

The Smithfield Town Council reconvened its April 23, 2020 meeting on Tuesday, April 28, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. via Conference Call, Mayor M. Andy Moore presided.

Councilmen Present:

John Dunn, Mayor Pro-Tem (6:22 pm until 9:01 pm)
Marlon Lee, District 1 (6:30 pm until 9:00 pm)
David Stevens, District 2 (6:23 pm until 9:01 pm)
Travis Scott, District 3 (6:21 pm until 8:57 pm)
Dr. David Barbour, District 4 (6:20 until 9:09 pm)
Stephen Rabil, At-Large (6:20 until 9:01 pm)
Roger Wood, At-Large (6:26 pm until 9:01 pm)

Administrative Staff Present

Michael Scott, Town Manager
John Blanton, Fire Chief
Lenny Branch, Public Works Director
Ted Credle, Public Utilities Director
Gary Johnson, Parks & Rec Director
Tim Kerigan, Human Resources/PIO
Shannan Parrish, Town Clerk
R. Keith Powell, Chief of Police
Greg Siler, Finance Director
Stephen Wensman, Planning Director

Reconvene: April 23, 2019 Meeting

Mayor Moore reconvened the meeting at 6:30 pm

Roll call of Councilmembers in Attendance

Town Clerk Shannan Parrish conducted the roll call of the Council present. All members were present for the conference call.

Town Manager Michael Scott explained that the budget included a breakdown of each non department organization funded in the current budget and the funding level of each organization. The draft budget allocates funding for all currently funded organizations at a status quo. He encouraged the Council not to make funding decisions tonight but to wait until all General Fund departments had a chance to present their draft budget request. We'll return to a discussion regarding the request following the full presentation in the general fund.

1. Non-Departmental / Nonprofit Requests

a. Annie D. Jones Child Enrichment Fund

The Annie D. Jones Child Enrichment Fund requested \$3,000. Funding for FY 2019-2020 was \$3,000. Executive Director Kayrese McDuffie expressed her appreciation to the Council for supporting the organization for the last three years. The Annie D. Jones Child Enrichment Fund is a nonprofit organization designed to provide financial support for underprivileged children to participate in recreational and cultural activities. The targeted age group is six through eight and the targeted area is the East Smithfield community. This is the organization's fifth year and we continue to be passionate and committed to exposing children to new experiences that hopefully they might choose to pursue in their future.

b. Ava Gardner Museum

The Ava Gardner Museum requested \$25,000. Funding for FY 2019-2020 was \$22,000. Executive Director Lynell Seabold explained the Gardner Museum was an integral part of the local economy. The museum has from all over the country, as well as from all around the world. The funds received from the Town of Smithfield are used to pay a portion of the museum director salary, and my salary has continued to be paid, but our income has been drastically reduced during this time due the museum being closed because of the COvid-19 pandemic. The funding provided by the Town, will assist with operations when the museum can finally reopen to the public.

Councilman Scott questioned the requested increase in funding. Ms. Seabold responded last year she received a salary increase and since the Town's funding paid for a portion of her salary, some of the additional funds would be used to offset the increase.

c. Bright Spot Ministries

Bright Spot Ministries requested \$1,000. This is a new request before the Council. Executive Director Gaile Brittain explained Bright Spot Ministries was founded in September of 2011. It is a 501c3 nonprofit organization located in South Smithfield. The mission is to do whatever we can daily to bring light into a dark world, one random act of kindness at a time. Care packages are provided to local businesses, the fire department, the police department, local schools, the Hospice House. The organization also sponsors a random acts of kindness club at Career and Technical Leadership Academy where we partner with the students. The newest outreach is a community garden. Funds from the Town would help to sustain the community garden.

