

Town of Swansboro
Board of Commissioners
May 14, 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes

In attendance: Mayor John Davis, Mayor Pro Tem William Justice, Commissioner Jeffrey Conaway, Commissioner Pat Turner, Commissioner Joseph Brown, and Commissioner Douglas Eckendorf.

Call to Order/Opening Prayer/Pledge

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm. Mayor Davis led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment

Citizens were offered an opportunity to address the Board regarding items listed on the agenda. No comments were given.

Adoption of Agenda and Consent Items

On a motion by Commissioner Turner, seconded by Commissioner Brown, the agenda and the below consent items were approved unanimously.

- January 23, 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes
- January 23, 2024, Closed Session Minutes
- February 12, 2024, Special Meeting Minutes

Appointments/Recognitions/Presentations

National Public Works Week

Mayor Davis acknowledged the Swansboro Public Work Department and read a proclamation for National Public Works week which was May 19th – 25th. Public Works Director Bates introduced his team that was in attendance and spoke on all the duties they accomplish.

Employee Introductions and Administration of Oath

Police Chief Taylor introduced Officer Michael Stutes. Mayor Davis administered the oath of office.

Town Manager Barlow introduced the new Building Inspector Paul Ingram, and shared the Mr. Ingram joined us from Jones County. Mayor Davis administered the oath of office.

National Police Week

Mayor Davis acknowledged the Swansboro Police Department and read a proclamation for National Police week which was May 12th – 19th and Peace Officers Memorial Day which was May 15th. Police Chief Taylor introduced his team that was in attendance.

Recognition of Lieutenant Phil Molloy

Police Chief Taylor shared that Lieutenant Phil Malloy retired after 20 years. Having worked for the town either in a full-time capacity or as a reserve, he provided many attributes to the department. Lieutenant Malloy was presented with a plaque in appreciation of his service to the Town of Swansboro Police Department.

Lieutenant Malloy shared that he had worked for 4 or 5 Chiefs during his tenure and was hired by the late Chief Pugliese, and he was honored to be part of the department all these years.

The board took a recess from 6:32 pm to 6:36 pm.

Onslow County Soil & Water Conservation District Presentation

Rob Johnson District Supervisor Soil & Water Conservation reviewed details from his presentation on soil & water conservation, attached herein with the power point presentation of the meeting. A few key takeaways included:

- Biggest problem areas are roof run off and parking lot run off
- Home rain gardens and rain barrels are helpful for residents
- Reverse osmosis works best but was an expensive choice
- Grant funding is available for projects
- Average rainfall in Onslow County is 5 inches per year

In response to inquiries from the board Mr. Johnson clarified the following.

- The CCAP grant of approximately \$30,000 was a good grant to consider
- Rainwater can be filtered back into the home for use but there was special required equipment

Business Non-Consent

EMS Service Plan Update

Fire Chief Randall reviewed his PowerPoint presentation attached herein with the power point presentation of the meeting. The presentation included details related to response zones and their records of responses along with average response times.

Chief Randall reviewed that Zones 5 which covered Swansboro and portions of Hubert showed large counts in several sections along Highway 24, Swansboro Loop Road for the Senior assisted living facility, and Sandridge Road. Zone 9 which the county covered and if needed Swansboro would provide mutual aid had large counts in the Highway 24/Piney green area. For Zone 5 the average response time since January 1, 2024, was 11 minutes and for zone 9 for the same period of time the average response time was 9 minutes.

Chief Randall shared that in order to move forward with providing EMS services there would be a process to follow, which in the end would require approval from the Onslow County Board of Commissioners. Additionally, to fulfill the program there would be a need for additional equipment and personnel.

Attorney Rasberry confirmed that municipalities can provide EMS services however to operate the state and county have the regulatory authority.

In response to an inquiry from the board Chief Randall shared that there were not any municipalities that provided EMS services presently.

By consensus the board provided Chief Randal with approval to proceed with developing a plan for Swansboro to provide EMS services, and present the plan at a future meeting.

Amend Cost-Recovery Mitigation Rate Exemption

Fire Chief Randall reviewed that at its May 7, 2024, special meeting the Board of Commissioners directed staff to amend Resolution 2024-R6 that was adopted on April 23, 2024, which established a cost-recovery program and provided parameters for billing. The amendment would change the program from not billing county residents to billing county residents that did not reside in the Swansboro City Limits.

