

The Smithfield Town Council reconvened at its December 2, 2025 meeting on Tuesday, December 9, 2025 at 6:30 pm in the Council Chambers of the Smithfield Town Hall, Mayor M. Andy Moore presided.

Councilmen Present:

Mayor Pro Tem Sloan Stevens
Travis Scott, District 3
Doris Wallace, District 4
Stephen Rabil, At-Large

Councilmen Absent

Gettys Cohen, Jr. District 1
Roger Wood, At-Large
John Dunn, At-Large

Administrative Staff Present

Assistant Town Manager, Kim Pickett
Michael Scott, Town Manager
Elaine Andrews, Town Clerk
Jeremey Daughtry, Fire Chief
Andrew Harris, Finance Director
Pete Hedrick, Chief of Police
Gary Johnson, Parks & Rec Director
Shannan Parrish, HR Director
Stephen Wensman, Planning Director
Ted Credle, Public Utilities Director

Also Present

Administrative Staff Absent

Lawrence Davis, Public Works Director

RECESSED BUDGET MEETING

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Moore called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm.

Assistant Town Manager, Kim Pickett began the discussion for the fiscal year 2026-2027 Town of Smithfield Budget. She outlined major items for budget discussions for the evening, and requested Council feedback for goals and priorities in FY 2027.

Assistant Manager Pickett outlined the following items of note as needed in Town's FY 26-27 upcoming budget, by department:

Capital Items

Fire Department

- Engine 4 Replacement
- Radio Upgrades
- Rolling Rack Hose Management
- Water Rescue Raft
- Pump Test Diffuser
- Firehouse Beds
- Storage Building
- Land Purchase – Station 3

Parks & Recreation

- Ventrac Tractor
- Maintenance Trailer
- Soccer Goals
- Community Park Fencing & Sidewalk
- Restrooms & Press box Renovations
- Engineering & Design – Fishing Pier (Johnston Community College location)
- Parking Lot seal coat and stripe

SRAC:

- Carpet Replacement w/LVT
- Heater Replacement
- Parking lot seal, coat & stripe
- Scoreboard replacement
- Front desk reconfiguration

General Services

- 61" zero-turn mower
- New Christmas decorations

There was some general discussion regarding the need for new Christmas decorations, with Assistant Manager Pickett noting these were initial looks based on department requests received, but that the need would be further examined by staff.

Sanitation

- ½ Funding for Garbage Truck for FY 2028

Streets

- Snow Plows/Salt Spreaders
- Scag 72" zero-turn mower

Water/Sewer Fund

- Fire Hydrant Paint & Fix
- Digitized mapping
- Water relocation in US-301
- Pump Station 1 Improvements
- Pump Station 11 & Outfall Improvements

Water Plant

- East Smithfield Water System Improvements
- Water Plant Intake Improvements
- PFAS Treatment
- Pump Rebuilds
- West Smithfield Elevated Water Tank

Electric Fund

- Voltage Conversion
- Delivery Point 1 – Upgrade
- Digger Derek
- Materials for Approved Growth

Personnel RequestsHuman Resources

- Safety & Risk Manager

Fire

- 12 Firefighters

Parks & Recreation

- Facility Maintenance Specialist I

Police

- GHSP (Grant Funded) Police Officer
- 2 Patrol Officers
- 1 Police Analyst
- 1 Special Victims Detective
- Public Safety Aid

Councilman Travis Scott asked for clarity regarding the personnel request for Parks & Recreation, and whether that Facility Maintenance Specialist I was in consideration of the draw from the new baseball stadium. Parks and Recreation Director, Gary Johnson noted he did not think the stadium would generate *more* work. The facilities are the same whether there is soccer or baseball there, other than maybe a bit more cleanup after the games for part-time staff.

