

**COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF BLADENSBURG
SPECIAL WORK SESSION MINUTES - DRAFT
April 23, 2024 - 5:30 PM**

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Takisha James called the meeting to order at 5:32 pm.

Council Members McBryde, Brown, and Dixon were also present, as were Code Supervisor Rinehart, Chief Collington, Treasurer Tinelli, and Town Administrator Michelle Bailey-Hedgepeth.

NEW BUSINESS

BUDGET SESSION 1:

Town Administrator Bailey Hedgepeth and Town Treasurer Tinelli opened the special budget work session, focused on the fiscal year 2025 draft budget. Discussions included revenue estimates, departmental expenditures, and a fund balance transfer for long-term stability. They highlighted enhancing revenues to reduce reliance on fund transfers in the future.

Initial budget details covered revenue sources like real estate, personal property taxes, income, and local taxes. Discussions included ARPA funds utilization projections and potential infrastructure and street lighting investments.

Highlights of the meeting included the following items that the town council reviewed during an interactive session, which allowed questions to be asked throughout.

1. Review of estimated Town Revenues for FY 2025: Town Treasurer Tinelli provided an overview of the state and county estimates that were used to build the budget.
2. ARPA and COVID Funding: The discussion of using previous funding for the town's basic needs (COLAs and Staff funding) related to ARPA Funding. This funding stream is ending due to the requirement to expend funds by December 31, 2024, if not encumbered for a Capital Project (December 31, 2026). Mayor James provided the input that remaining ARPA funds should be used for long-term/lasting projects since the Town has invested in items like Rental, Business, and Food Assistance.
3. Review of Administrative Budgets: The meeting started with the Town Council Budget. Below are some highlights:
 - Mayor James noted the importance of staff recognition and awards, which were important to the Town.
 - Mayor inquired about additional funding for professional development for the Council and conferences (NFBPA membership and NFBPA Forum)

- Discussion on community events and youth programming. CM Dixon and Mayor James noted that they began discussions with the Boys and Girls Club about providing services to Town youth for skill development and sports programming. Mayor James further noted that this partnership could cost \$25,000.
- Collaboration on Community Events: CM Brown asked staff about the level of coordination between the Town and Police Department on community events. She mentioned an example of Fall/Halloween events. Staff acknowledged that there has been additional coordination with partners to avoid event overlaps. The Chief and Town Administrator will be involved in event planning discussions. The overall Council discussed that new activities may need to be considered and added to the calendar.

Staff follow-up and next steps for Budget Session 2:

- Items for discussion to move to next week's session – Administrative Departments, Public Works, and Police Department.
- Improving Video Production for Town Meetings
 - Discussion on enhancing equipment for virtual meetings.
 - Considerations regarding video production costs and quality.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor James asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Council member McBryde moved, and Council member Dixon seconded. The motion passed 4-0. The meeting adjourned at 7:04 PM.