

TOWN OF COATS
Board of Commissioners
Thursday, March 23, 2023
Budget Workshop

The Town of Coats Board of Commissioners met in a scheduled budget workshop session on Thursday, March 23, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. in the Board of Commissioners' Meeting Room at Coats Town Hall.

Members Present:

Mayor Chris Coats
Mayor Pro-Tem Jerry Beasley
Commissioner Allen Mosby
Commissioner Kelvin Gilbert
Commissioner Shirley Allen
Commissioner Marc Powell

Staff Present:

Nick Holcomb, Town Manager
Connie Lassiter, Finance Director/Town Clerk
Ken Storicks, Chief of Police
Rodney Pleasant, Public Works Director
Mike Collins, Parks & Recreation Director

I. CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Mayor Chris Coats called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Mayor Coats delivered the invocation and led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

RESOLVED, to approve agenda.

MOTION BY: Commissioner Allen Mosby, SECOND BY: Commissioner Shirley Allen
APPROVED: 5-0, unanimously approved

II. Department Head Operational Budget Presentation

Town Manager Nick Holcomb introduced the budget work session as a chance for the department heads to share the needs in their departments and emphasized that this was in no way a balanced budget because revenues needed to be fine-tuned.

A. Public Works Department

Water Division

Rodney Pleasant, Public Works Director, stated that most of his line items had stayed the same except for a few small increases due to rising cost of services or items and highlighted the following:

- Water Purchases – increase in rates from Harnett County
- Printing Utility Bills – increase in cost of printing as well as increase due to combining the postage for mailing (Postage line item decreased as a result)
- Capital Outlay – request for an enclosed trailer for water supplies for \$10,000 that would be more beneficial, but just received a quote to fence in Public Works shop area for about the same amount as a Plan B option

- Capital Improvement Plan – request of \$64,000 for Jet Vac Trailer to clean out catch basins, wash out valve boxes that are full of dirt and keep mud out of ditches when fixing leaks; the remaining cost of \$21,000 would be paid from Streets because it can also be used to pressure wash sidewalks and wash dirt away from utility/phone lines to prevent cuts

Mayor Pro-Tem Jerry Beasley commented that the entire \$64,000 budgeted for the current year had not been used. Mr. Pleasant replied that \$50,000 was for the CIP and \$16,000 was for emergency repairs.

Commissioner Marc Powell inquired if they were no longer looking at a Ground Penetrating Radar they had wanted last year. Town Manager Nick Holcomb explained they would be proposing at the April meeting to buy the Ground Penetrating Radar and general inventory supplies due to the surplus from CIP if there are no emergencies. Mr. Pleasant mentioned that the cost of the best one on the market would be about \$16,000.

Street Division

Public Works Director Rodney Pleasant conveyed the need for increase in the following line items:

- Street Signs – inventory was low and needed to raise up stop signs and get new posts
- Training – new regulations for obtaining CDL required driving school
- Capital Outlay – previously explained the shared cost with Water for Jet Vac trailer

Solid Waste Division

Town Manager Nick Holcomb mentioned that we were holding steady on tipping fees due to staff being vigilant to prevent abuse of the system. Mr. Pleasant added that his staff was tagging doors and talking with people about putting out more stuff than they should.

Mayor Pro-Tem Jerry Beasley asked how many he had on staff, and Mr. Pleasant replied that it was himself and three more. Commissioner Kelvin Gilbert asked if he was looking to add more staff, and Mr. Pleasant responded that they were doing fine now with what they had.

B. Police Department

Chief of Police Ken Storicks announced that there were not a lot of changes in most line items and highlighted the following:

- Communications – decrease because of consistent billing in previous years
- Capital Outlay – request for Dodge Durango patrol vehicle with estimated cost of \$52,500 which included equipment and tax and tags

Chief Storicks requested to add an additional officer that would allow for two officers for every shift to prevent the town from being left unattended in cases when a call or action may cause the need for an officer to leave town such as taking arrestee to Lillington. Chief Storicks presented the Board with a proposed organizational chart and copies of the presentation that was given to them last year when requesting an additional officer. Chief Storicks stressed the importance of

being prepared for the growth coming to the Town and surrounding areas that could be resolved by the hiring of one additional officer.

