

**TOWN OF GRIFTON
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL MEETING
FEBRUARY 28, 2014**

Present: Mayor Billy Ray Jackson; Commissioners Buddy Albritton, Mike Coles, Mary Grace Bright, Will Barnes; Manager Joe Albright, Clerk Angel Hudson

Absent: Commissioner Sammy Whitehurst

Mayor Jackson called the meeting to order.

Manager Albright informed the Board that Commissioner Whitehurst had a work obligation and would not be present.

Purpose of the meeting was to hold the annual Grifton Board of Commissioners Retreat to discuss the 2014/2015 budget preparation and needs.

Introduction and Review of Packets

Manager Albright presented the retreat packets and gave a summary of all materials that were provided.

Section I – Police Department

Police Chief Bryan Cauley thanked the Board for allowing him to serve and he feels the department has made great strides to service the community.

Chief Cauley gave the 2013 Annual Report. He listed significant events such as Lt. Leon Chapman's retirement and promotions from within the Department. He gave a synopsis of crime statistics, changes in staff, officer activity, internal reviews and investigation complaints. He stated that there were no officer complaints reported or investigated this year. He went through the number of citations, traffic accidents and calls for service. He stated that calls for service have decreased by 15%. He went through the list of vehicles and commented that with the new vehicles there has been a decrease in fuel usage. He talked about the salaries stating that Grifton still has the lowest starting salary in the county. He commented that when hiring we have to choose the best of a bad lot. However, he feels we have some very good officers at this time. Chief Cauley would like to see a 4% salary adjustment and implementation of a P01/P02 program. Chief Cauley stated that the number of animal complaints has decreased in the last year. He noted to the Board that each time an animal is sent to PCAC there is a \$20.00 charge by PCAC. He also noted that 124 man hours were spent on animal complaints. Chief Cauley stated the need for an Investigator position. He stated, as it is now, our officers do not have time to investigate crimes as efficiently as he would like. He also commented that an Investigator would wear several different hats as do all employees of the Town of Grifton.

After discussion from the Board, the Chief was asked which position he would prefer from his wish list.

Chief Cauley replied by saying the Investigator position is the one he would choose if given a choice.

Manager Albright stated that he could put the position in the budget and then the Board can make the decision. Chief Cauley gave the goals and projections of the vehicles stating the need to replace 1 car this year. He would also like to replace the animal control vehicle. However, he commented that if utilities has a spare vehicle that would be sufficient for their use. His goals future goals are to have an

Investigator, an Assistant Chief, to implement a voluntary fitness program, provide additional training, etc. His goals for equipment are to update radio communications, purchase new ballistic vests, update handguns, install in car cameras and replacement of car flashlights. His goals for technology are to upgrade existing air cards used with mobile data, secure IT assistance and expand social media. He stated that the front and rear doors at the police department are in need of repair or replacement. He also stated that the inside needs to be painted and the floors need some repair or replacement in order to improve the professional appearance of the Police Department. Chief Cauley also mentioned that there has been an increase in the RV Park use, not by campers, that are leaving trash and debris on the grounds. He has increased patrol activity but would like to see the installation of a 24 hour key pad access gate to help control the issues.

The Board thanked Chief Cauley for his presentation.

Section 2 – Public Utilities & Public Works

Manager Albright started out with public utilities stating that public utilities are water treatment and distribution as well as sewer treatment and collection. He gave a brief overview of the budget for the water system operations and maintenance. This included the amount paid to NRWASA and the number of testing measures that are done for state standards. He also touched on the number of inspections, water meters cut on and off along with dozens of leak repairs and hydrants repairs. He then spoke about the sewer system stating the budget numbers, the miles of linear gravity sewer line, force mains, manholes and lift stations. He made the Board aware of the number of inspections on the sewer lines, repairs, blockages and the assistance of a contractor with annual cleaning and inspections. Manager Albright stated that we are required by DENR to visit every duplex sewer station daily unless we have telemetry /SCADA. This is an electronic means of letting you know what is going on with the stations. He advised that we are currently spending approximately \$10,000 in overtime pay to check the stations 7 days a week. He has investigated the options and has determined that for about \$1700 per station we can get the telemetry. With this system each employee will receive an electronic key so Manager Albright will be able to tell who went to the station at what time and why. The question was asked how much would the yearly maintenance be. Manager Albright replied that after the first year it would be around \$3600 to \$4000 in yearly maintenance. However, this will free up employee time. The Board agreed this was a good choice. Manger Albright stated that he would bring this back to the Board at a later time. However, he feels this would not only free up employee time, because it takes ½ of the day to check the stations, but will be cost effective and more efficient.

