

CAROLINA BEACH

Town Council Workshop

Tuesday, April 27, 2021 - 9:00 AM

Council Chambers, 1121 N. Lake Park Boulevard, Carolina Beach, NC



MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Pierce called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

PRESENT

Mayor LeAnn Pierce

Mayor Pro Tem Jay Healy

Council Member Lynn Barbee

Council Member JoDan Garza

ABSENT

Council Member Steve Shuttleworth (excused)

ALSO PRESENT

Town Manager Bruce Oakley

Assistant Town Manager Ed Parvin

Town Clerk Kim Ward

Town Attorney Noel Fox (arrived at 11:00 AM)

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Set a Public Hearing Date for May 11th, 2021 to consider amending Chapter 40, Article III & Article IX, to address temporary parking lots.

ACTION: Motion to adopt the consent agenda

Motion made by Mayor Pierce

Voting Yea: Mayor Pierce, Mayor Pro Tem Healy, Council Member Barbee, Council Member Garza

Motion passed 4-0

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

2. Employee Recognition

Public Works Director Brian Stanberry recognized Tony Burnett-Millage for 10 years of service with Public Works.

Police Chief Vic Ward recognized Detective Brandon Smith for 10 years of service with the Police Department, and he introduced Captain Greg Steffens.

Fire Chief Alan Griffin recognized his staff members for their exemplary service during the Paradise Cove fire.

Council Member Garza said he gets a lot of questions from residents about Police and Fire staff members, so he recommended that both chiefs take group photos of their entire staffs to post on social media so the public can be familiar with the public safety faces of the Town.

Council Member Barbee said Captain Steffens recently came to a Police Advisory Committee meeting and had everyone mesmerized in five minutes, so he thinks he will be a great addition.

Mayor Pierce said she agreed with Council Member Garza that there should be a directory of who is in each public safety department so people can recognize them. Mr. Oakley said he will do that.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

3. Quarterly Financial Update

Finance Director Debbie Hall gave the quarterly financial update.

Moody's Annual Credit Rating

Moody's reviews the Town's financial data annually as a requirement of Revenue Bond Series 2016. The purpose is to report the financial health of the Town to the bond market. This data is used by lenders to establish the interest rate to be charged on debt service and is monitored by the Local Government Commission. Once again, the General Fund and Utility Fund were issued Moody's second highest credit rating:

- General Fund Rating = Aa1
- Utility Fund Rating = Aa3

Both are the second-highest ratings possible. Ms. Hall said this tells creditors and future lenders that the Town has a good, strong, healthy economy, which will lead to getting better interest rates.

Sales and Use Tax

Collections for July 1, 2020, through February 28, 2021, are up 14.83 percent over the same period in FY 19/20.

Mayor Pierce asked if the money from the quarter-cent sales tax goes to the Town or the County. Ms. Hall said all of the sales tax that the Town has to pay for vendors comes back as a refund, so it's essentially lending the State money. Mayor Pierce asked if there is any way to tell how much sales tax is generated in the Town. Ms. Hall said there is no way to tell how much is collected in the Town because it's done at the County level as a whole.

Council Member Garza asked if most of the 14.83 percent was from during the off-season. Ms. Hall said this has been strong no matter what season. Council Member Garza said he would like to see year over year for the past two years what the Town averages between October and April. He asked Ms. Hall to track the exact time frame in the future for comparison.

Property Tax Collections

Ad valorem collections for the period of July 1, 2020, through March 31, 2021, were at 97 percent for the same time period in FY 19/20.

Ms. Hall went over figures for other sources of revenue and the percentage increase/decrease between FY 19/20 and FY 20/21, with most of the sources showing an increase. Other sources of revenue include:

- ABC tax
- Building permits
- Building inspections
- Parking lots
- Parking meters
- Parking permits
- Freeman Park annual fee
- Freeman Park daily fee
- Freeman Park camping

Mayor Pro Tem Healy said he was shocked that the revenue for the Freeman Park daily fee went up. Council Member Garza and Council Member Barbee said this was not surprising to them.

General Fund Expenses

Expenses up 8.10 percent from FY 19/20 to FY 20/21 (both through March 31)

Utility Fund Revenue Comparison

Up 6.18 percent year over year

Utility Fund Expenses

Down 13.25 percent from last year because Public Utilities Director Mark Meyer had trouble getting people to do projects during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hurricane Isaias

Wrapped up and everything reported

Total claims: \$552,737.07

Reimbursements received: \$427,097.58

Balance due from Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)/State: \$125,639.49

Council Member Garza said after a lot of unknowns last year at this time, the Town looks to be above par financially. He praised Ms. Hall and her staff for a great job and said these figures can be used as a reflection of what the upcoming year will be like. He said it could be the Town's busiest year yet.

Council Member Barbee said Ms. Hall's work with the Kure Beach and Carolina Beach joint water/sewer authority makes the meetings of that group go very smoothly.

Mayor Pierce said Ms. Hall is well-respected and trusted for giving accurate numbers.

4. Fire Budget Presentation by Chief Griffin

Chief Griffin presented the proposed Fire Department budget for FY 21/22. He started by reviewing the Fire Department/Ocean Rescue FY 21/22 organization chart.

FY 20/21 Fire Department Highlights and Accomplishments

Calls for Service

Total 949

Chief Griffin said call volume was down just a little, with an uptick in fire-related calls during the summer. He said his staff chose not to do certain EMS runs to minimize their exposure during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Training

Total 3,049 hours

Chief Griffin said his staff was able to achieve a significant amount of training hours despite almost all conferences being canceled during the COVID-19 pandemic. He said this was possible due to opportunities for training in small groups that adhered to State mandates.