Mayor Moore questioned how the community garden works and how the produce is distributed. Ms. Brittain responded it is our first time doing the garden. The plan is neighbors will be help pick the produce and have it available for whoever needs it. Mayor Moore questioned the location of the garden. Ms. Brittain responded it was located at her home on West Heath Avenue.

d. Community and Senior Services of Johnston County

Community and Senior Services of Johnston County requested \$3,500. Funding for FY 2019-2020 was \$3,500. Executive Director Neal Davis expressed his appreciation for the continued support. Mr. Davis explained Community and Senior Services of Johnston County provided services for the aging population. Programs are designed to help elderly citizens continue to live independently in their own home. The organization provides the community transportation program. They also manage several apartment complexes, one of which is in Smithfield off Seventh Street. They operate several senior centers around the county, one of which is also located in Smithfield. We provide home delivered meals. In Smithfield, they will average about 60 to 70 meals every day. The amount of funding requested will purchase over 800 meals for the elderly citizens in the Smithfield community.

Mayor Moore if Mr. Davis new in general how many citizens one of your programs touch in Smithfield. Mr. Davis responded the organization serves about 250 different citizens and not all of those are Smithfield residents. But based on the meal count previously provided, Smithfield would represent one third of the total.

Town Manager Michael Scott stated he has had the pleasure of assisting with some of the meal deliveries and they were much needed and much appreciated by the people who participate in that program.

e. Downtown Smithfield Development Corporation

Town Manager Michael Scott explained the Town has tried to keep the DSDC's funding to \$150,000 which is a total of taxes and the Town's donation. The Town Manager pointed out there was a mathematical error in the contributions line. Instead of \$8,305, it should be \$9,705 and that adjustment has been made. Currently, the DSDC is requesting an additional \$20,000 over their current funding levels.

Executive Director Sarah Edwards explained the DSDC has been an economic development partner to the town for about 35 years. Since 1985, the DSDC has contributed to more than \$20 million in private investments in the downtown area. DSDC assisted with writing a grant for the Wayfinding signage which are a great addition to the Town. The DSDC has increased its event programming to attract more people to downtown. With the restriction on mass gatherings, the events will be different, but they look forward to being able to hold some of the events. Most of the downtown business have adapted to the Covid-19 restrictions, but small business assistance will be a priority for the DSDC going forward. Ms. Edwards stated that the DSDC would be moving forward with the downtown master plan update.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dunn stated in the application, you felt your tax collections would be \$95,000, he questioned how that compared to past years. Ms. Edwards responded the tax rate has remained

consistent with the exception of the motor vehicle tax. Mayor Pro-Tem Dunn questioned if the reevaluation had any impact on the DSDC. Ms. Edwards responded a few buildings came off the tax rolls because they were purchased by the county or a nonprofit entity.

Councilman Barbour questioned if the \$55,000 provided by the Town last year covered the director's salary. Ms. Edwards responded the funding from the town was used for our program expenses. It allows the DSDC to use some of the recruitment programs that we offer and some of the facade improvement programs. Some of our events, certainly not all of them, but that's where that that funding comes from. The salaries and operating expenses of the organization are really paid to get through the municipal service district tax.

Councilman Wood questioned the increase in funding. Ms. Edwards responded it was for increased operating expenses. The funding would also be used to expand on current programs and services. The DSDC had planned to roll out some additional events this summer that would bring more people to Smithfield and to the businesses. Small business assistance will be needed to help the downtown businesses get through the Covid-19 pandemic. In this year's budget, the DSDC is looking at how they can increase the overall economic impact of downtown Smithfield in a way that benefits the town and its citizens

Councilman Wood questioned the additional events mentioned. Ms. Edwards responded improvements to the events like the Christmas tree lighting, food truck rodeos, events similar to the wine walk, additional music events and additional outdoor events.

Councilman Barbour questioned how the DSDC decided it needed an additional \$32,000 since the town provided funding of \$43,316 last year. Ms. Edwards responded the downtown tax district was created in the 1980s at the request of property owners. The agreement was the town would match the funding created by the municipal service district as a contribution to the DSDC. In 2014, the DSDC was receiving \$75,000 from the Town and the Municipal Service District was generating about \$80,000. Over time, the funding from the Town decreased. The \$75,000 represents some of the additional programs we would like to do and projects we would like to take on. The DSDC operated on a lean budget and there has not been a lot of room to do anything new for a few years.