Manager Albright gave a brief review of the Sewer Rehab Project stating that they are about 80% finished with the punch list. He informed the Board that 48 manholes were replaced, 141 sewer services were replaced, nearly 5000 linear feet of gravity sewer line was replaced and over 6100 linear feet of gravity sewer was re-lined. He also informed the Board that 3 of the largest sewer lift stations were upgraded with all new electrical hardware and pumps.

Manager Albright explained that public works is technically different from utilities. Public works includes things such as; street maintenance and repair, stormwater/drainage maintenance and repair, grounds maintenance and repair, and sanitation, which is yard waste, solid waste and recycling. He stated that the Town does the yard waste and Waste Industries does the solid waste and recycling. Manager Albright explained the Streets department touching on areas of cost of street lights, repairs and replacement of signs, potholes, drainage projects and ditch maintenance and repair.

Manger Albright explained the stormwater/drainage section of the presentation. He stated that in house usually included: spraying, cleaning, inspecting and repairing main canals and ditches at different times throughout the year. He explained Grounds maintenance. He stated that there are 2 employees in this department that perform mowing, park maintenance, yard waste collection and beautifications

project maintenance. He informed them of the large area these 2 employees have to maintain. Manager Albright stated that the Streets Improvement Project should begin sometime around September of 2014. He also informed the Board that The Wooten Company is currently working on a Street Maintenance Policy and Procedure Manual to help guide us in the long term maintenance of our new streets. He also stated that it is his intention to have a Stormwater Ordinance, including the necessary Fee Schedule in time to go into effect by July 1, 2014. Manager Albright then gave his 5 year projections for utilities and public works. He stated that 2 new trucks are needed to replace the aging ones. He would like to purchase a used CAT 308 Track Hoe to replace our 20 year old Case Backhoe. The track hoe would be beneficial in all our drainage needs and would also be used in some water and sewer work. He also touched on upgrading all small sewer lift stations. He then gave 5 year projections for Grounds Maintenance. This included: 2 new mowers, a tractor with a bush hog and side cutter for drainage and sewer right of ways to eliminate the need for contract cutting. He stated that currently the Town pays a contractor approximately \$45,000 a year. He would like to complete the new walking trail and do repairs to existing trails. He also stated that he would like to purchase a used bucket truck to replace the existing one.

Members of the Board asked if the spending balanced with the savings. Manager Albright replied by freeing up employee time and reduction of overtime he feels it would be beneficial.

The Board stated that they would like to see the Town more self sufficient and not have to hire outside contractors.

Section 3 – Comprehensive Plan

Manager Albright introduced Dr. Weitz from the ECU Planning Department. Dr. Weitz presented a draft plan. He gave a summary of the Comprehensive Plan mentioning the students that have really worked hard to put this together. He touched on the elements of the plan including; population and housing, working residents, soil suitability, existing and future land use, community facilities and services, transportation, implementation and suggested next steps.

Manager Albright recommended the Board take the plan home and read during the month of March and we will discuss it at the April workshop.

Section 4 – Town Hall/Administration

Manager Albright gave an overview of Zoning Permit trends and classifications.

Manager Albright stated the proposed Depot repairs including; repair/replace existing double hung doors, gable end fascia and crawl space panels, paint exterior, replace and finish decking, more lighting inside, replace ceiling fans, paint trim and doors, replace windows, and replace flooring in bathroom. Manager Albright's proposal for upgrading the St. David Street park building are as follows; clean and paint existing wood fascia, exterior of building, and inside floor. He also priced options for replacing windows and removing drop ceiling and adding new lighting and ceiling fans. Also included in the proposal is to repair and repaint exterior side and rear of Town Hall and Harvey Building. His 5 year projections is to replace the section of roofing at Town Hall that covers the Board Room and the Conference Room, to repair or replace the roof at the Police Department, to coat and restripe Town Hall parking lot. He also stated that near the end of the upcoming 5 years several of the Planning Documents will need to be updated.

