

**TOWN OF GRIFTON
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL MEETING
FEBRUARY 22, 2013**

Present: Mayor Billy Ray Jackson; Commissioners Buddy Albritton, Richard Hill, Sammy Whitehurst, Mary Grace Bright, Will Barnes; Manager Joe Albright, Clerk Angel Hudson

Absent: None

Mayor Jackson called the meeting to order.

Purpose of the meeting was to hold the annual Grifton Board of Commissioners Retreat to discuss the 2013/2014 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. He stated that there is an insert in the front of the packet about understanding monthly revenue and expense reports. He encouraged the Board to ask any questions they may have when reviewing the monthly revenue/expense reports.

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 a summary of the 2012 Annual Report on the increase and decrease in crime from January 1, 2012 through December 31, 2012. The report included crime statistics, staff, citations, accidents, calls for service, vehicles, computers, salaries, animal complaints, needs and goals and projections. He also stated that the department has been fully staffed and there have been no citizen complaints filed about the staff.

Chief Cauley would like for the Board to consider having an Urban Archery Season in order to eliminate some of the deer population. He feels that doing so would reduce the number of accidents involving deer. Chief Cauley will investigate this possibility and report back to the Board at a later date.

Chief Cauley would also like for the Board to consider the following items for the upcoming budget year: Replacement of his car, increase in starting salaries in order to entice and retain more qualified applicants, and he expressed a great need for an Investigator position in order to be able to close current open cases.

As Chief Cauley talked about goals and projections he mentioned the need for Panhandling to be addressed in the ordinance book and that the Town Attorney should be included in constructing this ordinance because of the various legal issues involved.

Mayor Jackson stated that the numbers given shows what a good job the Grifton Police Department is doing and he would like to give him what he needs.

Commissioner Bright asked if we could use the newspaper to inform the public of stolen items, etc.

Chief Cauley stated there is information that you do not want the public to know because it may hinder an investigation.

Commissioner Bright asked if the Town received revenue from the citations that are written.

Chief Cauley replied that the Town does not receive any revenue from written citations.

Section 2 – Public Utilities

Manager Albright introduced Harold Herring who is the Executive Director of Neuse Regional Water and Sewer Authority to give a brief update on the organization.

Mr. Herring began with a power point presentation letting the Board know how NRWASA began in 2000 and his presentation carried through to present day operations. Mr. Herring stated that Grifton pays 75% of the water consumption whether we use it or not so he encouraged the Town to use NRWASA water. He informed the Board that each Town or member is still responsible for its own internal water systems. He thanked Manager Albright for his invaluable service and expressed the importance of having good representation on the NRWASA Board because of the decision making process. Mr. Herring invited the Board to tour the plant at any time.

Commissioner Bright asked if there are any future increases anticipated.

Mr. Herring responded by saying that eventually, because of operating costs, there will probably be some type of increase but that will be up to the NRWASA Board.

Manager Albright thanked Mr. Herring for his attendance.

Manager Albright gave an overview of Public Utilities and Public Works. His presentation involved water treatment, distribution, sewer treatment and collections. He explained the amounts of each budget for water and sewer and described how the money is spent for these departments.

Manager Albright introduced Derrick Smith of the Wooten Company to give an update on the Sewer Rehab Project.

Mr. Smith stated that the project began in February and he feels the contractor is making good progress. He also informed the Board that the first progress meeting is coming up and there would be a progress meeting each month in order to address any issues that may arise.

Manager Albright gave a brief overview of the Streets Department. He individualized the amounts for street lights, signs, repair of pot holes, drainage and ditch repairs and street resurfacing.

Manager Albright stated that storm water drainage is also funded by the streets department which includes spraying, inspecting, cleaning and making minor repairs to the main canals, ditches, drains, and culverts.