Fire Department Budget Overview

The total budget request for FY 21/22 is \$1,690,454, an increase of \$237,893 from FY 20/21.

Budget Highlights

Operational budget:

- Personnel increase due to merit, insurance, back staffing of personnel
- Increase in maintenance and operation budget due to absorbing cell phones, vehicle maintenance

Mayor Pierce asked where vehicle maintenance was before. Chief Griffin said it was partly under the Public Utilities Department with a hybrid situation where both departments were managing certain parts, but now it will all be merged into the Fire Department. Mr. Oakley said each department now manages its own fleet and cell phone contract. Council Member Garza said this helps with budgeting and tracking.

Capital budget:

- Update workout equipment
- Equipment for new engine
- Knox Box program manufacturer-required upgrade

FY 21/22 Fire Department Strategic Budget Goals

- Emergency vehicle replacement
- Enhance recruitment and retention
- Enhance in-house training
- Core values: service, honor, integrity, and pride

Council Member Barbee thanked Chief Griffin for always keeping an eye on public safety first.

FY 20/21 Ocean Rescue Highlights and Accomplishments

Calls for Service

Total 770

Mayor Pierce asked if advertising for lifeguards had begun. Chief Griffin said yes, there are 42 applications right now, which is a little down from the 60-70 applications that are usually in by this time. He said if most applicants pass tryouts, there should be enough staffing. He said there may also be a dozen or more late applications and that he is optimistic there will be a solid staff with many returning from previous years.

Council Member Garza asked what the contingency plan is. Chief Griffin said he is comfortable with things at this point. Council Member Garza said he is worried that not everyone will pass tryouts. Chief Griffin said he is comfortable that most applicants will pass based on what he is seeing on applications so far.

Mayor Pierce asked if there had been any consideration about where to pull lifeguards from in case of sickness and other staff shortages. Chief Griffin said Ocean Rescue is used to having skeleton crews when students start returning to college in late summer. He said there are primary stands, and then lifeguards shift as needed throughout the day.

Council Member Garza asked about advertising for lifeguards. Chief Griffin said Human Resources does the typical outreach, plus social media marketing. Council Member Garza asked if there is collaboration with local surf shops. Chief Griffin said Ocean Rescue is already in contact with these shops and that some of the staff members have been lifeguards in the past, so they are good ambassadors for the positions. He said in general, many locals push and encourage the younger generation to apply to be lifeguards. Council Member Garza asked for an update about lifeguard staffing at the meeting in two weeks. Griffin said that would be no problem because he should know more about how things will go after Sunday.

Mayor Pierce asked if there are still lifeguards at Freeman Park. Chief Griffin said yes, there used to be two 4-wheelers and a pickup, but Ocean Rescue is now running just the two 4-wheelers.

Ocean Rescue Budget Overview

The total budget request for FY 21/22 is \$516,056, an increase of \$55,064 from FY 20/21.

Budget Highlights

Operational budget:

- Increase due to cost-of-living adjustment/merit, insurance, etc.
- Minimal staffing starting earlier in the season

Capital budget:

- Purchased two new 4-wheelers
- Purchase new portable radios

Mayor Pro Tem Healy asked what happens to the old 4-wheelers. Chief Griffin said they go to auction and bring a fair amount of money back into the General Fund, so there is some offset that is not realized until the sale.

Council Member Garza asked how serious the 26 medical calls for service in the current fiscal year were. Chief Griffin said on the lifeguard side, the calls can be very serious, such as heatstroke and heart attack. He said there is lots of more minor medical-related interaction with the public that is not reflected in that figure.

Council Member Garza asked if more staff is needed at the beginning of the season and near the end. He mentioned the possibility of a dedicated full-time, year-round person and said numbers show the Town is getting busier. Chief Griffin said seasonal staffing has been starting earlier and ending later, but that could be something to assess in the future. Council Member Garza said it may be time to think outside the box because the Town is changing drastically.

Mr. Oakley said the Town is considering a beach patrol funded through Ocean Rescue to take a proactive approach to enforcing beach regulations. He said he is looking at adding that into the upcoming budget.

Council Member Barbee said he gets a lot of questions from the public about Ocean Rescue's duties, so he wanted some clarification on that. Chief Griffin said the lifeguards are encouraged to keep their eyes on the water as much as possible and that a beach ambassador or beach patrol would be better for enforcing beach regulations. He said he is leaning toward putting a couple of non-lifeguard positions in Ocean Rescue to handle this task.

5. Police Budget Presentation by Chief Ward

Chief Ward presented the proposed Police Department budget for FY 21/22. He started by reviewing the Police Department FY 21/22 organizational chart. He said there are currently four vacancies and another expected during the summer, but he is optimistic about the applicants he has seen for these so far.

Mayor Pro Tem Healy asked how long the hiring process takes from start to finish. Chief Ward said it depends on various factors, but he likes to be thorough and ensure quality hires.

FY 20/21 Police Department Highlights and Accomplishments

- Three-day standoff with armed subject peacefully ended
- Collaborated with FBI and other agencies to solve several high-profile cases
- Professional certifications awarded: four advanced, one intermediate

Chief Ward gave statistics for state citation charges, incident reports, arrests, civil citations, and reports of vehicle collisions for 2018, 2019, and 2020.

