

MINUTES  
OAK ISLAND TOWN COUNCIL  
SPECIAL MEETING – BUDGET WORKSHOP  
April 13, 2018 – 1 P.M.  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS - OAK ISLAND TOWN HALL

Present: Mayor Cin Brochure, Mayor Pro Tempore Loman Scott, Council members John W. Bach, Sheila M. Bell, Charlie K. Blalock, and Jeff Winecoff, Town Manager David Kelly, Assistant Manager/Town Clerk Lisa P. Stites, CMC, Finance Director David Hatten, Police Chief Greg Jordan, Fire Chief Chris Anselmo, and Parks and Recreation Director Rebecca Squires.

Mayor Brochure called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

**Councilor Winecoff made a motion to suspend the rules to add a Budget Ordinance Amendment to the Agenda. Mayor Pro Tempore Scott seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Councilor Winecoff made a motion to adopt Budget Ordinance Amendment to adjust the anticipated revenue for the Oak Island Pier replacement project as presented, Councilor Blalock seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**

Councilor Bach asked if there had been a study done regarding the number of employees, salaries, etc. the Town uses to compare to other towns similar to Oak Island. Mr. Hatten said they were working on getting information from the NC League of Municipalities. Mr. Kelly said that full salary/staffing study is generally done by a consultant.

Councilor Bach asked when the last time the infrastructure reimbursement fee was last adjusted; Mr. Hatten said it was last adjusted two years ago, basing it on the number of bedrooms.

Councilor Winecoff asked why the budget included a 5% raise when the general public usually gets approximately a 3% raise. Mr. Kelly said the national COLA is 2.3%.

Police Department: Chief Jordan reviewed changes made in the proposed budget. The cell phone allowance was increased as all officers use their cell phones for work-related communications. Mayor Brochure asked if they were all required to use their cell phones; Chief Jordan said that it was necessary, though not required. Officers can retrieve information faster via cell phone than through C-Comm. Money was included in the budget to account for additional fuel use while the bridge is closed. Councilor Winecoff asked why the Sheriff's Office (BCSO) couldn't handle that area while the bridge is closed. Chief Jordan said that the BCSO will respond, but the two deputies that work in that area also handle Holden Beach, etc. Officers from the BCSO, Southport, and Boiling Spring Lakes will respond in an emergency, but won't do general patrol. The uniform line item was increased as new officers will be hired and 7 ballistics vests need to be replaced. Internet fees might come down by switching to ATMC. There is no money included for capital, though in the following year, vehicle replacement will likely cost \$220,000; Council asked to see figures for splitting that into two years (FY 2018-19 and the following year). The plan is to request two trucks and a car. The trucks will be 4-wheel drive. Chief Jordan said that SUVs are moving to all-wheel drive, and that doesn't work on sand. Chief Jordan also discussed the upcoming mandate for using in-car computers. Councilor Bach asked if it would be better to get a computer/printer/cell phone package. Chief Jordan said that the phones would be separate from a package for the computers and printers. Councilor Bach asked if it would be cheaper to purchase cell phones than provide a stipend. Chief Jordan said he would look into that. Councilor Bach also asked if there was enough money in the budget for training. Chief Jordan said that most of their training is actually free and the Town only has to cover travel, etc. Councilor Bach asked if there was enough training. Chief Jordan said that he thinks there is enough training planned. Chief Bach asked about the staffing; Chief Jordan said the line supervisors (sergeants) are also patrol officers, the Lieutenant is also in charge of the patrol