Manager Albright touched on the Grounds Maintenance stating that there are 2 employees under this department. These two employees perform mowing, park maintenance, yard waste collection and beautification maintenance. In the last few weeks they have also done some tree trimming on the right of ways. Their jobs are contained to mowing over 1500 acres of Town owned property, 150 miles of road right of way, and maintaining trees, shrubs etc. at all Town owned facilities.

Manager Albright stated that sanitation includes yard waste, solid waste (household garbage) and recycling. Our 2 employees handle the yard waste part of the sanitation and Waste Industries handles the solid waste and the recycling collection. However, the Waste Industries contract expires in June of 2013. He indicated that RFP's will be mailed out next week and that is the beginning of the process to see who the lowest bidder will be and see if the Board would like to change providers.

Commissioner Hill stated that we would be in bad shape if Benny Cox and Billy Britt left employment because of the outstanding job they do for the Town.

Mayor Jackson asked Manager Albright about the personnel at the utilities department.

Manager Albright responded by saying that he feels it is all going in a good direction since the recent personnel changes.

Manager Albright gave a power point presentation of Town owned facilities that need repair such as St. David Street park building and the Depot. He stated that the seal should be ready to install soon on the front of Town Hall Façade. Manager Albright feels that with the amount of repair work needed on the Park building and the Depot we need to package the maintenance for all buildings together. He stated that he is in the process of seeking architectural assistance in this packaging process because of his lack of knowledge on the subject of architecture and that professional help is needed.

Commissioner Whitehurst asked if this would be paid assistance or just guidance.

Manager Albright responded by saying it would include both paid assistance and guidance.

Commissioner Bright stated that she strongly felt that we need to do something about the St. David Street Park Building.

Section 3 – Streets Improvement Project

Manager Albright gave a brief summary of how the process for this project began and where we are today. He stated that it was very difficult getting public input from the surveys that were sent out in the utility bills but from the response that were given from the public that did return the surveys he decided to provide funding options on the 2B option. He talked about the assumptions for analysis, existing budget figures and future resources. He also talked about exploring options such as instituting a Storm Water Utilities Fund. The revenues for this fund would come from a monthly charge on the utility bill based on impervious surface of property.

Commissioner Hill asked Manager Albright to explain in further detail how the Storm Water Fund revenues would be charged.

Manager Albright stated that it is based on what amount of rain would soak into the ground and how much would run off the pavement. He also stated that typically commercial property would pay more than residential property because they have more paved property. He also stated that the charges on the bills would be set by the Board.

Commissioner Hill stated that he was concerned about the public's ability to pay their utility bills if it is raised any higher.

Manager Albright showed the options of the amount of tax increases that would be needed to fund this project based on the financing options the Board decided to use.

Manager Albright reiterated that we will have to have new revenues to fund this project.

Mayor Jackson feels it would be fairer to institute a Storm Water Fund.

Derrick Smith stated that moving forward the Wooten Company has pulled together some numbers for engineering services and to get from where we are now through the bond referendum the engineering cost will be approximately \$3500.00.

Manager Albright presented a more detailed 8 page report on financing options and asked the Board to take it home and study it over the next couple of weeks.

Section 4 – Town Hall/Administration

Manager Albright went over the current budget for the General and Water/Sewer Funds. He stated that in the General Fund, as of February 1st we are operating with a \$149,000 surplus. He did inform the Board that property taxes are the major revenue source in the months of November, December and January which makes the numbers higher at this stage of the budget. However, he does expect the General Fund to break even and maybe even have some surplus at the end of the budget year. He stated that in the Water/Sewer Fund we are currently operating on a \$45,000 surplus due to operational savings and hopes to also break even in this fund at the end of the budget year.

He also said that as far as rate increases go the water side looks okay but the sewer rates may go up because of new sewer debt at CMSSD.

Manager Albright touched on the Contentnea Creek Bridge Project stating that the money is still in the budget to do this project, however, the water levels have to be down in order for this to be done.

