



TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

COUNCIL RETREAT

January 24, 2017

The Kure Beach Town Council held a retreat at the community center on Tuesday, January 24, 2017 at 8:00 a.m. The town attorney was present and there was a quorum of council members.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Emilie Swearingen
Mayor Pro Tem (MPT) Craig Bloszinsky
Commissioner David Heglar
Commissioner Joseph Whitley
Commissioner Jim Dugan

STAFF PRESENT

Building Inspector – John Batson
Finance Officer (FO) – Arlen Copenhaver
Fire Chief – Harold Heglar
Assistant Fire Chief – Ed Kennedy
Police Chief – Mike Bowden
Public Works Crew Leader – Jimmy Mesimer
Town Clerk – Nancy Avery
Personnel Manager – Mandy Sanders
Deputy Clerk – Nancy Hewitt

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Swearingen called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. and asked the department heads to present their information.

1. DEPARTMENT HEAD PRESENTATIONS

FY17-18 potential budgetary impacts for staffing, regulatory requirements, equipment/vehicle needs and fee changes; updates on current projects; other items to bring to Council's attention

a. Building Inspections

Inspector Batson made the following points:

- He hired a new assistant who is working more hours than his former assistant; this will increase his budget by about \$6,000 per year. He said he might put her on full-time status within the next two years, probably after the town hall expansion.
- The new flood maps might be implemented this year.
- He is negotiating the placement of the Development Line with CAMA, with possible additional lines to be drawn along the B1 district and the Riggings area.
- Council needs to look at restructuring the fees or the fee requirements, specifically storm water fees, for properties where larger houses are replacing smaller ones. Currently, no storm water fees are charged to owners who tear down and rebuild their structures.



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- Eventually, building permit and storm water fee collections are going to decrease as the town is built out, and we're going to have to look for ways to compensate in other areas.

Commissioner Heglar suggested having storm water permit fees increase, proportional to the amount of impervious square footage being added to a property. He said the building inspector could go to the Planning and Zoning (P&Z) Commission and ask them to recommend a method to charge additional storm water permit fees for reconstruction or improvements. He said they could consider whether a fee should be charged every time someone adds impervious surface to the property, or only when a certain amount of impervious surface is added.

COUNCIL CONSENSUS – Council directed the building inspector to ask P&Z to recommend how to best charge additional storm water fees for existing properties when more impervious square footage is being added.

Inspector Batson said he is seeing more of an issue with parking from some of the new, larger houses being built and may want to change parking requirements, after which discussion ensued about parking for rental properties, public spaces and town right-of-ways.

b. Police Department

Chief Bowden made the following points:

- The biggest project he is currently working on is updating their server and computers through VC3, with the help of the town clerk.
- Their Motorola radios have about five years before they are obsolete, and there is a 35 percent discount if new ones are purchased this year. They are looking for a grant to pay for them.
- He would like all of their equipment to be compatible and interchangeable with each other, since a lot of their equipment is currently not.
- He's hiring a new officer in February, which was already put in the current budget.
- He'll be asking for a new police car in the next budget.
- Out of Asset Forfeiture, they're looking at buying new armor-plated vests.
- The Sunny Point (MOTSU) police have been writing speeding tickets on Dow Road and in town. The state attorney said it is illegal for MOTSU to be giving tickets out on Dow Road because it's not their jurisdiction since the state bought Dow Road from them in 1977. He said the town attorney is looking into this.

Commissioner Heglar said the state attorney, not the town attorney, needs to look into this. He said the town has significant interests at stake with MOTSU, including a sewer system, a park, parking for the fire department, a water tower and storage for public works, so we need to be respectful in our communications with them. He said the state attorney's office should put everything in writing so the town can show it to MOTSU.