Mayor Pro Tem Healy asked what falls under state citations. Chief Ward said these could be misdemeanors such as marijuana possession down to infractions such as failure to wear a seat belt.

Council Member Garza asked if the funds for state citations go directly to the State. Chief Ward said that is a good question. Mr. Oakley said the Town gets some administrative costs from state citations, but in general the Town does not get funds for state laws it enforces, such as speeding tickets. He said the Town does get civil citations funds. Mayor Pierce and Council Member Barbee said it's a common misconception that the Town makes money from writing speeding tickets.

Police Department 510 Budget Overview

The total budget request for FY 21/22 is \$3,041,082, an increase of \$306,028 from FY 20/21.

Takeaway points:

- Personnel increase due to cost-of-living adjustment/merit, employee retention, and anticipated full roster
- Increase in fleet maintenance due to aging vehicles and 20-21 underbudgeted projections
- Increase in supplies to cover cost of two mobile data terminals and six outdated in-office computers; also includes \$4,000 for in-vehicle first aid kits
- Increase in maintenance and repair - equipment includes funding to complete perimeter fencing project
- Increase in contract services includes purchase of expired/outdated body camera/less lethal weapons – grant funding request has been submitted as a potential cost offset

Capital highlights:

- Purchase vs. lease request for fleet vehicle

Police Department 630 Budget Overview (Beach Budget)

The total budget request for FY 21/22 is \$373,743, an increase of \$78,008 from FY 20/21.

Takeaway points:

- Personnel increase due to cost-of-living adjustment/merit and employee retention

Capital highlights:

- Purchase vs. lease request for fleet vehicle
- Request for utility terrain vehicle for beach patrol and other uses; grant funding request submitted to potentially offset cost

FY 21/22 Strategic Budget Goals for Police Department

Body camera/less lethal weapons

- Year one 20/21 - \$24,421 in grant funding awarded
- Year two 21/22 - grant funding request submitted

Mayor Pierce asked how long data is stored on body cams and if it has to be downloaded every day. Chief Ward said the footage is uploaded to the cloud immediately. He said it is available for 60 to 90 days and can be saved separately to be accessed indefinitely. Mayor Pierce asked if every officer wears a body cam. Chief Ward said the goal is to have all patrol people wear one.

Council Member Garza asked what was meant by “expired and outdated.” Chief Ward said there will be a credit and that some equipment is out of warranty, so now everything will be new.

Mayor Pierce asked if this was part of a push for less lethal weapons and to tase first. Chief Ward said the goal is de-escalation and for officers to have plenty of options to facilitate that. He said the more tools officers have, the better.

Mayor Pierce asked about the range for tasers, and there was some discussion with Captain Steffens. Mayor Pierce said tasers allow officers to maintain a distance. She said using other options and turning to a gun as the last resort is very proactive thinking.

K-9 Unit

- K-9 officer already vetted and ready to hire
- K-9 and equipment at no initial/upfront cost

Mayor Pro Tem Healy asked how old the dog is. Chief Ward said the dog is about to turn 3 and can be expected to work until the age of 7 or 8. He said the dog is a rescue with a great story and history.

Council Member Garza said he doesn’t recall the reason for disbanding the previous K-9 Unit, but he would like to know that information in comparison to expectations for the new unit. Chief Ward said the previous dog was not being utilized enough and spent a lot of time sitting in the car. He said expectations for the new unit are for the dog to be outside interacting with the public.

Mayor Pro Tem Healy said the new K-9 Unit would be fantastic for both police presence and public relations.

Mayor Pierce said she could envision the K-9 Unit visiting the elementary school and otherwise getting acquainted with the public, which she considers a very important part of community relations for law enforcement.

Council Member Barbee said the Police Advisory Committee recently heard about the possibility of a new K-9 Unit and responded very positively.

Mr. Oakley said he wanted to get the idea of the new K-9 Unit in front of Council before moving forward. He said the consensus is that he’s hearing positive feedback from Council.

Mayor Pierce asked if the new K-9 Unit will fill a vacant position. Chief Ward said yes.

Drone program

- Beach patrol/lost children
- Search and rescue
- Traffic crash reconstruction
- Crime scene mapping
- Crowd monitoring
- Natural disaster pre- and post-damage assessment

- Potentially dangerous tactical situations (i.e., active shooter)
- Surveillance and pre-surveillance
- Demonstrations, marches, protests

Utility terrain vehicle*

- Safe maneuvering through the crowded beach strand during busy summer months
- Safe maneuvering for all parts of Freeman Park; this is not currently possible with vehicles at high tide and other times due to atmospheric influences
- Efficient and practical enforcement of civil and criminal penalties/violations
- Safe access onto the beach via beach accesses
- Better maneuverability and access for searching for missing children
- Aid with maintaining a clear emergency lane for lifeguards on the ocean side of the park
- Provide rapid response in the event of medical or other emergency situations
- Public events

*Actively seeking grant funding to offset cost

Mayor Pro Tem Healy asked about the status of the Tsunami security camera surveillance system. Chief Ward said he is looking at three vendors and had a meeting with the N.C. Department of Transportation to make sure plans would not cause any right-of-way issues. He said there are some other technical considerations being discussed, including where to mount, but that more information would be available hopefully this week.