Manager Albright gave statistics on the current budget numbers stating that we are tracking fairly close and he expects to finish the year at a break even or with a small surplus in the General Fund. In the Water/Sewer Fund he is expecting to finish the year at least to break even if not with a surplus. He also informed the Board that we currently have a Fund Balance of \$844,750 which is up slightly from last year this time. He also gave an overview of the upcoming General Fund budget stating that the good news is that we are expecting a modest increase in sales tax revenue and our overall property tax base

has slightly increased. The bad news is that recent changes in the tax code made by the General Assembly leaves us in limbo. He stated that he expects the 14/15 expenditures to be similar to the current year. He will be making COLA and equipment recommendations. He also expects to be dealing with increases in the cost of health insurance rates, utility rates and fuel. Manager Albright then gave an overview of the Utility Fund revenue and expenditures. He stated that sewer rates will need to increase to cover the new debt service from CMSD construction projects and also NRWASA's rates will also increase. He pointed out that there has not been an increase in water and sewer rates since the 2010/2011 fiscal year. On the expenditures side he stated that the Contentnea Creek Bridge water line relocations project could be upcoming if the weather permits. He also stated that original projections and current trends have netted savings in excess of \$40,000 from reorganization of the utilities department. He informed the Board that any non-police equipment purchased in the upcoming budget could be shared between the general and utility funds. His 5 year projections for the General Fund are that the General Fund will experience a 10% increase in FY 15/16 because of the debt service for the Street Improvements Project and after that a modest growth over the next 5 years should occur. He stated that without any unforeseen circumstances or a shift in spending priorities we should continue to experience fund balance growth. His 5 year projections for the Utility Fund are our obligation to CMSD is expected to increase and in FY14/15 our cost to NRWASA will increase.

Section 5 – Museum

Manager Albright gave the floor to the Chairman of the Museum Committee, Mr. Wayne Hardee. Mr. Hardee stated that the Museum has to decline donations because of the lack of space. He is requesting the use of the remainder of the Civic Center for this purpose. He stated that the Museum is growing and has become well known throughout the State. They are requesting the space for displays, demonstrations, work space, office space, media space and archives. He also explained that when filing for grants adequate space is needed to show that good things are happening. He also feels that building codes would impact any expansion and the money is just not there to do so. He also informed the Board of the growth of John Lawson Days and there are also more visitors at the Museum and Indian Village. The Museum Board would like to have a thriving and interesting place highlighting the rich historical past of the Grifton area and to bring more people to Town to help the economy. Museum Board members were also present and they all stated that they wanted to work in harmony with the people that are currently using the Civic Center.

The Board asked Manager Albright to contact the Pitt County Council on Aging to find out what their requirements are so more options could be explored.

Manager Albright gave the following updates:

- *Currently Grifton has a CRS rating of 5 in National Flood Insurance Program which is a great rating. However, the Flood Insurance Program is changing its rating system so that may not be the case in the future.
- *The Board asked Manager Albright to find out if there were any changes in the Depot rental since the rates were increased. Manager Albright informed the Board that there had not been any changes.
- *Repairs are needed on the sidewalks.
- *Computers need to be upgraded due to the fact that windows will no longer support windows XP.
- *The State has asked this region for an Emergency Action Plan.
- *The audit contract will remain with Carr, Riggs & Ingram. They were willing to lower their price to \$12,000.
- *Emergency Action Plan for the Town of Grifton will be brought to the Board sometime in the near future.

Manager Albright asked for comments or suggestions from the Board concerning this Board retreat. Each member of the Board replied that they felt it was a very informative meeting and enjoyed the speakers.

Commissioner Mary Grace Bright feels it is up to the Board to decide if they are adopting the five year goals.

Commissioner Coles stated that in his observation we have a lot of great people here that volunteer. He stated that our staff, the Police Department and Utilities is also great people. He feels there should be some kind of recognition program in place to let these people know they are appreciated. He also stated that recognition motivates people and lets them know their hard work has not fallen on blind eyes.

Manager Albright stated that Commissioner Coles, himself and Angel would sit down and have a conversation in the very near future so we can iron out the details.

Commissioner Coles stated that he feels we should give to people that give back to the community including employees.

Commissioner Barns made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Coles. The motion carried unanimously.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted
Angel Hudson
Town Clerk