Town of Swansboro
Board of Commissioners
January 11, 2021 Regular Meeting

In attendance: Mayor John Davis, Mayor Pro Tem Frank Tursi, Commissioner Pat Turner, Commissioner Harry PJ Pugliese, Commissioner Larry Philpott, and Commissioner Laurent Meilleur. It was noted that the Board had agreed to return to remote meetings through the ZOOM platform as allowed by NCGS 166A-19. Governor Cooper had declared a state of emergency due to the COVID-19 Pandemic in March 2020 and it remained in effect.

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Call to Order/Opening Prayer

The meeting was called to order at 5:45 pm due to technical difficulties. Mayor Davis gave the invocation.

Mayor Davis recognized Swansboro business owners who were recently featured in the local newspaper - Kitty and Eva, owners of the Bamboo Asian House Restaurant and Roy Tookes Jr. - better known as "June Da Barber" of June's Barber Shop.

He also announced that Matador Network.com had named Swansboro as number 5 of 25 coolest towns in American to visit in 2021. https://matadornetwork.com/read/coolest-towns-america-visit-2021/

Public Comment

Citizens were offered an opportunity to address the Board regarding items listed on the agenda. No comments were given.

Adoption of Agenda

On a motion by Commissioner Philpott, seconded by Commissioner Pugliese, the Agenda and Consent Items below was unanimously approved.

Meeting Minutes – 12/28/2020 Regular Meeting
FY 21-22 Budget Calendar

Business Non-Consent

Emergency Operations Center Update - At the September 28, 2020 regular meeting of this Board, staff was instructed to solicit qualifications from consulting firms to assist the Town on the planning stage of the Public Safety Building Repair and/or Replacement Project. The selected firm would plan and design the Restoration/Relocation of the Public Safety Building. Firms that submitted qualifications were:

1. LS3P – Wilmington, NC
2. Moseley Architects – Raleigh, NC

3. The Wooten Company – Raleigh, NC

All three firms are well qualified for the project with excellent references. Manager Seaberg recommended the contract with The Wooten Company. The Town had used this firm in the past for various projects and seemed to be pleased with the deliverables. The anticipated cost for this planning project was $25,000. Proposed elements would include:

<u>Planning</u>:
1. To repair/restore the current facility with the necessary upgrades to meet the standards
to safely operate an Emergency Operations Center along with Fire and Police operations within the 2018 NC Building Codes.
2. The parameters under scenario #1 with additional upgrades to accommodate current staffing needs along with the anticipated needs through the year 2030.
3. To purchase additional land to relocate Public Safety operations into a new facility with
expansion capabilities to handle anticipated need through the year 2050.
Each scenario will include price estimates and some initial design functions in order to convey a conceptual concept.
<u>Design</u>: completed designs and plans for the purpose of permitting and construction.

Mayor Davis noted that Mayor Pro Tursi had asked for pros/cons of allowing Onslow County to provide EOC operations for the Town. He asked to hear from Chief Jackson and Chief Tessing on this option also. Both Chief Jackson and Chief Tessing shared concerns that Onslow County had its own coverage issued in various areas of the entire county at present. Fire and Police staff would be working regardless of any scenario and a safe location was required for the staff working and the town's equipment to ride out whatever storm came to Swansboro, be it a hurricane, snow storm, tornado etc. Another element of the EOC was communications with the residents before, during and immediately after the storm. Chief Jackson pointed out that we could not just allow a free-for-all condition – there must be some order in place during such events.

Mayor Pro Tem Tursi needed to better understand the purpose of the EOC and its overall benefit to the residents. Was it possible to partner with others and have the same result? Was an EOC required? Other Board members agreed more details were needed on the purpose behind the EOC, but also agreed the staff and equipment must be protected. Manager Seaberg indicated that this was the purpose for the proposed planning and design.

Mayor Davis noted that two additional scenarios be added to the plan; 1) was to do nothing – not having an EOC in Town, and 2) provide more details on partnering with Onslow County. In short, a risk assessment to determine what the Town would look like without an EOC after a hurricane or similar event.

On a motion by Mayor Pro Tem Tursi, seconded by Commissioner Meilleur, the Board instructed staff to move forward as recommended with the Wooten Company but adding two additional scenarios 1) was to do nothing – not having an EOC in Town, 2) provide more details on partnering with Onslow County. The vote was unanimous.

