

**Town of Swansboro**  
**Board of Commissioners**  
**February 20, 2025, Special Meeting Minutes**

In attendance: Mayor William Justice, Mayor Pro Tem Jeffrey Conaway, Commissioner Pat Turner, Commissioner Joseph Brown, and Commissioner Douglas Eckendorf. The board had one vacancy.

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**Call to Order/Opening Prayer/Pledge**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm and Mayor Justice led the Pledge of Allegiance. The purpose of the meeting was for FY 24/25 Mid-year Budget review and discussion.

**Business Non-Consent**

*FY 24/25 Mid-Year Budget Review*

Town Manager Jon Barlow provided an overview of the Town's financial position for the first half of FY 24/25, reviewing trends in key revenue sources including property tax, sales tax, and building inspection fees. He reported that property tax collections have remained steady at approximately \$2.4 to \$2.5 million annually since the FY 22/23 revaluation by Onslow County, which significantly increased revenue from previous years. Barlow emphasized the value of five-year trend analysis in understanding the current outlook and explained that sales tax projections—guided by the State, played a key role in budget planning. He also noted that building inspection revenue was influenced by development activity and fee schedule updates. Despite some unpredictability in market-driven revenue streams, Barlow expressed confidence in the Town's overall financial health.

Finance Director Sonia Johnson followed with a detailed projection for the remainder of the fiscal year, estimating a potential deficit of \$1,086,318. However, she noted that the use of assigned fund balance could result in a projected surplus of approximately \$83,000 by year-end. Johnson cautioned that these figures relied on assumptions and were subject to change based on actual revenue collections and expenditures. She highlighted the need for departmental adjustments to certain operational costs and stressed the importance of close expenditure monitoring and strategic financial planning to maintain the Town's fiscal stability.

Department heads then presented their individual budget reviews:

Police Department (Chief Dwayne Taylor):

- Reported being close to full staffing for the first time in 15 years.
- Highlighted successful equipment upgrades, including new mobile data terminals and body-worn cameras.
- Noted challenges with increasing equipment costs and the need for ongoing training.

Fire Department (Chief Jacob Randall):

- Reported on training hours logged and equipment upgrades.
- Discussed preparation for ISO inspection and challenges with equipment maintenance and repairs.

Parks & Recreation Department (Director Anna Stanley):

- Presented revenue and expenditure data for various programs and events.
- Highlighted successful sponsorships and tourism fund receipts.
- Noted challenges with part-time staff pay rates and the need for equipment upgrades.

Administration (Town Cler Alissa Fender):

- Reported on budget challenges in the governing body and administrative services budgets.
- Highlighted the need for funding for UDO codifications and continuing education.

Planning Department & Permitting (Planner Rebecca Brehmer & Building Inspector Paul Ingram):

- Discussed the need for funding to maintain certifications and stay updated on changing regulations.

Public Works (Director Gerald "Tank" Bates):

- Presented budget information for buildings, streets, Powell Bill funds, stormwater, and solid waste.
- Highlighted successes in acquiring new vehicles and equipment.
- Discussed challenges with stormwater management, particularly in subdivisions where the town doesn't own the infrastructure.

**Board Comments**

Commissioners expressed appreciation for the staff's hard work and dedication. They discussed the need for continued education and training for staff, as well as the importance of maintaining equipment and infrastructure.

Commissioner Eckendorf emphasized the need to develop strategies for equipment and dock maintenance, and that he wanted there to be future discussions centered around reducing the current tax rate.

**Adjournment**

On a motion by Commissioner Turner, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Conaway, the meeting adjourned at 8:23 pm.