Council Member Garza said he wanted to mention the idea of a contingency plan for Fire and Police because they are requesting significant budget increases. He said everything they have presented is great, but realistically they may have to look at delaying some things if the money is not available. Chief Ward said he has some ideas for cuts if they are necessary but that the budget is made up of needs and not wants. Mr. Oakley said the departmental budget presentations are requests and that some of the budgets may look different when they come back before Council. Chief Ward said he is trying to leverage grant funding and partnerships as much as possible to offset costs. Mayor Pierce said the new K-9 Unit is a good move because the Town is getting two officers for the price of one.

6. Parks and Recreation Budget Presentation for FY 21/22

Parks & Recreation Director Eric Jelinski presented the proposed Parks & Recreation Department budget for FY 21/22. He reviewed the current organization chart, which includes six full-time, three part-time year-round, and three part-time seasonal staff.

FY 20/21 Accomplishments

- Renovated the front desk of the Recreation Center, installed new flooring throughout the first floor, painted the walls and door, and installed wainscoting (COVID project)
- Installed new playground at McDonald Park
- Joseph Ryder Lewis Park ribbon cutting
- Tennis courts resurfaced
- New scoreboard (donation)

- New dugouts at both ball fields
- Safety netting coming (donation)
- New backboards being installed
- Continued work on turf improvements
- New benches at playground and dog park
- Received Military Ocean Terminal Sunny Point (MOTSU) approval for new shed

Mayor Pierce asked if there was room to expand the tennis court facility due to the popularity of pickleball and tennis. Mr. Jelinski said right now the answer is no, but the Town is constantly looking at expanding Mike Chappell Park on the MOTSU land across the street. Mayor Pierce said she envisioned something like the facility at Ocean Isle Beach.

Mr. Jelinski said there would be lots of grant money and momentum for fundraisers if expansion became possible. He also mentioned the possibility of getting a 501(c)(3) started. Mayor Pierce asked where the Town is in that process. Mr. Jelinski said it is still in initial stages, and he encouraged anyone willing to help set that up to contact him. He said bylaws have been created, so now it's just a matter of putting together the right board. Mayor Pierce said a 501(c)(3) would help raise money for things that the Town might have a hard time funding in the General Fund. Mr. Jelinski said his department can facilitate donations now, but it's much easier to do so with a 501(c)(3). Mayor Pierce said the community wants to give to something from which they're getting back. Mr. Jelinski said a 501(c)(3) could be very helpful due to the generous nature of the community.

Council Member Barbee suggested getting the Centennial Committee involved. Mr. Jelinski said he would love to talk to those members. Council Member Barbee said he wanted to mention the bathrooms at Mike Chappell Park. Mr. Jelinski said he would be talking about those later in the presentation. Council Member Barbee said many people don't know about McDonald Park, so he would like to see more publicity for it.

The total budget request for FY 21/22 is \$1,526,661, an increase of 75.4 percent from FY 20/21.

Highlights:

- Fireworks, Boardwalk Music, Family Night, Christmas by the Sea: \$161,575
- New bathroom/meeting space at Mike Chappell Park: \$250,000
- Playground at Lake Park matching grant: \$175,000
- Replacement vehicle for Parks & Recreation: \$10,000

Mayor Pierce asked if room occupancy tax (ROT) funds were combined in the budget. Mr. Jelinski said ROT funds are in the maintenance and operation budget as arts and activities and that all of that money will be refunded through ROT funds.

Tourism Programs

Parks & Recreation is taking over Fireworks, Boardwalk Music, Movies at the Lake, Family Night at the Boardwalk, and Christmas by the Sea. The total cost for all programs is \$161,575, and receipts will be submitted for ROT reimbursement.

Mayor Pierce asked if the Town is running proposed bathrooms through ROT funds. Mr. Oakley said the Town is likely to submit the Hamlet project. Mayor Pierce asked about Mike Chappell Park restrooms. Mr. Oakley said the Town hasn't submitted that project. Mayor Pierce said it was something worth considering because Wrightsville Beach had funded bathrooms through ROT funds. Mr. Oakley said he is in favor of doing that.

Council Member Barbee said people have traditionally not looked at non-beach projects as tourism-related. Mr. Jelinski said there is no off-season for Mike Chappell Park. Council Member Barbee said a reasonable percentage of people who use the park are non-residents and that the number is probably higher than most people think. Mr. Jelinski agreed.

Mayor Pierce said if the Town gets control of MOTSU property, funds will be needed to improve the park. Mr. Jelinski said the Town could legitimately approach the County about a lack of field space.

Council Member Garza asked if a sales pitch to the Carolina Beach State Park rather than MOTSU was a possibility. Mr. Jelinski said it makes sense to pitch to MOTSU because the park is right across the street from that property.

Mayor Pro Tem Healy asked where the Town is in conversations with MOTSU. Mr. Oakley said with help from Mr. Parvin and former U.S. Rep. Mike McIntyre, there has been progress, and recommendations from MOTSU's civilian staff to MOTSU leadership about some next steps should be forthcoming. Mr. Oakley said the outlook seems to be more positive than in the past.

Mayor Pierce asked if the Town has permission to build the restroom facility for Mike Chappell Park. Mr. Jelinski said not yet. Mayor Pierce suggested creating a rendering indicating the facility is coming soon because there have been lots of complaints about the current restrooms there.

Mayor Pierce inquired about the seasonal part-time positions. Mr. Jelinski said some of those will be helping at the Boardwalk, movies, and other events, in addition to the entire staff, to assist with setting up, taking down, delivering checks, etc.

