BOARD OF ALDERMEN MINUTES

APRIL 10, 2025, 5:30PM

TOWN HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 321 CAUSEWAY DRIVE, WRIGHTSVILLE BEACH

The meeting was called to order at 5:30pm by Mayor Mills. After the Pledge of Allegiance, the invocation was provided by Julia Hayes, Assoc. Pastor, Wrightsville United Methodist Church. The following were present:

Board of Aldermen	Staff
F. Darryl Mills, Mayor	Haynes Brigman, Town Manager
Hank Miller, Mayor Pro-tem	Lance G. Heater, Town Clerk
Jeff DeGroote, Alderman	Grady Richardson, Town Attorney
Ken Dull, Alderman	Tony Wilson, Director of Parks & Planning
Vivian (Zeke) Partin, Alderman	Matt Holland, Fire Chief
	Brian Murray, Finance Director
	Jason Bishop, Chief of Police

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The Mayor noted that, as several speakers had signed up to address the issue of paid parking, the Board would limit the number of speakers so that comments would not be repetitive.

Kelly Wolfe, 5106 Honeydew Ln., Wilmington, 1) expressed appreciation to Brigman for meeting with her with regard to paid parking concerns; 2) expressed support for the provision of free and accessible parking after 5:00pm Monday-Thursday; 3) stated that parking revenues had steadily increased between 2019 and the present; 4) said that any loss in revenues would be offset by increased utilization in non-free times; 5) noted the increase in the Town's fund balance over that time; and 6) said that 13,000 individuals had signed a petition in support of the change.

Julia Cullins, 137 Woodbury Ct., Wilmington, also expressed support for free parking after 5 Mon-Thur., stating that many could not afford to pay for parking. Cullins read from a letter from Chad Gardiner, whom she stated was a resident of Wrightsville Beach, in support of the change.

Sam Athey, 125 Amaryllis Dr., Wilmington, stating that she volunteered with the local chapter of the Surfrider Foundation, said that allowing free parking after 5 during the week would assist with encouraging volunteers who desired to help with beach cleanup.

In response to a request to address the Board by Polk Baggett, the Mayor stated that the Board's policy prohibited the use of the public comment period for the promotion of commercial enterprises. There was a discussion regarding the substance of what Baggett desired to address, and the Town Attorney concurred that the Board's policy prohibited such discussion.

Jeanna Haverstock, 901 Nutt St., Apt. 112, Wilmington, also spoke in support of free parking after 5 during the week, stating that she was the president of the Plastic Ocean project. Haverstock stated that parking fees reduce commercial activity.

CONSENT AGENDA

Upon motion by Partin, seconded by DeGroote and carried unanimously, the Board approved the Consent Agenda. It consisted of: 1) approval of the minutes of the 3/10/25 Special Called Budget Workshop and the 3/13/25 Board meeting; 2) approval of a recurring special event; 3) acknowledgement of previously-approved special events for May; 4) approval of Budget Ordinance (2025) 657-B funding the purchase of safety equipment for the Fire Department; 5) approval of

Budget Ordinance (2025) 658-B funding the purchase of reporting software for the Fire Department; 6) approval of a two-year extension of the Franchise Agreement with Caliber Recycling; 7) approval of Budget Ordinance (2025) 656-B funding the purchase of replacement batteries for the UPS system; 8) approval of Budget Ordinance (2025) 660-B creating a special revenue fund for WB license plate revenue; 9) approval of Budget Ordinance (2025) 655-B moving funds from the Capital Reserve Fund for the purchase of a Park Ranger Jeep; 10) approval of Budget Ordinance (2025) 661-B funding replacement batteries for golf carts in the Parking Department; and 11) acceptance of a donation for benches for the new pickleball courts and outside the existing pickleball and tennis courts.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF A REORGANIZATION OF THE POLICE DEPARTMENT COMMAND STRUCTURE

