

Zebulon Board of Commissioners
Work Session
Minutes
April 18, 2024

Present: Mayor Glenn York, Jessica Harrison, Quentin Miles, Beverly Clark, Amber Davis, Joe Moore-Town Manager, Lisa Markland-Town Clerk, Chris Ray-Public Works, Bobby Fitts-Finance, Jacqui Boykin-Police, Michael Clark-Planning, Sheila Long-Parks and Recreation, Kaleb Harmon-Communications, Eric Vernon-Attorney

Absent: Shannon Baxter

Mayor York called the meeting to order at 5:08pm.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

Mayor York stated Commissioner Baxter would not be at the meeting and Commissioner Harrison was running late.

DIVERSITY RECRUITMENT INITIATIVE

Chris Perry spoke about the Department's struggles with recruiting a diverse pool of applicants. Information about the opportunity the Town had to participate in Wake County's Diversity Recruitment Initiative known as "Career in a Year" to fund the salary and training of three recruits in FY '25 was detailed. The Diversity Recruitment Plan included focus groups, internal assessment: culture, pay, policy and promotion, removed barriers, paid training, physical agility prep course, replaced the basics aptitude test with success methods, fire services career expo's, television, print, radio, social media advertising and Veterans Career Fair. The 2023 applicants' interview and hiring demographics were shown on a map. The marketing campaign, recruitment engagement, and academy process timeline were reviewed.

The recruitment initiative was designed to increase applicant/new hire diversity and utilize regional marketing for greater exposure. The position salaries, benefits, gear, uniforms, and books are covered by ARPA funds, and employees would be on the job by July 2025.

Commissioner Miles asked about the age limit which Chris Perry stated was 18 years old.

There was discussion about how the initiative increased diversity.

Commissioner Clark stated she thought the initiative was a wonderful opportunity to get a more diverse pool.

Joe Moore stated the decision to partner with Wake County would come before the Board at their regular meeting on May 6, 2024.

2024 PROPERTY REVALUATION

Wake County Deputy Tax Administrator, Nicole Kreiser, spoke about what a revaluation was, why it was done, and the revaluation results from the 2024 reappraisal. It was explained the Wake County 2024 residential overall change was 53% and commercial was 45%. Zebulon's overall change for residential was 48% and 50% for commercial. The commercial real property tax base went from \$425.8M to \$640.5M and the drivers were mini-storage facilities, industrial, apartments, retail, office and restaurants. The average annual growth for Wake County municipalities was shown. Ms. Kreiser encouraged those who had questions to reach out to her.

Joe Moore explained any year there was an appraisal, state statute required the Town to report the revenue neutral tax rate to the citizens. Information was given about how that rate was calculated and the property value growing with the population growth. Diverse housing product, housing supply and development funding were essential in the property value growth. Graphs with the 2009 and 2019 tax bases were shown demonstrating the significance of commercial tax base with GSK representing 31% of total value in 2019. The tax rates from 2009 to 2016 were shown. Mr. Moore explained how the original tax rate was not sufficient and revenue was lost. There were details given about how to determine the revenue-neutral tax rate.

FY'25 REQUESTED BUDGETS

Joe Moore spoke about potential transportation CIP and bond projects. Those projects included:

- Arendell Avenue access and operational improvements
- Pearces, Jones and Proctor roundabout
- Downtown Gateway and Poplar St. roundabout with improvements
- West Sycamore and Arendell drainage improvements
- Proctor Street Improvements - Pearces to Shepard School
- Old Bunn – Shepard School Road to Karial Court
- East Gannon Avenue – Shepard School Road to Walmart
- Judd Street and Arendell intersection improvements

Details about each potential project were given including possible timelines and costs. The total costs of the projects would be \$48M which would be a property tax rate increase of two cents every year for 10 years to support the road projects.

Joe Moore spoke about the possible pedestrian CIP projects:

- Pony Road sidewalk
- Gill Street sidewalk
- Proctor Street sidewalk
- 700 N. Arendell sidewalk
- Poplar Street sidewalk

Possible bond referendum projects include:

- Library and Proctor Street connector greenway
- Green Spine – East Half
- Beaverdam Creen Greenway Phase II

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The costs and potential dates of the projects were given. Staff would provide a recommendation at the May regular meeting.

Joe Moore spoke about market conditions within the Police Department and the difficulty they have had in recruiting. It was explained how the starting salary could be increased to become more competitive in the market. There would be impacts on existing positions if starting salaries were increased. Some higher level positions in the Police Department would be higher than multiple director salaries. The salary budgets needed to be increased to pay the directors fairly but to also be more competitive in the market.

Commissioner Miles asked if the salary numbers were based upon municipalities similar to the Town's size. Lisa Markland explained the salaries were based upon other municipalities the Town's size and where are employees were coming from and going to.

Commissioner Harrison joined the meeting.

There was discussion about retention issues with specifics about the Planning Department. A map showing the Town's labor shed was shown. Employees from County Planning and right out of school were the majority of where new employees came from. It cost the Town money to recruit, train and then to lose employees due to lack of competitive pay.

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

The meeting reconvened at 6:53pm.

Sheila Long gave a background of Gill Street Park area explaining prior to the 1960s it served as a household waste landfill and in the 1960s was redeveloped to serve as a park. In 2023 staff was asked by the Board to investigate bathrooms at the park which led to finding lead contamination during the preliminary surface level soil sampling. Some areas had been sectioned off and initial remediation had begun to protect the community. The Town would be responsible to address the issues now. Some grant opportunities would be available, and staff was looking into those. Once the Town received the final report it would let the Board know what remediation steps to take.

Commissioner Harrison asked what was involved with the initial remediation. Sheila Long spoke about the remediation method DEQ uses.

Staff was asked to make a special social media post on how citizens could receive updates on the project. Kaleb Harmon explained the information was updated on Public Input and was also available in Spanish.

Details of the tests that were performed and the importance of engaging the community during the next steps was discussed.

Commissioner Miles asked where to read the lab results. Sheila Long stated that information would be available once it was complete. Eric Vernon gave an overview of how the testing was performed.

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Sheila Long explained the Town would work with NCDEQ and they were aware of the steps the Town was taking.

CLOSED SESSION

The Board needed a motion to go into closed session under NC GS 143-381.11(a)(5) for the purpose of discussing property acquisition.

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

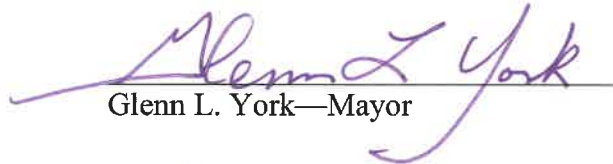
There was a consensus among the Board to have a closed session after the work session May 15, 2024.


Commissioner Miles made a motion, second by Commissioner Davis to adjourn. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

Adopted this the 5th day of August 2024.

SEAL




Glenn L. York—Mayor


Lisa M. Markland, CMC—Town Clerk