

The Smithfield Town Council met for a scheduled work session meeting on Tuesday, February 20, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. 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, District 4  
John Dunn, At-Large  
Stephen Rabil, At-Large

Councilmen Absent

Administrative Staff Present

Michael Scott, Town Manager  
Ted Credle, Public Utilities Director  
Pete Hedrick, Chief of Police  
Tim Kerigan, Human Resources  
Eric McDowell, IT Director  
Shannan Parrish, Town Clerk  
Michael Sliger, Public Works Superintendent  
Stephen Wensman, Planning Director

Also Present

Bob Spence, Jr., Town Attorney

Administrative Staff Absent

Lawrence Davis, Public Works Director  
Greg Siler, Finance Director

**Call To Order**

Mayor Moore called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm

**Approval of the Agenda**

Mayor Pro-Tem Wood made a motion, seconded by Councilman Barbour, to approve the agenda with the following amendment:

Add a Closed Session: Pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (5) prior to the business items

Unanimously approved.

**Closed Session: Pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (5)**

Mayor Pro-Tem Wood made a motion, seconded by Councilman Barbour, to enter into Closed Session pursuant to the aforementioned statute. Unanimously approved at 6:33 pm.

**Reconvene in Open Session**

Councilman Barbour made a motion, seconded by Councilman Stevens, to reconvene in open session. Unanimously approved at 7:34 pm.

**Business Items:**

**1. Discussion concerning the structure of the working meeting**

Town Manager Michael Scott informed the Council that staff had been working to determine the best use of the proposed second monthly Council meeting. Staff suggested holding public hearings at those meetings. The Manager questioned if the Council which to hold workshop type meetings or public hearings during the second monthly meeting. Other items to consider were allowing citizens comments and the recoding of the meetings.

Councilman Dunn stated he was in favor of allowing a citizen's comment period if the Council was going to take action during the second meeting. It was his opinion that all Town Council meetings should be recorded.

Councilman Stevens stated he was in favor of using the meetings to decide on previously tabled items. He further stated he wanted to be efficient with the Council's time and if a second meeting wasn't needed one month, then the Council should not meet.

Councilman Barbour stated he was in favor of using the meetings to hold public hearings. He explained the Council could hold the public hearing and deliberate on the item before making a final decision.

Mayor Moore stated it was important for the citizens to be able to address the Council because their comments were beneficial to the Council and the decisions being made. He further stated he saw the benefit of holding the public hearings at the second monthly meeting.

Mayor Pro-Tem Wood questioned if there were any concerns about advertising for the public hearings at the second monthly meeting. Town Manager Michael Scott responded staff was able to sufficiently advertise for the public hearings.

Mayor Moore informed the Council that if at any time the Council feels the second monthly meeting isn't productive or isn't working, the Council could vote to return to one meeting a month.

Councilman Lee stated he was in agreement with everyone's suggestions. He further stated it would be beneficial if the meetings were efficient and concise.

Mayor Moore asked for the Planning Director's input on holding the public hearings at the second monthly meeting. Mr. Wensman responded staff felt comfortable with all the requirements needed to hold a public hearing. He stated he liked the idea of holding the public hearing at one meeting and delaying a decision until the following meeting. It allowed the Council time to ask questions and think about the comments offered by those that address the Council before making a decision.

Town Attorney Bob Spence stated that during any quasi-judicial hearing, the Council was not permit to discuss the issue after the public hearing was closed.

Councilman Dunn stated that for consistency, both meetings should be held at the same time.

It was the consensus of the Council that citizens comments would be allowed at both meetings, both meetings would be recorded, and dinner would be served before each meeting. At the first meeting of the month, the Council would consider ceremonial items and all other business item. At the second meeting, the Council would hold public hearings and other business items.

Councilman Dunn made a motion, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Wood, to hold two meetings a month on the first and third Tuesdays of every month beginning at 7:00 pm. Unanimously approved.

**2. Continued discussion of Post-Employee Health Benefits**

This item was not discussed.

**3. Continued discussion on Fee in Lieu of Sidewalks (ZA-23-07)**

This item was not discussed.

**4. Continued discussions on Article 10 Amendments to the Unified Development Ordinance (ZA-23-06)**

This item was not discussed.

**5. FY 2024-2025 Continued Budget Discussion**

Town Manager Michael Scott informed the Council that the Town received a grant in the State Budget in the amount of \$450,000 for public safety with no other determination on how the funds should be used. The Office of State Budget wants the Town to submit a scope of work to claim the funds. Staff requested funds for assistance with the Police Department expansion project's overages and for the purchase of a new fire engine. The state appropriations will not totally fund either project. He stated that since the funds are earmarked for public safety, the Council should decide the highest priority for those funds. He suggested using those funds for the Police Department expansion project's costs that exceeded the original budget since it would take several years to receive the fire engine.

Councilman Stevens made a motion, seconded by Councilman Barbour, to use the \$450,000 of state appropriated grant funding for the Police Department expansion project. Unanimously approved.

Town Manager Michael Scott informed the Council that the first draft of the budget was completed and all three funds are balanced. He stated the Council should decide how you want to meet and discuss the budget. He informed the Council that tipping fees would increase by \$2. If the Council wished to pass that fee onto the customers, it would be an increaser of \$.55 a month per customer. He further stated that the County Public Utilities Director informed the Town that she will be requesting a 6% increase in wholesale sewer rates. The County may also increase landfill tipping fees. There was also a 2% increase in electric rates based on the rate study conducted.

The Town Manager informed the Council that Chief of Police Hedrick was working on a proposal for Johnston County Schools to put Smithfield Police Officers back in Smithfield schools. Chief Hedrick was waiting to hear back from Johnston County schools.

Councilman Barbour stated he thought the reason Smithfield Police Officers were not school resource offers was because Smithfield did not have the needed staff for regular operations. Chief Hedrick responded that he was approached by the school system to determine if it was possible to have Smithfield Police Officers serve as school Resource Officers in the Smithfield schools. He stated this was contingent on hiring the five officers and one supervisor needed for the schools.

Councilman Lee questioned if this was an all or nothing type deal. Chief Hedrick responded he felt the schools would appreciate any number of Smithfield Officers in the Smithfield school. They knew it was contingent on the number of people they could hire for those school resource officer positions. More information would be forthcoming.

Town Manager Michael Scott also informed the Council that Outlet Center Drive was in need of repair. The Public Works Director was working with NCDOT to determine a cost for temporary striping. He further indicated there may be some future state funding for Outlet Center Drive. The draft budget would also include changes to the Powell Bill budget. Funds were earmarked for repaving only.

Councilman Barbour requested an update on the Multipurpose path. Planning Director Stephen Wensman responded that it was a slow process, but it was moving forward.

**ADJOURN**

Councilman Barbour made a motion, seconded by Councilman Rabil, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:37pm.

*M. Andy Moore*

M. Andy Moore, Mayor

ATTEST:

*Shannan Parrish*

Shannan L. Parrish, Town Clerk