division, and the captain is in charge of investigations, volunteers and civilian positions. The sergeants are field supervisors. Mayor Brochure asked if the Town provided cell phones to any staff; Mr. Kelly said there are some phones used for on-call that are shared among staff, though some supervisors are using monitoring apps on their phones and do receive a cell phone stipend. Mayor Pro Tempore Scott asked about having all of the command position employees on duty during the day while at night, the sergeants handle everything. Chief Jordan said the Lieutenant works one day a week from 8-4 and the rest of the week, he works either 11-7 or 12-8, because he needs to be here when the second shift is in. So during the day, the Chief, Assistant Chief and Captain are on duty. Chief Jordan said that he gets called back to the station many times during the day, meetings are scheduled during the day, etc. Chief Jordan said that he does work night or weekend shifts occasionally too, as do the Assistant Chief and Captain, though he acknowledged it was probably not as often as he should. Mayor Pro Tempore Scott said he wondered if we shouldn't have a command officer out at all times, at least during the peak times. He asked if it took that many people just to do the paperwork. Chief Jordan said they do much more than paperwork. He said that today, for example, they had a retirement function for a staff member, he spent time with the children at the Community Center and he handled a complaint, and that he had not yet started on his paperwork for the week since he was out a few days. The Assistant Chief was dealing with the cloud-based storage company and also handling the staff retirement function. Mayor Pro Tempore Scott said that it seemed like command personnel could return to the station when needed, but that he wondered if the Town didn't deserve to have a command officer out at least during the peak times. Chief Jordan said the peak call times were between 1 p.m. and 7 p.m. Chief Jordan said that it does change on the weekends and based on the season. The peak call times are from 1 to 9 p.m. on Saturdays and then from 2 a.m. to 3 a.m. for the drunk drivers. He said that's why the Lieutenant is there between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m., so he can help answer calls while they are doing shift turnover.

Councilor Bach asked about the \$30,000 for overtime and how many hours that covered. Chief Jordan said that was approximately 1,200 hours. Councilor Bach asked if that was a constant in the budget. Chief Jordan said he'd raised it last year because they kept going over budget. He said that they will spend \$30,000 on overtime this year, by the time they do beach patrol on weekends, etc. Councilor Bach asked if at some point it would make sense to hire another officer. Chief Jordan said that it might, but there would still be overtime as officers have to attend court, etc. Approximately 75% of the overtime budget is used in peak season. Chief Jordan said that during the peak season, they don't schedule training or allow vacations so that they have all of the officers available. Councilor Bach asked about the Christmas bonus and if that was included in all departments; Mr. Hatten said it was.

Councilor Bell asked if it would help to have part-time civilians dedicated to enforcing parking, dune violations, etc. Chief Jordan said that would free-up officers for other things. Chief Jordan said that most of their overtime is used to cover beach patrol, and that would require a certified officer. Mayor Brochure said other towns handle additional beach coverage differently, and she asked if we had reached out to see how they do that. Mr. Kelly said staff had been directed to see if we could supplement that with volunteers, and that now that we have seen we won't have enough to do that, it's time to consider another approach. The same is true for other departments too. In Public Works, for example, we have employees out early picking up trash and when their 8 hours are done, we can't use them the rest of the day. Councilor Bach said that we need to find a better way to handle peak season on the beach, maybe even double police presence. He said a natural solution may be to hire retired officers. Chief Jordan said the training for them would be minimal, just a matter of teaching them how things were done in North Carolina. Chief Jordan said that he estimated it would cost \$7,500 per part-time employee during the peak season. Councilor Bach said that would then cut the overtime though. Chief Jordan again said that most of their overtime is on beach patrol and said he wouldn't be comfortable with a retired officer doing beach patrol; a North Carolina certified officer would need to do that job. Council and the Chief also discussed citations and fines. The Chief said that last year, the department wrote 399 ordinance violation citations and 375 were fines that were paid to the Town, as they were not state citations.