Chief Storicks presented the Board with a list of all Police Department current salaries and proposed increases for each one in the department along with a list of current salaries in surrounding towns. He beseeched the Board to consider the increases because it was difficult to hire new employees at our current starting rate and current employees' salaries needed to be adjusted accordingly for retention.

C. Parks and Recreation Department

Mike Collins, Parks and Recreation Director, announced that his goal for parks and recreation was to be the best it could be with what we have and not compare it to other municipalities. Mr. Collins highlighted changes in the following line items:

- Referees/Umpires – decreased even though cost went up; some of the groups would not be participating
- Janitorial Supplies – increased due to rising cost and no longer getting free toilet paper and paper towels
- Hand Tools – increased because of need for air compressor and cordless drills
- Landscaping – increased because already over budget in the current year; need fertilizer and seed to maintain grass; pesticides
- Tires – increased cost of tires
- Office Supplies – increased because rise in cost for printer ink and paper
- Printing/Advertising – increased from \$250 to \$4,000 to place more ads in paper for advertising registrations and anything going on at park
- Repairs Building – cost of material and labor to take care of needed repairs
- Capital Outlay – requested \$15,000 for basketball court and goals; noted this would not be needed if a plan for basketball was included in the \$50,000 grant plan
- Vehicles/Equipment – requested \$30,000 for a tractor to avoid borrowing one from Public Works if both departments need it at the same time
- Park Improvement Project – requested \$15,000 for an LED sign to promote events and the removal of trees at the park

D. Planning Department

Town Manager Nick Holcomb informed the Board that there was little change in the Planning Department expenses and noted the following:

- Outside Contracts – \$8,900 budgeted for the current year to payoff the last installment of the UDO decreased to \$8,000 which would allow for paying engineer when there are construction documents for major subdivisions
- Demolition Structures – decreased to \$15,000 which would get about two potential residential demolitions

E. General Management

Town Manager Nick Holcomb noted items in the General Management expense lines as follows:

- Janitorial Services – increased significantly; had to put out for quote for new cleaner
- Gas – increased due to sustained increase in costs; noted some of cost is offset on revenue side for amount used by Fire Department
- Telephone/Email – increased due to cost of emails being increased by Harnett County IT

F. Governing Board

Town Manager Nick Holcomb noted items in the Governing Board expenses as follows:

- Elections – this is election year; estimated \$5,000 cost
- Coats Library – new line item to account for the payment due to Harnett County since the library is no longer a department under the Town

Mr. Holcomb suggested that nonprofits could be discussed during the workshop on Saturday as well as salaries for each department.

RECESS

RESOLVED, to recess the meeting to Saturday, March 25, 2023 at 9:00 a.m.


MOTION BY: Commissioner Kelvin Gilbert, SECOND BY: Commissioner Allen Mosby

APPROVED: 5-0, unanimously approved

Meeting recessed at 7:33 p.m.



Connie Lassiter, Town Clerk



Chris Coats, Mayor

TOWN OF COATS
Board of Commissioners
Saturday, March 25, 2023
Recessed Budget Workshop

The Town of Coats Board of Commissioners reconvened the recessed Thursday, March 23, 2023 scheduled budget workshop session on Saturday, March 25, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. in the Board of Commissioners' Meeting Room at Coats Town Hall.

