

The Smithfield Town Council reconvened their April 21, 2026 meeting on Wednesday, April 29, 2026 at 6:30 pm to continue budget discussions in the Council Chambers of the Smithfield Town Hall, Mayor M. Andy Moore presided.

Council Members Present:

Mayor Pro Tem Sloan Stevens
Dr. Gettys Cohen, Jr., District 1
Travis Scott, District 3
Doris L. Wallace, District 4
Stephen Rabil, At-Large
John Dunn, At-Large
Roger Wood, At-Large

Council Members Absent:

Administrative Staff Present

Kimberly Pickett, Interim Town Mgr.
Elaine Andrews, Town Clerk
Tracy Stubblefield
Gary Johnson, Parks & Rec Director
Pete Hedrick, Police Chief
Brent Reck, Planning Director
Shannan Parrish, HR Director
Jeremey Daughtry, Fire Chief
Ted Credle Public Utilities Director
Lawrence Davis, Public Works Dir.

Also Present:

Administrative Staff Absent:

Town of Smithfield FY 26-27 Budget Discussions – Draft Budget

Interim Town Manager Kim Pickett distributed her proposed draft budget and fee schedule for Fiscal Year 2026-27 to members of the Town Council. Pickett stated key cost drivers applicable across all departments include a state-mandated retirement rate increase for general employees from 14.35% to 15.1%, and for law enforcement officers from 16.1% to 17.1%.

Property and liability insurance increased 6% overall.

A 2% merit increase was applied across all personnel.

Pickett presented the total estimated revenues for Fund 10 (General Fund) at \$24,692,995, representing an overall 1% increase from the current fiscal year. The property tax rate will remain unchanged at \$0.45 per \$100 of assessed value, with a net assessed value of \$2,405,235,742 at a 98% collection rate, yielding \$10,607,090. The Downtown Smithfield Tax District rate will also remain at \$0.16 per \$100, with total collections including motor vehicle taxes of \$249,110. She stated that NCVTS Taxes were at a net assessed value of \$215,549,419, which equals \$950,573 at a 98% collection rate.

Travis Scott and Mayor Andy Moore asked for clarification on the tax collections—whether collection was based on unassigned addresses, and if amounts were consistent with or higher than last year. Pickett stated it was an increase, based on the tax card from February, the increase was 7%.

Interim Manager Kim Pickett listed other Fund 10 Revenues as:

- Local option sales tax: \$4,500,000
- Franchise tax, cable, and excise tax combined (3 different funds within the revenue line item): \$1,189,748
- Beer and wine as well as ABC combined: \$90,000
- JCVB grant (still collecting for the house theater from historic preservation foundation): \$150,000 initially given; \$100,000 still to be collected
- PEG Channel: \$25,000
- Miscellaneous receipts: \$50,000
- PILOT for Housing Authority (property taxes turned in by housing authority): approximately \$47,000 (amount fluctuates yearly)
- Proceeds on fixed assets: \$35,000 (estimated based on uncertain amount from asset sales)
- Cell tower rental (three contracts on the water tower): \$76,821
- Electric, water, and sewer tax transferred into the general fund from the enterprise funds: \$155,000 (amount unchanged from last year)

General Government Department:

Pickett presented the General Government budget, stating the total expense was \$803,020, which was an 11% decrease from the current budget. She stated salaries and wages were at \$193,935, covering the Town Manager, Interim Town Manager, Town Clerk, HR Director, Marketing Director, and Administrative Assistant, each allocated at one-third across the General Fund, Water/Sewer, and Electric funds. Council salaries are also included at one-third. Training and education increased by 4%. Supplies and operations were increased from \$12,200 to \$25,000, primarily to fund minor improvements to Town Hall, including painting, estimated at \$10,000. She noted that it may be appropriate to issue an RFQ for a new auditor following completion of the current audit, given the longstanding relationship with the existing firm.

Pickett presented capital requests for Council consideration:

Pickett discussed the proposed implementation of BoardBook, a web-based meeting management platform, at an initial cost of \$4,750 (including three years of document import at \$250/year) and an annual recurring fee of \$4,000. Town Clerk Elaine Andrews described the current process of manually compiling agenda packets via email and PDF. Pickett noted that BoardBook would provide a public-facing portal, electronic agenda distribution, and searchable document archives. iPad purchases for Council members were also proposed as a companion item, with the option for members to use personal devices. There was some discussion among the Council regarding methods, user friendliness and ease of connection for the use of Boardbook.

Pickett stated there was also a new Risk and Safety Manager position that was requested by the HR Director. She asked Shannan Parrish (Human Resources Director) to emphasize the position need—who cited the growing volume and complexity of risk management, workers' compensation, property and liability insurance administration, and OSHA compliance responsibilities across 179 full-time employees. The all-in first-year cost was estimated at \$123,892, with the position to be split one-third across all three funds. An expected market salary of \$78,000–\$85,000 was cited. Parrish stated the position is expected to reduce workers' compensation and liability exposure over time. Both investments reflect the Council's stated priority of improving operational efficiency and institutional accountability. There was discussion regarding the new position also handling CDL licensing assurance for town staff. Lawrence Davis stated that the Town already has someone who handles these services who offers some CDL in-house instruction and local shop instruction at the cost of \$2,500 per person.