Police Chief Bishop outlined a recommendation to reorganize the command structure of the Police Department. The current organizational chart provides for a Police Chief with two captain positions reporting to the Chief: a Patrol Captain and a Support Services Captain. Bishop proposed that there instead be one captain with two lieutenants reporting to the captain. Bishop stated that this structure would allow for better supervision of the patrol divisions, especially during evenings and weekends. It would also allow for lieutenants to manage more complex incidents involving other jurisdictions during those times, relieving the sergeants of that burden. Bishop stated that it was hoped that all positions would be filled through promotions of existing personnel, with the positions filled sometime during the month of June. Miller asked how the reorganization would assist in improving the quality of life for residents. Bishop responded that he was proposing additional police officers be added in the upcoming budget in part to address quality of life issues, and the reorganization would help with managing those additional officers. Upon motion by DeGroote, seconded by Partin and carried unanimously, the Board approved changes to the Town's Authorized Permanent Positions by Pay Range Chart as outlined by Bishop.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF BUDGET ORDINANCE (2025) 659-B CREATING A CAPITAL PROJECT FUND AND FUNDING A CONTRACT WITH ANDREW ENGINEERING FOR PROFESIONAL DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION PHASE SERVICES FOR THE STREET END HEADWALL REPLACEMENT PROJECT AND AUTHORIZING THE TOWN MANAGER TO EXECUTE THE CONTRACT

Finance Officer Murray stated that two of the headwall projects had already been designed, with the understanding that the Town would proceed to do two of the headwall projects per year. However, the State had informed the Town that there was $1.5 billion in grant funding available for flood mitigation assistance, with only $800 million in projects having been submitted for consideration. Murray stated that there was a good chance that the Town could receive such funding if it developed an application for "shovel-ready" projects. Authorization of the engineering services would allow for the grant application to be prepared in the most advantageous manner for consideration by the State. If approved, this would allow for all 10 of the bulkhead projects to be completed. Murray stated that the design costs would be approximately $416,000, however, these costs could be included in the grant application. In response to a question from Town Attorney Richardson, Town Manager Brigman stated that regardless of whether the grant was received, the Town could utilize the engineering services for the projects which would then be included in annual budget requests. In response to a question from Dull, Murray stated that the contract not only provided for design services, but also bid package preparation, construction management and inspection services. In response to a question from Miller, Brigman stated that if there were existing stairways at the headwall, those stairs would be replaced when the headwall is replaced. Richardson noted that the Town had no obligation to replace plantings or other items that residents might have placed within the Town's rights-of-way. In response to a question from Dull, Murray stated he would prepare the grant application, which is due by October 31. Upon motion by Miller, seconded by Dull and carried unanimously, the Board approved the Budget Ordinance and authorized the Town Manager to execute the contract.

OTHER ITEMS AND REPORTS

A. **Alderman DeGroote:** congratulated Richardson on being appointed Town Attorney.
B. **Alderman Partin:** noted that the TDA had approved $974,088 for the Town for FY25-26 and noted that ROT collections county-wide are down in the current year.
C. **Alderman Dull:** stated that the Town and CFPUA were still on schedule for the projected 9/30/25 merger date.
D. **Mayor Pro Tem Miller**: stated that there was no upcoming vote by the MPO on the Eastwood Road/Military Cutoff project and that the only body that could stop the project was the State. Also asked Brigman to review the rules for electric bikes, which Brigman did, stating that there were no age restrictions on such bikes unless the bike had a motor that exceeded 750 watts or could travel more than 20 mph on a flat surface. Brigman stated the Town was working with the Police Department to ensure that individuals using electric bikes were following the rules and operating in a safe manner.
E. **Town Clerk Heater**: reminded the Board of its upcoming Budget Workshop scheduled for April 15 at 9:00am.
F. **Town Manager Brigman**: stated 1) NCDOT had completed repaving projects on Causeway Drive and N. Lumina which resulted in the addition of bike lanes to Causeway Drive and the creation of an emergency lane on N. Lumina; 2) the park and Town Hall parking lot projects were nearing completion, with the addition of 50 spaces; and 3) playground improvements were nearing completion.
G. **Town Attorney Richardson**: nothing to report.
H. **Mayor Mills**: nothing to report.

CLOSED SESSION TO CONSIDER THE QUALIFICATIONS, COMPETENCE, PERFORMANCE, CHARACTER, FITNESS, CONDITIONS OF APPOINTMENT, OR CONDITIONS OF INITIAL EMPLOYMENT OF AN INDIVIDUAL PUBLIC OFFICER AS AUTHORIZED BY NCGS 143-318.11(A)(6)

At 6:38pm Dull made a motion to enter into closed session for the purpose of considering a personnel matter as authorized by NCGS 143-318.11(A)(6). The motion was seconded by Mills and carried unanimously.

Upon motion by Miller, seconded by Partin and carried unanimously, the Board returned to open session at 7:00pm, with no action being taken as a result of the closed session.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lance G. Heater, Town Clerk