Town Manager Michael Scott stated everyone was experiencing change in revenues for this year because of this COVID-19. He questioned if the DSDC chose not to put on the Ham and Yam festival that would help with the DSDC's budget. Ms. Edwards responded the DSDC does receive a bit of a profit from the festival. Those profits are used for the Independence celebration. At this point, the DSDC is unsure if the Independence Day Celebration can be held because it would have to raise \$12,000 for the event to pay for the fireworks, the band, and some other components of the event.

f. Harbor, Inc.

Harbor, Inc. requested \$2,500. Funding for FY 2019-2020 was \$2,500. Executive Director Kay Johnson explained the requested funds would be used to provide services for residents of the town of Smithfield. The organization has served over 250 residents from the Smithfield area through our sheltering, core advocacy, victim advocacy, program services that we provide on a consistent basis. Even though the shelter is not operational, Harbor continues to provide services for those in need.

Councilman Barbour expressed his appreciation to Ms. Johnson for the work that she and he staff do to assist those in need.

g. Public Library of Johnston County and Smithfield

The Library of Johnston County and Smithfield was requesting \$400,000. Funding for FY 2019-2020 was \$270,000. Library Executive Director Renita Barksdale provided an overview of the library's operations, its services, its affiliate libraries, and the number of citizens it served. She explained that over 205,147 people enter the library. Each month, 6,917 residents of Smithfield are using the library. The library is going to continue to need funding to provide services to the community. She explained the costs of books have increased and digital collections costs have increased. She explained that earlier in the fiscal year, we did not realize that the fund balance was

almost depleted. In the past, the fund balance was used for increased expenditures. When we realized the error, we informed the Town and the County and requested additional funds. The County provided some of those additional funds.

Councilman Barbour questioned the Town the library served besides Smithfield. Ms. Barksdale responded the main library serves the libraries of Benson, Four Oaks, Selma, Princeton and Kenly. The only thing we do for them is their cataloguing and book jackets. All funding from Smithfield stays in Smithfield.

Councilman Barbour inquired as to how much the other Towns contribute to the library. Ms. Barksdale responded those Town have their own library budgets. The main library only assists them with cataloguing.

Mayor Moore questioned if the other communities paid into the system for the cataloguing. Ms. Barksdale responded they do not because they would not be able to afford the system.

Councilman Wood questioned if the library was asking the Town of Smithfield citizens to fund all the libraries in the County. Ms. Barksdale get receive money from the state which helps with the assistance of the affiliates. Councilman Wood questioned the cost to catalogue books for the other libraries. Ms. Barksdale responded the cost was minimal. Councilman Wood questioned the salary of the person who performs cataloguing for the libraries. Ms. Barksdale responded the salary was \$29,000

Councilman Barbour questioned what would happen to the library if the town did not provide all of the requested funding. Ms. Barksdale responded there would have to be layoffs and no additional books could be purchased. She explained the previous library director used the appropriated fund balance to cover increased expenditures. Now there are no savings to supplement the general fund.

Councilman Wood stated the library was asking the town to bail them out of their current financial situation because of the past financial mistakes of the library board.

Councilman Barbour questioned the amount of the increase would the county would be contributing to the library to offset its costs. Ms. Barksdale replied the library was asking for an additional \$99,000 from the county.

Councilman Scott stated the library board Chairman made a request to the Town several months ago for additional funding. Councilman Scott questioned what steps the library had taken to reduce expenses. Ms. Barksdale responded the library reduced expenses by \$100,000.

Councilman Scott stated the citizens of Smithfield also pay Johnston County taxes so essentially the citizens help fund the library with town and county tax dollars. He stated he felt it would be difficult for the town to meet the request of the library.

