

**Zebulon Board of Commissioners**  
**Work Session**  
**Minutes**  
**June 18, 2024**

Present: Mayor Glenn York, Jessica Harrison, Quentin Miles, Shannon Baxter, Amber Davis, Taiwo Jaiyeoba-Interim Town Manager, Lisa Markland-Town Clerk, Chris Ray-Public Works, Bobby Fitts-Finance, Chris Perry-Fire, Jacqui Boykin-Police, Michael Clark-Planning, Sheila Long-Parks and Recreation, Kaleb Harmon-Communications, Shannon Johnson-Economic Development, Eric Vernon-Attorney

Absent: Commissioner Clark

Mayor York called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Mayor York asked to amend the agenda to include Resolution 2024-30.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

**BOND PUBLIC HEARING**

Bobby Fitts reviewed the bond referendum process. It was stated the possible improvements included:

- Arendell Ave access and operational improvements
- Pearces, Jones and Proctor with roundabout
- Downtown Gateway and Poplar Street Roundabout with improvements
- Downtown bulb outs and crosswalk stamping
- Proctor Street improvements – Pearces to Shepard School Rd.
- Old Bunn Road – Shepard School Road to Karial Court
- East Gannon Ave. – Shepard School Road to Walmart
- Judd Street and N. Arendell intersection improvements

All the projects totaled an estimated cost of \$48M. Possible ballot sidewalk projects included Pony Road, Gill Street, Poplar Street, and 700 N. Arendell sidewalk. The Board prioritized the N. Arendell access, operational and sidewalk connection, Jones St. connector and Proctor/Pearces roundabout and sidewalk connection which had a recommended \$20M transportation bond.

Commissioner Baxter asked about the \$5M cost for the Judd Street and Arendell intersection improvements. Chris Ray explained the amount was added as a placeholder to perform a preliminary engineering report to see if an improved intersection or a roundabout would be better for that intersection.

Mayor York opened the public hearing.

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

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

Mayor York asked if anyone wished to speak either for or against.

Nicholas Walton stated he was in favor of the bond funds being spent on sidewalks but stated the infrastructure improvements would not help traffic and stated bonds should be a last resort.

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

Mayor York closed the public hearing.

### **BOND ORDER – RESOLUTION 2024-28 AND RESOLUTION 2024-30**

Staff recommended moving forward with the bond by adopting resolutions 2024-28 and 2024-30.

Commissioner Harrison made a motion, second by Commissioner Baxter to approve Resolution 2024-28 approving the bond order. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Baxter made a motion, second by Commissioner Davis to approve Resolution 2024-30 approving publication of the Bond Order establishing the date for referenda on the same and setting the ballot question. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

### **FY '25 BUDGET**

Taiwo Jaiyeoba stated a summary was emailed to the Board about the requested adjustments from the June 11, 2024 meeting and spoke about four options for salary adjustments.

- 10% increase for all employees
- 10% for employees and 5% for directors in July 2024 and another 5% in January 2025
- 5% for all employees
- Support for everyone except directors
- 10% for Police, Fire and Public Works and 3% for all other employees

The Board's administrative assistant, \$90,000 for the pedestrian bridge, \$280,000 for Town Hall and Police improvements were removed from the proposed budget.

Commissioner Harrison asked why the cost for the Christmas parade changed from \$20,000 to \$35,000. Bobby Fitts stated the original cost came from the Zebulon Chamber from two years ago and did not include benefits and the new special events pay.

Commissioner Miles spoke about not approving the Program Coordinator, Parks Maintenance Tech and Facility Tech until the new Town Manager was hired. Sheila Long explained there were currently two program coordinators and spoke about the need for the new position and the community's desire for new programs. There were three employees on the park's maintenance crew and information about what was covered by those three employees was given.

Commissioner Harrison asked for an explanation of the 10% increase for all employees and a 5% for directors in July and again in January. Taiwo Jaiyeoba stated the option was a compromise. The market rate for directors showed the Town was on average 25% lower than surrounding directors' salaries. That option kept the tax rate from being raised too much, but the Town did risk losing staff during those six months. The 5% for all would be the lowest increase in the tax rate. It was explained by Taiwo Jaiyeoba that the 10% for Police, Fire and Public Works and 3% for all other employees would be approximately a 1.2¢ increase in the current tax rate.

Commissioner Baxter stated the 10% increase would get the Town closer in filling difficult positions. Taiwo Jaiyeoba explained all the salary options would get the starting police salary to \$52,500. All departments were finding it difficult to fill positions.

Jacqui Boykin explained that the 10% increase did not quite get the starting salary to \$52,500, but there would be lapsed salaries to make up the 1.4% difference in what it would take to get the starting salary to \$52,500. It was strongly recommended by Taiwo Jaiyeoba to approve option 2: 10% for employees and 5% for directors in July 2024 and another 5% in January 2025. The Town needed to be equitable in pay, so others did not feel unimportant as employees.

For the Town Hall and Police Department renovations, \$280,000 was removed from the budget. Lisa Markland explained part of those funds were to purchase cubicles for new positions. There was discussion about cubicles and there was consensus among the Board to keep the funds in the budget to purchase cubicles. Staff explained cubicles were approximately \$6,000 each. Commissioner Baxter suggested adding back in \$15,000 to cover cubicles for the two new positions.

The Board was asked for their preference on the salary increase options. Commissioner Baxter stated she wanted to do a 10% increase for Police, Fire and Public Works, 3% for all other employees and a 3% merit increase. Commissioner Harrison explained she was in favor of option 2: 10% for employees and 5% for directors in July 2024 and another 5% in January 2025. There was discussion about making the increase 3% for all directors. With that adjustment the tax rate would be 58.8¢.

Commissioner Baxter stated she wanted to decrease the budget authorization amount from the current \$10,000 threshold to \$5,000. There was consensus among the Board to change it to \$5,000.

Commissioner Harrison asked about the current merit. Staff explained it was currently 5%. It was explained how the staff's salary was significantly below market and decreasing the merit would make the Town an unfavorable employer. There was discussion about keeping the merit at 5% and tax rates for each option.

Commissioner Baxter stated she did not want to increase the tax rate and proposed lowering the allocation of the splash pad to \$700,000. There was further discussion about tax rates and avoiding an increase. Commissioner Harrison explained with the growth of the Town and needs of the community it would be difficult to avoid a tax increase.

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There was discussion about the \$275,000 budgeted amount for the Town Attorney and legal fees over recent years.

Taiwo Jaiyeoba reviewed the budget modifications:

- \$15,000 for cubicles
- Staff compensation – 10% for Police, Public Works and Fire employees, 3% for remaining employees and 5% merit increase.
- Decreasing the budget authorization amount from the current \$10,000 threshold to \$5,000

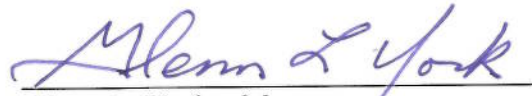
There was a question about the \$1,050,000 budgeted for park acquisition and development. Sheila Long stated the Parks and Recreation Master Plan identified zones for future parks and expansion and that was a placeholder to allocate funding to pursue those areas.

Commissioner Baxter made a motion, second by Commissioner Harrison to schedule a meeting for June 25, 2024 at 5:00pm to discuss the budget and a closed session for personnel discussion as allowed by GS §143-318.11(a)(6). There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

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

Adopted this the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of December 2024.



  
Glenn L. York—Mayor

  
Lisa M. Markland, CMC—Town Clerk