

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

BUDGET WORK SESSION

March 27, 2019

The Board of Commissioners for the Town of Cramerton met in a budget work session on Wednesday, March 27, 2019 at 8:30 a.m., in the G.M. Michael Commission Chamber at the Cramerton Town Hall.

Board Members present: Mayor Will Cauthen; Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas; Commissioners Houston Helms, Donald Rice; and Susan Neeley were present. Commissioner Dixie Abernathy arrived at 8:50 a.m.

Staff Present: David Pugh, Town Manager; Attorney Kevin Bringewatt; Chief Brad Adams, Police Department; Josh Watkins, Planning Director; Chief Lance Foulk, Fire Department; Rodney Baker, Public Works Director; Eric Smallwood, Parks and Recreation Director; Joel Lineberger; Finance Director; and Wilene Cunningham, Town Clerk.

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

Adoption of Agenda:

Fiscal Year 2019-2020 Budget Work Session Schedule:

- **FY 19-20 Budget introduction and overview of current capital projects.** Mr. Pugh stated that the state mandates eight (8) percent be maintained in fund balance. The Town has imposed a self-imposed forty (40) percent. The Town's total current Fund Balance is \$3,423,890. Discussion was held regarding purchase of radios and software upgrades for the police department. Mr. Lineberger presented information regarding the revenue neutral tax computation. The current tax rate is 0.475. Commissioner Abernathy arrived at 8:50 a.m. Discussion was held concerning property revaluation and possible change of growth rate. The stormwater fee is in a separate fund as it is restricted. The tag and tax vehicle fee that could be collected ranges from \$5 to \$25.
- **General Government – Joel Lineberger.** A rate increase for the NC retirement local government employees increased from 7.75 to 8.95 percent and law enforcement will increase from 8.50 to 9.70 percent effective July 1st. Information was provided regarding the website redesign and licenses, fleet fund, and town hall repairs. Commissioner Abernathy asked about the proposed 2.5 percent employee salary increase. Mr. Lineberger stated the number in this column was adjusted due to rounding.
- **Police Department – Chief Adams.** Discussion was held regarding purchase of three (3) protective vests with a fifty (50) percent offset by a Department of Justice grant. Printer copies will be reduced with the purchase of New World software as reports will be electronic. The purchase of one (1) NightForce scope, sixteen (16) Armor carriers and plates, and one (1) sub gun were discussed. Chief Adams spoke regarding Fraternal Order of Police memberships for the police department. The sub gun would be kept as a secondary weapon and is best used in tactical situations.
- **Fire Department – Chief Foulk.** A request was made for an additional four (4) hours per work week. Calls have increased by fifty-three (53) percent since 2014. The fire department has twenty-nine (29) volunteers. Discussion was provided regarding upgrades to the radio system along with the pagers. Emergency reporting software needs to be purchased. Chief Foulk stated he would continue to follow up with the future purchase of a ladder truck with the City of Charlotte regarding any extra vehicles they may have after the Republican National Convention is held. He stated the current ladder truck would have a minimal trade-in value.

- **Public Works – Rodney Baker.** An increase of \$4,900 was requested in addition to the proposed 2.5 pay increase for his employees. The inmate labor program will continue. Discussion was held regarding the purchase of wayfinding signage and any traffic signage that would need to be changed due to NCDOT regulations. Mr. Baker stated that the current Christmas decorations need to be considered for replacement. Commissioner Helms asked about the Powell Bill. The Powell Bill amount is based on 15.9 road miles and the town’s population. Mr. Baker stated he had been doing crack sealing and the overall condition of most of the town’s roads are good. Discussion was held about possible changes with recycling with the implementation of contracting directly with the recycling center. A replacement vehicle was discussed to replace the Public Works Director’s truck.
- **Planning and Zoning – Josh Watkins.** Discussion was held about a new position for an employee to provide code enforcement. The position would be for five (5) days per week and provide availability throughout the week. Additional duties would include assisting the Planning Director with basic zoning permits, zoning enforcement, and golf cart registrations. A discussion was held with Adrian Miller with the City of Belmont about sharing a code enforcement employee. Updates to the ordinances is being proposed in order to bring them up to date.
- **Parks and Recreation – Eric Smallwood.** The pool had to be filled due to the plaster being repaired. The flower pots at Centennial Center will now need to be maintained by the town. Mr. Smallwood spoke regarding the Zagster bike program. The Board asked if helmets would be provided. Mr. Smallwood said no. Commissioner Helms mentioned filtered water fountains for filling water bottles. The Board members asked about replacement of the rocking chairs. Mr. Smallwood said new rocking chairs will be ordered and a locking system is being considered. Discussion was held regarding improvements to Central Park including repaving trails, ADA approved playground equipment, enhanced trail areas with a wider walking trail, and single-track mountain bike trail. Improvements to the Goat Island Park area included the addition of shading at the playground equipment. Shading was also discussed for the swimming pool areas.

BOC Budget Prioritization Exercise:

The amount needed to balance the budget as presented would be \$136,245. The funding for wayfinding, the Cramerton Historical Society museum, upgrades to Central Park, and implementation of a new website are not included in this budget amount. The tax and tag option would add approximately \$66,000 of revenue. The Board discussed asking department heads to cut two (2) percent from their current budgets. Discussion continued about possible grant funding and the availability of any PARTF funds. The Board discussed utilizing fund balance for items that are non-reoccurring or special event expenses.

The Board thanked everyone for their hard work. The department heads were asked to review their budget requests and do a reprioritization for discussion at the second Board meeting in April.

Adjournment: A motion was made by Commissioner Rice to adjourn at 3:25 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Neeley and passed by unanimous vote.

Mayor Will Cauthen

ATTEST:

Wilene Cunningham, Town Clerk