

The Smithfield Town Council held a work session on Monday, February 23, 2015, at 6:00 pm. in the Fire Station Training Room located at 111 South Fourth Street. Mayor John H. Lampe II presided.

Councilmen Present:

Marlon Lee, District 1
Travis Scott, District 3
Emery D. Ashley, At-Large
Charles A. Williams, At-Large

Councilmen Absent

M. Andy Moore, Mayor Pro-Tem
J. Perry Harris, District 2
Roger A. Wood, District 4

Administrative Staff Present

Paul Sabiston, Town Manager
Greg Siler, Finance Director
Lenny Branch, Public Works Director
Patrick Harris, Fire Chief
Mike Scott, Chief of Police
Shannan Williams, Town Clerk

Mayor Lampe called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm.

Approval of Agenda

Councilman Ashley made a motion, seconded by Councilman Williams, to approve the agenda as submitted. Unanimously approved,

Topics of Discussion:

1. Council discussion on amending the employee handbook to include life insurance benefits for current and retired Council members with 20 or more years of service starting before 2016.

Town Manager Paul Sabiston informed the Council that a retired Councilmember recently inquired as to whether he was entitled to receive life insurance benefits paid by the Town on his behalf as part of his retirement from Town Services.

It was the consensus of the Council that life insurance benefits should not be paid by the Town for members of Council past or present. No formal action was taken.

2. Discussion regarding reimbursement for Volunteer Fire Department personnel

Town Manager Paul Sabiston informed the Council that there was an issue with regards to the annual compensation for volunteer fire personnel. In years past, the Town used to reimburse volunteers with a flat reimbursement payment that did not withhold any taxes. More recently, withholdings were made but the amount of money paid to the volunteers was increased to offset these withholdings. This year, in an effort to correct what could have been perceived as an incorrect withholding amount, the annual payment for withholdings was adjusted to match the single payment to volunteers. This resulted in much less tax withholding being paid by the Town to the state and federal taxing authorities. This has caused concern by the volunteers who have inherited a larger tax liability for this year as opposed to recent tax years.

Staff was directed to bring to the Council at the March 3rd meeting two options that would resolve the issue.

3. Preliminary Budget Discussion

a. Police

The following items were discussed:

- A request for five patrol vehicles. This would allow several aging vehicles to be removed from the fleet.
- Potential need for body cameras
- The creation of a substation in East Smithfield to improve the community relations.

b. Fire

The following items were discussed:

- The need for a new ladder truck and fire engine.
- Recommendation by Chief Harris to replace some of the positions that were removed from prior budgets.
- The need for additional Fire Stations in the future.

Town Manager Paul Sabiston asked for input from the Council concerning new fire trucks and potential fire stations. No direction was given by the Council.

c. Public Works

i. General Services – Appearance

The following items were discussed:

- The Appearance Commission is requesting a 50% increase (\$5,000) in the budget for additional projects. Council suggested that the Appearance Commission outline the projects that they would complete to justify the increase in funds.
- Replacement of HVAC units at the Hastings House and the Police Department.
- Replacement of a 1 ton flatbed truck
- Replacement of some Christmas decorations

ii. Streets

The following item were discussed:

- Replacement of a flatbed truck

iii. Garage

The following item was discussed:

- The need for diagnostic equipment in the garage.

iv. Sanitation

The following items were discussed

- The need for a new Knuckle boom truck
- Replacement of a pick-up truck

Mayor Lampe asked that staff look at the possibility of adding robotic arms to the garbage trucks.

Adjourn

There being no further business, Councilman Williams made a motion, seconded Councilman Ashley, to adjourn. Unanimously approved.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:15 pm.

John H. Lampe II, Mayor

ATTEST:

Shannan L. Williams, Town Clerk