

**Special Meeting Minutes of the Town of Highlands Board of Commissioners
Meeting of March 28, 2019, at the First Presbyterian Church, 471 Main
Street, Highlands, North Carolina**

Town Board Present: Commissioner John Dotson, Commissioner Amy Patterson, Mayor Pro Tempore Brian Stiehler, Commissioner Eric Pierson and Mayor Pat Taylor

Also Present: Town Manager Josh Ward, Finance Director Rebecca Shuler, Public Works Director and Town Engineer Lamar Nix, MIS/GIS Director Matt Shuler, Fire Chief Ryan Gearhart, Computer Support Specialist Mark Hall and Town Clerk Gibby Shaheen

1. Meeting Called to Order

Mayor Taylor called the meeting to order at 9:03am.

2. Present and Approve the Agenda

Mayor Pro Tempore Stiehler made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, which was seconded by Commissioner Pierson and the vote was unanimous.

3. Financial Matters – Midyear Update

Town Manager Josh Ward stated the sales tax is projected to be up this year and we are trying to hold the expenditures to budget over the next few months. Ward reported that the water tank had been a slow go because of so much rain, but should begin the tank install mid-April.

Commissioner Patterson asked the finish time line, and Public Works Director and Town Engineer Lamar Nix answered 10 weeks once they start the tank, but it will not affect the current system.

Town Manager Josh Ward stated that WK Dickson was working on an estimate for costs needed to be budgeted for the next fiscal year.

Town Manager Josh Ward stated the County had complete re-evaluations and it would be a 6% increase before appeals because of the new construction.

Finance Director Rebecca Shuler presented the following highlights of the FY19/20 budget at mid-year.

As of February 2019 property tax collections have increased \$41,370.21 compared to February 2018. This represents a collection rate of 99.28% as of February 2019.

Sales tax revenue as of February 2019 has increased \$34,276.30 compared to February 2018.

Franchise Tax revenue as of February 2019 is \$1,587.53 more than in February 2018.

The amount of General Fund revenues collected as of February 2019, exclusive of \$3,257.97 in donations for Police projects, is \$325,231.43 more compared to General Fund revenues collected as of February 2018.

We anticipate meeting our budgeted revenue for General Fund with 64% currently collected. General Fund expenditures are 66% spent as of February 2019.

The Town had an original fund balance appropriation in General Fund at July 1, 2018 of \$1,178,534.00. As of February 2019, the Town has appropriated an additional \$372,500.00 in General Fund.

All utility funds should be at approximately 66.6% of budgeted revenue as of February 2019. The Water is at 68% with water charges. The Sewer is at 67%, Sanitation is at 66% and the Electric is at 74% for electric charges and 27% with misc. charges and fund balance appropriations for a total of 66%. We anticipate meeting our budgeted revenue for all utility funds.

All utility funds should be at or below 66.6% spent as of February 2018. Water is at 63%, Sewer is at 59%, Sanitation is at 64% and Electric is at 65% spent as of February 2019. All utility fund expenditures will be closely monitored so as to stay within budget.

4. Bear Resistant Toter Discussion

Public Works Director and Town Engineer Lamar Nix presented two 96 gallon bear proof toters with a plastic latch that won't freeze and get damaged and are easily replaced. The toters also have the capability to use the flippers available on the trucks so it would help the worker's and cut down on worker's compensation claims. Nix continued that the cost would be \$349 per can for 350 commercially was \$122,000.

Commissioner Patterson asked the lifespan of the toters and Nix responded 6-10 years.

Nix stated he recommended beginning the process with commercial toters and if it worked out well then consider the residential toters, and they should be branded by address.

5. Break

6. New Fire Department Building Discussion

Commissioner Pierson began by discussing the current Fire Department Building and how it doesn't have enough space or extractors, which allows exhaust fumes in the building. The Building has been added onto through the years, but the Board should seriously consider a new building with the need for a larger building, since volunteer departments are going out and moving toward full-time housed departments. With that in mind the housing is included in the design.

Town Manager Josh Ward stated the Public Safety Committee had met with Design Architect Randy Baker. Baker had presented a free analysis and design with some of the wish list. Public Safety Committee suggested a Design-Build plan so Randy could design and oversee the work on the new building. Ward continued that Baker had indicated a cost of \$80,000 for the design of the new Fire Department.

Commissioner Pierson stated the money was in this year's budget just need it to be allocated to move forward with true numbers.

TOWN OF HIGHLANDS BUDGET AMENDMENT
AMENDMENT # _____

March 28, 2019

FROM: Fire Fund



DEPARTMENT: Fire Dept.

EXPLANATION: Fund Balance allocated to fund architectural and structural engineering design services for the design of a new Fire Dept.

Account	Description	Increase/Decrease	Debit	Credit
1. 20-3300-0910	Fund Balance Appropriated	Increase		\$80,000.00
20-5300-0410	Professional Services	Increase	\$80,000.00	
Subtotals			\$80,000.00	\$80,000.00
Totals			\$80,000.00	\$80,000.00

Approved by Town Manager

Action by Town Board

Approved and Entered on Minutes Dated

Finance Director

Commissioner Patterson made a motion for the Fire Department to move forward with the funds (\$80,000) for the design of a new Fire Department, which was seconded by Commissioner Calloway and the vote was unanimous.

