

The Smithfield Town Council reconvened the April 16, 2022 (also continued on April 22, 2024) meeting on Monday, April 29, 2024 at 6:30 pm in the Council Chambers of the Smithfield Town Hall, Mayor M. Andy Moore presided.

Councilmen Present:

Roger Wood, Mayor Pro-Tem
Marlon Lee, District 1
Sloan Stevens, District 2
Travis Scott, District 3
Dr. David Barbour
John A. Dunn, At-Large (left at 9:01 pm)
Steve Rabil, At-Large (arrived 6:49 pm)

Councilmen Absent

Administrative Staff Present

Michael Scott, Town Manager
Ted Credle, Public Utilities Director
Jeremy Daughtry, Fire Chief
Lawrence Davis, Public Works Director
Pete Hedrick, Chief of Police
Gary Johnson, Parks & Rec Director
Tim Kerigan, Human Resources/PIO
Eric McDowell, IT Director
Shannan Parrish, Town Clerk
Greg Siler, Finance Director

Reconvene the April 16, 2024 Meeting

Mayor Moore reconvened the meeting at 6:31 pm

Special Event: Bulldog's Harley Davidson's May the Fourth Event

Prior to discussing the business items, the Town Manager informed the Council that staff had received a temporary use permit application for an event at Bulldog's Harley Davidson to be held on May 4, 2024 at their location on 1043 Outlet Center Drive from 12:00 pm until 5:00 pm.

Mayor Pro-Tem Wood made a motion, seconded by Councilman Stevens, to approve the temporary use permit request. Unanimously approved.

Business Item

1. FY 2024-2025 Budget Discussions Continued

a. General Fund

i. General Government

Councilman Barbour questioned the amount of money the Town was spending for legal fees. Town Manager Michael Scott responded that \$160,000 has been spent in legal fees. He explained it would take \$180,000 - \$240,000 in salary and benefits to hire an attorney.

Councilman Stevens inquired if any other Town employs an attorney. The Town Manager responded Johnston County, Clayton and Garner are the only ones in our area that has a full-time attorney on staff.

Mayor Pro-Tem Wood stated he felt it was more important to hire an Assistant Town Manager than to have a full-time attorney on staff

Since the Council meets twice a month, it was suggested that the Town Attorney only attend one of those meetings to reduce legal fees. Another option would be that another attorney from his office one meeting and Mr. Spence attend the other.

ii. Non-departmental

Town Manager Michael Scott asked for clarification on the DSDC's request for billboards on I-95. He thought that it was the intent of the Council to have one sign northbound and one southbound. There was already a sign southbound at exit 105. He questioned if two were sufficient or if the Council wanted three billboards for Downtown. It was the consensus of the Council that only one additional sign was needed.

Councilman Barbour stated he understood what the DSDC was trying to accomplish. They wanted to do whatever they could to promote their businesses and bring people downtown. While he did not agree with alcoholic beverages at events, he hoped the Council would support the downtown. Town Manager Michael Scott clarified that the Council had no control over alcohol at events on private property, as it was a matter between the property owners and the state. The Council could only exercise jurisdiction if the event was on public property or right of way. Denying permits for private property events solely due to alcohol presence was not within their authority. They could deny permits for other reasons, such as amplified sound, but not for alcohol on private property.

iii. Finance

Finance Director Greg Siler highlighted some line items in the Finance Department's proposed FY 24-25 budget. They are as follows:

- Decreases in Salaries, FICA, Group Insurance and Retirement due to Mr. Siler's upcoming retirement at the end of May.
- Training and Education – 11% increase due to Finance Director's certification training.
- Capital Outlay - \$2,500 for a new intercom system at the cash windows.

Mayor Pro Tem Wood questioned if the Manager was not going to hire an Assistant Finance Director. Town Manager Michael Scott responded that Mr. Siler would work part-time in that role.

Mr. Siler asked for the Council to consider some kind of career ladder program for the Finance Department and other similar departments to help retain quality employees. It's something he will be working on with Andrew in the future.

iv. Information Technology

Information Technology Director Eric McDowell highlighted some line items in the IT Department's proposed FY 24-25 budget. They are as follows:

- Training and Education – Significant increase due to the staff's training needs
- IT Supplies – Police & Fire – Significant decreases in both these lines due to more computers being purchased last year than is proposed this year.
- Drones for Police & Fire – Mr. McDowell explained that he requested drones for both Police and Fire, but they were not included in the budget. He stated both departments would benefit from the use of drone technology.

Town Manager Michael Scott explained that with the new federal legislation effective July 1st, it changes the minimum salary requirement for exempt and nonexempt employees. The IT Specialist will be affected by this change and will move from an exempt employee to a nonexempt employee.

v. Planning

Planning Director Stephen Wensman highlighted some line items in the Planning Department's proposed FY 24-25 budget. They are as follows:

- Salaries, FICA and Group Insurance – These lines will increase due to the hiring of a full-time code enforcement officer. This one full-time position would eliminate 2 part-time positions.
- Training and Education & Professional Fees – These lines will decrease due to the retirement of the Senior Planner last fall.

