

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF GASTON
TOWN OF CRAMERTON**

January 28, 2017

The Board of Commissioners for the Town of Cramerton met in special session for goals and objectives work session on Saturday, January 28, 2017 at 8:00 a.m., in the G.M. Michael Room at the Cramerton Town Hall.

Board Members present: Mayor Will Cauthen, Mayor Pro Tempore Demetrios Koutsoupas, Commissioners Dixie Abernathy, Houston Helms, Donald Rice, and Susan Neeley.

Staff Present: David Pugh, Town Manager; Bill Brown, Town Attorney; and Wilene Cunningham, Town Clerk.

Call to Order and Determination of Quorum: Mayor Cauthen called the meeting to order and determined a quorum was present. He thanked everyone for being in attendance for this meeting.

Introduction of Facilitator: Darren Rhodes, Program Manager Rural Economic Development for NC Department of Commerce. The Town Manager introduced Mr. Rhodes.

Discussion of meeting format, role of facilitator, and ground rules: Mr. Rhodes went over the ground rules and stated he wanted to make sure that today's meeting was as productive as possible.

Discussion of Retreat Goals: Mr. Rhodes asked each of the Board members to state their objective for today's meeting.

Commissioner Neeley stated she would like to review the goals in reference to what has been completed and goals that can be achieved in five to ten years. She recommended review of capital improvement plans and annual cost of maintenance. Commissioner Rice stated he wanted to discuss review of the outreach programs and where did we get with them and review the number of projects. He recommended reviewing the budget to ensure we are financially responsible. Mayor Cauthen stated this is a good day to determine where our focus should be in twelve months. Commissioner Abernathy asked if these goals reflect the Board's opportunities and what key things needs to be accomplished and what action steps need to be taken. Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas stated there should be clear cut objectives. There are several projects nearing completion but also some projects that are just starting. He stated he wanted to consider what improvements could be made and learn from the past goals and objectives. Commissioner Helms stated he wants to review the goals and objectives and have specific and measurable principles and make them smart goals.

Review of Goals and Objectives: Review prior year (2016) goals and objectives. Mr. Rhodes recommended the Board possibly review goals as themes starting with outreach. Commissioner Rice stated that the outreach goal regarding the boards and committee relationships changed with the addition of a new advisory board and removal of one of the advisory boards. The Community Committee has been quite successful. Commissioner Neeley stated that the Planning and Zoning Board plays an important role. Commissioner Rice stated the Veterans Memorial should remain a high priority capital project. The Board discussed maintaining improved communication with the advisory boards to maintain a positive focus and a good relationship. Commissioner Helms stated he likes to receive feedback as to how things are going and how can more data be collected especially from the silent majority. Discussion was held regarding meetings being held off site and possible use of surveys. Commissioner Helms said possibly each of the department heads could address this with the Board to assist with providing deliberate feedback. Commissioner Abernathy stated qualitative type face-to-face input is critical but surveys could be created asking specific questions about any topic that the Board wants using modern technology. Mayor Cauthen stated this might require having one person focusing on social media and technology. The Town Manager stated he is the public information officer and the Town Clerk maintains the town's Facebook and website pages. The Town Clerk works with the other departments regarding the publication of a monthly newsletter. Mayor Cauthen stated the themes could be listed as

organized, deliberate, and sustained citizen input. Mr. Rhodes entered this information on the white board per the Board's consensus.

Mayor Cauthen stated he felt the Veterans Memorial is a 2017 goal. Commissioner Rice stated the geographic location for the Veterans Memorial has been chosen and design and funding will need to be discussed. Mr. Rhodes asked the Board if the Veterans Memorial was considered a smart goal. Commissioner Helms asked about a timeframe for possible groundbreaking. Commissioner Rice said a subcommittee could now be formed and the funding process could start. Mayor Cauthen stated Richard Atkinson would be available to assist. The Board discussed how much money should be set aside for funding and to set a benchmark date. Commissioner Rice said the groundbreaking date could be set as a two year goal. Mr. Rhodes stated as a multi-year goal does this assist the Board in dictating certain actions such as funding and design. Attorney Brown stated that this project needs a budget along with information regarding design, funding, and construction and then other benchmarks or goals can be set. Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas stated he wants the goals to be achievable and realistic. Commissioner Rice stated he wants to see the Veterans Memorial dedicated in the next two years. The Town Manager stated the staff has been working with Richard Atkinson and a budget and design could be completed in the next six months. The Board would review the design and assign a budget. This information would then be given to the subcommittee and fundraising would begin. An architect would be able to advise how many bricks and how many benches the proposed area could accommodate. Mayor Cauthen stated a 501(c)(3) could be created and funding would come from both public and private funds. Attorney Brown stated the architect would need to know the parameters of the site and maximum construction cost being allotted for the site in order to prepare a quote. The Town Manager stated a workshop meeting could be scheduled in March for discussion regarding a sample request for quotation. Mayor Cauthen and the Board consented to a March workshop meeting to discuss the Veterans Memorial.

