Surry County moved from a Tier 1 to a Tier 2 and increased in property tax base per capita. The unemployment average is down to 3.27%. Surry County received \$45,000,000 in State funding and all went to projects in Mount Airy. The Elkin Corporate Park is now a 45-acre site and has been submitted to NC Select Sites for one of two spots for development needed for less than 100 acres.

12:00 p.m. Mayor Bishop recessed the meeting for lunch
1:00 p.m. Mayor Bishop reconvened the meeting.

Departmental Updates – (See attached presentations)

- Parks and Recreation – Adam McComb
- Economic Development, Planning and Main Street (Leslie Schlender)
- Police Department (Chief Joey Vanhoy)
- Fire Department (Chief Kevin Wilson)
- Public Works (Travis Butcher)
- Airport (Town Manager Cornelison)

- Front Street and Depot Alley parking project is on target to be done and ready to pave by April 1, 2024.
- A creek bank stabilization project along Front Street will hopefully start in May 2024.
- The Airport Commission met and discussed the code violations at the airport. The current contract for the Fixed Base Operator is up for renewal and they are recommending the current FBO be given an opportunity to cleanup around the airport. He will have until April 30, 2024 to cleanup and make changes. Mr. Shore will be on a month-to-month contract until the Airport Commission meets again the 1st Tuesday in May. The current contract rules and regulations will be reviewed and updated. The Board approved the recommendation of the Airport Commission.

2:45 p.m. Mayor Bishop recessed the meeting for a 15-minute break.
3:00 p.m. Mayor Bishop reconvened the meeting.

Prioritization of Projects Discussion

After much discussion the Board has prioritized projects as follows:

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| General Fund: | Police Department Vehicles | \$162,500/6 year finance |
| | Park Storage Buildings | \$ 24,000 |
| | Wheeled Excavator (1/2) | \$185,000 |
| | Pickleball Court Expansion | \$120,000 |
| | Downtown Cameras | \$ 10,000 |


If the budget allows, we will consider the new position of Recreation Center Supervisor. Chief Kevin Wilson will get information on financing a new F350 pickup for the Fire Department and this will be considered if the budget allows.

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| Water Fund: | Waste Valves | \$ 60,000 |
| | Service Truck | \$200,000 |
| | Wheeled Excavator (1/2) | \$185,000 |
| | Directional Drill | \$205,000 |

We should already have enough money in the current budget to purchase the raw water pump strainers at a replacement cost of \$20,000.


Mayor Bishop thanked staff for a great budget workshop and concluded the meeting.

There being no further business, Commissioner Gwyn made a motion to adjourn. Upon a second by Commissioner McCulloch, the motion was unanimously approved. The Board adjourned at 3:57 p.m.



Sam Bishop, Mayor

Attest:



Darla S Parker, Town Clerk