

SHALLOTTE BOARD OF ALDERMEN
BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING
JUNE 26, 2025
5:15 P.M.

The Shallotte Board of Aldermen met for their Budget Public Hearing on July 26, 2025 at 5:15 p.m. in the meeting chambers located at 110 Cheers Street with Mayor Walt Eccard presiding.

Aldermen present: Larry Harrelson, Gene Vasile, Bobby Williamson, Jimmy Bellamy and Karmen Custer

Staff present: Mimi Gaither, Robert Waring, Isaac Norris, Paul Dunwell, Adam Stanley, Dan Formyduval, Megan Bellamy, Natalie Goins and Kirstie White

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Walt Eccard called the meeting to order. A motion was made by Jimmy Bellamy seconded by Karmen Custer to open the meeting. Motion carried 5 yes 0 no.

II. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

III. AGENDA AMENDMENTS & APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Gene Vasile seconded by Bobby Williamson to approve the agenda as submitted. Motion carried 5 yes 0 no.

IV. BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING – FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026

1. A motion was made by Larry Harrelson seconded by Gene Vasile to open the public hearing. Motion carried 5 yes 0 no.

2. Overview and Highlights

Town Manager Mimi Gaither presented an overview of the budget. She stated that the budget was balanced at \$9,748,848, which represented a 17.4% decrease from the ending budget of 2024-2025. The total property tax levy increased 7.5% from 2024-2025. She noted that no new debt was introduced to the budget. Highlighted aspects of the budget included the following:

Planning department - Matching funds for transportation study and funds for a grant writer.

Events - Continue funding concerts, kids' events, farmers' market, and holiday events.

Police – Third year lease with Enterprise and 5 new vehicles with equipment.

Fire - One firefighter position in January 2026 and provision for a merger feasibility study.

Streets - Paving budget of just under \$800,000, including carryover Powell Bill and 2% tax. It also included \$70,000 for stormwater and \$50,000 for general maintenance.

Parks - Continued maintenance of Mulberry Park, the Riverwalk, and soon-to-be Price Landing.

Enterprise fund - No increase in user fees. Budget balanced at \$4,860,981, a 9.7% decrease from the fiscal year-end 2024-2025 budget. System development fees for new development increased by 18%. Tap fees increased by 10% due to increased costs. Provisions for finishing the 12-inch force main to the wastewater treatment plant, Village Point Estates sewer rerouting, and upgrades to sewer lines on Pender and Columbus.

Employee benefits - 3% COLA, continued mandated increases by the retirement system for general employees (from 13.6% to 14.35%) and law enforcement (15.4% to 16.08%), continuation of 5% 401k, medical, dental, and vision health insurance, and provisions for 4 retirees getting retirement benefits and 1 retired officer getting special separation allowance.

3. Public Comments / Questions

4. Board Comments / Questions

Alderman Vasile praised the administrative planning that anticipated growth, leading to a leveling of ad valorem tax requirements.

5. A motion was made by Gene Vasile seconded by Karmen Custer to close public hearing. Motion carried 5 yes 0 no.

V. BUDGET RELATED DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. A motion was made by Gene Vasile seconded by Larry Harrelson to approve FY 2025-2026 Budget Ordinance 25-13. Motion carried 5 yes 0 no.

2. A motion was made by Larry Harrelson seconded by Gene Vasile to approve Resolution 25-04 revising the current fee schedule for the Town of Shallotte. Motion carried 5 yes 0 no.

VI. SUMMERS WALK

1. Sewer Dedication – Resolution 25-05

A motion was made by Jimmy Bellamy seconded by Bobby Williamson to approve Resolution 25-05 accepting Summers Walk sewer lines and equipment dedication. Motion carried 5 yes 0 no.

2. Streets Dedication – Resolution 25-06

A motion was made by Gene Vasile seconded by Karmen Custer to approve Resolution 25-06 accepting Summers Walk streets dedication. Motion carried 5 yes 0 no.

VII. TOWN HALL

1. Revised Cost Estimates (5/20/25 Work Session)

Revised cost estimates for a new town hall complex first presented at the May 20, 2025 work session were reviewed for further discussion. The initial pricing came in at close to \$20 million. After revisions, the cost was reduced to \$13.9 million. Town Manager Mimi Gaither addressed questions and concerns raised by the Board:

Financing mechanism: USDA at a rate of approximately 4%, though the exact rate would be set at the time of loan closing.

Loan terms: The loan would be a typical mortgage with a fixed rate for the life of the loan, amortized over 30 years.

Building specifications: There was discussion about the reduction in square footage and the removal of certain features.

Board members expressed concern about potentially undercutting future needs by reducing the scope too much.

The Board discussed the possibility of moving forward with hiring a construction manager to get more accurate cost estimates and explore potential savings. They agreed to put this item on the agenda for the July 1, 2025 meeting.

VIII. DISCUSSION

Planning Director Robert Waring informed the Board that the Town was continuing to receive applications for projects in the Village Point area.

Mayor Eccard stated there were ongoing discussions at the county level about how fire services are funded and that there would be more discussion on this topic at the next meeting.

IX. ADJOURN

A motion was made by Jimmy Bellamy seconded by Karmen Custer to adjourn the meeting at 6:16 p.m. Motion carried 5 yes 0 no.

Respectfully submitted,

Natalie Goins
Town Clerk