Mayor Moore questioned the amount of the requested increased would be allocated to salaries and benefits. Ms. Barksdale responded \$9,772 would be allocated to salaries and benefits. Mayor Moore questioned how the remainder of the funding would be used. Ms. Barksdale responded additional computer classes and outreach programs such as sewing and crocheting and STEM classes for students would be added. Mayor Moore questioned if the library's employees were considered Johnston County employees. Ms. Barksdale responded in the affirmative. Mayor Moore questioned how many Smithfield citizens were library card holders. Ms. Barksdale responded 6,917 citizens are library patrons. Mayor Moore questioned how the library determined residency. Ms. Barksdale responded the information is taken from the patron's drivers license. Mayor Moore stated the 27577-zip code stretches far beyond the town limits therefore not all people with Smithfield zip codes are tax payers to the Town of Smithfield

Mayor Pro-Tem Dunn stated that based on the presentation provided, the library was requesting 18% of additional funding from the county and 48% of additional funding from the Town. He questioned what additional measures the library has done to decrease expenses. Ms. Barksdale responded the library has cut everything except for salaries and benefits.

Mayor Moore questioned how many were employed at the Smithfield library. Ms. Barksdale responded there were 19 employees.

Town Manager asked Ms. Barksdale to clarify if the \$400,000 request was a one-time request or would it be the same request in future years. Ms. Barksdale responded it would be an on-going amount. The Town Manager further asked her to clarify how much of the requested funds would be used for salaries and benefits. Ms. Barksdale responded \$97,000 would be used for salaries and benefits.

Councilman Scott stated he appreciated the library, but hoped Ms. Barksdale understood that the Council had to do its due diligence when allocating the tax payers' money.

h. Reach Mentoring Ministries

Reach Mentoring Ministries requested \$1,000. This is a new request before the Council. Executive Director Susan Stem explained during the time of being a foster mom, she was made aware of the plight of foster children, and especially those that aged out of the system. In 2016, she founded this nonprofit to reach out to foster kids at risk and assist foster children that aged out with mentors. The organization provides hygiene kits, assist with mentoring, provide emotional support, classes for the older children and provide additional support as needed. Every donation is used for the children.

Councilman Lee commended Ms. Stem for this organization. He explained he was involved with mentoring programs and would contact Ms. Stem on how he could assist.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dunn questioned how long the organization had been in existence. Ms. Stem responded it started in 2016 and became a nonprofit organization in 2018.

i. Smithfield Rescue Mission

The Smithfield Rescue Mission requested \$10,000. This is a new request before the Council. Executive Director Ben Olsen explained the Smithfield Rescue Mission is a 501c3 nonprofit organization, Founded by his parents. Currently, there are 21 beds for men, 7 beds for women and children. In 2019, they provided 7,420 nights of lodging. The Rescue Mission is a therapeutic community-based approach to helping people with just gaining control of life wherever it's out of control. The emergency shelter for men is located near downtown Smithfield. The Rescue Mission offers a variety of programs and direct services. Three meals are provided every day and approximately 34,000 meals were served in 2019.

Councilman Scott questioned the cost of utilities for the two facilities. Mr. Olsen stated he was unsure but would be happy to provide that information. Councilman Scott questioned if Mr. Olsen would give staff permission to provide the utility bills to the Council for review. Mr. Olsen consented to that request.

Councilman Barbour expressed his appreciation to Mr. Olsen for the work he and his family were doing.

j. Triangle East Chamber of Commerce

Triangle East Chamber of Commerce requested \$4,000. Funding for FY 2019-2020 was \$4,000. Economic Development Vice Chair Mark McDonald explained the requested funding would be used for economic development. From an economic development standpoint, the Chamber has established a transportation committee which is focused on anything that impacts our community. Our focus in the last year has been working on the rail study projects and supporting not only the towns but the county at various rail meetings. We have also formed a real estate group. This group gathers once a month to brainstorm what is working in their communities. The other group established by the Chamber is a branding committee that focuses on the marketing of the Chamber and the communities. This involves attending trade shows to market the Towns and the Chamber.

k. Career and Technical Leadership Academy

The Career and Technical Leadership Academy requested \$1,000. This is a new request before the Council. Principal Sheila Singleton explained the Career and Technical Leadership Academy

is the early college on the campus of Johnston Community College. The requested funds were going to be used for the prom, but with the Covid-19 pandemic the event has been cancelled. Ms. Singleton explained the student body has approximately 200 students and that number will continue to grow. Funding is limited and everything costs money.

