

Zebulon Board of Commissioners
Special Called Meeting
Minutes
June 25, 2024

Present: Mayor Glenn York, Jessica Harrison, Beverly Clark, Quentin Miles, Shannon Baxter, Amber Davis, Taiwo Jaiyeoba-Interim Town Manager, Chris Ray-Interim Assistant Town Manager, Lisa Markland-Human Resources, Sheila Long-Parks and Recreation, Bob Grossman-Police, Bobby Fitts-Finance, Kaleb Harmon-Communications, Michael Clark-Planning, Eric Vernon-Attorney

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

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

CONTRACTS

A. Interim Town Manager

Taiwo Jaiyeoba explained the extension of his contract until the end of July 2024 and his reduction of hours from 32 to 16 hours per week. Eric Vernon explained the amendment was very similar to the original contract and revised the term, hours and provided the extension until the end of July 2024

Mayor York stated there would be a 10-minute recess for staff to assess the sound issue.

The meeting reconvened at 5:17pm.

Commissioner Baxter stated Taiwo Jaiyeoba's hours would be cut back from 32 hours to 16 hours and the interim Town Manager would be able to pick up some of those duties.

Taiwo Jaiyeoba explained he and Interim Town Manager Chris Ray would have weekly meetings so there was no gap in communications. Information about the Town Clerk and IT Director position search was given. Waiting for the Town Manager could be costly, but they should be involved in the Assistant Town Manager decision process.

Commissioner Clark made a motion, second by Commissioner Miles to adopt the agreement for the Interim Town Manager. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

B. Executive Search Firm

Taiwo Jaiyeoba spoke about the three proposals the Town received from Polihire, Good Hope Works, and Baker Tilly to assist with the next hiring. Staff recommended the Board approve staff to enter into contract negotiations with Polihire to conduct the recruitment process for the permanent Town Manager due to their quick hire schedule.

Commissioner Baxter stated she thought the process was emergent and asked about their start dates. Taiwo Jaiyeoba explained Polihire can expedite the process and customize the schedule to fit the Town's vision. Polihire and Baker Tilly both offered a provision to include a termination clause where if the position was terminated within one year both firms would assist with finding a new candidate.

Commissioner Clark asked if the Board would write the job description. Taiwo Jaiyeoba explained that would be done and the chosen firm would meet with the Board about specifics for the desired candidate.

Commissioner Baxter stated she thought Polihire would make the best sense as the recruiting firm based upon their experience and track record. Commissioners Miles, Harrison and Davis were in agreement.

Commissioner Baxter made a motion, second by Commissioner Davis to enter into a contract with Polihire to assist with the Town Manager search. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

FY '25 BUDGET

Taiwo Jaiyeoba spoke about the spreadsheet with adjustments that were sent to the Board. The administrative position from the Governing Board was removed as well as the pedestrian bridge, Town Hall and Police Department renovations. Two cubicles at \$15,000 were added to the budget. The space across from the Human Resources suite could be renovated to add office space with an estimated cost of \$50,000. The splash pad cost was reduced by \$300,000 to address compression issues. The 10% pay increase to Police, Fire and Public Works and 3% to remaining employees would cost \$327,000. Even after the adjustments, there were still employees being paid under market. To give 10% adjustments to all employees would be approximately \$600,000 and would help with the compression issue and offer pay equity for all employees.

Commissioner Baxter asked about salary adjustment clarifications. Lisa Markland spoke about the merit increase information she sent out to the Board. The merit was at 5% for the last three years, 3% for 2021 and 2020 and 4% prior to that from 2015. Commissioner Baxter stated she did not want to move forward with the \$50,000 Town Hall renovation at this time and the new Town Manager could evaluate the best use of the space.

Staff was asked about the housing infrastructure in the budget. Michael Clark explained one item was the housing study to evaluate the existing market, needs of the community, and the best way to expand and improve upon the affordable housing quality in Town. The second item was a housing infrastructure improvement program.

There was discussion about removing the splash pad to address compression. Taiwo Jaiyeoba explained how that would be a onetime thing and there would still need to be funds added to address the pay differentials. Commissioner Baxter stated she wanted to move forward with Parks and Recreation initiatives, but the splash pad may not need to move forward at this time. The new Town Manager could evaluate the needs of the community and the costs.

Sheila Long explained that staff did not have time to perform a feasibility study at Whitley Park for the splash pad but estimated the design to be \$270,000 and spoke about the challenges. There was consensus among the Board to move the funds for the splash pad into the general fund.

Commissioner Baxter stated they needed to make sure there was not a compression issue with directors and wanted to increase the pay for the directors in the Police, Fire and Public Works departments to 10%. The remaining directors and employees would receive 3% increases.

