

# CAROLINA BEACH

Town Council Workshop Minutes  
Tuesday, March 27, 2018 @ 9:00 AM  
Council Chambers  
1121 N. Lake Park Boulevard  
Carolina Beach, NC 28428

## ASSEMBLY

The Town of Carolina Beach Town Council Workshop was held on Tuesday, March 27, 2018 at 9:00 AM at Council Chambers.

**PRESENT:** Mayor Joe Benson, Mayor Pro Tem Tom Bridges, Council Member LeAnn Pierce, and Council Member JoDan Garza

**ABSENT:** Council Member Steve Shuttleworth

**ALSO PRESENT:** Town Manager Michael Cramer, Assistant Town Manager Ed Parvin, Finance Director Debbie Hall, Town Attorney Noel Fox, and Town Clerk Kim Ward

### 1. MAYOR BENSON CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 9 AM

### 2. DISCUSSION ITEMS

#### a. Lake Park Traffic Study

Jonathan Guy with Kimley-Horn presented the 2018 traffic study.

The N. Lake Park Boulevard Corridor Study is intended to explore ways to improve peak and off-peak hour traffic congestion, enhance mobility through improved connectivity, and create an enhanced equilibrium for all travel modes along the corridor.

An action plan has been put together. The project would cover 1.1 miles in length, 4 traffic signals, 9 major intersections, and 73 driveways.

Mr. Guy reviewed traffic safety statistics from 2012-2017. He also showed a few concept ideas.

Council Member Shuttleworth will take these ideas to the MPO to be put into the ranking system to gain funding from NCDOT.

The final recommendation will be coming back to Council in the near future.

#### b. System Development Fees

On August 16, 2016, the North Carolina Supreme Court heard the case of Quality Built Homes, Inc. v. Town of Carthage and reversed the North Carolina Court of Appeals' decision and held that the Town of Carthage did not possess authority to charge impact

fees for water and sewer. Following the ruling the General Assembly of North Carolina enacted House Bill 436, which established a new "System Development Fee" that allows all governmental entities to assess fees for the recovery of capital costs associated with development and new growth. The bill also established a process and specifications that the governments need to meet in order to enact the new fees. The Town hired Willdan Financial Services to develop the Town's new "System Development Fees". Daryll Parker with Willdan provided an overview of the recommended System Development Fees.

Mr. Cramer stated that the next steps will include the 45 day comment period, then Daryll will come back and give this same presentation with any changes as a public hearing. Then it would be enacted into the rates and fee schedule.

c. Budget Workshop # 1

Finance Director Debbie Hall presented the revenue projections for the 2018/2019 fiscal year. The revenue projections for the general fund in FY 18/19 are \$13.7 million which is an increase of 3.48%. The projection for the water/sewer fund is \$7.1 million which is a decrease of 2.9%. This is partly a result of the reduction in system development fees. The Town is also doing away with the Wilmington Beach Stormwater Impact Fee. That was a \$6,000 fee charged to builders.

Mr. Cramer presented the departmental requests for FY 18/19. Departments will present their detailed requests in future budget meetings.

Mr. Cramer explained the state requirement of an 8% fund balance. Town Council in years past has requested to maintain a 50% fund balance. Currently, there is a 25% balance due to the major infrastructure projects. He stated that Carolina Beach holds extra due to hurricanes.

MPT Bridges reminded Council why the fund balance is at 25%. He stated that Council continues to approve many projects that add up to large dollar amounts. He also stated that it was a previous Council that set the minimum requirement of 50%. This Council can make a new recommendation.

Mr. Cramer said that if this Council wants to have a 50% fund balance, there needs to be a plan on how to get there.

Council Member Pierce said that she would like to see the fund balance at 50%. She stated she doesn't know how to get it there and that is on the manager, but it could possibly increase by 5% each year.

Mr. Cramer said that capital projects make up about \$1.6 million of this budget. A large portion of that is replacement vehicles. The Town typically pays cash for vehicles but that could change and you could finance vehicles which would allow for that cash to remain in fund balance.

Staffing - Council has requested that the Town be competitive with similar communities with pay and benefits. Town employees did not receive a COLA this current budget year, however they received the option of receiving a 1% 401k match if they contributed 1%. Employees could also receive up to a 3% merit increase. The proposed budget includes up to a 3% merit, that is approximately \$71,000. This budget does not include numbers for a COLA. Most other

communities are requesting a 0-3% COLA, up to a 3% merit increase, and a 5% 401k match. Mr. Cramer asked Council to think about what kind of COLA if any Council would like to offer. 2% would cost \$117,000. He recommended going up 1% each year on the 401k. The Town is scheduled for a pay study in August of 2020.