Manager Albright also stated that the State would be unwilling to help with the funding of this project. He also stated that if this line were to burst the Lenoir County side of our Town would be cutoff and without water. He suggested doing an emergency contract with another water company in case of an emergency.

Mayor Jackson stated that he feels we should explore that idea.

Commissioner Albritton stated that there should be a cutoff on both side of the line.

Mayor Jackson suggested putting in a valve and tying in with NRWASA on the Lenoir County side.

Manager Albright showed the Board an Organizational chart for all employees.

Manager Albright touched on Personnel, Utility Department Changes, and current Utilities Savings because of these changes. He stated that he was not sure how much health insurance would go up or if it would go up at all at this point in the budgeting process. He also informed the Board that we are looking into changing Dental Insurance because of the lack of coverage on our current policy. He did let the Board know that the employee is solely responsible for all Dental Coverage premiums.

Manager Albright stated that he was asked to come up with some form of evaluating his performance. He presented several different Manager Evaluation forms from several different Towns and asked the Board to review them and advise him of how they would like for the Town of Grifton's to be completed. Alicia Arnold gave the financial condition analysis of the Town of Grifton from 2007 through 2011. She touched on Peer Group, Governmental Activities, which concludes that we do live within our means, Governmental Activities, which she stated have improved in the last 2 years and Financial Conditions for the General Fund. In summary, she stated that we are in a lot better shape because the revenues have increased and the expenses have decreased.

Section 5 – Planning

Alicia Arnold gave a power point presentation about the Parks & Recreation Plan. She talked about the purpose of the plan and how she felt we needed to build upon what we already have. She talked of the key goals, recreation inventory, recreation sites current and future recreation sites, the statistics, facility inventory, the survey sent out to citizens, and strategies. She talked about what needs to be done at St. David Street Park, Hodges Field, the RV Park and Mattie's Mini Park. She talked about the initial phase of the plan which includes exploration, promotion and development within a 2 year period. She stated that the next phase would be the intermediate phase which would be 2 to 5 years and would include creation, exploration and construction. Lastly she talked about the long term phase which would be beyond 5 years and will include construction, designing and acquiring land for district scale park facility and continue to seek grant opportunities to complete and maintain recreational outlets in the Town. She presented a more thorough packet for the Board to look at on the Recreation Master Plan at their leisure to build upon.

Alicia Arnold brought to the attention of the Board several other plans the Town now has such as; The Thoroughfare Plan, Greenway Plan, Land-Use Plan, Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan, Water/Sewer Capital Improvement Plan, Pedestrian Plan, Economic Development Plan, Downtown Conceptual Master Plan, Marketing Plan and the Parks & Recreation Master Plan. She stated that the Economic Development Plan was developed through the NCSTEP grant and so was the Marketing Plan. She feels the Downtown Conceptual Master Plan is integral for the Town Commons which was also developed through the NCSTEP grant. She informed the Board that some of our plans fall under the Pitt County plans such as; the Greenway Plan, Emergency Operations Plan and the Solid Waste Management Plan.

Commissioner Whitehurst and Commissioner Bright both stated that they feel the Board should know more specifics about the plans we have.

Manager Albright stated that he and Alicia have already discussed bringing at least 1 plan per month before the Board for a more informative description of each plan before adoption. He stated that some plans may be obsolete and some may need to be updated.

In conclusion, Manager Albright stated that the information has been put before the Board in order to determine what direction we go from here. He also asked for any feedback on the Board Retreat itself and any future retreats and planning.

The Board felt the Retreat had been very informative and that they have some good information to study and make decisions from.

Manager Albright thanked Alicia Arnold and Angel Hudson for the information provided and expressed the appreciation for the hard work that Alicia Arnold has done putting the information together.

Mayor Jackson stated that he felt there was good team work in the office up front.

Commissioner Whitehurst made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hill. The motion carried unanimously.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted
Angel Hudson
Town Clerk