Mayor Cauthen stated he would like to discuss the Capital Improvement Plan. He stated he feels a trend is beginning with spending being greater than the town's growth. Commissioner Helms asked how service levels would be affected without any increase of taxes or affecting the General Fund balance. Mayor Cauthen commented on changes in personnel due to an increase in the town's population as there is currently one police officer per every 700 residents. Growth will also increase the number of streets and additional upkeep along with other services. The Town Manager stated the memo and map provides information regarding several projects for the next five years that are currently approved developments along with projected revenue and costs. Some of the repairs such as upkeep to the swimming pool and deck repairs along with trail repairs are one time projects that are funded out of the General Fund balance. Discussion was held regarding recurring revenues verses expenditures for fiscal year 2017. The Town Manager stated the currently approved developments include 224 apartments for The Groves, 122 apartments for The Haven, 29 single-family homes Phase I on Peach Orchard Road, 14 townhomes at Stuart's Landing, and 65 single-family homes Phase I of the Villages at Cramer Mills. Commissioner Rice asked about development of the commercial property on Wilkinson Boulevard. The Town Manager stated there has been discussion with one of the property owners along Wilkinson Boulevard regarding construction of a dentist office along with several other buildings.

The Town Manager stated another police officer along with a police vehicle will be needed per the projected growth and buildout over the next five years. Two additional Public Works crew members will need to be hired. Mayor Cauthen asked if today's information includes the loss of the availability of inmate labor. The Town Manager said yes.

Mayor Cauthen stated prior years the Board focused on financial resiliency and stability. The Board discussed revenue received from possible reconstruction of how stormwater fees are calculated based on the amount of impervious surface. Mayor Cauthen stated that the Board has considered in the last few years possible alternatives for collection of stormwater fees, maintaining the General Fund balance at forty percent, and no increase of ad valorem taxes for at least two years. Commissioner Rice asked about the possible collection of tag and taxes on vehicles. The Town Manager stated the maximum amount is \$15.00 and the minimum is \$5.00. Collection of these monies could be used for paving projects along with the Powell Bill funds. Cramerton is only one of three local municipalities that are not collecting this fee.

Commissioner Abernathy asked if a timeline could be presented for review regarding all capital improvement projects. The Town Manager stated the Central Park trail has been marked and this project will be completed in phases. The Lakewood Greenway should be started in the spring. The Goat Island trailhead bathroom should be completed in spring as this is a prefabricated structure. The Town Manager stated this list can be updated and presented to the Board. Mr. Rhodes asked the Board if they considered this as a separate goal and the Board members said yes.

The Board discussed the continuation of the branding and marketing process along with citizen involvement. Wayfinding signage remains important in assisting with identifying the town's gateways. Mr. Rhodes asked the Board if they considered branding and marketing as a continued goal for this session or as an action. Commissioner Rice said a branding and marketing committee was created last year and felt this could be a subheading as part of this goal has been achieved. Mr. Rhodes asked if social media, surveys, and other technology to engage citizen interaction and input should be listed on the white board. Commissioner Helms asked this information be put on the white board as twenty-first century canvassing, branding, wayfinding, and NCDOT bike-ped as part of different forms of communication to encourage citizen engagement. Each Board member is the liaison to different assigned areas of Cramerton. Commissioner Abernathy asked about the gateways. Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas stated each neighborhood would be identified. Mayor Cauthen stated signage would be placed in neighborhoods and throughout the town to provide unity and as a welcome to the town. Mayor Cauthen stated he wants the minimum housing segment to be included as part of the goals and objectives document. Commissioner Helms stated that attendance to various local towns at their Board meetings could assist in letting the Board see where other municipalities are headed. Attorney Brown stated Cramerton has been working with local municipalities regarding reciprocity with golf carts. The Town Manager stated he meets with other managers on a quarterly basis and also at the Montcross Chamber meetings. Discussion was held regarding holding quarterly manager/mayor meetings to share information regarding what is occurring in other local municipalities. Commissioner Abernathy stated that utilization of the Stuart W. Cramer High School auditorium is not a goal. Discussion was held by the Board for the possible use of the auditorium for arts council events. Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas stated the auditorium is used frequently and events would need to be collaborated with school staff in setting up programming and scheduling. Commissioner Neeley stated no alcohol is allowed. Mr. Rhodes stated the auditorium could be added as part of the interlocal collaboration and may require formation of a committee.