On a motion by Commissioner Eckendorf, seconded by Commissioner Turner, Resolution 2024-R7, amending the previously adopted Resolution 2024-R6 was approved unanimously.

The board took a recess from 7:58 pm to 8:05 pm.

FY 24/25 Draft Budget Discussion/Direction (Revised 5/14/2024)

Interim Manager Barlow reviewed that after discussions at the May 7, 2024, special meeting, the following was incorporated into the draft FY 24/25 Budget as a “net zero” option. To reduce the budget by a 1 or 2 cent tax reduction would result in removal of COLA raises, Merit raises, and bonuses to first responders and possibly reduction of employee benefits.

Funded highlights after discussions at the May 7, 2024, BOC meeting included:

2% COLA

New Personnel \$72,630 (Police Lieutenant & Police Officer (Grant Submitted)

NC Orbit Retirement: Increase .75 basis points

NCLM Property & Casualty 17.5% increase

NCLM Workers Comp 10% increase

NCLM Group Health Insurance increased 4%
Capital Outlay \$570,000-Funded using Loan Proceeds

Added:

2% Merit

Fire-Part-time-\$36,000

Bonus for Public Safety Personnel

Required: Travel/Conference/Training

Major budget requests that were unfunded (to date):

Recreation Coordinator-FT: \$57,534

Recreation Assistant-PT: \$10,851

Dock Attendants-PT (2): April 1st – November 23rd) \$20,884

Firefighter II-FT: (3) January 2025-June 2025: \$105,852

Capital Reserve: \$225,000 (Fire), \$16,000 (Police), \$102,500 Parks & Recreation

The below items for a total of \$724,611 would be appropriated from fund balance for items requested by the Board of Commissioners at prior meetings.

1. Sidewalks-\$500,000
2. Christmas Lights-\$20,000
3. Town Hall Digital Sign-\$18,000
4. Pickleball Court-\$150,000
(added)
5. New workstations-(24 workstations) compatible with Windows 11-\$36,611

By consensus after discussion, it was decided to remove the 2% COLA and increase merit to 4%, increase first responders' bonus to \$1,000 for those not on probation and prorate those on probation. Additionally, \$20,000 was to be allocated for lights in this fiscal year instead of next year. Interim Manager Barlow shared that a final proposed budget would be provided around the 30th of May, and the public hearing and adoption of the Budget Ordinance would be scheduled for the June 11, 2024, regular meeting.

Future Agenda Topics

Presenter: Alissa Fender – Town Clerk

Future agenda items were shared for visibility and comments. In addition, an opportunity was provided for the board to introduce items of interest and subsequent direction for placement on future agendas. The following items were addressed:

- Several items listed on the Future Agenda items agenda memo were removed
- Moratorium Discussion/Education was scheduled for the May 28th meeting

Public Comment

Linda Thornley Chairperson for the Swansboro Military Affairs Committee shared with the Board about the June 1st Military Appreciation Day at Hammock Beach State Park was in need volunteers to contribute to the success of the event, and any board members that wished to help could do so by volunteering for the dunking booth.

Manager's Comments

Interim Manager Barlow reviewed several pictures attached herein with the power point presentation of the meeting. The pictures provided details related to the road conditions in Charleston Park Subdivision and reviewed that all safety issues had been addressed and signs had been ordered. The cost of all items addressed to date was around \$18,500.

Board Comments

Board members expressed their appreciation to Interim Manager Barlow and Finance Director Johnson for all their hard work with budget preparations.

Mayor Davis shared that planning of a Memorial Day event at the Methodist Church had begun and shared that there may be an opportunity for the Town to work with them on the event.

Closed Session

On a motion by Commissioner Eckendorf, seconded by Commissioner Turner the board entered into closed session at 9:13 pm pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (5) to establish, or to instruct the public body's staff or negotiating agents concerning the position to be taken by or on behalf of the public body in negotiating the amount of compensation and other material terms of an employment contract or proposed employment contract.

Pursuant to a motion duly made and seconded in closed session the board returned to open session.

Adjournment

On a motion by Commissioner Conaway, seconded by Commissioner Turner, the meeting adjourned at 9:45 pm.