Members Present:

Mayor Chris Coats
Mayor Pro-Tem Jerry Beasley
Commissioner Allen Mosby
Commissioner Kelvin Gilbert
Commissioner Shirley Allen
Commissioner Marc Powell

Staff Present:

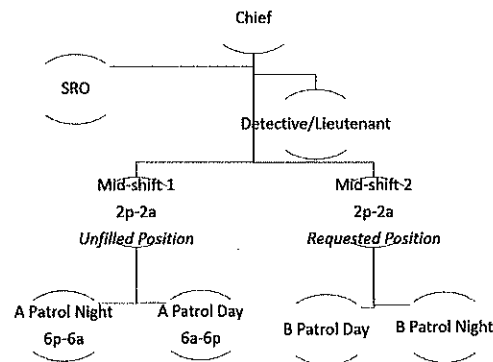
Nick Holcomb, Town Manager
Connie Lassiter, Finance Director/Town Clerk
Ken Storicks, Chief of Police

A quorum being present, Mayor Chris Coats called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Town Manager Nick Holcomb started with a review of items from the recessed budget workshop to allow for additional questions or comments on those requests.

Police Department – Request for Additional Officer

Nick Holcomb, Town Manager, presented a graph to illustrate how the additional police officer requested by Chief of Police Ken Storicks would allow for each shift to have two officers which would provide police coverage at all times.



Discussion included the following:

- Difficulty hiring due to competing with other neighboring towns and the county
- Based on monthly report of stats hard to justify additional officer
- Officer benefits offered in comparison to other nearby towns
- Population and square miles of Coats is less than the towns used for comparison in documentation given to Commissioners
- Suggested using retired officers on a part-time basis
- Uncertainty of current revenues supporting another officer
- Hard to justify to citizens that money is more important than their safety

Public Works – Request for Vac Tron Trailer

Town Manager Nick Holcomb clarified the split in budget between Streets and Water for the Vac Tron trailer due to the use of the equipment for purposes of both divisions.

Parks & Recreation – Request for Tractor

Nick Holcomb, Town Manager, explained that he had already listed in the Manager Proposed budget column \$3,500 for the purchase of attachments that Parks staff could use on the Public Works tractor instead of the \$30,000 department request for a new tractor. Comments from the Board:

- Don't see need for tractor with the limited number of fields to be maintained
- Already have a tractor available for use
- Parks Department could look for grants to purchase a tractor

III. Capital Planning Presentation

A. Salary & Personnel

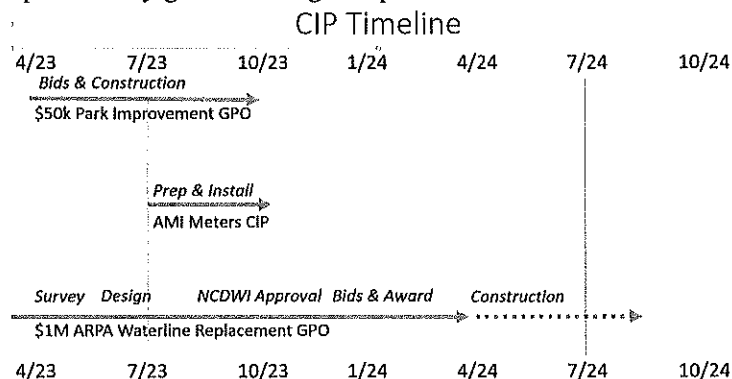
Nick Holcomb, Town Manager, recapped that last year employees were given a 5% across the board increase and that staff expanded by adding one additional Police Officer and one full-time Parks employee. He mentioned that construction on subdivisions had not started but when completed it would be one-third of our tax base.

Mr. Holcomb informed the Board that salaries and raises being more targeted was his plan; keeping the budget simple and not growing the budget, but pushing what expenses could be cut toward salaries and raises.

B. Capital Planning

Nick Holcomb, Town Manager, mentioned the potential grants available that he had informed them about during his update at the March 9th meeting would require a plan if the Board was interested in doing a storm water project with park-like amenities.

Mr. Holcomb noted that the actual operating budget would look more simplistic because of the CIP projects made possible by grant funding and provided the timeline for those projects:



Town Manager Nick Holcomb suggested that the Ground Penetrating Radar that was mentioned at the previous budget meeting could be purchased in the current budget year with surplus from CIP; planned to bring request before Board at the April meeting.

