

The Smithfield Town Council reconvened its May 20, 2021 meeting on Tuesday, May 25, 2021 at 6:30 pm in the Council Chambers of the Smithfield Town Hall, Mayor M. Andy Moore presided.

Councilmen Present:

John Dunn, Mayor Pro-Tem  
Marlon Lee, District 1  
David Stevens, District 2  
Travis Scott, District 3  
Dr. David Barbour, District 4  
Stephen Rabil, At-Large  
Roger Wood, At-Large

Councilmen Absent

Administrative Staff Present

Michael Scott, Town Manager  
John Blanton, Fire Chief  
Lawrence Davis, Public Works Superintendent  
Gary Johnson, Parks & Rec Director  
Tim Kerigan, Human Resources/PIO  
R. Keith Powell, Chief of Police  
Greg Siler, Finance Director  
Stephen Wensman, Planning Director

Administrative Staff Absent

Ted Credle, Public Utilities Director  
Shannan Parrish, Town Clerk

**Reconvene: May 20<sup>th</sup> Meeting**

Mayor Moore reconvened the meeting at 6:35 pm

**Budget Discussion**

**Fire Department – Part-Time Staff**

Chief Blanton provided challenge coins to the Mayor and Council. He also explained a parting message, as this was his last official meeting with the Council prior to his retirement. Councilmembers, the Mayor and Manager thanked him for his service.

Chief Blanton passed out a cost/benefit analysis regarding the hiring of part time fire fighters for EMS, as opposed to using full-time fire fighters and a full-size fire engine for response. Chief Blanton estimated a net cost of \$101,298 as the annual cost of the part-time EMS staff.

Mayor Pro Tem Dunn explained that the volume of these service calls were only going to increase in time, so this issue needed to be kept on everyone's mind.

Councilman Steven's asked the Manager how the Town might fund the additional manpower costs. The Manager stated that there existed an additional \$30,000 in contingency, above and beyond normal funding and an additional \$12,000 in Public Works General Services, Salary line as the result of Lawrence Davis salary being less than the previous Director, Lenny Branch. After that there still over \$60,000 in CARES reimbursement for police and fire salaries that could be used, but the Manager cautioned against using a one-time revenue source to pay for on-going expenditures.

Chief Blanton recommended to the Council that an outside assessment group be paid to come in and complete a futures fire needs study for the Town.

Mayor asked we note these issues and come back to them after discussing other agenda items.

Councilman Scott stated he agreed but he hoped if the part-time positions were funded that the part-time employees would be allowed to come along with the full-time staff and rotate positions with them.

**Police Department – Body Cameras**

The Manager discussed the Federal House Bill, H.B. 1280. This Bill had already passed the House and was in the Senate, though no action was yet taken. This Bill include police reform measures and includes funding for local government to purchase and maintain body cameras and data for two years. The Manager asked the Council to forgo further discussion until this Bill works its way through the Federal Legislature to ascertain if funding may become available for body camera purchases. The Council agreed.

**Stormwater**

The Manager requested that all storm water discussions take place after budget adoption, as the Federal American Rescue Plan funds will then be available and are an accepted use for storm water infrastructure. The Council agreed.

**Public Works Garage – Part Time Mechanic Position**

Councilman Wood discussed the hiring of a part-time mechanic, as opposed to a full-time mechanic for public works. The Manager was asked what the additional cost would be. He estimated the cost at \$36,900.

The Manager suggested the Public Works Department be allowed to try to hire an additional part-time mechanic for the first six months of the year. If this is unsuccessful, then the money can be used for a full-time position later in the fiscal year. Councilman Wood was concerned because of the cost of outsourcing mechanical work if the Town experiences another vacancy. Councilman Barbour asked the Council move on and discuss at the end of the workshop.

### Employee salaries and Benefits

Salaries and Benefits for employees were discussed. The Manager explained the 7% increase in healthcare costs and the state mandated increase in pension costs. The Manager explained that a 2.5% salary adjustment was included in the budget to be implemented around July 1<sup>st</sup>. Council discussed the possibility of merit increases and dates for salary increase implementation. Councilman Scott stated he preferred a blended salary adjustment system similar to what the County does where an across-the-board salary increase was provided, as well as a smaller merit increase for those employees who earned it.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dunn asked that the Council consider leaving the 2.5% increase as exists in the budget for FY 2022 and place staff on notice that a blended system will be in place for FY 2023. The Manager was asked to include a blended salary increase in FY 2023 along the lines of a 2.5% across the board adjustment and a 1.5 % merit increase.

### Asphalt Speed Bumps

Asphalt speed bumps were then discussed. The Mayor cautioned the Council that many requests for speed humps would likely be made following any implementation of them.

Lawrence Davis of Public Works stated that his research showed, that many communities, with Durham being an example, required all members of an effected neighborhood/community would have to petition the Council for the Speed Humps and then the neighbors would pay for them, either up front or through an assessment.

Chief Powell advised that his department was in the process of acquiring a speed measurement/recording device that could be used to evaluate the need for the speed humps or increased enforcement.

The Manager indicated that he felt that one street could be done within the existing budget, if the Council wanted to experiment with them

Councilman Barbour indicated that he would recommend using the new speed recording device first to ascertain the need for the humps. If warranted, the Council could discuss at a future meeting.

### Debt Service – EMS Building

The Manager asked for permission to use existing General Fund, Fund Balance to pay off the existing debt on the EMS Building. The estimated pay-off was \$103,000. This would net a savings of \$38,000 in interest if the loan was allowed to continue to fruition. Greg Siler, the Finance Director, supported the paying off of the loan.

Councilman Barbour made a motion, seconded by Councilman Wood, to use fund balance to pay off the existing EMS Building Loan. Unanimously approved

The Council then revisited the issues that were temporarily tabled. Consensus decisions included the following:


- Leave the part-time mechanic request as in, in the proposed budget. Come back to Council during the budget year if the position needs to be full-time.
- Move \$42,000 into the part-time salary line item for the fire department to begin the requested EMS program These funds would be moved from PW General Services/Salary Line and General Fund Contingency. The Manager suggested that the Finance Department track expenditures in other departments through FY 2022 and be allowed to move funds between department to pay for the full year of part-time EMS services. The Council agreed to this via consensus.

The Council discussed recessing the June 1<sup>st</sup> meeting to June 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm to approve year end budget amendments.

### **Adjourn**

Councilman Scott made a motion, seconded by Councilman Stevens, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:55 pm.

ATTEST:

  
Shannan L. Parrish, Town Clerk



  
M. Andy Moore, Mayor