7. Digital Speed Limit Signs

Mayor Taylor presented the idea of Digital Speed Limit Signs. Mayor Taylor stated there were Grants available for these types of devices and they are not expensive. The concept was presented before and bringing it before the Board again.

The Board discussed the idea and decided it wasn't something they wanted to move forward with.

8. Lunch

Mayor Taylor recessed the meeting for lunch at 11:30am.

The meeting was reconvened at 12:35pm

9. Public Works Matters – Capital Needs

Public Works Director and Town Engineer Lamar Nix presented the Board with the following Public Works presentation of requested projects for the upcoming FY19/20 budget year.

Town of Highlands
Board Retreat
March 25, 2019
Public Work Matter

- I. Street Dept.
 - A. Paving
 - i. Satulah/Worley
 - ii. Cullasaja Dr. (1.1 mile)
 - iii. Oak Lane
 - iv. Hickory Hill

- II. Water/Sewer Dept.
 - A. Split Rail Water Improvements

- III. Electric Dept.
 - A. Replace Chipper Truck
 - B. Reconductor Portion of Horse Cove Rd.
 - C. Reconductor Portion of US64

- IV. Sanitation Dept.
 - A. Commercial Toters (350)
 - B. Residential Toters (2500)

- V. Water Plant
 - A. Underdrain Replacement
 - i. Immediate Repair Filter #1

- ii. Intermediate Filter #2
- iii. Long Range Filter #3

VI. Capital Improvement Plan

Nix presented bear proof commercial toters to show the Board and suggested to being with them this fiscal year to see how they work and move toward obtaining the residential toters the next fiscal year. The cost for commercial toters is \$122,150 and it will take an estimated 2500 residential toters with a cost estimate of \$797,500.

Nix stated there was a problem at the Water Treatment Plant that needed to be addressed immediately. The underdrain of Filter #1 that allows water through a steel precision plate and catches the media and sand out is allowing media to go through and getting to the bottom side. Nix suggested a long term plan to add a third filter to offset installations so the plant is not so vulnerable if one goes down.

TOWN OF HIGHLANDS BUDGET AMENDMENT
AMENDMENT # _____

March 28, 2019

FROM: Water Fund



DEPARTMENT: Water Treatment Plant

EXPLANATION: GF Fund Balance Appropriation for the repair of WTP Filter

Account	Description	Increase/Decrease	Debit	Credit
1. 10-3100-0910	Fund Balance Appropriated ~ General Fund	Increase		\$160,000.00
10-4100-9501	Transfer to Water Fund	Increase	\$160,000.00	
30-3800-0931	Transfer from General Fund	Increase		\$160,000.00
30-8160-7300	Capital Outlay/Other Improvements	Increase	\$160,000.00	
Subtotals			\$320,000.00	\$320,000.00
Totals			\$320,000.00	\$320,000.00

Approved by Town Manager

Action by Town Board

Approved and Entered on Minutes Dated

Finance Director

Commissioner Patterson made a motion to approve \$160,000 for the repair of the filter to come from the General Fund, which was seconded by Mayor Pro Tempore Stiehler and the vote was unanimous.

10. IT/GIS Matters – Capital Needs

MIS/GIS Director Matt Shuler stated the department would request the following:

- (a) Jeep replacement at a cost of \$33,000;
 - (b) GIS replacement software \$5,000;
 - (c) PLC Hardware Replacement Buckhorn and Country Club at a cost of \$46,000;
 - (d) Sewer pumps on to SCADA at a cost of \$40,000; and
 - (e) GPR give the ability to save data and grid live data at a cost of \$30,000.
- For a total request of \$154,000.

11. Police Dept. Matters – Capital Needs

Police Department requests for one vehicle and equipment is \$82,400.

- (a) Chief Replacement vehicle - \$32,000;
- (b) Equipment for Vehicle - \$32,400;
- (c) ATV Equipment and Accessories - \$6,000; and
- (d) Equipment – AED’s, Tint Meters/Sound Meters, PBT’s - \$12,000.

12. Parks & Recreation Matters – Capital Needs

Parks and Recreation Department requests a total of \$159,000.

- (a) Tennis Court Replacement with black vinyl fencing is \$105,000;
- (b) 3 Tread Mills - \$17,500;
- (c) 3 Ellipticals - \$13,500; and
- (d) Replace pool slide - \$23,000.

13. Session Wrap Up: Mayor and Council Comments

Mayor Taylor thanked the Presbyterian Church for hosting the Retreat and staff for their hard work.

Commissioner Calloway thanked staff and stated it would be key to inform the school that the Town would be having some job openings in the future and maybe students would be interested in staying here and working for the town.

Town Manager Josh Ward announced the first Budget Workshop for April 1, 2019.

14. Adjournment

As there were no further matters to come before the Board of Commissioners, Commissioner Dotson moved to adjourn which was seconded by Commissioner Pierson and upon a unanimous vote, the Town Board adjourned at 1:50pm.

Patrick Taylor
Mayor

Gilberta B. Shaheen
Town Clerk