

Zebulon Board of Commissioners
Special Called Meeting
Minutes
June 20, 2023

Present: Mayor Glenn York, Beverly Clark, Quentin Miles, Shannon Baxter, Jessica Harrison, Larry Loucks, Joe Moore-Town Manager, Lisa Markland-Town Clerk, Stacie Paratore-Deputy Town Clerk, Chris Ray-Public Works, Sheila Long-Parks and Recreation, Bobby Fitts-Finance, Jacqui Boykin-Police, Bob Grossman-Police, Michael Clark-Planning, Sam Slater-Attorney

Mayor York called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor York asked to amend the agenda to add a closed session at the beginning of the meeting to consult with the Town attorney per GS 143-381.11(a)(3).

Commissioner Clark made a motion, second by Commissioner Baxter to approve the agenda as amended. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Harrison made a motion, second by Commissioner Clark to go into closed session. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

NOTE: In closed session, Commissioner Loucks made a motion, second by Commissioner Harrison to come out of closed session. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

FISCAL YEAR 2024 BUDGET - ORDINANCE 2023-48

Mayor York opened the public comments and asked if anyone wanted to speak.

Mike Weeks stated he was an attorney for 50 years and expressed concerns over the Board's action regarding making changes to the budget after the Public Hearing and that the changes made during deliberations violated North Carolina's open meetings law.

Mayor York asked if anyone else wished to speak. There were none.

Mayor York closed the public comment.

Joe Moore spoke about the statutory requirements for the budget and meetings of public bodies. The budget message and the goals and features of the budget were detailed. Information about the budget development was explained stating the Board's retreats began the process and hearings often ended the process. The budget public hearing on June 5 yielded no comments from the public but after the hearing several new items were introduced into the budget. Mr. Moore explained staff's role in budget development and how the Board and staff were to work in partnership.

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The Board's proposed modifications included:

- Increase Board compensation
- Increase Board travel and training expenses
- Increase Board uniforms and clothing account
- Defund occupied position of HR Technician/Deputy Clerk
- Defund IT Specialist position (currently provided through contract)
- Pursue Town designation as Bee City USA.
- Join the National League of Cities organization
- Sponsor Zebulon Chamber of Commerce
- Reduce Board Retreats
- Budget a Drug Investigator position
- Budget an additional Equipment Operator position
- Reduce work cell-phone reimbursement to employees

The FY'24 budget included an increase to Board compensation for the Mayor at \$14,000/year and Commissioners to \$8,000/year. The FY'24 modified budget showed an increase to \$15,000 for the Mayor and \$10,000 for Commissioners with a shortfall of \$11,000. Other Board's compensation in Zebulon's labor shed were shown.

Mr. Moore showed the travel and training recommended budget and the new modified budget for the Board's travel and training expense account explaining there would be a \$23,500 shortfall. It was shown how changes could be made at a line-item level to keep the budget balanced, but funds would need to be increased to accommodate such a large increase. The Board increased their travel and training to include a \$1,000 National League of Cities membership which created a \$24,500 shortfall.

The FY '24 recommended budget included six local day long mini retreats for \$21,000 in the governing Board budget. The budget developed by Commissioner Loucks decreased the budget by \$25,000 from the administrative budget eliminating the retreats and increasing the shortfall to \$28,500.

The FY '24 recommended budget included \$600 for uniforms and it was modified by the Board to include an additional \$500.

Joe Moore explained staff recommended a sustainability assessment that could be performed by an NC State student. The assessment would show how the Bee City USA membership fit into the Town's sustainability goals and the work required to be a full member of Bee City USA. A resolution to join the Bee City USA program could be passed at a Board's regular meeting. The recommendation was to wait until the sustainability assessment was completed.

It was explained no change was necessary to join the Zebulon Chamber of Commerce and the funds could be taken from the strategic plan grants line item. State law had changed about giving money to non-profits, and staff recommended the Board revise their grant policy.

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Commissioner Loucks stated he added the Chamber of Commerce dues as a line item in the budget he modified as well as reduced the retreats in the administration line item. It was explained retreats were budgeted in the Governing Board not Administration.