Councilman Scott questioned if staff had considered an increase in pay for the Planning Board and Board of Adjustment members. Staff did not recommend increasing the pay for the advisory board members.

- Condemnations – Town Manager Michael Scott informed the Council that \$31,775 would be carried over from this fiscal year to the FY 24-25 fiscal year.

vi. Police

Chief of Police Pete Hedrick highlighted some line items in the Police Department's proposed FY 24-25 budget. They are as follows:

- Salaries – 5% increase. Eliminates the full-time Animal Control Officer and replaces it with a full-time Police Officer. The Animal Control Office will be a part-time position.
- Overtime – 25% increase due to staff shortage and the need for Police presence at Town events.
- Training and Education – significant increase due to new officers needing much more training and the cost of training has increased.
- Vehicle Maintenance and Repair – 10% increases due to anticipated maintenance needed.
- Police K-9 Supplies – This was a new line created for the supplies needed for the K-9 officers.

Mayor Moore stated he was unaware that the Town had three K-9 officers. Chief Hedrick explained that one dog was a gift and has only been trained to detect narcotics. K-9 officers' training and usage are tracked.

- Uniforms – 8% increase uniforms needed for new Police Officers.
- Community Policing – \$3,500 increase for additional community policing events/efforts.

Councilman Stevens questioned if the federal grant for body cameras included upkeep costs. The Town Manager responded he was waiting for the grant award letter, but he believed it was the total cost for all the needed body cameras, maintenance and warranty for three years.

Councilman Barbour questioned the starting salary of a patrol officers. Chief Hedrick responded that the salary for police officers is \$49,000. Chief Hedrick further explained that he's no longer losing new officers, but he's also losing seasoned officers. He has one Lieutenant retiring and one Lieutenant who's accepted a position with the Sherriff's Department. At some point, the Council would have to address the salaries of Police personnel. Hopefully, the completed salary study will address the salary issue.

- Capital Outlay
 - \$110,500 was included for 2 Explorer vehicles,
 - \$98,000 was included for taser replacement
 - \$9,000 was included for 2 cameras
 - \$6,000 was included for ASP Baton Replacement
 - \$18,000 was included for Flock Camera System

Chief Hedrick explained the Flock Camera System to the Council. He further stated that the Carolina Premium Outlets may be interested in partnering with the Town so that more cameras can be installed. They currently use a system similar to the proposed system. \$18,000 would be used for six cameras and software. Then it would move to service contracts unless additional camera were added.

- Requested but not included in the budget
 - 2 SUV Patrol Vehicles \$110,000
 - 2 Vehicle Cameras \$ 9,000
 - 1 Polaris UTV \$ 21,000
 - 1 Drone \$ 9,200
 - 1 Additional Detective \$ 74,740 + \$55,000 for vehicle
 - 5 Additional Officers:
 - 2 Patrol Officers \$149,480 + \$119,000 for vehicle
 - 2 COP Officers \$149,480 + \$119,000 for vehicle
 - 1 Task Force Officer \$ 74,740 - vehicle supplied by Fed Govt
 - 6 SROs \$165,400-Year 1- Working with School System.

Chief Hedrick explained that a new UTV was needed because the current one was fifteen years old and not as useful as it needed to be. Also, the drone would be useful in certain situations, but it also has to have the necessary software.

Councilman Dunn questioned the status of the Police fleet. Chief Hedrick responded that every officer has a vehicle and there are a few spare cars.

Councilman Dunn inquired if Town assets were being used during off-duty jobs. Chief Hedrick responded that assets were being used when a Police Officer works off duty. Command staff was investigating ways in which the Town could recoup some costs associated with assets being used during off-duty work.

Chief Hedrick also explained that new furniture would be needed for the building.

Town Manager Michael Scott explained included several potential uses for the \$450,000 that were not initially in the budget. Suggestions included purchasing a police UTV for \$21,000, acquiring six SRO vehicles with necessary camera systems, and buying \$45,000 worth of electric extrication tools for the fire department. Additionally, they could also consider installing button-controlled lights at the Smith Collins crossing to the splash pad on Martin Luther King Jr. Drive to improve safety. This would allow children to safely cross by stopping traffic with the push of a button, addressing a public safety issue more effectively than just a crosswalk.

Recess

Councilman Scott made a motion, seconded Councilman Dunn, to recess the meeting until Wednesday, May 1, 2024 at 6:30 pm. The meeting recessed at approximately 9:05 pm.

M. Andy Moore
M. Andy Moore, Mayor

ATTEST:
Shannan L. Parrish
Shannan L. Parrish, Town Clerk