Pickett also noted, but did not include in the budget, a citizen-requested GoGov municipal app at \$15,580, which would provide geofenced service request submissions and targeted push notifications. Pickett cited existing outlets the Town utilized for citizen communications including Facebook, and Police Department apps. She also noted that the Town is still doing research on this request. Public Works Director, Lawrence Davis also cited his Maintainx app, which is a QR code connected to his business card for citizen work order requests. Pickett stated the need for departments to reign in for use of one unifying communication tool.

Staff also did not include a requested part-time Digital Media Specialist (approximately 20 hours/week at \$20–\$22/hour), described by Public Information Officer Brian Eaves as needed to extend communications capacity in social media and graphic design.

General Fund Debt Service:

Interim Manager Kim Pickett continued with review of General Fund Debt Services. She stated the total Debt Service budget was presented at \$330,178, a 12% decrease from the current year, due primarily to the payoff of the fire truck loan following an insurance settlement. Active obligations include the ladder truck (\$75,697 maturing October 2040), the police department expansion (\$61,520 maturing January 2036), the knuckle boom (\$35,550 maturing December 2027), and the Smithfield Crossing (\$157,411 maturing January 2044).

Pickett disclosed that loan proceeds of \$420,000 had been budgeted in Fiscal Year 2026 for the purchase of a knuckle boom truck (\$209,611) and a street sweeper (\$289,500), but that the previous Finance Director had paid for both vehicles outright from departmental capital accounts without securing the required loan or Local Government Commission (LGC) approval. Both vehicles were received in July and December 2025, respectively. Pickett explained that the failure to secure \$420,000 in loan proceeds as budgeted in FY2026 created a revenue shortfall in the current fiscal year. Because the vehicles were paid from existing capital balances rather than loan proceeds, no debt payment obligation will arise for these specific assets, which is a favorable long-term outcome. After some discussion, the mayor questioned the need to take a loan—given the item has been paid for. Pickett iterated what the proper procedure should be: obtaining competitive loan proposals, presenting them to Council for approval, and receiving LGC authorization prior to purchase. Staff was directed by Council to remove the loan proceeds from the FY2027 budget, as the vehicles are already paid for, and to move forward without pursuing reimbursement financing. Finance Director Tracy Stubblefield noted that requisition and purchase order controls have since been tightened to ensure funding verification prior to purchase approvals. Pickett stated that departments are continuing to identify and find areas for cuts as the budget process moves forward.

Finance Department:

Interim Town Manager Pickett stated that the Finance Department budget was presented at \$213,063, a 24% increase from the prior year. Two capital items were presented, each to be split one-third across the General Fund, Water/Sewer, and Electric funds.

The first item is the addition of Tyler Technologies Payroll/Time & Attendance software, at a total implementation and first-year cost of \$49,686 (General Fund share: \$16,652), with an annual recurring cost of approximately \$26,000. Pickett stated the second item is Tyler AP Automation, at a total cost of \$11,454 (General Fund share: \$3,818), which would transition the majority of vendor payments from paper checks to ACH electronic payments.

Finance Director Stubblefield described the current payroll system as highly manual, with paper time cards submitted by employees, transcribed to spreadsheets by supervisors, and re-entered by the payroll specialist—consuming approximately two full weeks per month of staff time. The new module, fully integrated with the Town's existing Tyler ERP system, would provide electronic timekeeping with

geofencing capability, multi-layer electronic approvals, automated PTO accrual tracking, and a full audit trail. All employees would be required to use the system. Stubblefield added that the new software would also help streamline year-end W2 processes. Staff discussed the integration process—for which the Town would utilize a project manager from Tyler, and make sure all the Town's payroll processing rules are built in. The new software would also offer layers of approvals for paid time off requests, and ease of access logins for auditors to obtain records at fiscal year-end.

Councilman Travis Scott asked staff to ensure that each department had adequate buy-in for user appropriateness of payroll software, as related to shift work and the like. Later in the meeting, Stubblefield confirmed that staff did have meetings with department heads, and that staff is excited about new software, noting its flexibility, as each department is a little different. Councilman Scott also stated that as he understood it, a NEOGOV software, purchased the prior year, was thought to have payroll tools with it. HR Director Shannan Parrish stated NEOGOV has proven to not be user-friendly, and what the Town was sold, versus what it received with regards to NEOGOV's capabilities for onboarding and performance evaluations has not been helpful. Parrish stated she has had to build the system herself using a template. She did note that the software was good for recruitment.