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c. Finance Department

FO Copenhaver made the following points:

- Sometime in the near future, he needs to get new financial software that is more compatible with other accounting systems.
- There are regulation changes stemming from a recent lawsuit against the Town of Carthage regarding impact fees. They were found to be collecting them illegally, and the judgement was that they had to refund the fees collected over the last 10 years. He and the town attorney are looking at the town's impact fees and how they are defined.
- For electronic payments, every disbursement has to be pre-audited and documented to make sure there's enough money in the budget. In this case, the town's credit card process needs to be updated since there's no way he can pre-authorize those expenditures. He has set a \$2,500 limit on each of the town's credit cards. They should only be used in the case of an emergency, otherwise, all expenditures should be pre-authorized through the AP system. He will have to show that funds are encumbered for \$2,500 per card for each department.
- There may be a way to centralize the purchase of general needs for the town for things like kitchen, bathroom and office supplies to keep costs down, but that's uncertain.
- He reviewed the following town policies regarding credit cards:
 - Department heads are responsible for every transaction on their credit card.
 - Anything that costs over \$1,000 needs a purchase order first.
 - Receipts are required to be submitted with the monthly statements. If no receipts are provided within 60 days of the purchase, the department head is personally responsible and the charge amount could be deducted from his/her pay and, if it's a continual problem the card could be canceled.
 - Everyone needs to document what was purchased on the credit card receipt, since statements often only list the name of the vendor and not what was purchased. This information is also important for tax refund purposes.
- Invoices need to get to AP in a timely manner. The department head needs to make sure that finance knows who is authorize to sign off on expenditures within a department, if it's not the department head.
- For payroll, finance needs timesheets early Monday morning or the first day of the work week. The timesheet needs to fully document the hours and be signed by the employee and the department head, in case the town is ever audited.
- If a department head elects to keep his department's timesheets, finance needs a signed statement from the department head stating he/she is maintaining them correctly. The retention for timecards is forever.

Regarding impact fees, Attorney Canoutas said if the town is truly planning a project to take place soon, the court says it's legal to collect the fees; but if the town is collecting fees to be used for an undetermined project that will happen sometime in the future, the court says it's illegal to collect the fees. He said only by a special act of legislature will it be allowed, so the town has to



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come up with correct language and talk to Representative Davis about it. He said he will get Carthage's legislative act to review it.

Regarding lost credit card receipts, Commissioner Heglar said the town needs to institute a Lost Receipt process where the department head fills out a form to justify the expense since he is not in favor of making department heads pay for the expense. He said finance needs to tell the department's council liaison if there is a continual problem with lost receipts from a department head and then it should be worked out by council what to do about it.

Regarding Human Resources (HR), Mayor Swearingen said there needs to be a central system for HR to keep everything in order for audits and to safeguard against lawsuits, since there are so many HR laws to keep up with.

FO Copenhaver stated that Town Clerk Avery and Personnel Manager, Mandy Sanders, keep up with most of the HR records and processes. He said that there is no centralized way of documenting HR items, as most departments have their own set of forms or way of doing things.

Assistant Chief Kennedy said he talked with the town clerk and came up with a way to document the hours for payroll and to summarize the work hours listed by day and time, also accounting for comp days, so that their timesheets show whether or not the employee is incurring overtime.

Regarding timesheets, Commissioner Heglar said council is supportive of the finance officer working with the department heads to receive and store all of the timesheets in one, central repository.

d. Fire Department

Assistant Chief Kennedy made the following points:

- He needs new radios and has applied for a \$160K AFG (firefighter) grant to pay for them. He said that the town's share of it will be five percent.
- They decided to hire three FTE and two PTE, rather than four FTE, as originally approved by council. He said the PTEs have a more flexible work schedule and can be used to cover FTEs who are sick or on vacation leave. He said having two PTEs in place of one FTE also saves the town from having to pay out as much in benefits.
- They currently have 49 air packs, but 16 of them will go out next year since they only last 15 years; they cost \$1,100 per bottle and it will cost about \$11k per year to replace them on a rotating basis.
- Regarding lifeguards, council needs to understand that, at the end of August, ocean rescue is short-staffed due to many of the lifeguards leaving for college at that time. He said this is a normal occurrence.



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Regarding new hires, Mayor Swearingen said that department heads need to let the town clerk and finance officer know right away when there's a plan to hire someone. She said the new employee should have a form they initial to state they have received their benefits and payroll information, as well as a copy of their job description. She said she would also like to see exit interviews done, noting the information could be helpful during department head evaluations.

MPT Bloszinsky pointed out that the personnel manager does a benefits orientation with each new town employee.