Budget Ordinance Amendment #2021-3 – Multiple departments required amending for FY 20/21.
Emergency Management - At the September 28, 2020 regular meeting staff was instructed to solicit qualifications from consulting firms to assist the Town on the planning stage of the Public Safety Building Repair and/or Replacement Project. The anticipated cost for this planning project was $25,000. Action to award the contract to Wooten Company had been accomplished as noted above, therefore, the funds needed to be appropriated from fund balance to move forward with this project.

Streets - In FY 19/20, the Town reserved $116,634 for sidewalk improvement as listed in Resolution 2019-R9 adopted August 13, 2019. NC Department of Transportation had indicated that they would begin the project early 2021. Staff recommended that the $116,634 be appropriated from Capital Reserve fund balance and transferred to the General Fund for its intended purpose.

Due to the unknown potential effects of COVID-19, Board members deferred a merit increase to its employees until mid-year. At its December 28, 2020 regular meeting, Board members approved up to a 3% mid-year merit, authorizing the Town Manager to award such merits based on FY 19/20 evaluations. In addition, the Board of Commissioners granted a one-time bonus of $300 for full time and $150 for part time employees for efforts shown by its employees during the on-going COVID-19 Pandemic. Funds to cover the merit and bonuses needed to be appropriated from fund balance to individual departments. ($50,668.98)

On a motion by Commissioner Philpott, seconded by Commissioner Turner, Budget Ordinance Amendment 2021-3 was unanimously approved.

FY 2021 Budget Review (Revenues and Unfunded Projects) – The economic uncertainty resulting from COVID-19 caused the Town to readjust the draft versions of its proposed FY 2020-2021 Operating Budget prior to its adoption in June 2020. The readjustments

included removing many proposed Departmental projects with the hope that those projects and/or unfunded items could be readdressed mid-year.
Manager Seaberg reviewed those projects and unfunded items removed from FY 2020-2021 Budget.

1. Continued work on the Town's Emergency Operation Center/Public Safety Building project.
2. Continued investments in the Fire Department's Capital Projects in the Town's CIP
3. Continued Implementation of the Swansboro Watershed Restoration Plan (2017)

In addition, the Board gave instructions for mid-year discussion on the following if the economic climate was favorable.

1. Looking at potential adjustments in the Town's matching contribution for staff's 401K's. As a reminder, current State Law mandated the Town contribute 5% to the 401K accounts of Law Enforcement Officers. Other Town employees received up to a 1% match only if they contribute. The proposal was to increase the percent match to a level that the Board was comfortable with.
2. Merit Increases – It was noted that the Board had acted on December 28, 2020 awarded up to 3% merits based on evaluations in May/June 2020.
3. Funding the Parks and Recreation Plan Update. The current Plan was 12 years old and granting agencies preferred a five-year update cycle.
4. Capital funding set-asides for Public Works vehicles.

Manager Seaberg informed that property tax collection was healthy. The Town had collected $1,210,650.47 (73.77% of the budgeted amount for the FY) of property tax revenues by the end of CY 2020. This percentage collected matched the collections at similar times for FY 2017-2018, FY 2018-2019, and FY 2019-2020. He noted that the Town typically received most of its revenue by the end of February of each year.

Motor vehicle tax collection through November 2020 was $62,106.08 (46.78% of the budgeted amount for the FY). This percentage matched the collection at similar times for FY 2017-2018, FY 2018-2019, and FY 2019-2020. He noted that the funding source was paid monthly throughout the FY.

Sales tax revenues had far exceeded the forecasts provided by the NC League of Municipalities. The Town budgeted to receive $900,000 as part of the FY 2019-2020 Budget. Due to the economic uncertainties, the NCLM had suggested that towns significantly reduce their anticipated amounts for this revenue source, therefore Town budgeted $750,000 for FY 20/21. As of the end of CY 2020, the Town had collected

$533,959.60 (71.19% of the budgeted amount for the FY). That collection amount was $45,889.18 more than the amount received this same time last FY. With this trend, we could see, at minimum, $200,000 more than anticipated from this revenue source.

The Utility Tax collections was not performing as well; noting that we had a $4,000 deficit from this time last FY.