Mayor Pro Tempore Scott asked about the narcotics efforts; he reviewed activity from those officers for the last quarter. He asked if, for \$300,000, was it worth keeping the narcotics officers or if they should just be put back in patrol to let them write parking tickets. Chief Jordan said that last year was the first year since 2010 that narcotics arrests were above average, and they doubled last year what they had done the year before, so it's working. Chief Jordan said they quantify it by what the officers are doing, not what they're bringing in. Chief Jordan said there were 88 arrests last year. Mayor Pro Tempore Scott asked how many of those were felony arrests; Chief Jordan said he did not know. Mayor Pro Tempore Scott also asked who trained the narcotics officers and asked what classes they had been to in the last two years. Chief Jordan said that that one of the narcotics officers had been to 5 or 6 classes. Mayor Pro Tempore Scott asked how much time they had spent working with the Sheriff's Office. Chief Jordan said that last week they were with them for 14 hours, though that didn't happen every week. He estimated it was about 20-30 hours a month. Chief Jordan said he was happy that they were getting more drugs off the streets, and said he didn't care what kind of drugs they were as long as they were getting them off the street. Mayor Pro Tempore Scott said that the majority of that was marijuana. Chief Jordan said he wasn't sure. Mayor Pro Tempore Scott asked if that was worth \$300,000 spent to this point to get a little weed off the street. Mayor Pro Tempore Scott said that this was implemented because people were dying from opioid overdoses, and so far, he doesn't see much in terms of results. Chief Jordan said that from 2010-2017, between 1 and 3 people have died every year, and that most of those involved pills, not heroin. Mayor Pro Tempore Scott asked what they had done about the pills; Chief Jordan said he didn't have that number. He said that it may not seem like it's worth \$300,000, but it would be to the person who doesn't overdose on the drugs they are pulling off the street. Councilor Blalock said it's important to create an environment where people who do this sort of thing don't feel comfortable. He said we used to have a reputation as not a place for doing drugs. Chief Jordan said that we don't have an open-air drug market. We have people who go to Little River, Ash and Wilmington to buy drugs and then come back here and use them behind closed doors. There are a lot of civil and constitutional issues involved, so yes, they are trying to create an atmosphere where it's known that we don't want people here using, transporting, or selling drugs. Mayor Pro Tempore Scott said that an Oak Island resident was recently arrested elsewhere with something like 13 pounds of cocaine, so it is still around. Mayor Brochure said that she has learned that with increasing bail amounts for heroin cases, people are now turning back to cocaine and other drugs.

Councilor Bach said he'd like to see numbers for hiring 3 retired officers, with estimates for revenue from citations they would issue and a reduction in overtime. Regarding vacancies within the department, Chief Jordan said that they recently received 3 applications for 2 vacancies. Chief Jordan said Oak Island has the second-lowest paid department in the County, but it is not just the pay scale that's keeping people from applying. He said the Sheriff's Office pays a higher salary but also has trouble filling positions. Councilor Bach asked what strategies the Chief was using to attract candidates. Chief Jordan said they were recruiting at the community colleges.

Council took a brief recess.

Fire Department: Chief Anselmo said the department is already over in its overtime budget. There are 2 vacancies, and a third is expected next week, and two firefighters are out on medical leave. Council and the Chief had further discussion about the amount of overtime needed. Regarding filling vacancies, Chief Anselmo said that there is not much more he can do to attract people to the department. He said that they used to pay for training, but if they're not going to be competitive salary wise, all they will do is pay for training so the employees can then go somewhere else when they are certified. He said he has spoken to HR and the Manager about broadening the advertising for positions. Councilor Winecoff said when we did the MAPS study, the salaries were brought up to meet surrounding towns, and he asked what had happened since then. Mr. Kelly said that the other towns had increased their salary ranges as well. He said that the problem was not just in Police and Fire; with a building boom going on, it was hard to attract

employees when they will make more money building houses. Councilor Bach said that we need a recruiting strategy, and we need to think about incentives, the salary scale, etc.