Taiwo Jaiyeoba explained the compression issue affected all employees not just employees in Police, Fire and Public Works. Giving the increase to just employees in those departments would make the compression issue even worse and would cause inequity.

Commissioner Miles explained he wanted the new Town Manager to assess the compression issue. Commissioner Clark stated all staff needed adjustments and suggested a 3% increase and 5% merit for all employees. Commissioner Baxter was not comfortable with that scenario and suggested allowing the salary study to address pay in the remaining departments.

Commissioner Harrison asked Chris Ray if there were hard to fill positions in his department. Mr. Ray spoke about the competition and how three out of the last four hired positions needed adjustments because the starting salary was not high enough. There are currently no open positions in Public Works. Commissioner Harrison explained the work all staff and departments performed was very important and played a role for each department. It was suggested a DEI expert speak to the Board about equity.

Commissioner Davis agreed that all positions were important, but salaries needed to be added in the Public Works, Fire and Police department to bring in more applicants for open positions.

Commissioner Harrison asked what other departments were having a difficult time hiring for open positions. Staff stated the Police Department had open positions and Planning had issues losing people for more competitive pay. Chris Perry gave details about their recruiting pool and salary challenges. The salary increase would make the department more competitive with surrounding departments.

There was a request by Commissioner Baxter to give a 10% salary increase for Public Works, Police and Fire Departments including their respective department heads. All other departments would receive a 3% increase with a possible 5% merit increase. Other positions would not be funded to allow funds for the salary increases including the Budget Analyst, Transportation Planner, the Police Detectives, Police Watch Commanders, Parks Maintenance Technician, and Parks Facility Worker. Commissioner Clark stated she did not agree with the modifications and removing the positions. Commissioner Harrison did not agree with removing the Parks and Recreation positions since the Town is growing and the department was doing so much for the community.

Commissioner Miles asked to remove the Program Manager position as well. There was consensus among the Board to leave the Program Manager position in the budget.

Commissioner Baxter stated those changes would leave the tax rate at its current 57.5¢

Mayor York stated there would be a five-minute recess for staff to calculate the numbers for the budget modifications made by the Board.

The meeting reconvened at 6:53pm.

Taiwo Jaiyeoba stated that the Administrative Assistant to the Board, pedestrian bridge, Town Hall and Police renovations were all removed. The Board added \$15,000 for cubicles. The \$50,000 Town Hall renovation, \$1.4M splash pad, \$300,000 compression costs were removed. The dug-out shades remained in the budget. The 10% salary increases for Public Works, Police and Fire Departments including their respective department heads were added. All other departments would receive a 3% increase with a possible 5% merit increase.

A pay equity and adjustment study was added for \$10,000, Gill Street Parks bathrooms for \$500,000 remained in the budget. The seven new positions Budget Analyst, Transportation Planner, Police Detectives, two Police Watch Commanders, Parks Maintenance Technician, and Parks Facility Worker were removed. Those changes would make the tax rate 57.7¢

Commissioner Baxter asked staff not to allocate the \$1,050,000 parks acquisition funds until a new Town Manager was hired and a plan was in place on how those funds would be spent.

There was discussion about the .2¢ tax rate increase. Commissioners Davis, Baxter, Miles and Clark agreed with the increase. Commissioner Harrison stated taxes would need to be increased as a growing Town and needed resources.

Commissioner Baxter made a motion, second by Commissioner Harrison to approve FY 2025 budget as amended with a tax rate of 57.7¢.

Commissioner Miles stated the Board understood the importance of every position.

Commissioner Harrison stated there were three departments eligible for a possible 15% increase while all other departments were at a possible 8% increase.

There was no further discussion, and the motion passed with a vote 4 to 1 with Commissioners Baxter, Miles, Davis and Harrison voting in favor and Commissioner Clark voting in opposition.

CLOSED SESSION

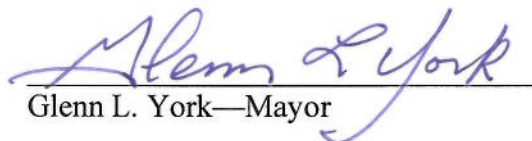
Commissioner Davis made a motion, second by Commissioner Miles to go into closed session for personnel discussions as permitted by §143-318.11(6). There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

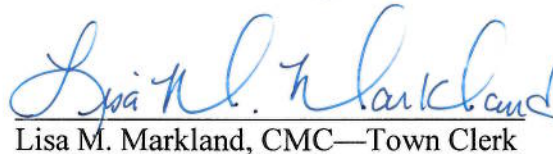
NOTE: In closed session, Commissioner Baxter made a motion, second by Commissioner Harrison to come out of closed session. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

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

Adopted this the 2nd day of December 2024.




Glenn L. York—Mayor


Lisa M. Markland, CMC—Town Clerk