Subtracting the $50K for merits awarded in December 2020 and the $25K approved for EOC Planning/Design, Manager Seaberg was comfortable reporting that the Board had roughly $200K it could consider toward those unfunded capital/non-capital items.

Regarding the 401K contribution, Manager Seaberg recommended the Board consider an increase to 3% for general employees who contributed themselves. The annual increase of what was currently being paid would be $9314, essentially increasing the amount overall each year to $12K versus $3100 which was what was currently paid.

Commissioner Meilleur asked that the details be provided in writing versus given verbally. Commissioner Turner was also interested in the number of employees currently contributing/participating noting that if an increase was given, more employees may participate.

Parks/Rec Master Plan Update – Manager Seaberg noted that the Parks/Recreation Master Plan was dated 2008. Updating the document was important in the Town's quest for grant assistance. The price tag to do a complete overhaul of the plan was estimated at $50K last year. Mayor Davis believed there were elements of the update that staff could handle to reduce the cost somewhat also, noting that Commissioner Philpott, having been a Parks/Recreation Director, also might also be able to assist. Commissioner Philpott indicated it would be quite an endeavor for the small department staff to take on and would most likely take a great deal of time away from daily operations. An update also required public participation/surveys etc. He would like to see the update include an additional greenway/pedestrian plan element. Grant agencies expected the Master Plan to be updated every 5 years for it to be eligible for grant points. Commissioner Turner shared that perhaps the Town would be beyond the pandemic once the plan was updated. Mayor Pro Tem Tursi believed the $50k price tag too high. Staff should reconsider what it could do and seek updated costs for what a consultant would be required to do. Commissioner Pugliese agreed and hoped the Town would have the plan updated and ready when the pandemic was over. Commissioner Meilleur added that any requests for qualifications/proposals should focus on updating the current plan for what was required to satisfy grant agencies.

Staff was instructed to seek RFQ's/Proposals with a focus on updates that would satisfy grant agency requirements.

Public Works Vehicles – There were three items listed on the Capital Improvements Plan. The dollar amounts shown were installment amounts to be set aside for future purchase. Tundra $12,500, GMC Sierra $9375 and $6166 for a Ventrac multiple-purpose unit. In response to what the Ventrac unit did, Manager Seaberg shared that it mows, edges and saves hours on other essential equipment. It was also helpful in eliminating back injuries. If the Town was to take on maintenance of additional sidewalks, this unit would be critical. The total amount for Public Works Capital items was $28K.

On a motion by Commissioner Turner, seconded by Commissioner Philpott, $28K was approved for Public Works Capital items (vehicles/equipment). A budget amendment would be forthcoming to officially set aside the funds. The vote was unanimous.

Fire Dept Staffing – The Town had not been successful in securing the Safer Grant funds for an additional position. Manager Seaberg offered that $26K would be needed for one full time position for the remainder of FY 20/21. Currently, the Fire Department had 5 full time personnel. Adding one additional fulltime person, would assist the Town in securing its current ISO rating. Also, the unfunded capital item in the Fire Department was the $60K for a Ladder Truck purchase in a future year.

On a motion by Commissioner Turner, seconded by Commissioner Pugliese, $26K was approved for a fulltime position and $60K set aside for a future Ladder Truck purchase. The vote was unanimous. A budget amendment would be forthcoming to officially set aside the funds approved.

NCLM Proposed Municipal Advocacy Goals - Throughout the year Board members and Staff received email invites from the NCLM to submit goals for consideration. The NCLM Board of Directors had reviewed, approved and now submitted 17 proposed advocacy goals for our consideration. Establishing these Municipal Advocacy Goals with wide participation by all cities and towns allowed the NCLM to speak with confidence and sincerity as they pursued each with state and federal policymakers. Each municipality would cast a single vote by selecting 10 of the 17 proposed advocacy goals. Manager Seaberg had previously been the voting delegate. The deadline to submit goals selections was January 15. Draft goals had been emailed to Board members.

On a motion by Commissioner Philpott, seconded by Commissioner Pugliese, Manager Seaberg was selected as the voting delegate and would submit those goals submitted to him by January 14, 2021. The vote was unanimous.