Public Utilities - Water Plant

- Mechanic/Operator

General Fund - PIO

- (PT) Digital Media Specialist

Assistant Manager Pickett outlined prior year budget goals met and on-going as:

Completed:

- ✓ Salary Study
- ✓ Amphitheater (tree trimming)
- ✓ Town Hall Parking Lot
- ✓ EMS Building Option (discussions ongoing)
- ✓ Smithfield Entrances/Gateways (completed unless currently under DOT construction)
- ✓ Additional Seasonal Cutting, Mulch & Weeding (added more to PT salaries and mulch line items)

Ongoing:

- Bradford Pear Trees (down but not replaced)
- West Smithfield Park Space (keeping land options open with new development)
- American Legion Hut (moving forward with the development of the PAC—former Howell Theatre)
- Sidewalk inventory (currently underway by staff)

Assistant Manager Pickett asked for the Board's feedback for potential missed items, or anything they would like to mention.

Councilman Travis Scott, referencing the completed salary, asked if anything was currently a defined plan to address salary compression issues—noting it needed to be examined as an *ongoing* item. Assistant Manager Pickett made note of the concern.

The council discussed Johnston County's continued occupation of the Town of Smithfield's EMS building. Council members and staff noted that there have been ongoing conversations with the county regarding

potential purchase or repurposing of the building, but significant challenges exist, primarily due to the integrated utilities and complexities in separating them, making a sale unfeasible. As a result, the county is no longer interested in purchasing the property but will continue leasing it from the town. Further discussion indicated that previous ideas to repurpose the building (such as for finance or other municipal uses) were reconsidered, but it was determined that the facility was not suitable for those purposes. The council also reviewed budget allocations for architectural planning and discussed recent and ongoing maintenance at the EMS building. No immediate changes to the county's lease or building use are anticipated; the town will maintain current arrangements with ongoing periodic maintenance and review.

Eagle Eye Consulting Update and Priorities for FY 2027

Assistant Town Manager Kim Pickett introduced KJ Stancil of Eagle Eye Consulting, along with his father Jackson Stancil of Jones Street Consulting. They discussed their successes and future goals for the next fiscal year for the Town of Smithfield, along with strategies for accomplishment.

KJ Stancil, Consultant and Jackson Stancil:

- Advised the board that the North Carolina Legislature has not passed a full state budget in two years, creating a highly competitive environment for municipalities seeking funds.
- Emphasized the importance of submitting a detailed, prioritized list of funding requests for the coming year as early as possible (preferably by January), noting that "shovel-ready" plans with supporting documentation have the highest chance of success.
- Explained nuances in state and federal funding, indicating that projects related to infrastructure (e.g., water, sewer, utility, large transportation projects) are likely to be prioritized.
- Recommended strategic, proactive advocacy and detailed funding proposals for the upcoming session, including backup from capital improvement plans or technical studies.
- Offered to coordinate with newly elected representatives and lobby for Smithfield's interests directly.

Mayor Andy Moore:

- Thanked the consultant for their ability to bring the Tobs baseball franchise to Smithfield
- Urged the board to think strategically and ambitiously about major infrastructure needs.
- Stressed the value in asking for "big" projects, noting the town's past success in doing so.
- Stressed importance of guidance for readiness (e.g., having fully developed plans, costs, and justification documents prepared) to take advantage of funding that becomes suddenly available.
- Spoke to the need to balance local resources with requests for outside/state funding and highlighted water tower and underground infrastructure as top priorities.

Councilman Sloan Stevens:

- Raised the idea of prioritizing infrastructure requests, such as the water tower, the fishing pier at the community college and large-scale underground utilities replacement.
- Highlighted the benefits of asking for projects likely to receive broad public and legislative support.

Councilman Travis Scott:

- Suggested that even though some projects (like road/rail improvements) are costly and complex, they should still be considered and included because ambitious requests can pay off.
- Supported assembling a comprehensive, prioritized list to present to the Consultant and legislators.
- Discussed the importance of seeking expert guidance from consultants for legislative advocacy.

Asst. Town Manager Kim Pickett:

- Reinforced the need for supporting documents (CIP studies, engineering/hydraulic assessments) alongside funding requests.
- Shared experience with representatives who expect well-documented, needs-based, and shovel-ready proposals.

