

Town Council Budget Retreat
June 13, 2024
10:00 am in the Civic Center
Minutes & General Account

Council Members Present: Mayor Montgomery, Council Members Wolfe, Rayborn, Glanville and Burgess

Council Members Absent: None

Staff Members Present: Matthew Johnson, Katie M. Weiner, Faith Wilson, & Heather Lunsford

Visitors Present: Ben Chavis & Donna Bailey

Call to Order – Mayor Montgomery called the meeting to order.

- Pledge of Allegiance – Mayor Montgomery led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance
- Moment of Silence – Mayor Montgomery called for a moment of silence.

Discussion of 2024/2025 Fiscal Year Budget & Capital Improvement Plan – Johnson explained that at the May 21st Council meeting a resident stated he had found over \$100,000 in additional revenues. Upon investigation, the county tax office discovered eight parcels owned by D. R. Horton were billed incorrectly due to a software error. This has been corrected and paid. Approximately \$56,000 was collected. The Town owes Pinecroft Sedgefield Fire Department about \$19,000 and a portion will be allocated to the Capital Reserve fund. That leaves around \$35,000 or less in additional revenue for fiscal year 2023-2024, less than the resident claimed. Staff recommends not expending the \$35,000 before June 30th so it would move to Fund Balance. Due to 2010 state law changes on builder exemptions, the previously forecasted revenue for the eight parcels will be much lower in fiscal year 2024-2025. Staff does not recommend changing the proposed budget based on this.

Johnson stated Council directed the staff to look at additional cuts to programming or services to allow reduction in the proposed 5 cent tax increase needed to balance the budget. Staff suggestions are:

- Reduce two Music in the Park events - \$6,000
- Remove customer service training - \$23,000
- Remove School of Government Marketing Retreat - \$6,000
- Remove one HVAC unit from Capital Improvement Plan - \$15,000
- Remove additional funding Historic Jamestown Society - \$2,000

Johnson said these suggestions reduce proposed expenditures by roughly \$52,000 allowing a decrease from a 5 cent to a 4.5 cent tax increase.

Council Member Rayborn said that the funding for Fusion to provide recreational services could also be removed. She added that the YMCA provided similar services, and it would save the Town an additional \$10,000.

Council Member Wolfe suggested not funding the purchase of a snowplow for a savings of \$9,000.

Johnson requested direction from Council on how to approach the contract with the Sheriff's Department. He suggested a workshop to discuss the matter.

Council Member Wolfe made a motion to hold a workshop to discuss the contract with the Sheriff's Department on July 9th at 3 pm in the Civic Center. Council Member Rayborn made a second to the motion. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

Council Member Glanville stated she hoped to reduce the needed tax increase by at least 2 cents but would compromise at 1 cent. She suggested that the amount of proposed COLA and merit increases provided to the staff be considered in future years. She said that the Town is the most generous in the county and is the only one proposing both a merit and a cost-of-living increase.

Johnson and Council Members discussed balancing the need to keep employee salaries current in the market and the concerns for the cost it places on citizens.

Johnson asked if the general consensus is to do the \$52,000 in cuts in addition to removing services from Fusion (10,000) and the purchase of a snowplow (\$9,000). This would bring the tax increase to 4 cents.

Council Member Rayborn made a motion to amend the budget to reduce the Music in the Park events (\$6,000), remove customer service training (\$23,000), remove School of Government Marketing retreat (\$6,000), remove HVAC from Capital Improvement plan (\$15,000), remove additional funding for Historic Jamestown Society (\$2,000), remove Fusion (\$10,000), and remove the snowplow purchase (\$9,000). Council Member Wolfe made a second to the motion. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

Adjournment

Council Member Rayborn made a motion to adjourn. Council Member Burgess made a second to the motion. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

The meeting ended at 10:44 am.

Mayor

Town Clerk