Inlet Dredging and Beach Renourishment - The Town has been setting aside \$350,000 each year for beach renourishment. The Town also puts up \$10,000 each year for inlet dredging.

d. Discussion on Promotional Ideas by Council Member Garza

Council Member Garza suggested using Facebook Live to engage citizens. He would like to showcase staff and items on the meeting agenda. He also mentioned using boosts on Facebook and evaluate how effective it is.

Other ideas include the Town having a booth at Town events and it would be staffed by Council Members and staff. You could provide koozies, t-shirts, hats, magnets, etc.

MPT Bridges said that the purpose of government is to provide services at the lowest cost. Unless the public is personally affected by an issue, they are too busy to come to a Council meeting to give feedback.

Council Member Garza said that we need to go out and engage our citizens. He stated that he does not feel that the Town is going above and beyond.

Council Member Pierce said she liked the idea of Facebook live. She said she would be willing to attend the events.

MPT Bridges said he was concerned about citizens looking like Town employees and presenting themselves as such. He feels this is a safety issue.

Council Member Garza asked if we are holding workshops at convenient times for citizens.

MPT Bridges replied that they are offered both day and night. Night meetings impact the staff during their off hours. Same as if you ask them to attend all the events.

Council Member Garza responded that the turnover rate for Town employees is low meaning the employees love their jobs. They would love to come hang out if it means helping the citizens.

MPT Bridges said that you would run the risk of increasing the turnover rate if you required the employees to come in on their time off.

Council Member Garza feels that they should try it and make adjustments as needed.

Council Member Pierce suggested just starting with the Facebook live idea. That's free and easy.

Mr. Cramer mentioned that he put \$1,000 into the clerk's budget for social media.

Council Member Pierce asked if the Town would tag Council Members in all of their posts so they won't miss them and they can share the posts.

Mr. Cramer said that was a great idea.

Council Member Garza added that he feels the live stream icon should be on the main page of the website and that staff should provide a link to the meeting on Facebook the next day. He also reiterated that he feels strongly about having a booth at the events even if you have to pay the staff.

Mayor Benson said that he created the Tony Silvagni parade event and it was very easy and didn't cost a dime. There were people lined up on both sides of the street in attendance. He said he would be willing to contribute a portion of his mayor's pay for the swag. It should be each individual council member's decision if they want to contribute.

Council Member Garza asked where Council stood on these ideas.

Council Member Pierce said she is willing to be at a booth at events.

MPT Bridges suggested that the Town make sure the event is in line with Town ideas and not conflicting.

Mr. Cramer reminded Council said you are going to hear feedback from citizens. Out of the 120 Town employees, only a handful will volunteer to take the abuse of receiving that feedback and know how to respond to it. Council will know how to respond to it, it may be more challenging for others.

Council Member Pierce mentioned that she is concerned about employee burn out. You are putting them in positions where they are always having to answer questions about the Town. You have to get away from it so that you can come back fresh.

MPT Bridges was concerned that this will be an extension of a Town Hall complaint line. People will come over to the tent to make complaints about services.

Council Member Pierce suggested starting with Facebook live.

Mayor Benson suggested taking this offline for discussion.

### **3. NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

MPT Bridges stated that he and Council Member Pierce met with Kure Beach Mayor Craig Bloszinski and Commissioner Joseph Whitley. They have some concerns about the new re-entry system and would like to be included in all discussions that would affect their community in the future.

Council Member Pierce asked if there would be dredge material placed on the Greenway.

Mr. Cramer responded that the contract contains everything they need for Greenway. They can adjust where we get the material from and feels that they will use some of the dredge material.

Council Member Garza asked if there would be trees along the bike way.

Mr. Cramer said that there would not be because it's a fire break. No vegetative debris should be in the fire break.

Council Member Garza mentioned that ROT funds may be available for ADA upfits.

Council Member Garza wants Council Members to give an update on their committees at every workshop.

MPT Bridges suggested bringing the committee meeting minutes to the workshop.

**4. MAYOR BENSON ADJOURNED THE MEETING AT 12:20 PM**

Adopted at a regular meeting on April 10, 2018.

Recorded by:

Kimberlee Ward, Town Clerk