

WORKSHOP TOWN BOARD

December 20, 2023

Present Mayor George Holleman
Mayor Pro Tem Eric Bumgarner
Councilman Jack Simms
Councilwoman Kim Brown
Councilwoman Tamara Odom

The workshop was opened for discussion by Mayor Holleman at 9:00 a.m. The invocation followed.

Items of Discussion:

1. Planning/Zoning Information:

Brian Burgess, Alexander County Planning Director, presented information of upcoming changes in zoning that Alexander County is planning to make and also information of their Land Development Plan.

2. FY 23-24 Budget Update:

Town Manager, Aaron Wike went step by step through the current fiscal year budget noting the town's position on revenues and expenditures at the mid- point of the fiscal year. There have been some unplanned for expenses such as the culvert at Matheson Park, the police department staffing and overtime expenses, the SRO contract with Alexander County, the purchase of the Vac truck, the addition of a Finance Director, but overall, the Town is in good shape. With increased sales tax revenues and the sale of the rental houses total revenues should exceed expenditures for FY 23-24.

3. Grant/Funding Updates:

Below is a list of on-going projects funded by grants, state funds, and local matches.

2022 Sewer Collection System Assessment (Wastewater AIA) – 100% Grant - \$155,000

Water AIA -100% Grant - \$155,000

Merger and Regionalization Grant – 100% Grant - \$90,000

All 3 of these grants were awarded due to the Town being on the Distressed Unit List.

The Town volunteered to go on the list following the June 21, 2022 letter.

S.L. 2021-180 Project – 100% Funded with State Funding and SCIF Funding -

\$1,455,130

VW On-Road Diesel Vehicle Replacement Project – 62% Grant 38% Local Match -

\$211,212.98

CS370700-07 Renewable Energy Project – 100% Loan at 0% Interest - \$306,500.00

2018 WWTP Improvements – 100% Loan at 0% Interest - \$350,000.00

HB-259: 2023 Appropriations – 100% State Funding - \$1,500,000.00

Current BRIC Grant application – 88% Grant 12% Match - \$1,915,050.00

4. Property Leases and Agreements:

Town Manager Wike brought up the verbal lease agreements that the town has with owner Tim McCullen of the old hospital property and Greg Kaziah, owner of the property across from town park. The verbal agreements are that the town maintain the properties in exchange for use. A breakdown of town expenses for each property was discussed. Both property owners are asking that the town taxes for the properties be refunded to them as an additional condition of using the properties. More discussion will follow.

5. CIP – Capital Improvement Plan

Manager Wike noted that our current CIP includes water and wastewater but does not include parks, cemetery, sidewalks, streets, etc. Projects like the replacement of the remaining section of culvert at Matheson Park need to be included on the plan for future planning and grant opportunities.

6. Council Member's Topics:

Mayor Holleman asked for all members to make a list identifying their goals and bring back for further discussion. Items such as ideas for revitalization of the downtown area of town.

Councilman Simms brought up consideration of moving the election to the even years which will be a great cost savings to the town and would result in greater voter turnout. Several members stated they did not want it to be a partisan election. Further discussion will follow.

Councilwoman Brown stated that the Mainstreet Conference will be held in Goldsboro March 14th & 15th, 2024. She attended last year and plans to do so again this year at no expense to the town. That is where much valuable information can be gathered for revitalization efforts/ideas for the downtown area. She thanked everyone for all the help with Hometown Christmas. Each Thursday the attendance has increased. She states that there is a crosswalk needed on Main Street to cross from the free parking area. She also feels that since Hometown Christmas is growing that a committee is needed to help with coordination and organization for next year.

Councilman Bumgarner suggested an update to the Towns website. He'd like to see the council meetings videoed and put on the website. Manager Wike stated that we are planning on updating the website with pictures of the Town Council. It was suggested that we get a gift card for Judge Graham for his time at the December swearing in ceremony.

No further items were discussed and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 12:30 pm.

Mayor

Councilman

Councilman

Councilman

Councilman

Attest: _____
Yolanda T. Prince, Town Clerk