When it comes to overtime and scheduling, Chief Anselmo said that he had to consider truck locations, meeting minimum response standards, FLSA standards, etc. He said if they used Bald Head method, it would mean adding another crew, or spending \$300,000 to save \$80,000 in overtime. Council also asked about the Fire Marshal position. Councilor Bell said that the position was not bringing in the money they were told it would. Chief Anselmo said he does have the Fire Marshal covering shifts, and that person also does special events, special programming, fire inspections, plan reviews and has many other duties. He said that the position was originally estimated to generate \$28,000/year and that now that number would be higher as the fee had increased, but that he can't force collection of the fee. Council and the Chief also discussed billing for fire inspections. The Chief said he can close a business for violating the fire code but not for non-payment of the fire inspection fee. Councilor Bell asked the Chief to find out how other departments handle collection of fire inspection fees.

Councilor Winecoff asked the Chief if he thought we would be responding to calls in Caswell Beach while the bridge is closed. Chief Anselmo said he thought so, but he has not been officially asked. Oak Island already responds through a mutual aid agreement for structure fires, though not medical calls. There is a meeting scheduled soon for all of the fire/medical responders affected.

The budget does not include the \$10,000 for fireworks since the Pier won't be available. The dues and subscriptions line item may be reduced as well. He plans to replace carpeting with vinyl flooring in one of the stations to reduce maintenance costs. Chief Anselmo continued reviewing the proposed budget; there are no capital expenditures, though there is some money included to start replacing radios which will become obsolete in 2020. Council and the Chief also discussed how the department's radio communications work; in a major incident, multiple agencies can use the same channel.

Parks and Recreation: Parks and Recreation Director Rebecca Squires reviewed her budget. One small increase is for marketing supplies, to cover purchase of items sold, which makes the Town money. One goal is to increase sponsorships for the concert series so that the program will pay for itself. There are some capital expenditures for a new treadmill, the remaining owed for the Master Plan, replacing some fencing, basketball goals, and a new laptop. Ms. Squires also reviewed the grant payments included in the budget; they are one-time payments.

Council discussed use of the pickle ball courts, and expressed concern about Oak Island citizens not having the opportunity to use the courts when they are full with players from other communities. Mr. Kelly said that we could have an attendant, players could go into Town Hall and pay a fee and show a ticket to the attendant. Councilor Winecoff said priority should go to Oak Island citizens. Ms. Squires said that the Oak Island Picklers were Oak Island citizens. Councilors Blalock and Bach suggested approaching the other communities using the court and ask for financial support. Consensus was to brainstorm for a possible solution.

The Community Center budget is the same as last year's. The Center does not provide services for non-residents other than seniors who attend the County's NutriLunch program hosted at the Center.

Mayor Brochure said it didn't seem like there was much difference between the program and facility fees for residents versus non-residents. She asked if we really needed to be drawing non-Oak Island citizens to use the center and programs. Mr. Kelly and Mr. Hatten said that they would review all the fees, and that they had already asked the department heads to review them as well. Ms. Squires said that for a lot of the classes, the weight room, etc. they are at capacity and as the Town continues to grow, that's a real consideration.

Outside Agency Funding: There is a request for \$2,500 to help an Oak Island Parks Conservancy non-profit get started.

**Councilor Bell made a motion to adjourn at 3:21 p.m. Councilor Bach seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**

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Cin Brochure, Mayor

Attested: \_\_\_\_\_  
Lisa P. Stites, CMC  
Assistant Manager/Town Clerk

*Clerk's Statement: Minutes are in compliance with the open meetings laws. The purpose of minutes per the open meetings laws is to provide a record of the actions taken by a Council or a Board and evidence that the actions were taken according to proper procedures. All actions of the Council are recorded in the official minutes. Not all portions of Town of Oak Island meetings are recorded verbatim in the official minutes, with general discussion items, reports, presentations, and public comments being paraphrased or summarized in many instances. Public comments in writing should be submitted to the clerk via hard copy, electronic mail, or other means so as to ensure an exact verbatim account. The Town of Oak Island provides full coverage of meetings on Government Channel 8 so that the Citizens and the Public may view and listen to the meetings in their entirety.*