

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

**March 27, 2018**

The Board of Commissioners for the Town of Cramerton met in budget workshop session on Tuesday, March 27, 2018 at 8:30 a.m., in the G.M. Michael Room at the Cramerton Town Hall.

**Board Members present:** Mayor Will Cauthen; Mayor Pro Tem Demetrios Koutsoupias  
Commissioners Dixie Abernathy, Houston Helms, Susan Neeley, and Donald Rice were present.

**Staff Present:** David Pugh, Town Manager; Attorney Kevin Bringewatt; Brad Adams, Police Chief; Joel Lineberger, Finance Director; Dave Pettine, Planning Director; Rodney Baker, Public Works Director; Eric Smallwood, Parks and Recreation Director; and Wilene Cunningham, Town Clerk. Chief Foulk arrived at 9:53 a.m.

**Call to order and Determination of Quorum:** Mayor Cauthen called the meeting to order and determined there was a quorum.

**Adoption of Agenda for this meeting:** A motion was made by Commissioner Neeley to adopt the proposed agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rice and approved by all.

**Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Budget Work Session Schedule:** Mr. Pugh stated this is the unabridged draft 2018-2019 budget. The final budget presentation will be given on June 7, 2018. He thanked all the department heads for being in attendance.

- **FY 18-19 Budget introduction and overview of current Capital Projects:** A review was given of the capital projects. Total project costs are \$2,484,000.00 with grant funding of \$1,454,500.00. The Town has a self-imposed Capital Reserve Policy that restricts forty percent of the fund balance of the fiscal year budget. The Town Manager listed the various projects and developments. Mayor Cauthen stated the Cramer Mountain Sidewalk Project will need to be discussed with private owners as an easement is needed. NCDOT is requesting retaining walls be implemented. A three to one slope would be required if retaining walls are not constructed. Clearing of trees would be required. Discussion was held regarding possible placement of the sidewalk on the opposite side of Cramer Mountain Road. Mr. Pugh advised the Board that the topography on that side would also require sloping and there is a perennial stream. Discussion was held regarding project funding being used for the Eagle Road Sidewalk Project.
- **FY 18-19 Revenues and General Government Expenditures:** Mr. Pugh presented information regarding salary summaries for municipalities of 5,000 to 10,000 in population. Commissioner Abernathy stated she would like to see information for the last five years and annual salaries on a chart for review. Salary information was gathered from the NCLM and is gathered from various municipalities. Mr. Pugh stated he would bring additional information back to the Board for consideration.

Mr. Lineberger stated revenue increased 2.2 percent and grant revenue has diminished. He advised that the Town cannot budget more than the collection percentage from the prior year. Discussion was held regarding proposed future population growth. A property re-evaluation by Gaston County will occur in the next two years. A 2.5 percent salary increase is included in the proposed budget.

Mayor Cauthen called for a five minute recess.

- **Police Department – Chief Brad Adams:** He stated four applications have been received for the police officer vacancy. He updated the Board on the patrol staff's current certifications and educational levels. Chief Adams stated that retention of staff is important. A 2.5 percent increase is included in the FY-2018-2019 proposed budget.

The patrol vehicles are on a five year cycle with three vehicles being traded out. Spare vehicles are maintained for use by the reserve officers.

The interlocal police services agreement with the Town of McAdenville will be discussed next year for negotiation for renewal.

Chief Adams discussed the conversion of radios from 800 megahertz and the two different systems available. Commissioner Helms asked how many employees are employed by the police department. Chief Adams stated a full staff consists of sixteen. Currently he has fifteen on staff with one full time position open.

- **Fire Department – Chief Lance Foulk:** A request was made to increase the firefighter's pay by 2.5 percent. This would raise the current rate from \$11.00 per hour to \$11.27 per hour with an increase of two hours for staff to be on site from Monday to Friday.

Chief Foulk stated that the Dodge Durango that was purchased five years ago needs to be considered for replacement. The 1987 ladder truck has exceeded the traditional twenty-five year lifespan. Discussion was held regarding funds being set aside to pre-pay for items in the budget each year for this type of large scale expenditure.