Councilman Travis Scott asked how the new electronic payroll/timekeeping system would work for both non-exempt and exempt employees, raising concerns about employees clocking in on their phones and the potential legal issues if exempt employees are required to track hours like hourly staff. Interim Town Manager Kim Pickett explained that non-exempt employees would use the system to clock in and out, while exempt employees (such as department heads) would not record daily hours but would use the system only to note vacation and sick time so absences are documented, with the expectation that exempt staff still meet their 40-hour workweek. Mayor Moore noted that having exempt employees' clock in and out could jeopardize their exempt status and open the Town to overtime liability. The consensus was that the new payroll system should track hours for non-exempt employees, while exempt employees should use it only to record leave, to stay in line with wage and hour rules.

Pickett stated the Tyler platform would replace NEOGOV for onboarding and performance evaluation functions when that contract expires, as staff noted that Tyler has equivalent capabilities already included.

Finance Director Tracy Stubblefield explained that AP automation would move the Town from mailing paper checks to primarily electronic (ACH) payments through the existing Tyler system, reducing postage and check stock costs, minimizing lost-check issues, and shifting much of the fraud-prevention and NACHA-compliance burden to Tyler. She noted that invoices could be scanned and auto-read by the software, with staff only reviewing and approving entries, thereby streamlining workflows, reducing errors, and keeping all payment activity fully integrated within the Town's financial system. She confirmed that vendor preferences for paper checks would still be accommodated.

There was some discussion about the feasibility of weekly/biweekly and monthly payroll deposits, with staff noting more frequent payments would cause more work for staff for payroll compliance reporting, and it was stated that most employees are satisfied with biweekly payrolls.

Information Technology:

The IT budget was presented at \$229,682, a 22% increase, reflecting a deliberate effort to consolidate technology costs previously scattered across individual department budgets into a centralized IT budget. Key initiatives include a Town-wide transition from desktop computers to laptops with docking stations where operationally feasible, elimination of redundant personal office printers in favor of shared copiers, and the implementation of access controls on color printing. IT staff (Geuel Hernandez) noted that 13 replacement laptops are needed for the Police Department due to devices over six years old, and that Fire requires one laptop, three office desktops, and tablet upgrades. Finance requires three laptops and a docking station. Pickett stated that the Planning Department requires a new plotter, and it was noted that the existing unit reached end-of-life in 2022 and cannot be repaired or supplied with replacement parts.

Mayor Andy Moore asked if there was a standard laptop, or could staff buy whichever one they wanted. Pickett stated town laptops are standard issued under a state contract.

Pickett noted a significant change to the service contract line item, revised from \$27,000 to \$61,846—a 60% increase in that line—partially reflecting the consolidation of previously distributed IT costs. The Town's contract with VC3 for managed IT support services, currently valued at \$126,400 annually, expires in June 2027. Staff indicated they do not intend to renew the contract and plan to recruit a full-time, on-site IT Director to replace the managed services arrangement. Internet service is provided by Intelliplex at \$21,792. The Webex/Benchmark telephone system license is \$21,641. Staff reported that a dedicated fiber line, separate from the County's infrastructure, has been installed and that Internet reliability has improved. Finance Director Stubblefield noted that Internet outage logs are now being maintained to pursue service credits under the Intelliplex contract for outages of 30 minutes or more.

Planning Department:

Interim Manager Pickett presented the Planning Department budget. She stated the total Planning expense budgeted was \$650,293, a 27% increase from the prior year. Revenues in this department include sign permits, zoning permits, special use fees, and site plan fees. Capital items include one-half of the local match for the Venture Drive sidewalk project at \$152,538, to be re-budgeted in the following year upon

project completion. The second capital item is the implementation of iWorQ, a new permitting and code enforcement software platform, at a first-year cost of \$20,000 and an annual recurring fee of \$12,000, under a three-year contract term. Pickett also stated that staff also recommended the promotion of Planner Micah Woodard to the title of Senior Planner, which has been incorporated into the salary line and requires no additional appropriation beyond what is already reflected in the budget.

Planning Director Brent Reck also described iWorQ as more revenue-focused than the current platform, designed to capture fees for minor permits and tenant changes that currently are untracked. He added that the new software is more focused on accurately calculating and capturing fees. The new system is described as more revenue-driven, allowing closer tracking of plans and permits, particularly for high-volume, lower-fee items such as tenant changes and minor plans, so the Town has a tighter grasp on fees and reduces the chance of smaller charges (e.g., \$25-\$100) "falling through the cracks."

Pickett noted that the iWorQ suite will be for Planning, Fire inspection, as well as for Code Enforcement—where each model (though purchase separately), will integrate with one another, allowing view of active cases in real time. She noted that County GIS information will be fully integrated in the software also.

Adjourn:

The Council agreed to adjourn, and to address the remaining departments in the budget at the subsequent regular Town Council meeting on Tuesday, May 5, 2026. Pickett stated that a corrected version of the budget spreadsheet, reflecting same-day revisions identified by department heads, was to be distributed to Council members by staff the following day, and delivered in workbooks at the next Town Council meeting.

Councilman Travis Scott made a motion, seconded by Councilman John Dunn to adjourn the meeting at approximately 8:16 pm. Unanimously approved.




M. Andy Moore, Mayor

ATTEST:


Elaine Andrews, Town Clerk