

Minutes
Budget Retreat
Aberdeen Town Board

March 7, 2015

Aberdeen Fire Station

Saturday, 8:30 a.m.

Aberdeen, North Carolina

The Aberdeen Town Board met Saturday, March 7, 2015 at 8:30 a.m. for the Budget Retreat. Members present were Mayor Robert A. Farrell, Mayor Pro-tem Jim Thomas, and Commissioners Joe Dannelley, Buck Mims, and Elease Goodwin. Commissioner Pat Ann McMurray was not in attendance for the meeting. Staff members in attendance were Planning Director Pam Graham, Public Works Director Rickie Monroe, Fire Chief Phillip Richardson, Deputy Fire Chief Gary Blue, Police Chief Tim Wenzel, Deputy Police Chief Todd Weaver, Parks & Recreation Director Adam Crocker, Town Manager Bill Zell, and Town Clerk Regina Rosy. Jae Kim was also in attendance for the meeting.

1. Call to Order

Mayor Farrell called the meeting to order at 8:42 a.m.

2. Budget Sessions

a. Public Works Department

Public Works Director Rickie Monroe stated he has prepared a very conservative budget for this upcoming year. Director Monroe reviewed his Capital Improvements Plan for 2015-2016 which included the following for the Water & Sewer Fund:

- Construction of 2100 linear feet of gravity sewer main so that Sewer Pump Station #5 can be abandoned with an estimated rehab cost of \$125,000. Director Monroe stated the Board previously approved this sewer extension along with the Berkley Phase III project. The additional cost for this sewer main extension is \$79,129.50 from the low bid received.
- Installation of approximately 1600 feet of cured in place sewer pipe liner (slip lining) to be installed in high priority areas where sewer mains have in the past caused major repair problems. Estimated cost is \$60,000.
- Continue to pursue an affordable AMR-AMI System for reading meters in a more productive manner. Also by replacing the current meters with the new

no moving parts meters will allow staff to more accurately bill customers for high flow periods and low flow periods. Funding will have to be determined by the most affordable method possible. Director Monroe stated a general idea of cost would be \$300,000 a year for 9 years, then \$50,000 each year for Years 9 – 15. Commissioner Mims asked what work is completed for this price. Director Monroe stated all meters in the Town would be replaced. Commissioner Mims asked how many meters are located in the Town. Director Monroe stated between 3300 and 3500 meters are located in the Town. Manager Zell and Director Monroe explained how the AMR/AMI system would work. Manager Zell stated this system would be able to identify a water leak extremely quick, and it would save water, and save a lot of labor for the meter readers. Commissioner Mims stated he would like to see if Harris will interface with the AMR/AMI System, and he would also like a true cost of what the AMR/AMI system will cost.

Director Monroe stated for the General Fund, the Capital Improvements Plan for 2015-2016 includes the following:

- Replace a 15 year-old salt spreader. The cost to replace the unit is \$15,000.
- Drainage issue on Robbins Rd. The total cost of this project is estimated at \$190,000, and Director Monroe stated he is coordinating with NCDOT to see if they will pay for a portion of the project since part of the project is located on NCDOT streets, and part on Town owned streets.
- Streets improvements with Powell Bill Fund. Bid packets will be mailed out by the end of March. \$650,000 is currently in the Powell Bill Fund Balance.

Director Monroe reviewed 3 considerations for 2015/2016. Director Monroe stated as of 1/1/2015 the County started charging the Town \$15 per ton for leaf and limb disposal. In our current budget we have no adjustments in the garbage fee to pay for this additional cost to the Town. From our leaf and limb report, we have estimated the yearly cost to be \$25,000 per year, however this amount could vary year to year. Commissioner Mims suggested adding an additional \$2 a month to the garbage fee for residents, and be sure to notify residents of why there will be an increase so they know it is just passing down a fee that is being assessed by the County.

Director Monroe discussed the no cost driveway permit currently in place, and recommended a \$25 fee for driveway permits.

Director Monroe stated approximately 600+ residences in our city limits have sewer available for their use when their septic system goes bad. None of these homes were ever assessed for the sewer mains and the property owners have no investment at all in these mains. Director Monroe suggested charging an availability fee. Commissioner Mims stated he has a problem with charging for something not being used. Commissioner Dannelley suggested educating those residents about the availability and offer an incentive to those residences that would take advantage of the Town sewer system, in areas where it is available.