Mike Chappell Park Restroom Replacement

- Only two flush toilets in the park currently
- Current restroom building donated in 1985 and does not meet the needs of park users
- If approved, all portable toilets will be removed
- Design will have multiple toilets for men and women plus meeting/event space that can be reserved

Council Member Garza asked Mr. Jelinski when he was last inside the current restrooms. Mr. Jelinski said yesterday. He said they are cleaned and stocked with hand soap every day, but the problem is there are more portajohns than flushing toilets, and the Town would like to get rid of them.

Council Member Garza said everything hinges on getting an OK from MOTSU. Mr. Jelinski said he believes the request would come pretty quickly because the Town is just seeking to replace the existing building. He said he believes the best place for it is where the current facility is.

Mr. Jelinski said Parks & Recreation is looking at what can be done to expand the Skatepark without using Town funds, including grant opportunities, fundraising, and donations.

Mayor Pierce said she thinks the Town is close to restroom permission with MOTSU. She asked if the current restrooms are unclean or just old. Mr. Jelinski said he thinks they are as clean as possible, but the volume of people visiting the park in the evening often creates the need for more cleaning early in the morning. Mayor Pierce said all of the restrooms need to be redone. Mr. Jelinski said Parks & Recreation has done more than 25 projects in the past six to seven years, but big-ticket items are a challenge.

Regarding the new playground at Lake Park, Mr. Jelinski said the Town has applied for a Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant. He said he heard funds are available for the project and there is a good chance the Town could be awarded a grant, but the process is awaiting the National Park Service (NPS) to release the funds. He said the matching portion in the budget is \$175,000, and the Town is looking at strategically leveraging this to \$450,000 by applying for an economic development initiative that could be attached to the bill. He said the Town is asking for the money to fund expansion of the playground, a new picnic shelter, and a new bathroom. He said he expects to know something within a couple of months. Mr. Oakley agreed that the Town should hear something soon.

Council Member Garza asked if the \$450,000 comes through whether it is a matching program. Mr. Jelinski said it is not a matching program. He said the Town hopes to get \$175,000 from the LWCF grant and is willing to pitch in \$175,000. Council Member Garza asked if there is a time frame for when the money needs to be utilized. Mr. Jelinski said yes.

Council Member Garza asked about where lake dredging contractors would enter to stage their equipment. He said he wouldn't want that work to ruin anything new at Lake Park. Mr. Jelinski said he doesn't know all the ins and outs of the dredge process, but it should be possible to get contractors to avoid certain areas.

Council Member Garza said the Town is still waiting to hear the worst-case scenario for beach renourishment. He said there may need to be tough financial conversations about some budget items. Mr. Jelinski said Parks & Recreation can whittle down its budget as needed and have further discussions. Council Member Garza said he is 100 percent pro-parks, but he wanted to mention this possibility.

Mr. Jelinski then went through a series of slides for unfunded capital needs, or what he referred to as "big ideas" for the future.

Mayor Pierce asked where the closest park to the Town is besides the high school. Mr. Jelinski said Veterans Park in Wilmington or Joe Eakes Park in Kure Beach.

Council Member Barbee said he thinks the Centennial Committee and Parks & Recreation could develop a good relationship and partnership to benefit fundraising efforts and more.

Mayor Pierce asked Ms. Fox to give an update on the 501(c)(3) effort at some point. Mayor Pierce said she would be happy to serve on this board.

7. Public Works Budget Presentation by Brian Stanberry

Public Works Director Brian Stanberry presented the proposed Public Works Department budget for FY 21/22. He started with a flow chart showing a total full-time Public Works staff of 22.

FY 20/21 Public Works Accomplishments

- Debris management for Hurricane Isaias
- Staining and maintenance of Boardwalk and marina docks prior to summer
- Flood control and prevention
- Implementation of the Pack It In, Pack It Out program
- Many stormwater improvements throughout the Town
- Replacement of can machine for Freeman Park and beach strand
- Emergency bypass for Greenville stormwater pump station
- Replacement of knuckle boom debris truck

Council Member Garza asked how everything looks around the beach strand with trash cans on the street side. Mr. Stanberry said there has been positive feedback and that the program is still evolving as Public Works is putting out more zones.

Council Member Barbee said he has seen a transition where people are more accepting of the Pack It In, Pack It Out program and that the Town is making progress with residents.

Mayor Pro Tem Healy said residents are buying bags to take to the beach and making an effort on their own. He said some business owners have expressed interest in getting involved in the process.

Mr. Stanberry said he is sensing a shift and that the program seems to be working.

Council Member Garza asked if trash pickup is twice a day. Mr. Stanberry said it is twice a day on weekends and once a day during the week. Council Member Garza asked if Mr. Stanberry anticipates having to go twice a day every day during the summer. Mr. Stanberry said that would be implemented if necessary.

Council Member Garza asked if the can machine and knuckle boom truck are kept in a shed or out in the open. Mr. Stanberry said they are openly exposed because there is not a facility to house them. Council Member Garza asked if that's something Public Works would look into to extend their life expectancy. Mr. Stanberry said yes, and he also stressed the need for routine maintenance.

The total budget request for Environmental for FY 21/22 is \$4,227,909, an increase of \$882,558 from FY 20/21.

Staff = 13.5 full-time (including one proposed Maintenance position)

Public Works Admin (10-493) has now been combined with Environmental budget.