- **Update regarding Stormwater Collection Fees:** Discussion was held regarding the stormwater fund and the fees that are currently being charged. The current method for collection is a "flat" fee based on use and does not take into account the impact of impervious areas. Changes to the stormwater collection formula would require contacting all affected properties offering an opportunity for owners to offer comments. The proposed stormwater collection formula would take effect in January 2019 and would allow the Town and Two Rivers Utilities time to make the necessary changes to the billing process. Single-family and multi-family homes stormwater fees would remain the same. The Board asked staff to determine the total of multi-family units.
- **Public Works – Rodney Baker:** The Board was advised that due to an increase in the cost for processing of recycling Waste Management has increased their fee. Mr. Lineberger stated that some municipalities have a fee for recycling. The cost for recycling per month per unit is \$2.63. The Board discussed what other municipalities are providing and how businesses pay for trash pickup services. The Board discussed reviewing what trash services each business is receiving.

Discussion was held regarding the Dixie Lawn contract. Mr. Baker stated he has a good working relationship with this vendor.

Mr. Baker advised the Board that the Town's garbage truck is thirteen years old and is having some major maintenance problems. Commissioner Rice asked about the impact on the Public Works Department once the firing range property is sold. Mr. Baker stated that all refuse and leaves will need to be taken to the Philadelphia Church Road facility. The Board asked for a list of fleet vehicles to review and the estimated life of the vehicles.

Mayor Cauthen called a break for lunch.

**Planning and Zoning – Dave Pettine:** The importance of a comprehensive Land Use Plan was discussed. Mr. Pettine stated that this area is growing quickly and the Town's Land Use Plan needs to be kept up to date as this helps guide policy decisions. The last update was completed in 2010. Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas asked about wayfinding signage. Mr. Pettine stated information has been received regarding options and guidelines per the bike-ped plan. Installation of signs could be done by the Town's staff. Work continues with Demetri Baches with Metrocology.

Mr. Pettine advised the Board of changes to the software that is used for zoning permits. The current company has been purchased and the new vendor will have software that will include code enforcement.

**Parks and Recreation Department – Eric Smallwood:** A list of current events and partnerships was distributed to the Board. A request was made for the addition of a staff person to be responsible for programs and special events. The purchase of a power rake that can be used by Public Works and Parks and Recreation was discussed. Consideration was given as to what type

of decking for the bridge on Goat Island at Lakewood should be used. Mr. Smallwood stated that ironwood has a lifespan of about thirty years. Discussion was held regarding repairs to the weight room; repairs to the C.B. Huss Sports Center roof; upgrading playground at Riverside Park; and continued improvements to Central Park. Commissioner Helms asked if the fees being charged are adequate and Mr. Smallwood stated yes. The Board agreed to the hiring of an additional staff person for Parks and Recreation effective January 1, 2019.

Commissioner Helms left the meeting at 2:00. He stated he would return later.

Mayor Cauthen called for a five minute recess.

**BOC Budget Prioritization Exercise:** Each of the department heads discussed items they felt were important to consider for the upcoming budget. Mr. Smallwood stated an additional staff person along with replacement of the Goat Island Lakewood Bridge decking; replacement pillars for the playground; and fencing at the Riverside Park to assist in keeping vehicles off of the grassy areas were items he would like for the Board to consider for approval. A capital project ordinance will be needed for the purchase of a garbage truck for the Public Works Department. The Board asked Mr. Pugh to review the salary adjustments and present additional information at a later meeting. Mayor Cauthen stated the building maintenance needs to be done as soon as possible.

Commissioner Helms returned to the meeting at 3:05 p.m.

Mayor Cauthen and the Board thanked everyone and stated their appreciation for all of the planning and preparation by the Town Manager, Finance Director, and department heads that occurred prior to this meeting.

**Adjournment:** A motion was made by Commissioner Abernathy to adjourn at 3:15 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rice and passed by unanimous vote.

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Mayor Will Cauthen

**ATTEST:**

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Wilene Cunningham, Town Clerk