Regarding exit interviews, Town Clerk Avery said that she doesn't do exit interviews because she attempted it once, but it didn't go well, and she didn't get any support from council when the department head objected to it. She said there's an exit form but, if we get blowback from a department head, we need council to support us.

MPT Bloszinsky said council needs to assure the department heads that an exit interview isn't a witch hunt against them or their department and they shouldn't be concerned that it will be used against them in their annual evaluation.

Commissioner Heglar said exit interviews are a good idea and should be implemented, but council's responsibility is to make sure it's happening and that they back up the process, if a department head objects. He said council shouldn't manage the actual process, though.

Regarding lifeguards, Commissioner Dugan said to direct any complaints about the decreased staff at the end of August to him, Chief Heglar, or the assistant chief.

Chief Heglar said that they are building the last three aluminum lifeguard towers this year. He said the five beach wheelchairs are used a lot during the July 4th holiday, but there are usually two sitting in the station not being used the rest of the season.

Assistant Chief Kennedy said the U.S. Lifeguards Association (USLA) just changed their standards to require every lifeguard to have a physical and a post-season skin cancer screen; they won't allow them to use football physicals. He said it costs \$200 per fireman for a physical done through the town, which doesn't include the cancer screening, and there are about 30 lifeguards. He asked if it was worth it to council for the lifeguards to continue to be USLA certified. He said they're in talks with them to see if they would accept football physicals.

Commissioner Heglar said he's not sure how much the certification is worth if the town were to be sued for a drowning or other incident, but he thinks having an outside agency certify the lifeguards may have value. He told the assistant fire chief to put it in his proposed budget for this coming year for consideration.



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e. Public Works

Crew Leader, Jimmy Mesimer, made the following points:

- Public works has been short-staffed due to injuries and they are anticipating some employees will be retiring soon. They will need to hire in the near future.
- The quote came in at \$125k to fix the town's outfalls. The finance officer confirmed that FEMA WILL reimburse from the quote a maximum of 75 percent.
- They may need a new Vac machine (truck) soon.
- The lift station project will go out for bids on February 1st, and they hope to award the contract by March 1st with construction to begin April 1st.

Crew Leader Mesimer and Commissioner Heglar reviewed the areas in town that public works is dealing with on storm water issues and the solutions.

Commissioner Heglar gave an update on the Beachwalk HOA retention pond project. He said the contractors hope to be finished by the second week in February and, after that, he will start back on talks with the HOA about the Sandman lots.

Finance Officer Copenhaver said, as soon as we get the bid, we need to start the financing process and go to the LGC.

At 10:14 a.m., the mayor called for a break

At 10:30 a.m., the meeting resumed

f. Administration and Recreation

Town Clerk Avery said one of her goals has been to move all of the computer data for the town over to the cloud through VC3, which she has done; and she is handing over IT maintenance to them, as well. She said the cloud offers better security, connectivity, backup of files and includes 24/7 system monitoring. She said the other goal has been to review and update the personnel policy which was last updated in 2001. She said she is working with Personnel Manager Sanders on that project and reviewed a few policies with council she thought they may want to change.

2. DISCUSSION ON SUGGESTED CHANGES TO PERSONNEL POLICY

a. Part-time employee (PTE) benefits eligibility

Town Clerk Avery reviewed the current policy regarding PTE and the list of their benefits. She said there is currently no one working for the town who qualifies as a PTE and reviewed the criteria for that position. She asked council if they wanted to consider removing the benefit eligibility for PTE.

Personnel Manager Sanders said that PTEs are there for a reason in the fire department, to cover full-time employees (FTE) when they take vacation and sick; but who will cover PTEs if they get



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sick or take vacation? She said paying insurance for three or four PTE, compared to paying insurance for just one FTE can add up.

Assistant Chief Kennedy said his PTEs are receiving benefits from their full-time jobs, but they want as many hours as they can get on their part-time job to help supplement their income. He said they aren't working part-time for the benefits but, rather, to get the supplemental pay.

Commissioner Heglar said council needs to ask the department heads if they will have a problem recruiting PTE if council removes this benefit, and then council needs to decide what, if any benefits, are offered to them.