Commissioner Helms stated the town needs to be ready for growth. Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas asked about the Belmont-Mount Holly connector road. No update was available. The Board agreed that stated smart growth needs to be in place and information available for review on the website such as the Build A Better Boulevard and including the Wilkinson Boulevard small area plan. Mayor Cauthen stated the town needs to take all necessary steps to promote and prepare for key economic growth corridors and diversification of the tax base. The Town Manager stated a small business plan should possibly be considered for Market Street. The Board stated the town needs to be smart growth ready and prepare and promote small business area plans for various areas. The town currently is promoted through the Montcross Chamber of Commerce, Greater Gaston Chamber of Commerce, Gaston County EDC, and Go Gaston. Attorney Brown stated the town needs to take all necessary steps to promote and prepare for key economic growth corridors. The Board agreed.

Discussion was held regarding preparing a Municipal Citizens Academy geared for the youth and to encourage utilization of the youth to assist with local projects. Commissioner Rice stated several projects have been completed by different Eagle Scouts. Commissioner Rice stated parking in the down town area will need to be monitored for a possible parking study. Mayor Cauthen stated modifying traffic flow and striping would provide some additional spaces. The Masonic Lodge has been approached and they stated they would move if the town provides them with a building of the same size. The Public Works Department maintains the Centennial Center parking lot. Commissioner Rice stated the down town parking area could be redesigned and incorporate parking for golf carts. Attorney Brown stated focus continues on promoting vitality of the down town area. Mayor Cauthen stated the town needs to know what businesses will need in order to move to this area. Commissioner Helms stated a decision will need to be considered regarding the fire department structure. Commissioner Rice stated restriping of parking spaces and creating parking for golf carts could be considered to maximize spaces.

Discussion was held regarding the upcoming hiring process for the police chief, one of the police captains, and town attorney. Mayor Cauthen stated the Town Manager needs to be empowered by the Board and given a clear set of expectations and instructions. Commissioner Abernathy added that she thought the town needs the ability to recruit and retain quality personnel to work on behalf of the town with effective replacement of key positions along with other employment initiatives. The Town Manager stated salary studies were completed last year. Commissioner Rice encouraged professional growth for employees and to provide a spirit of advancement possibility and that they are appreciated. Mayor Cauthen stated there are several changes forecast for the police department and the town needs to be able to recruit and retain the most effective personnel.

Commissioner Neeley encouraged the town to be involved with a fit and healthy program and to consider offering classes for new mothers to learn CPR. Mayor Cauthen stated the town could offer to host an event and collaborate with Gaston College or Caromont regarding offering CPR training. The Board discussed possibly having a wellness program to encourage citizen engagement. Commissioner Rice said employees could be involved in a fitness program.

Mayor Cauthen stated there are five items listed from today's meeting which include engagement; financial resilience; collaborate regionally; maintain/increase measureable services to citizens; and take necessary steps for smart growth. Each of these topics include bullet items. Mayor Cauthen stated the goals and objectives could be made into a one page document with bullet points which shows what this Board is committed to.

Commissioner Helms stated he likes the baseball card idea which includes a photo along with various statistics. Mayor Cauthen stated the card could list personnel along with other statistics regarding each department.

Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas asked about partnering with other towns regarding sports. The Town Manager stated several sports are already synced up with other municipalities using their leagues.

The Board thanked Mr. Rhodes for being the facilitator for today's meeting. Mayor Cauthen commented that the current Board works well together with a lot of passion and respect for each other. The Board thanked the Town Manager and staff for preparation of materials for today's meeting.

Adjournment: Mayor Cauthen adjourned the meeting at 11:55 a.m.

Will Cauthen, Mayor

ATTEST:

Wilene Cunningham, Town Clerk