Director Monroe stated Bill Lester with LKC is currently working on a water/sewer rate assessment that includes our approximate cost on producing 1,000 gallons of water.

b. Parks & Recreation Department

Parks & Recreation Director Adam Crocker reviewed the significant increases to the Parks & Recreation Budget which includes a \$9,000 increase in contract cleaning, \$2,425 increase in supplies/maintenance for waxing of the floors, utilities for Malcolm Blue Farm, \$3,000 increase in printing expenses, and \$1,200 increase in training/travel. Director Crocker stated the recommendation is to budget an additional \$20,000 - \$30,000 for Ray's Mill Pond dredging. Director Crocker stated programs are going great, however, new program and special event costs will raise this budget by a few thousand dollars. Most, if not all, of these costs will be balanced by increased revenue due to program fees and special event sponsors. Director Crocker stated revenues will significantly increase as we continue adding programs. Director Crocker stated there is also an increase of \$4,200 in uniforms, due to increased participants. Director Crocker stated the contracted services line item is also an increased budget of \$3,100 for officials for athletic programs. Director Crocker stated revenues are particularly increasing in program registrations. Commissioner Mims stated he would like to see a spreadsheet each year for Malcolm Blue to show expenses, versus revenues.

Director Crocker reviewed photos of Aberdeen Lake Park Trail and the maintenance work that is needed with the trail. Director Crocker stated his Capital Improvements Plan includes 4 years of \$50,000 each year to improve the trail and bring it back to where it needs to be so the public can utilize the trail. Commissioner Mims asked which firm is being looked at to improve the lake park trail. Director Crocker stated McGill & Associates is a landscape firm and that is who he received this quote from. Mayor Farrell stated either we need to fix the trail, or abandon the trail. Mayor Farrell stated the public has quit using the trail because of the condition. Commissioner Dannelley was concerned about the safety of the trail, and if any signage is needed to warn the public. The Board was very interested in improving the lark park trail since it is a draw for the public.

Director Crocker reviewed photos of Colonial Heights ball fields. Director Crocker stated there are areas that have been tilled up. Farrell Field is in really bad shape, and really needs some clay and grading. Director Crocker stated once these fields are improved, it will be just regular maintenance going forward. Director Crocker stated \$10,000 will be budgeted for this project. Commissioner Mims asked if there are any grants that might be able to help with maintenance on trails, ball fields, etc. Director Crocker stated he has already been in contact with Daniel Martin about grant possibilities, and that is definitely something they are looking into.

Director Crocker stated the other item for the capital improvements plan is playground equipment for Sharpe Park. Director Crocker stated it is a very convenient park and is utilized quite a bit, and would be used even more if proper playground equipment was installed. Director Crocker stated what he would like to do is replace one piece of equipment each year at the park. Director Crocker stated there are no fall zones at all at the park.

Director Crocker stated recreation center repairs are also needed for re-caulking, repainting, etc. for the exterior of the building. Director Crocker also displayed photos of the storage shed at Colonial Heights, which is in need of replacement. Director Crocker stated he would recommend replacing the structure at a cost of \$10,000.

Director Crocker stated the JC Hut is located on the trail across the lake. Director Crocker stated it is extremely creepy. Director Crocker stated the only recourse for this, is to remove the structure. Director Crocker stated asbestos has been found in the structure. The removal of the structure is estimated at \$9,100.

Mayor Farrell stated these maintenance issues are all areas that need attention, and if we don't take care of them, we will lose these recreational areas. Director Crocker stated he thinks as parts of the trail are improved, it will increase traffic and people will come back to see additional work being performed. Commissioner Dannelley suggested a sign be put out at the park that says "Aberdeen Lake Park Renovation, Phase I".

c. Planning Department

Planning Director Graham stated enough time has not been allotted for her budget presentation. Director Graham stated Board members have already been provided with a power point for her budget presentation, so instead of going over information the Board has already received, she is going to maximize her time by sharing additional information with the Board.

Director Graham stated last year the Planning Department received a decrease in the budget, and she believes that is a dangerous course of action, due to the importance of the Planning Department. Director Graham stated the work the Planning Department does makes the Town more viable. Director Graham stated Aberdeen is growing quickly, but she does not believe it is going to continue to grow at the same rate. Director Graham stated the troops at Fort Bragg will not increase any more, and in fact they may even drop a little bit. Director Graham stated builders in Aberdeen are reporting that 80%+ of their homes are being sold to military families.

Director Graham stated even though growth may fall off, Aberdeen can still experience growth by being a more competitive destination location within the region by focusing on the following:

- Better transportation choices
- Walkable communities
- Technology-enabled cities and towns

- **Connect to surrounding municipalities and facilities**
- **Foster healthy lifestyles**
- **Create a more economically vibrant community**
- **Reduce pedestrian-related auto collisions**
- **Address the growing obesity issue**
- **Contribute to a greater sense of community and improve quality of life**

Director Graham discussed the Priority Project #1 which is the Aberdeen Lake Park to downtown crossing (which was awarded NCDOT funding), and the Priority Project #2 which is the Aberdeen Creek Trails. Director Graham also discussed Priority Project #11 which is South Street improvements, and Priority Project #12 which is the railroad crossing improvements in the downtown area.