Personnel Manager Sanders said that employees who work 1,000 hours or more are required to be signed up with the state's retirement system, and workman's comp is also a mandatory benefit; otherwise, PTE are not required to have any other benefits. She said that PTEs usually don't want to go over the 1,000 hours because their paycheck will get hit with six percent of their income going into retirement.

Commissioner Dugan said council needs to consider that the employees working part-time are working dangerous jobs in the fire and police departments.

Personnel Manager Sanders said that she contacted several towns while researching, and a lot of their policies are outdated, and they are also limiting their employees' hours so they don't meet the part-time criteria.

MPT Bloszinsky said, if you look at the major companies today, a lot of them aren't even offering retirement options any more, for FTE and PTE.

Commissioner Heglar suggested that part-time benefits be only those benefit that are required, statutorily.

The finance officer said that the full-time requirement for the fire department is 212 hours of work for every 28 days.

The town clerk said that the definition for full-time in the town's personnel policy is working 12 months, ongoing, and at least 35 hours a week.

Commissioner Heglar summarized that FTEs would be those who work more than 1,750 hours per year, PTEs would be those who work between 1,000 and 1,750 hours per year, and temporary employees would be those who work less than 1,000 hours per year. He suggested changing the definition of a PTE to one who works over 1,000 hours, but less than full-time.



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Town Clerk Avery asked council if they want to offer PTE benefits, now that they have defined what the PTE criteria should be. She added that one federal requirement for medical insurance says if an employee works 30 hours a week, the town has to offer them medical insurance, but the town doesn't have to pay for it.

Commissioner Whitley said the town should pay one day of sick leave to PTE.

Commissioner Heglar said he would like to see the costs associated with one day of paid sick day for PTE, as well as the pros and cons of offering it.

CONSENSUS – Council eliminated all of the PTE benefits that are currently listed in the town's personnel policy, except for those benefits that are required by federal or state law, as well as the possibility of granting PTE one day of sick leave per year. They directed the town clerk to develop wording for the revised policy, with and without the sick leave, for their final consideration.

Council asked the personnel manager to inform them of policies from other towns regarding PTE benefits.

b. Maximum Accumulation Vacation

Town Clerk Avery said that the policy states the town pays a maximum of 30 days accumulated vacation upon termination and it allows only half of the accumulated vacation hours, exceeding 30 days, to convert to sick time that may be used for extra service credit towards retirement. She suggested allowing all of the excess vacation, over 30 days, to convert to sick time that may be used towards extra service credit towards retirement. She said this change provides an additional benefit for retiring employees, but it doesn't cost the town anything.

Personnel Manager Sanders said that most towns whose policies she has looked at allow all of the overage to be used towards retirement that can be used at the end of the employee's career.

CONSENSUS – Council will allow all FTE excess vacation accrual over 30 days to be converted to sick time that may be used as extra service credit towards the employee's retirement.

c. Sick Leave for Care of Healthy Children

Town Clerk Avery said that the current policy allows sick leave to be used for the care of an immediate family member who is ill, but it doesn't allow sick leave to be used for the care of healthy children while the spouse is ill. She rationalized that, if an employee is taking sick leave to care for a spouse and there are healthy children in the home at the time, it seems reasonable to assume the employee would also care for the children. She suggested council consider deleting the policy under Article VIII, Section 12 that doesn't allow an employee to use sick leave to care for healthy children while a spouse is ill.



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CONSENSUS – Council directed the town clerk to delete the section in the policy that says employees cannot use sick leave to care for their healthy children while their spouse is ill.

d. Sick Leave Used for Bereavement Leave

Town Clerk Avery said that the current town policy allows sick leave to be used for bereavement in the case of death of an employee's immediate family member, not to exceed three days. She asked council if they wanted to consider adding a separate Bereavement Leave benefit, not to exceed three days, in addition to the 12 days of sick leave FTE receive now. She said this is a common policy with other municipalities.

During discussion, some council members thought that 12 days of sick leave per year was a lot of time to be given off, without adding bereavement leave, too.

CONSENSUS – No change to current policy

e. Transfer of Sick Time for New Hires

Town Clerk Avery recommended adding a new section to Article VIII, to be listed as Section 13A Transfer of sick time for new hires. It would read, as follows: *Sick time earned by new hires at another NC government agency will be accepted for the purpose of reporting to the NC State Retirement System upon retirement for use towards additional service credits.* She said that this policy is common among government agencies in NC.