Board members and the Consultants further discussed proposed Market Street parking changes from NCDOT. It was a consensus that rapid decision making; stakeholder and business input will be important in dealing with the situation. The Council stressed timely board action to finalize and submit project priorities for the upcoming legislative session and noted the importance of collaborating with legislative representatives and consultants (KJ and his team) for effective state advocacy for a reasonable solution. Assistant Manager Pickett noted that staff has been able to have changes delayed until January. Mayor Andy Moore stated further delay may be necessary to buy time for the Board to come together with a proposal for a more effective change for Market Street—with consideration for how any change would affect not only downtown, but the entire town. There was also discussion for possibly forming a subcommittee, or focus group of non-quorum council and staff members to address the issue.

Town Manager Hiring Process:

The board engaged in a detailed discussion regarding the process for hiring a new town manager. Mayor Andy Moore outlined the council's options, stating that hiring the manager is solely the council's responsibility and that they could choose to proceed either internally or with the assistance of professional recruitment firms. Councilman Travis Scott highlighted the value of transparency, community input, and professional support, noting concerns around confidentiality and the comprehensive, months-long process required if using an outside firm. He also stressed the importance of balancing fairness, particularly for internal candidates, with the need to cast a wide net for qualified applicants. HR Director

Shannan Parrish presented cost estimates and described previous hiring experiences, explaining that both the MAPS Group (21K estimated cost) and Developmental Associates (28K estimated cost) provide comprehensive assessments and manage everything from stakeholder outreach to applicant screening, but at significant cost and lead-time.

Councilman Sloan Stevens and others discussed the alternative of handling advertisement and application review in-house, referencing past experiences where the town manager search was successfully managed internally and suggesting they proceed by advertising the position, then determining whether to engage a firm based on the pool of applicants. Mayor Moore emphasized that regardless of the approach, the process should include reviewing and, if necessary, revising the job description, publicizing the job widely, and narrowing the pool for council and stakeholder input. Additional discussion touched on legal and contractual matters, including who would review and draft the employment contract, as well as options for appointing an interim manager if needed. Assistant Town Manager Kim Pickett stated that she is fully open to whatever decision the Council makes regarding the hiring process. She emphasized her commitment to Smithfield, affirming that she considers it her home and intends to remain with the Town for the remainder of her career. Ultimately, there was consensus to gather council feedback, share the job description for review, and place the hiring approach on the agenda for the next council meeting to make a final decision on procedure, perhaps as an added agenda item.

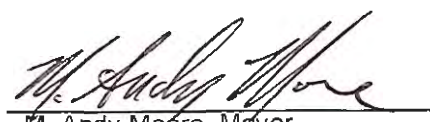
Meeting Schedule Discussions:

The Board discussed the purpose and format of the Town's second meeting each month. Councilman Travis Scott expressed a preference for making these meetings more productive by focusing on specific topics or department needs and utilizing a workshop-style format, rather than duplicating the formality and workload of the regular meeting. Mayor Andy Moore acknowledged that prior (one meeting per month) format sometimes resulted in extended sessions, but agreed that greater flexibility for both staff and Council would be beneficial. Asst. Town Manager Kim Pickett shared her experience with digital solutions, such as *BoardBook* and electronic packets used in other towns, which can streamline meeting preparation and record-keeping, while also supporting those who prefer printed copies. The Board collectively recognized the benefits of tailored agendas, collaborative discussion, and technology integration, concluding that a more flexible structure could enhance efficiency and better leverage staff and councilmembers' time and expertise in a second monthly meeting.

There was further discussion, with the Mayor mentioning the Town's Christmas parade to be held Thursday, December 11, 2025.

Councilman Travis Scott requested it be noted for the record that he has been asked to serve on the Historic Smithfield Foundation, a subcommittee of the pack. He reported that he attended his first formal meeting, found it to be very productive, and looks forward to updating the Board on ways to support the committee's efforts.

Councilman Travis Scott made a motion, seconded by Councilwoman Doris Wallace to adjourn the meeting at approximately 8:38 p.m. Unanimously approved.


M. Andy Moore, Mayor

ATTEST:


Elaine Andrews, Town Clerk