Director Graham discussed additional needs which are as follows:

- **Master Sign Plan Phase II.**
- **Capital Improvement Projects to implement plans already adopted and create a Downtown Master Plan.**
- **Re-entry into Main Street will require a dedicated budget - \$37,500 above salary already provided.**
- **Appearance & Beautification budget to coordinate with renewed push for aesthetics and image building.**
- **Minimum housing program needs more attention and dollars.**

Commissioner Mims asked for clarification on how these items are assigned to the budget of Public Works versus Planning Department, such as the railroad crossing. Director Graham stated Public Works and Planning work very closely together, and often items cross over into both departments. Director Graham stated there may be grant opportunities that can help with the railroad crossing project.

Commissioner Dannelley commended Director Graham for her presentation, and pulling relevant data from surveys to put the work Aberdeen is doing into perspective.

Director Graham stated her Planning Department staff is very smart, and they are all doing a great job, and she is very proud of all the work they are doing for Aberdeen.

d. Fire Department

Fire Chief Phillip Richardson reviewed the calls that have been received this past year. Chief Richardson stated response times have become a little longer over the past year. Chief Richardson reviewed the mission statement of the Fire Department, and the goals for the upcoming years.

Chief Richardson discussed the possible merger with Crestline Fire Dept. The only capital item requested for this upcoming budget year is a staff vehicle for Deputy Chief Gary Blue, at a cost of \$36,000.

Chief Richardson stated he turned in the SAFER grant yesterday, which could potentially help cover the costs for additional personnel if granted. Commissioner Mims asked what % the SAFER grant covers salaries for. Chief Richardson stated the grant would pay 100% of salaries and benefits for 2 years, then the Town has to pay for 1 year afterwards. Chief Richardson stated a new engine is also for future consideration. Currently there is no reserve engine, because Engine 414 has not been replaced yet. Chief Richardson stated we also need to look at a brush truck 3-4 years down the road, since the current brush truck is 15 years old. Chief Richardson stated we will also need to consider an additional Fire Inspector down the road and a substation. Chief Richardson stated AVL is also another consideration, which is automatic vehicle locator, at a cost of \$6,000. Chief Richardson stated it is very difficult working with the County 911 system for dispatch. Commissioner Mims asked if staff has met with County personnel regarding this issue. Chief Richardson stated the meetings do not do any good. Chief Richardson gave a couple examples of situation that have happened with dispatch.

Commissioner Dannelley confirmed that for this current budget year, the truck has been sold at the price that was projected, and a mini pumper is in the process of being purchased.

e. Police Department

Police Chief Tim Wenzel stated updated goals have been distributed to the Board. Chief Wenzel stated he believes he was brought to Aberdeen to provide the best service to the citizens of Aberdeen.

Chief Wenzel stated he would like to add an investigator to the detective bureau. Chief Wenzel stated Aberdeen is experiencing a rise in violent crime. More cases are being referred back to patrol for follow-up, which would also allow the Town to assign a detective to the Drug Task Force from time to time. This gets more concentration of drug enforcement in Town and we share in proceeds.

Chief Wenzel stated he proposes the following:

- Continue to replace tasers that are becoming outdated; 5 tasers at a cost of \$5,500 and Taser cartridges and training cartridges at a cost of \$800
- 1 radar unit left to replace at \$1650
- 2 laptops for supervisors vehicles at a cost of \$3,200
- 1 laptop for detective bureau at a cost of \$1,600
- 5 new desktop computers to replace old out of warranty towers, one which has crashed, which would be a cost of \$3,500
- 30 reversible police jackets are needed at a cost of \$4,100
- 6 bulletproof vests to replace expired vests at a cost of \$3,600.

Chief Wenzel stated for capital purchases, 4 patrol vehicles are needed at a cost of \$128,000. 1 SUV is needed for the Chief's vehicle at a cost of \$30,000. Chief Wenzel also requested replacing the oldest Durango with undercover vehicle at a cost of \$20,000. Chief Wenzel stated he is requesting 2 in-car cameras for supervisor's vehicles at a cost of \$10,000. Chief Wenzel reviewed the 5 year capital plan.

Chief Wenzel recommended a college/military incentive plan be used to reward officers for pursuing college, and/or for those who have served in the military, and/or have pursued an advanced certificate. Chief Wenzel proposed a \$500 yearly stipend for associate's degree or 2 years military service, \$750 a year for bachelor's degree or 4 years military service or advanced certificate, or \$1,000 a year for a master's degree. Chief Wenzel stated this incentive plan would give an incentive to officers to become better educated and pursue advanced certification.