Councilman Lee stated he supported her request.

Mayor Moore asked for an explanation of the programs offered at the Career and Technical Leadership Academy. Ms. Singleton responded the program basically offers our students to be able to finish with high school graduation requirements being met, but when they finished with us, they will also have an associate degree in one of five pathways. Those pathways are early childhood, medical assistant, nurse aide, applied engineering, or information technology. When the students leave in their super senior year because they don't graduate in their fourth year but in their fifth year. This program allows students who may not be able to afford college to earn college credits.

i. Innovation Academy

The Innovation Academy requested \$1,000. Funding for FY 2019-2020 was \$1,000. Principal Kelly Johnson explained the Innovation Academy's students engage in project-based learning opportunities. The primary population serves is along the I-95 corridor in Johnston County. Of the rising 6th graders, 29 will be from Smithfield. The funding would be used for "Cinderella's Closet" where a student's basic needs can anonymously be met.

Councilman Lee expressed his appreciation to Ms. Johnson for her leadership at the Innovation Academy. He stated he supported her request.

m. Neuse Charter School

Neuse Charter School requested \$1,000. Funding for FY 2019-2020 was \$1,000. Nicki Lewinsky of Neuse Charter School explained staff appreciated the support the Council has shown in the past. We are requesting \$1,000 to help fund Chromebooks for our K2 students. We feel like we have enough calculators now that we want to focus our technology needs to our younger students who need these computers, especially right now in this virtual time that we have in schools.

n. Smithfield Middle School

Smithfield Middle School requested \$1,000. Funding for FY 2019-2020 was \$1,000. Principal LaShunda Faison explained the funding received from the town is used to support our general fund for various initiatives that ultimately benefit our students and staff that are outside of the scope of Title One. Funds from the town will also help support those students that may not otherwise be afforded certain educational opportunities.

o. Smithfield Selma High School

Smithfield Selma High School requested \$1,000. Funding for FY 2019-2020 was \$1,000. Principal David Allen explained the support from the Town in the past has been used to show appreciation to our teachers and staff. Smithfield Selma High School is also a Title One school.

Mayor Moore asked Mr. Allen to provide the Council with an overview of the 3-D masks the students are doing. Mr. Allen responded the students were able to print 3D masks and make them available to our first responders in Smithfield and surrounding areas. The masks will be made out of plastic filament that can be reused. A filter such as a coffee filter will be placed inside the mask and can be replaced every 24 hours. Currently there are 50 masks printed. The robotics team and the engineering department students are working on these masks.

p. South Smithfield Elementary

South Smithfield Elementary School requested \$1,000. Funding for FY 2019-2020 was \$1,000. Principal Laura Makey explained the funding would help the school continue its efforts to build an all-inclusive community playground. \$20,000 of the \$90,000 had been raised.

q. West Smithfield Elementary

West Smithfield Elementary School requested \$1,000. Funding for FY 2019-2020 was \$1,000. Principal Sharon Bryant explained the requested funds would be used to fund teacher appreciation and to replenish playground items.

Councilman Lee stated he supported Principal Bryant for all she was doing at the school and in the community. He stated he would like for the Council to consider providing more funding to West Smithfield Elementary because they really need it. The families of these children are financially struggling, and they cannot afford to offer any support to the school.

Recess

Councilman Scott made a motion, seconded by Councilman Wood, to recess the meeting to Tuesday, May 5th at 6:00 pm. The meeting recessed at approximately 8:58 pm.

ATTEST:

M. Andy Moore, Mayor

Shannan L. Parrish, Town Clerk