

CAROLINA BEACH

Town Council Workshop Day Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, May 26, 2020 @ 9:00 AM
Council Chambers
1121 N. Lake Park Boulevard
Carolina Beach, NC 28428

ASSEMBLY

A Workshop Day Meeting of the Town of Carolina Beach Town Council was held on Tuesday, May 26, 2020, at 9:00 AM at Council Chambers.

PRESENT: Mayor LeAnn Pierce, Mayor Pro Tem Jay Healy, Council Member Lynn Barbee, Council Member Steve Shuttleworth, Council Member JoDan Garza

ALSO PRESENT: Town Manager Bruce Oakley and Town Clerk Kim Ward

1. MAYOR PIERCE CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER

2. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Fire Department ISO Rating Update by Chief Griffin

Fire Chief Alan Griffin gave an update on the results of the latest Insurance Services Office (ISO) inspection for the Town Fire Department and what it means for residents. He said the inspection was done in February and then reviewed at the federal level for approval. The score dictates what people in a particular area pay for insurance premiums and is based on the following factors: quality of the local fire department, availability of water supply, and quality of the area's emergency communications system, with bonus points for community outreach.

The Town received a Class 2 rating, joining only 38 other fire departments in North Carolina. Class 1 is the highest, and Class 4-6 is the national average. Chief Griffin said the Town went from a Class 5 to a Class 3 in 2008 before moving up to a Class 2 this year, which will go into effect on September 1. He said this should translate into lower homeowners insurance premiums and praised staff and volunteers for the hard work and extra hours required to achieve this.

Mayor Pierce said a lower ISO rating makes the Town a safer community.

Mayor Pro Tem Healy asked how often the rating inspection is done. Chief Griffin said the goal is every five years, but it had been almost 10 years since the Town was last rated so it depends on how far behind the process is. He said the Town of Kure Beach also received a Class 2.

Mayor Pro Tem Healy and Council Member Barbee commended the Fire Department on the new rating.

b. Update on Committees by Jerry Haire

Project Manager Jerry Haire gave an update on the status of Town committees and led a discussion with Council about their goals for these committees. He said the process for evaluating the Town's standing and ad hoc committees started in February.

Purpose/Goal

- Advise local leaders on issues such as land use, recreation, environmental protection, transportation, and economic development
- Provide an effective mechanism for program planning and assessment by identifying community needs and interests and soliciting recommendations on how to meet those needs

Committee Role and Function

- Standing vs. ad hoc committees
- SOP for committees: Council directives or bylaws, elected Chair/Vice Chair/Secretary, Robert's Rules of Order
- How does chain of command work for a committee?
- How do committees communicate with staff/Council/community?
- How can we ensure the committees stay focused (back to fundamentals, bylaws, ordinance, Council directives)?

Benefits for Local Governments

- Tapping into citizen expertise
- Engaging citizens as partners
- Gathering information for governing and decision making
- Making governing process more transparent
- Expanding citizens understanding of how government works
- Going beyond what local governments can accomplish alone
- Improving communication between elected officials and public
- Receiving new information/perspectives
- Networking/collaboration with other groups on issues

Costs for Local Governments

- Time-consuming for staff and elected officials
- Can be costly to support projects, technical expertise, staff time for research, reports, etc.
- Can create tension and hostility through mixed or personal agendas, division, loss of focus, etc.
- Loss of control over decision making
- Overlapping/redundancy between committees
- Bad recommendations result in flawed decision making

Mr. Haire reviewed a list of the Town's 10 committees, which collectively have 85 members, and the staff and Council liaisons assigned to each. He said all committees have or will have Council-adopted bylaws, operating ordinances, or defined missions.

Mr. Haire discussed the process for re-engaging committees after the COVID-19 shutdown. He asked whether Council wanted to resume regular committee meetings in June or July via Zoom

or other virtual methods, or whether in-person meetings with social distancing and capacity limits were preferred.

Council Member Shuttleworth said he thought committees could resume meeting in person due to the small size of membership.

Mayor Pro Tem Healy said he would like to see changes to the nomination process for committee members. He wants to sit down with applicants in an open forum rather than just seeing names on a ballot.

Mayor Pierce said she wants committee members to look over applications and make recommendations.