Public Comments

Citizens were offered an opportunity to address the Board regarding items not listed on the agenda. No comments were offered.

Manager's Comments

No additional comments were offered.

Board Comments

No additional comments were offered.

Adjournment

On a motion by Commissioner Philpott, seconded by Commissioner Turner, the meeting adjourned at 7:25pm.

Regular Meeting
January 11, 2021

1

1. Please turn cell phones to "off" or "vibrate".

2. The Board offers the public three opportunities to speak during the meeting:

   A comment period is offered at the beginning and end of the meeting. Please note that a separate opportunity is provided for those items requiring a public hearing.

   Public Hearing(s) – There are no public hearings scheduled for this meeting.

3. Under the ZOOM Meeting Platform, individuals wishing to make comments should "raise their hand" ✋ from their computer. At the appropriate time, Major Davis will acknowledge those with comments.

2

PUBLIC COMMENT

Citizen opportunity to address the Board for items listed on the agenda.

3

AGENDA AND CONSENT ITEMS

Action Needed: *Motion to Adopt the Agenda as prepared (or amended) and approval of the Consent Items*

4

NEW BUSINESS/NON-CONSENT

Emergency Operations Center Update

At the September 28, 2020 regular meeting of this Board, staff was instructed to solicit qualifications from consulting firms to assist the Town on the planning stage of the Public Safety Building Repair and/or Replacement Project. The selected firm will be required to plan and design the Restoration/Relocation of the Public Safety Building.
Firms that submitted qualifications were:

1. LS3P – Wilmington, NC
2. Moseley Architects – Raleigh, NC
3. The Wooten Company – Raleigh, NC

All three firms are well qualified for the project with excellent references. The Manager recommends the contract with The Wooten Company. The Town has used this firm in the past for various projects and seemed to be pleased with the deliverables. The anticipated cost for this planning project is $25,000.

Action Needed: ***If the Board agrees with the Manager's recommendation, instruct staff to move forward with this project.***

Presenter: Chris Seaberg/Town Manager

5

NEW BUSINESS/NON-CONSENT

Budget Ordinance Amendment #2021-3

Amendments to multiple departments is requested.

Action Needed: ***Motion to approve Budget Ordinance Amendment #2021-3***

Presenter: Sonia Johnson/Finance Director

6

NEW BUSINESS/NON-CONSENT

FY 2021 Budget Review (Revenues and Unfunded Projects)

The economic uncertainty resulting from COVID-19 caused the Town to readjust the draft versions of its proposed FY 2020-2021 Operating Budget prior to the impending adoption in June 2020. The readjustments included removing many proposed Departmental projects in hopes that we may readdress them mid-year.

<u>Action Needed:</u> Staff will have updated cost estimates for some of the high-ranking items to assist in the decision making. The Board is requested to instruct staff what projects they wish to move forward with.

Presenter: Chris Seaberg/Town Manager

7

NEW BUSINESS/NON-CONSENT

NCLM Proposed Municipal Advocacy Goals

Throughout the year Board members and Staff receive email invites from the NCLM to submit goals for consideration. The NCLM Board of Directors has reviewed, approved and now submits 17 proposed advocacy goals for our consideration. Establishing these Municipal Advocacy Goals with wide participation by all cities and towns allows the NCLM to speak with confidence and sincerity as they pursue each with state and federal policymakers. Each municipality will cast a single vote by selecting 10 of the 17 proposed advocacy goals.

<u>Action Needed:</u> 1. Designate a single Voting Delegate who will cast the municipality's vote by January 14, 2021; and

2. Review, discuss and determine which of the proposed advocacy goals the Town supports. Each municipality may select 10 of the 17 proposed goals; and

3. Staff to submit Voting Delegate contact by January 14, 2021. Voting Delegate to submit the online ballot by January 15, 2021.

Presenter: Chris Seaberg/Town Manager

8

PUBLIC COMMENT

Citizen opportunity to address the Board.

9

MANAGER'S COMMENTS

Chris Seaberg, Town Manager

10

BOARD COMMENTS

Mayor John Davis
Mayor Pro Tem Frank Tursi
Commissioner Pat Turner
Commissioner Harry "PJ" Pugliese
Commissioner Larry Philpott
Commissioner Laurent Meilleur

11

ADJOURN

12