Board discussed the need for the Vac Tron trailer requested by Public Works:

- Is it really needed? Will it be like other things purchased that are not being used?
- Potential for use due to what had been found with valves
- Other features with jettors help to find lines versus cutting up streets
- Ground Penetrating Radar will get more use than Vac trailer and save money in the long run
- Benefit from being able to clean out ditches

Park Project

Nick Holcomb, Town Manager, introduced the \$50K Park project by stating that the tennis court was dilapidated and asked the Board to consider what project would spark the most participation and the impact of it regarding the Boards' aims for the park operating budget. He presented the pros and cons of two types of projects that had been mentioned at previous meetings.

Grass Multi-Purpose Field Soccer / General

- Dedicate space for youth soccer program
- Multi-purpose field available for several outdoor uses
- Takes advantage of existing grading, fencing, lighting.
- **Con:** removes existing asphalt
- **Con:** additional money required for small basketball court

Hard Multi-Purpose Court

Basketball / Tennis / Pickleball / Shuffleboard

- Multi-purpose court available for several outdoor uses
- Takes advantage of existing grading, fencing lighting.
- **Con:** Large expense for 1.5" asphalt overlay
- **Con:** Not used for youth basketball practice/games

After much discussion of the two options and a suggestion of a project at McKinley Point, Mr. Holcomb asked the Board to choice between the following:

1. Grass Multi-Purpose Field
2. Hard Multi-Purpose Asphalt Court
3. Create a project at McKinley Point
4. No confidence in anything presented so far; need more options

The consensus of the Board was to pursue the Hard Multi-Purpose Court and have Mike Collins get quotes and then have work session to discuss.

McKinley Point Plan

Town Manager Nick Holcomb suggested the idea of work sessions regarding future plans, but he wanted to include any immediate things the Board would like to see in the budget. He mentioned ideas like a shelter or farm vendor huts for a Farmers Market, digital sign and lighted Christmas tree. The Board liked the idea of the Christmas tree.

Mr. Holcomb mentioned adding a line item to the street department in the amount of \$5,000 to take care of appearance/beautification items such as flags, electrical, landscaping, trash cans, and benches.

Major Increases and Additional Items to Consider

Town Manager Nick Holcomb informed the Board of major increases:

- Harnett Regional Water increasing bulk water rates from \$2.60/1,000 gallons to \$3.00/1,000 gallon; suggested holding the customer water rates the same because the AMI meters would give more accurate readings; customers will see a higher usage; better to hold rate steady unless things are tighter than we think
- Harnett IT increasing cost of each email individual email account from \$4/month to \$13/month
- Cleaning Service increase to \$275/week

Mr. Holcomb mentioned the following items for the Board to consider:

- Website update
- Microphones – need better option for sound
- Hey Gov – provides features that would replace Mobile 311 used for work orders; give citizens access to enter issues online; transcribe minutes; capability to complete forms and send payment online
- Update Code of Ordinance
- Pay & Class Study

Powell Bill Street Funding

Town Manager Holcomb asked the Board to consider some combination of the following streets for use of Powell Bill funding for 3,000’:

- N Poole St & Odum 1,230’
- Winchester 980’
- Remington 1,300
- Park Ln 700’
- Marlin 460’

Nonprofit Funding

Town Manager Holcomb urged the Board to think on the following in regards to funding nonprofits:


- What are your goals? What do voters want to see?
- Are any nonprofits capable of accomplishing this?
- Calculating a fair cost for performing this service

IV. ADJOURN

RESOLVED, to adjourn the budget workshop meeting.

MOTION BY: Commissioner Allen Mosby, SECOND BY: Commissioner Marc Powell
APPROVED: 5-0, unanimously approved

Meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.



Connie Lassiter, Town Clerk



Chris Coats, Mayor