Highlights:

- Waste Industries Contract (CPI of 3.8 percent): \$1,860,626
- Proposed New Gen Maintenance III Position to Reduce Outsourcing: \$75,000
- Landscaping Contract (with Ryder Lewis, Greenway, Mulching): \$275,000
- Replacement of Town Hall/PD HVAC: \$470,000
- Truck-Mounted Can Servicing Machine: \$40,000
- Replacement of One Truck for Can Servicing Machine: \$11,000
- Replacement of Boardwalk Railing Lights: \$40,000
- Oversight of Emergency Debris/Solid Waste Management and Facilities/Grounds/Streets

Council Member Garza asked when the landscaping contract was last put out for bid. Mr. Stanberry said it's been about 10 years. Council Member Garza said it might be beneficial for the Town to rebid this.

Mayor Pierce asked if plans are in compliance with the Mayors' Monarch Pledge. Mr. Stanberry said yes. Mayor Pierce said the Town is supposed to plant a certain number of certain types of natural plants that create habitat for the monarch butterfly. She said people are putting trash in empty planters, especially on the Boardwalk. Mr. Stanberry said new plants are going in, and they should be monarch-friendly.

Council Member Garza said his understanding was that the construction of the Town Hall building was predominantly funded by FEMA. He wanted to know if the Town could talk to FEMA about a maintenance fund that could be used to update the HVAC system. Mr. Parvin said the Town could talk to FEMA but would have to go through a grant process.

Mayor Pierce said a lot of Boardwalk maintenance could fall under ROT funds. She said she thought the Town could successfully present that. She said the ROT funds are continuing to grow and therefore need to go back into maintenance.

Council Member Barbee said the possibility of using ROT funds for some of those things can often be forgotten.

The total budget request for Stormwater for FY 21/22 is \$1,763,405, an increase of \$706,516 from FY 20/21.

Staff = 7.5 full-time + one Building Construction Review Technician = 8.5 full-time employees

Highlights:

- Pump Servicing and Maintenance Contracts (Lake, Greenville, Texas): \$24,000
- Replacement of Stormwater Service Truck: \$11,000
- Maintenance of Henniker's Ditch: \$30,000
- Stormwater Repairs to Alleviate Existing Drainage Issues (10+): \$655,000
 - Saint Joseph/Summer Salt Easement

- East Hamlet Drainage
- 500 Fayetteville
- Basin Road Improvement
- Maryland/Virginia Pipe Relocation
- 300 Spartanburg Reprofile
- Snapper/N.C. Drainage
- 7th Street Pipe Lining
- 2nd Street Reprofile
- 7th and Sumter Drainage

Council Member Garza asked if Henniker’s Ditch is maintained in the spring and fall or every two years. Mr. Stanberry said it’s annual at most and done during the cooler months because of snakes and vermin.

The total budget request for the Powell Bill Fund for FY 21/22 is \$185,000, an increase of \$11,327 from FY 20/21.

Powell Bill Funds are received from the State based upon miles of Town streets, fuel charges, and other variables.

Highlights:

- Temporary Hold on Carolina Beach Avenue North/Focus Efforts on 100 Block of Florida
- Street Supplies/Signals/Signage: \$35,000
- Street Maintenance: \$40,000
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transitional Plan Improvements: \$10,000
- Perform Updated CPI Rating Survey: \$20,000

The Town currently has \$586,000 in Powell Bill Reserve.

The total budget request for Beach Maintenance for FY 21/22 is \$843,243, a decrease of \$82,930 from FY 20/21.

Staff = 0 full-time staff in Public Works

Highlights:

- Campsite Repairs: \$2,000
- Beach Strand Signage/Cans/Etc.: \$15,000
- Misc. Improvements/Repairs: \$25,000
- Repair/Replacement of Dumpsters for Freeman Park: \$25,000
- Inlet Dredging Payment: \$35,000
- Storm Damage Prevention: \$350,000
- Beach Patrol Gator: \$15,000
- Replacement Beach Patrol Dodge Truck: \$47,215

Mayor Pierce asked how long the Town has had wooden beach accesses. Mr. Stanberry said a long time. Mayor Pierce said she was thinking about how much maintenance they entail, as well as the fact that she likes sand walkovers because they are natural. Mr. Stanberry said once you have a wooden walkway it is hard to go back to not having one because people get accustomed to it, especially for ADA compliance. Mayor Pierce said she has gotten complaints about the wooden accesses and wants to know if Public Works would consider having them only in certain areas. Mr. Stanberry said it would be a lot less maintenance. Mayor Pierce asked if it's a Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA) issue. Mr. Stanberry said that is possible and that he could look into the idea.

Council Member Garza asked about using another material such as PVC. Mr. Stanberry said something like that or Trex board would be more susceptible to hurricane damage and cost about three times as much as wood.

Council Member Garza said it looks like Public Works has seven vacant positions as the Town is coming up on a busier-than-normal season. He asked Mr. Stanberry how prepared his staff is. Mr. Stanberry said everyone is very prepared, and although they do need more staff, they are all working through the challenges. Council Member Garza said he recognizes the added stress that comes from the season starting earlier and ending later. Mr. Stanberry said the crunch starts at Easter and goes through the last hurricane. He said the goal is keeping the Town clean, maintained, and safe.

Council Member Garza said the Public Works budget represents a huge hike, and even though he's not suggesting the requests are not needed, he wants Mr. Stanberry to think about things that can be cut if necessary. Mr. Stanberry said he is ready to work through it.

8. Municipal Service District

During the annual Council budget retreat in February, Council expressed interest in a Municipal Service District (MSD) for the Boardwalk area.