Council Member Garza said he thinks virtual meetings might become a burden on Town staff to ensure everyone has accessibility, so he is in favor of giving in-person meetings a try starting in July. He also said he would like Council to have a workshop to meet and discuss committee applications before voting on them.

Council Member Barbee said he also thinks the technical challenges of virtual committee meetings could be a problem, so he would rather try in person.

Mayor Pierce said she does not like holding applications for 18 months, which is the current policy.

Mayor Pro Tem Healy said he thinks holding the applications for one year is sufficient.

Council Member Barbee said he thinks June might be too soon to start gathering again and bringing more people into Town Hall.

Mayor Pro Tem Healy and Mayor Pierce said they were in favor of waiting until July for committees to resume in-person meetings.

Council Member Shuttleworth said the process for appointing applicants to the Planning & Zoning Commission should be more thorough so that a diverse group of stakeholders is represented. He said he is in favor of interviews for Planning & Zoning Commission applicants and Council taking a more active role.

Assistant Town Manager Ed Parvin said Town staff can do interviews by the end of June for the Planning & Zoning Commission and Board of Adjustment. Then Council can make appointments in July with new members taking their seats in August.

Mayor Pierce said the consensus is that all committee meetings resume in person in July, with all appointments other than Planning & Zoning Commission and Board of Adjustment pushed to August. She also suggested that any absences in July and August be excused and not counted against members.

c. Budget Review

Mr. Oakley presented the Manager's Budget Message along with the proposed FY 20/21 budget. He also submitted an updated version of fourth quarter revenue averages for the past four years.

Mr. Oakley said balancing the budget was a challenge due to economic uncertainty and difficulty projecting revenues. He said the Town would be delaying as much spending as possible, including postponing some hiring, reducing the cost-of-living increase to 1.8%, and waiting until January to implement it. He also said there are few capital projects in the General Fund, including a storage unit at Mike Chappell Park, a knuckleboom for yard debris pickup, and a new beach can machine to help with trash. He said these were limited to dire needs while cutting out other major projects, such as restrooms at Mike Chappell Park and a playground at Lake Park. The goal is to continue to seek funding through stimulus grants and other outside sources so some of the delayed projects can move forward.

General Fund

FY 19/20: \$15,553,211

FY 20/21: \$15,442,611 (no tax increase)

Utilities

FY 19/20: \$9,549,270

FY 20/21: \$8,963,903 (includes 5% rate increase as required by bond covenants and \$314,943 transfer from utilities fund balance; anticipate significantly less revenue from system development and connection fees this year)

Mr. Oakley said the budget was a chance for staff to look at how things can be done better and cheaper. He said at the next regular meeting Council will discuss proposals for an efficiency study that will hopefully lead to more savings in future budgets.

3. NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Council Member Garza said he was happy to see things reopening after the COVID-19 shutdowns, but he was concerned about crowds at Freeman Park and wanted to see more enforcement of and education about social distancing.

Council Member Shuttleworth said people have been asking him about Thursday night music and fireworks. He said he assumes music is out of the question due to the size of the crowd it would draw, but fireworks were feasible other than the lack of money in the budget. He said some residents and business owners had asked about starting an online fundraiser for one large fireworks display for Fourth of July or Labor Day. The cost would be about \$12,000.

Mayor Pierce asked whether staff had heard anything about Military Ocean Terminal Sunny Point (MOTSU) visitation and permissions. Mr. Parvin said he had not heard any updates about the trip planned for elected officials, but there were discussions every week about the lake dredge situation.

Mayor Pierce also asked about the status of the Land Use Plan. Planning Director Jeremy Hardison said the Planning & Zoning Commission wants to take a final look at the revised document before making a recommendation to Council. Mayor Pierce said she was OK with the Planning & Zoning Commission resuming meetings in June if they practice social distancing.

Council Member Barbee said he wanted to know how much of the Town's water capacity goes to irrigation. He said if there are ever capacity issues, the Town might want to take a look at this.

Mayor Pro Tem Healy asked how the \$4 million allocated to New Hanover County for COVID-19 would be distributed. Council Member Shuttleworth said this round of money is only for expenses related directly to the pandemic and is not available to cover loss of revenue. Mr. Oakley said anything not covered would be submitted to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

4. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Pierce adjourned the meeting at 10:05 AM.