CONSENSUS – Council directed the town clerk to add the following new section to the town's personnel policy: *Section 13A – Transfer of sick time for new hires. Sick time earned by new hires at another NC government agency will be accepted for the purpose of reporting to the NC State Retirement System upon retirement for use towards additional service credits.*

f. Voluntary Retirement

Town Clerk Avery said that the current policy states, if an employee meets the conditions of the State Retirement System, the town will pay for continued health (medical, dental & vision) insurance coverage. She suggested council clarify that the town pays premiums associated with group medical insurance for either a Medicare supplement, if the retiree is Medicare eligible, or the same coverage regular employees receive, if the retiree is not Medicare eligible. She said the retiree is responsible for any costs associated with Medicare eligibility. She also suggested council clarify that the town will pay 100 percent of the premium, if allowed by the insurance vendor. If not allowed, the retiree is responsible for costs that the vendor requires the employee to pay.

CONSENSUS – Council directed the town clerk to amend the personnel policy under Article IX, Section 5 – Voluntary Retirement, as follows: 1) the policy will clarify that the town pays premiums associated with group medical insurance for either a Medicare supplement, if the



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retiree is Medicare eligible, or the same coverage regular employees receive, if the retiree is not Medicare eligible, and 2) the policy will clarify that the town will pay 100 percent of the premium, if allowed by the insurance vendor. If not allowed, the retiree is responsible for costs that the vendor requires the employee to pay.

Council asked that the finance officer inform them of the financial impact this policy will have on the budget and asked the personnel manager to inform them of policies from other towns regarding this.

Town Clerk Avery gave council and department heads the current policy from Article X, Sections 2 and 5, regarding Unsatisfactory Job Performance and Detrimental Personal Conduct, and asked them to give her any suggestions for revisions to the policy.

At 11:57 a.m., the mayor called for a lunch break

At 12:27 p.m., the meeting resumed

3. FINANCE

a. Mid-year Financial Review

FO Copenhaver reviewed the FY 2017 budget status for all of the town's funds, including highlights, revenues and expenses, from 7/1/16 to 12/31/16. He also reviewed the trends in revenue and expenses over the last five years. He highlighted that the Storm Water Fund has \$1 million in it so, rather than take on additional debt for upcoming storm water projects, it is a good time to spend some of it. He said the fund could be reduced by about \$650k with the projects that are slated to be done.

b. 5-year Capital Plan

FO Copenhaver said he set up a separate capital project fund for the new fire station and town hall expansion project under the General Fund, which will cost approximately \$5 million, and he set up a separate capital project fund for the H Avenue lift station replacement project and the water line replacement project under the Water/Sewer Fund.

c. Future Projections

FO Copenhaver reviewed projected revenues versus projected expenses for the three, main town funds (general, water/sewer, and storm water) over the next five years. For the General Fund, he estimated there would be a deficit beginning in FY 2019 with the assumption of no tax increases, and then he projected what the fund would look like in the next five years if tax rates were increased, incrementally.

For the Water/Sewer Fund, he estimated there would be a deficit beginning in FY 2020 with the assumption of no water and sewer rate increases, and then he projected what the fund would look like in the next five years if water and sewer rates were increased, incrementally.



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For the storm water fund he said there will be a deficit beginning this year. He pointed out that there would still be a deficit in the storm water fund for the next few years if council increased the storm water fees in 2018, but it wouldn't be as much of a deficit as not raising fees at all.

d. Finalization of 2017 Budget Calendar

FO Copenhaver showed the revised budget calendar approved by council, reflecting that the Outside Agency Funding Request Application availability date is February 10th instead of February 17th.

e. Property Tax Revaluation

FO Copenhaver showed the potential impact of the revaluation on the town's revenues and said he thinks the tax rate will not be much different than it is now

Regarding outside agencies requesting funds, Mayor Swearingen said she asked representatives to come to the April 7th budget workshop to share what they do with the funds they've received from the town in the past and what they plan to do with the funds if they are granted by the town. She asked council what should happen if an agency doesn't submit their application by the deadline; should they only approve agencies who submit their applications on time.