Chief Wenzel stated he would also like to propose a detective stipend. Chief Wenzel stated usually our best and brightest are picked for the detective bureau. They take a pay decrease to go into the detective bureau with loss of holiday pay, court overtime, in-service overtime, and road overtime. Chief Wenzel stated he would like to propose a \$1,000 stipend to be paid in 2 installments. This would ease the transition and make it a more attractive position to strive for.

Deputy Chief Todd Weaver reviewed a proposal to begin offering take home vehicles to police officers. Deputy Chief Weaver presented a great deal of research that reflected there would actually be a cost savings to the Police Department, if take home vehicles were implemented. Deputy Chief Weaver stated by allowing officers to take home vehicles it gives the department another opportunity for recruiting officers, which is becoming increasingly challenging. Deputy Chief Weaver stated if officers are assigned a specific vehicle, then the vehicle would be able to have more down time, and not require as much maintenance, and would have a longer life in operation, thus decreasing the cost for new vehicles. Some discussion was held regarding parameters for take home vehicles and things to consider.

f. Finance / Administration Departments

Manager Zell stated the Local Governmental Employees Retirement System employer contribution is projected to decrease from 7.07% to 6.67% which will be a savings for the Town. Manager Zell stated there is no word yet on the law enforcement rates which are currently at 7.41%.

Manager Zell stated staff is currently in the process of quoting out medical and dental insurance to hopefully find competitive pricing, with the

current rate being \$370 a month per employee. Clerk Regina Rosy explained the wellness initiative and what requirements employees must meet in order to receive their insurance paid at 100%. Clerk Regina Rosy also explained an alternative being researched, whereby employees age 65 and older could potentially waive the Town's insurance plan, in exchange for the Town paying for Medicare supplemental coverage.

Manager Zell explained the current benefit for retiree health insurance and the budgetary implications for down the road. After some discussion, there was a consensus among the Board that is a benefit that is extremely helpful in retaining employees, and although they appreciated the information, they chose to leave it as is for now.

Manager Zell reviewed the Wellness Program Budget, which is an annual budget of \$7160, and no increase is requested for the upcoming budget year. Manager Zell reviewed the Safety Program Budget, which is \$8,000, and no increase is requested for the upcoming budget year. Manager Zell reviewed the Employee Functions Budget, which does include an increase in the budget to cover the cost of an Employee Christmas Party, at the request of Commissioner Mims. The total budget for Employee Functions is \$4,500.

Manager Zell stated the Worker's Compensation insurance rates for the upcoming year have not been received yet. However, the past year has been a very "safe" year and we would expect the rates to be very comparable to the current year.

Manager Zell stated \$1,500 is included in the budget for the Citizen's Academy Program which will provide for weekly refreshments, small token of appreciation for each participant, and document frames for certificates.

Manager Zell reviewed the Capital Improvement Plan for Administration for FY 2016 which includes a new HVAC unit at the Train Depot (\$6,900) and a new HVAC unit at the Aberdeen Library (\$8,200).

- g. Develop Priorities for Budget

Manager Zell stated it is hard to develop priorities for the budget at this point, since numbers have not even been received from Moore County yet.

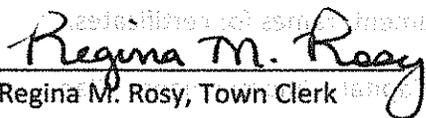
Commissioner Dannelley asked what the schedule is for the remainder of the budget process. Manager Zell reviewed the budget calendar:

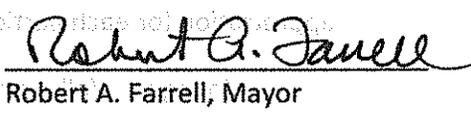
- March 27th – budgets turned in to Manager
- April 7-9th – Manager and Finance Officer meet individually with each dept. head and review budget
- April 24th – Budget finalized
- May 4th – Budget packets distributed to Board members
- May 11th – Discuss budget at Work Session with Board members
- May 26th – Budget message presented at Board Meeting

Commissioner Dannelley stated he would like for the Board to consider approval of the vision statement at the next Work Session, and begin considering the goal areas as well. Commissioner Dannelley suggested reviewing a couple of the goals areas at each of the next 3 Work Sessions, and hopefully have the vision statement and all goal areas in place by July 1st.

3. Adjournment.

A motion was made by Mayor Pro-tem Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Mims, to adjourn the Board Meeting. Motion unanimously carried 4-0.


Regina M. Rosy, Town Clerk


Robert A. Farrell, Mayor

Minutes were completed in
Draft form on March 7, 2015

Minutes were approved
on March 23, 2015