



**MINUTES OF THE
TOWN COUNCIL 1st BUDGET WORKSHOP
Thursday, March 25, 2021 @ 5:30 pm
The Hut Meeting Facility
413 Johnston Drive, Pineville, NC**

The Town Council of the Town of Pineville, NC, met in a Budget Workshop on Thursday, March 25, 2021 @ 5:30 p.m. The meeting was held at The Hut Meeting Facility utilizing ZOOM.

ATTENDANCE

Mayor: Jack Edwards
Mayor Pro-Tem: Melissa Davis
Council Members: Amelia Stinson-Wesley, Les Gladden and Joe Maxim
Town Manager: Ryan Spitzer
Town Clerk: Barbara Monticello
Finance Director: Richard Dixon

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Jack Edwards called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and asked for a motion to open the meeting. Council Member Joe Maxim moved to open the meeting, seconded by Council Member Amelia Stinson-Wesley. There were ayes by all and the meeting was opened.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

GENERAL FUND BUDGET

1. *(Ryan Spitzer)* Town Manager, Ryan Spitzer, gave a general overview of the budget, including Revenues, Expenses, Salary, Solid Waste and Sponsorships. He advised it was a Balanced Budget with no tax increase to citizens.
2. Mr. Spitzer continued, stating this year's budget is \$16,000 to the good so far. There was a 3.5% increase in revenue from property taxes projected by the County. We won't see large tax revenue increases from new, large developments until one year after completion.

There were some large decreases in Investments and in the Room Occupancy Tax, mainly due to Covid 19. A total of \$100,000 will be used from the Powell Bill Funds for the Lynnwood/Lakeview Project. Another \$444,172 will be taken out of Fund Balance to pay for electric projects, along with \$713,000 to help with communications projects. Manager Spitzer and Financial Director Richard Dixon will have discussions with a financial person tomorrow.

3. Mr. Spitzer noted we were anticipating a 5% solid waste fee increase for trash, recycling and bulk pick-ups but the increase is not passed along to our residents. We are expecting more tax revenue this year, compared to last year.

Finance Director Richard Dixon said we are still projecting less Room Occupancy Tax this year.

Manager Spitzer stated that we will still be getting Covid funds for the next couple of years that will need to be spent. He advised of an increase of 44.5% in salaries, 3.7% increase in operating expenses, and 2.5% increase in debt services. Sponsorships – we have budgeted \$25,000 for them but the following requests totaled over \$50,000. PCAA

- \$10,000, Pineville Neighbors Place - \$7,500, James K. Polk - \$5,000, Downtown Merchants - \$8,000 (went in to the Parks and Recreation budget), Chamber - \$5,000 and Arts and Science Council asked for \$15,000 but we get \$5,000 back for a grant.

Mayor Jack Edwards asked if anyone had an objection to an increase of the Pineville Neighbor's Place sponsorship. No one objected but Council Member Joe Maxim would like to see the Chamber do more with the Downtown Merchants. The \$8,000 that was for the Downtown Merchants but was put into the Parks and Recreation Budget. He asked if we would we hold on to that? Manager Spitzer advised that we would hold onto it and put it toward the Farmer's Market.

Mayor Pro Tem Melissa Davis said she is not in favor of those who ask for more money than what was given to them. Mayor Edwards clarified that it was not a lack of interest on the Chamber's part, but more to do with the downtown businesses not always being able to afford to join.

Mayor Pro Tem Melissa Davis said the Farmer's Market was not the best this past year and the question was asked if it was still going to take place this year. Mr. Spitzer advised that the Parks and Recreation Department was taking it over again since the Downtown Merchants have basically disbanded. Council Member Joe Maxim recommended a conversation with Kevin Devanney. He stated that Kevin and Wendy tried to start up the Merchants Association again but no one showed up at the meeting.

Manager Spitzer asked Council if they wanted to give the Arts and Science Council \$15,000. Council Member Joe Maxim asked if the ASC had a targeted program, they'd be willing to do for us. Manager Spitzer advised they did do things this past year having music at Wendy's Unwind Tea Shop and with their "Cultural Bites" series. He will keep things as they are for now.

Manager Spitzer spoke on salaries. This year the town was proposing a 2% Cost of Living Adjustment based on CPI. He stated there would also be a 2.5% merit increase. Police Department expenses increased by \$190,000. The Chief is requesting a new Analyst position. A Rate Study adjustment for police officers will cost \$90,000. The cost to replace one officer with another is \$50,000. Manager Spitzer proposed a 5.5% increase to new officers to put us in the middle of the range with other towns. We have lost four officers in the last two years due to pay. We lose a lot to Union County Sheriff's Office.

Council Member Les Gladden did not want to put a band aid on it now and still have to deal with it again next year. He did not want this to be a waste of time for Council; he just wanted to deal with it now so it didn't come back again later. Manager Spitzer stated that the town was starting to give incentives for speaking multiple languages along with having educational degrees. Mayor Pro Tem Melissa Davis said we should focus on retention.

Mr. Spitzer continued, stating that we were looking to close the gap on technology issues and take out \$300,000 from the Asset Forfeiture money to upgrade police department's technology. Town Manager Spitzer referred to a handout from Human Resources that broke out all of the salaries along with benefits. He and Finance Director, Richard Dixon, would run some numbers to see where they stood should adjustments need to be made.

Mr. Spitzer stated there was a one-step increase of a \$30,000 adjustment for nine employees in the telecommunications department. Most towns start their telecommunication employees a couple of thousand dollars more to start out and we would be looking to increase our starting pay from \$15.00 to \$16.00/hr. In addition, Police Chief Hudgins requested an Analyst, a Planner/Accreditation position, two new corporal ranks and one new hire. He also requested a one-step increase for the Telecommunications Manager as well as promoting someone to Assistant Telecommunications Manager.

Council Member Les Gladden said he is not convinced that we need an analyst here in Pineville. Manager Spitzer replied he thinks that Matthews has two analysts – we might be able to make one job out of the analyst and Planner Accreditation position. Council Member Joe Maxim advised he was in favor of combining the two jobs. Council Member Amelia Stinson-Wesley asked how long the accreditations are good for. Manager Spitzer advised that most

are three to five years. Council Member Stinson-Wesley said she would like to know what other towns have Police Departments that are accredited.

Department Meetings are the next up for the second Budget Meeting. Departments will talk about their goals and any grants they have applied for. CIP was done at the last meeting – those projects that were \$5,000 or more. Mayor Pro Tem Melissa Davis asked if Council would be getting the department goals before the next meeting. Manager Spitzer advised he would supply Council with the changes on a spread sheet. Mayor Pro Tem Davis asked if each Department Head would be attending in person for the presentations. Mr. Spitzer advised they would be present.

ADJOURNMENT: At 7:37 p.m., Council Member Les Gladden made a motion to adjourn and Council Member Joe Maxim seconded it. There were ayes by all and the meeting concluded.

Jack Edwards, Mayor

ATTEST:

Barbara Monticello, Town Clerk