Commissioner Dugan said, if the town sends them something and they don't abide by the guidelines, he doesn't mind if they don't get anything; but he doesn't think that new agencies should be penalized because they aren't aware of the guidelines and deadline.

FO Copenhaver said the Federal Point Help Center didn't send anything last year, but it was decided during the budget workshop to fund them anyway. He said that Friends of Fort Fisher did the same thing a year earlier, but council didn't give them anything.

Commissioner Heglar said, if a group comes to us and admits they screwed up, and they are able to convince three commissioners to fund them anyway, then the town should fund them.

MPT Bloszinsky said that council should have the right to decide how to handle applications or no applications. He said if they normally apply but forget to do so, funding them should still be considered, and a vote of council will decide the matter.

FO Copenhaver said that it's important to get the application no matter what because it helps satisfy the requirement of defining the public purpose of spending town money.

Commissioner Heglar asked the town clerk to email budget meeting requests to department heads and council and to also email a copy of the entire budget calendar to them.

At 1:20 p.m., the mayor called for a break



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At 1:30 p.m., the meeting resumed

4. TOWN COUNCIL ITEMS

a. Status of 2016 Council Goals

FO Copenhaver reviewed the progress of the goals council set at their 2016 retreat, and welcomed council members and department heads to fill in the status of each.

1. Resolution of outstanding issues relating to the Sandman property – In Progress

Commissioner Heglar updated council on the progress of the Sandman property and asked that this be added to the 2017 Council Goals.

Mayor Swearingen said she would like to expand the 2017 goals to resolve outstanding issues for all town properties that could have buildings placed on them.

2. Over the next two years, resolve the storm water issues identified during the February 2016 Town Council Retreat – In Progress

3. Before the end of FY 2018, develop plans, obtain financing and construct a new fire station and perform improvements to other Town facilities – In Progress

4. Maintain the current tax rate, if possible – Completed

FO Copenhaver said it was completed, but council had to increase the tax rate by 2.35 cents.

5. Work with New Hanover County, Carolina Beach and Wrightsville Beach to develop a long-term coastal storm damage reduction funding plan – In Progress

MPT Bloszinsky said that money for renourishment is in the federal and state budget, as far as he knows.

Mayor Swearingen said she is looking forward to hearing what the county's lobbyist is planning to do with the state, because he's not communicating with anybody; but the lobbyist in DC is doing a great job. She said the U.S. President's budget hasn't come out yet, but it's in the federal water bill. She said she has no idea where the study is that the state was supposed to have completed by November 1st.

6. Monitor potential revenue shortfalls that may occur in future years – In Progress

7. Complete the Town of Kure Beach Comprehensive Plan by February 2017 – In Progress.



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Mayor Swearingen said council needs to wait for the survey results to come back before anything can be finalized. She said the two big issues during the planning are parking and the business district.

8. Address public safety staffing during the FY 2017 budget process – Completed
FO Copenhagen this was accomplished when council approved four new positions for the fire department and one new position for the police department.

*At this point in the meeting, council took a break and, at 2:00 p.m., skipped ahead to *Item 5 for the architects' presentation before returning to these items.*

b. Future Use of Undeveloped Town Property

Commissioner Dugan said that, although council agreed to not proceed with giving public works some space in the back lot of the town hall complex, that doesn't mean they don't need additional space. He said they need adequate, roofed space to store some of the most expensive equipment the town owns, which is currently being stored in the open air leading to faster deterioration.

Discussion ensued about the three vacant town lots that are located across from public works. Comments made were that 1) the property was purchased by the town for future use, and the best use is for public works and 2) that town property on Sandman wouldn't be the best place for public works storage.

Commissioner Heglar said that most residents have been living near the public works property for years and, except for one new homeowner in that area, they don't mind it and have accepted it. He said the property across from public works should be used for public works. He said Director Beeker is also looking at extending the space behind the Baptist church where the trash trucks are stored now.

Commissioner Dugan said there are vehicles parked on the property across from public works that don't belong there, after which discussion ensued about how to handle that situation and about how to keep the property looking decent.

c. Determination of FY17-18 Council goals

Mayor Swearingen asked that this item be removed from the agenda and discussed during the FY17-18 budget session.