Purposes for District

NCGS 160A-536 states the Council of any City or Town may define any number of service districts to finance, provide, or maintain for the districts. The following are some approved purposes for MSDs that could apply in Carolina Beach:

- Beach erosion control and flood and hurricane protection works
- Downtown revitalization projects
 - Urban area revitalization projects
- Drainage projects
 - Sewage collection and disposal systems
- Off-street parking facilities
- Watershed improvement projects

Proposed Purpose for Carolina Beach: A Downtown Revitalization Project the Boardwalk/Central Business District (CBD)

Downtown Revitalization Defined. - As used in this section, "downtown revitalization projects" are improvements, services, functions, promotions, and developmental activities intended to further the

public health, safety, welfare, convenience, and economic well-being of the central city or downtown area. Exercise of the authority granted by this Article to undertake downtown revitalization projects financed by a service district do not prejudice a city's authority to undertake urban renewal projects in the same area. Examples of downtown revitalization projects include by way of illustration but not limitation all of the following:

1. Improvements to water mains, sanitary sewer mains, storm sewer mains, electric power distribution lines, gas mains, street lighting, streets, and sidewalks, including rights-of-way and easements.
2. Construction of pedestrian malls, bicycle paths, overhead pedestrian walkways, sidewalk canopies, and parking facilities both on-street and off-street.
3. Construction of public buildings, restrooms, docks, visitor centers, and tourism facilities.
4. Improvements to relieve traffic congestion in the central city and improve pedestrian and vehicular access to it.
5. Improvements to reduce the incidence of crime in the central city.
6. Providing city services or functions in addition to or to a greater extent than those provided or maintained for the entire city.
7. Sponsoring festivals and markets in the downtown area, promoting business investment in the downtown area, helping to coordinate public and private actions in the downtown area, and developing and issuing publications on the downtown area.

Tax Authorization for MSDs: NCGS 160A-542 authorizes a city to levy additional property taxes with defined service districts in order to finance, provide, or maintain for the district services that are greater than provided for the entire city.

- Taxes cannot be levied above the limit established by NCGS 160A-209 (d) which combined with property tax cannot exceed \$1.50 on the one hundred dollars appraised value of a property.
- The statutes state that in setting the tax rate, "the city council shall consider the needs, as well as the long-range plans and goals for the service district." And, "shall be used only for meeting the needs of the service district, as those needs are determined by the city council."

Potential Use of MSD funds: A tax rate for the Boardwalk/Central Business District could potentially fund the following:

- Designated police officer
- Daily maintenance/cleaning personnel
- Lighting/landscaping/appearance materials and installation
- Pedestrian/right-of-way Improvements
- Capital projects (new restrooms, performance stage, etc.)

Establishment of MSD: Council can define district by ordinance if it can establish the district is in need of one or more of the services, facilities, or functions listed in NCGS 160A-536 to a greater extent than the remainder of the city.

A report with a map showing the district and its boundaries, a statement showing that the district meets the standards set out in NCGS 160A-536(a), and a plan for providing the district one or more of the services listed in NCGS 160A-536 must be presented to Council and be available for public inspection for at least four week before a required public hearing.

The proposed MSD and the proposed tax rate for the district must be adopted and set prior to adoption of the new fiscal year budget.

District Options: Staff will propose four district boundary options for Council review and will recommend a tax rate:

- Option 1 – Entire CBD zoning district that extends into west side of Lake Park Boulevard. The total property valuation of this district is \$154,842,400, and 1 cent of tax would generate \$15,484.24.
- Option 2 – Encompasses only the historic Boardwalk area and the two major hotel chains. The total property valuation of this district is \$70,777,790, and 1 cent of tax would generate \$7,077.79.
- Option 3 – Includes most of the CBD east of Lake Park Boulevard, including the marina. The total property valuation of this district is \$136,275,600, and 1 cent of tax would generate \$13,627.56.
- Option 4 – Includes a smaller version of the CBD east of Lake Park Boulevard and excludes some properties that only have access to Lake Park Boulevard. The total property valuation of this district is \$126,198,000, and 1 cent of tax would generate \$12,619.80.

Proposed Schedule

- April 27 – Discussion at budget workshop
- May 11 – Present report to Council and make available for public inspection
- June 8 – Public hearing
- June 15 – Adoption of MSD and budget

Mr. Oakley said Town staff thinks Option 3 is the best, but he would like feedback from Council.

Mayor Pierce asked if she should recuse herself from the conversation because she owns property in that district. Ms. Fox said she must recuse herself from any vote about it but can participate in discussion.

Council Member Garza asked if the extra work would result in the Town paying staff more than the amount being taken in. Mr. Oakley said the proposed MSD tax would have to be more than 5 cents to pay for a full-time Police officer there. Council Member Garza said he thinks the Town might not break even, and he asked if it's beneficial to do that. Mr. Oakley said the General Fund is paying for everything now, and this would be a way to supplement the Police presence already there. Council Member Garza said his expectations would be really high if he was paying an extra fee.

Mayor Pierce said owners in the proposed MSD are going to want to know what they are getting for their money. She said it's a creative way to offset the amount of time the Town is spending in that area. She said she would like to see more aesthetics for property owners in the Boardwalk area.

Mayor Pro Tem Healy asked for examples of other places doing this. Mr. Oakley said he is fairly certain downtown Wilmington does, as well as other historic districts and beach towns, some of which use the funds for beach nourishment.

Mayor Pro Tem Healy said because the proposed MSD is where the majority of visitors go, its presence must be top-notch. He said this was a good and creative way to make cosmetic improvements.