Joe Moore spoke about budget adjustment options and creating a line item. Staff could provide itemized details on what was spent for retreats.

Another item in the modified budget showed defunding the currently occupied HR Technician/ Deputy Town Clerk position. It was stated that the current HR workload exceeded the capacity freed up by the IT Director and Town Clerk. The new positions would help to expedite HR processes, allow tangible progress on backburner projects and allow the Town to start on more advanced training. The hours the HR Director and HR Assistant spent on IT, Clerk, meetings and HR work for May were detailed on a graph. There was discussion about areas HR would be able to expand upon in FY '24 once the IT Director and Town Clerk were hired.

Lisa Markland provided details about how the HR department could expand their recruitment efforts.

The Board's modified budget included defunding the currently vacant IT Specialist position. Mr. Moore stated the position was currently filled by a contractor and spoke about the need for an IT Specialist. The IT Director could evaluate the need for an IT Specialist once they were hired.

There was a request in the modified budget to add an Equipment Operator I and Drug Investigator. Mr. Moore recommended the Board wait on both positions and explained why. Hiring an Operations Manager would give some capacity in the Public Works Department and an Equipment Operator I position would not be needed at this time. It was also detailed how a Drug Investigator was not needed since a Special Operations Sergeant would help with gang and drug intervention.

Commissioner Loucks asked if the Town would continue to hire a third-party administrator to perform the insurance assessment. Mr. Moore spoke about the expertise and service they provided and how they were able to negotiate on the Town's behalf to receive aggressive insurance rates. The Board would have a presentation at their August work session about the possibility of self-insurance.

Mayor York stated there would be a 10-minute recess.

The meeting was reconvened at 6:58pm.

Staff recommended the Board approve Ordinance 2023-24 as recommended and evaluate rollover savings in August to fund the Board's travel and training and uniforms. The Board would evaluate cell phone options and the Strategic Plan Grant policy at the August work session. In the second quarterly reports the Board would be provided feedback about the need for a Drug Investigator and Equipment Operator I. The sustainability assessment would be provided later in the year and the Board could assess the Bee City membership at that time.

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Commissioner Baxter stated there was a lot of discussion about line items in the budget and wanted to approve the budget and meet in July to discuss some budget amendments.

Commissioner Harrison also wanted to have more discussions about the budget items and recommended waiting until August to know exactly what was available.

Joe Moore explained there would be more savings than from just uniforms and travel and training for the Board to review.

Commissioner Loucks stated the Board's most important job was reviewing the budget and encouraged citizens to reach out to the Board with questions.

Commissioner Baxter wanted an understanding of what other communities were doing and learn from their successes and failures and stated attending conferences outside of North Carolina could aid in that.

There was consensus among the Board to review the savings from rollover funds in August. Joe Moore stated the rollover numbers would be presented at the August regular meeting.

Commissioner Harrison made a motion, second by Commissioner Clark to approve Ordinance 2023-48.

Commissioner Baxter stated she appreciated staff's work and did not agree with all items in the budget but was looking forward to having more discussion at the August meeting.

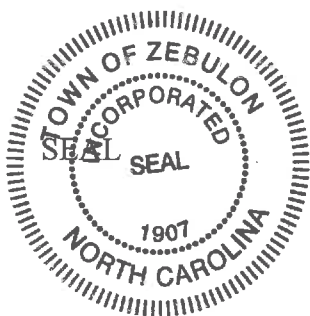
Mayor York stated taking from one area and giving to another sent a mixed message to the community. Staff was doing a lot of various duties and not compensated for all the work they did. Mayor York asked the Board to take all of that into consideration when discussing the budget adjustments.


Commissioner Miles thanked staff for their work on the budget.

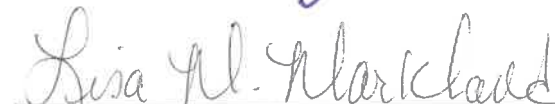
There was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Loucks made a motion, second my Commissioner Baxter to adjourn. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

Adopted this the 7th day of August 2023.




Glenn L. York—Mayor


Lisa M. Markland, CMC—Town Clerk