5. *FINAL REVIEW WITH ARCHITECTS OF CONCEPT FOR NEW FIRE STATION AND EXPANSION/RENOVATION OF TOWN HALL COMPLEX

Tim Oakley introduced Shawna Hammond, a new architect with his firm. He said that council charged them with reducing the budget of the project by \$500,000. He reviewed proposed



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floorplans for the three buildings. He said the reason the cost went up from \$240 per square foot (SF) to \$250 per SF for the fire station was because they reduced the plan to one story but still had to factor in all of the equipment that would have been used in the two-story space. He said the estimated cost of the new fire station and expanded town hall facility comes to \$4.9 million, all-in, including storm water, landscaping and resurfacing. He said that the next goal is to look for economies as council manipulates the plan. He pointed out the town's property line and noted that the AT&T property is the only area that is still in question.

Commissioner Heglar said that public works doesn't want to use the site near the fire department after all, and asked if the driveway on the north side of town hall or the destruction of the police department's treehouse was necessary.

Mr. Oakley said that there would be a savings of about \$40k if there wasn't a need to demolish the treehouse. He said keeping the plan to install a driveway on the north side of the complex would allow people to go back to the cell tower and give better access to the roll-up door on the north-facing treehouse.

CONSENSUS – Council directed Oakley Collier Architects to revise their proposed plans as follows: remove the plan to tear down the treehouse and remove the plan to install a driveway along the north side of town hall.

Mr. Oakley said they will amend their drawing to reflect the consensus and said this concludes their portion of the study to determine a plan for the fire station and expansion of the town hall facility. He said it is now up to council to decide if they want to move forward with the project. He said, if the town sends out an RFQ for the project, his firm is very interested in being considered for the job. He said construction prices are going up and time may not be the town's best friend as it relates to cost. He said they will deliver an electronic copy of the plan to the town clerk and will await any further directions or requests.

Town Clerk Avery asked Mr. Oakley what their timeline was to develop construction drawings, to which Mr. Oakley answered that they need about 90 days from the time council votes to move forward with the drawing, then 90 days to complete all of the necessary documentation, then 30 days to put it out for bids, and then a couple more weeks to review the contracts; so the town is about five months away from beginning construction.

Town Clerk Avery asked which rendition of the fire station they wanted to go with, to which she was told by Fire Chief Heglar and agreed on by council that Scheme #2 be the preferred floorplan for the fire station.

MOTION – Commissioner Heglar moved to approve the proposed design of the town hall complex and Scheme 2 of the fire station, as amended by consensus of council to remove the



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driveway at the north side of the complex and to not demolish the treehouse, with the budget not to exceed \$5 million. The town clerk is to issue a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for selection of an architectural firm and the received proposals are to be reviewed, and an architect selected, at the February 21st council meeting, per legal requirements of the Mini-Brooks Act.

SECOND – Commissioner Whitley

VOTE – Unanimous

Discussion ensued about the right of way around the AT&T and MOTSU properties. Mr. Oakley said they can go back and ask the surveyor what properties are legally recorded. He said, worst case scenario, the fire station could slide down to the town’s property line to stay off MOTSU property and still be off of AT&T’s property without the parking area added.

Mayor Swearingen asked the town clerk to talk to AT&T again and ask them to take down their fence, to which the town clerk stated that she heard they are adamant against removing the fence that surrounds the switching equipment.

Commissioner Heglar asked Crew Leader Mesimer to let Director Beeker know what was discussed and, if he has concerns, tell him to come see him.

(After the architect’s portion of the meeting ended at 3:00 p.m., council returned to discuss Town Council Items 4b and 4c, on the agenda, before adjourning.)


ADJOURNMENT


MOTION – Commissioner Dugan moved to adjourn.

SECOND – Commissioner Whitley

VOTE – Unanimous

The meeting adjourned at 3:21 p.m.


Emilie Swearingen, Mayor


ATTEST: Nancy Hewitt, CMC, NCCMC
Deputy Clerk

NOTE: These are action minutes reflecting items considered and actions taken by Council. These minutes are not a transcript of the meeting.