Council Member Barbee said he has been hearing his whole life that the Town does not give enough attention to the Boardwalk area. He said he thinks this is a very creative way to address needs.

Mayor Pierce asked Mr. Oakley to get a group of CBD property owners together to ask if they are interested in the MSD tax and if so, what they would like to accomplish with that money. Mr. Oakley said he will do that. He said there is plenty of time for the public to review the proposal, get more information, and comment.

Council Member Barbee said the consensus of Council was to proceed. Mr. Oakley said he will have a report at the next meeting.

NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Council Member Barbee said he recently attended a meeting of the N.C. Beach, Inlet & Waterway Association, where there was a discussion about derelict vessels. He said the State bill has momentum, and Dare County has its own ordinance that recently passed.

Council Member Barbee said there is no formal news about beach renourishment money, but optimism remains that it could happen and work is progressing.

Council Member Barbee said there was also discussion about parking fees at CAMA beach accesses. He said if any beach accesses are funded by CAMA, then parking funds for those can't go into the Town's General Fund.

Council Member Barbee said the Army Corps of Engineers gave a presentation on grant money it has for planning analysis services. He said one of the things that caught his attention was water resource planning.

Council Member Barbee asked about the section of Woody Hewett Avenue where the road ends in the area that used to go in front of where the Marriott is now. He said if that is still Town property, it would be a perfect place for golf cart parking. Mr. Parvin said the only easement the Town has on that property is for underground utilities, so the Town could not use it for parking. Council Member Barbee said anywhere the Town can put golf cart parking is a good thing.

Council Member Barbee said he recently had a conversation with Mr. Oakley about ordinance updates. He said when ordinances diverge from uses, the Town ends up with unenforceable and/or undesirable rules, and this could become a political issue resulting in a confused public and creating animosity. He asked Mr. Oakley to work with Chief Ward to have a public safety review of ordinances by the end of the year. Council Member Barbee mentioned trouble spots such as dogs on the Boardwalk, bikes on the Boardwalk, and sun shelters on the beach. He said he would like them to look into the future to see what's changing and whether our existing rules reflect that. He said this is an attempt to get ahead of the curve and prepare for upcoming trends. Council Member Barbee said he is not advocating any

specific changes, but he wants to ensure changes are driven by public safety professionals and reviewed by the Town Attorney in coordination with citizens groups such as the Police Advisory Committee. He said he gets a lot of questions from the public about rules. Mr. Oakley said he, Chief Ward, and Chief Griffin will get together and go through the ordinances. Council Member Barbee said it would be much easier to take this approach to addressing problems rather than waiting until there is a room full of angry residents. Mr. Oakley said his theory is the Town shouldn't adopt things it can't or won't enforce.

Mayor Pierce said Mr. Jelinski is the new liaison to the Bike/Pedestrian Planning Committee, and they had discussed changing an ordinance about bikes on the sidewalk. She said there would be an upcoming presentation about this.

Council Member Barbee said he sees so much changing, and when there is confusion there is not enforcement of any kind so it gets to the point where lines are very blurred. Mr. Oakley said the beach patrol position would take a more active role in education and enforcement of ordinances. Council Member Barbee said all of these things are part of public safety.

Council Member Garza said with the budget presentations being almost \$3 million over last year and the continued uncertainty about beach renourishment, the Town must balance the need to protect its beaches with aesthetic improvements and staff training/retention. He said he is concerned about possible staffing shortages across Town departments, and he thinks the Town must show appreciation for its existing staff. He said it's important for the Town to find creative ways to get more people and take care of the ones already here. Council Member Garza stressed the need for a contingency plan for the budget if money must come out for beach renourishment.

Council Member Garza also suggested Town staff make use of social media content such as videos to get information to the public.

Mayor Pierce asked about the status of allowing Boardwalk businesses to leave out their tables overnight. Mr. Oakley said the businesses can now leave their tables out overnight as long as they don't interfere with cleaning of the area.

Mayor Pierce said she is attending an upcoming event with Cape Fear CREW (Commercial Real Estate Women) and that SECOF Construction was nominated for an Award of Excellence for TownePlace in the CBD through this group.

Mayor Pierce said she has an upcoming meeting with Chauncey Lambeth, the District Director for U.S. Rep. David Rouzer, and she plans to ask where the Town is with beach renourishment. She said Rep. Rouzer will be in Town for a function next month, so she is going to try to attend and speak to him to get some answers.

CLOSED SESSION - ATTORNEY/CLIENT MATTER

ACTION: Motion to go into closed session to discuss an attorney/client matter in accordance with NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3). Matters being discussed are:

18 CVS 3151 Town of Carolina Beach vs. Carolina Freeman LLC

18 CVS 3152 Town of Carolina Beach vs. B&F Enterprises LLC

18 CVS 3153 Town of Carolina Beach vs. DRDK LLC

18 CVS 3154 Town of Carolina Beach vs. Freeman Beach LLC

18 CVS 3155 Town of Carolina Beach vs. Winnie Futch Heirs

Motion made by Mayor Pierce

Voting Yea: Mayor Pierce, Mayor Pro Tem Healy, Council Member Barbee, Council Member Garza

Motion passed 4-0

Mayor Pierce called the meeting back to order and said Council took no action during closed session.

ADJOURNMENT

ACTION: Motion to adjourn

Motion made by Mayor Pierce

Voting Yea: Mayor Pierce, Mayor Pro Tem Healy, Council Member Barbee, Council Member Garza

Motion passed 4-0

The meeting adjourned at 1:00 PM.