

BOARD OF ALDERMEN MINUTES

MARCH 2, 2026 9:00AM

TOWN HALL CONFERENCE ROOM, 321 CAUSEWAY DRIVE, WRIGHTSVILLE BEACH

A duly noticed special called meeting of the Board of Aldermen was called to order at 9:00am by Mayor Dull. The following were present:

Board of Aldermen

Ken Dull, Mayor
Jeff DeGroot, Mayor Pro-tem
Margaret Baggett, Alderman
Todd Schoen, Alderman
Vivian (Zeke) Partin, Alderman

Staff

Haynes Brigman, Town Manager
Lance G. Heater, Town Clerk
Matt Holland, Fire Chief
Jason Bishop, Police Chief
Bailey Hartsell, Communications Manager
Tony Wilson, Planning & Inspections Director
Bill Fay, Director of Public Works
Evan Morigerato, Asst. Director of Public Works
Tosha Campbell, HR Officer
Sam Proffitt, Ocean Rescue Director
Brian Murray, Finance Officer
Katie Carus-Childers, Parks & Rec. Director

BUDGET PLANNING SESSION

Brigman reviewed the agenda for the session as: 1) capital improvement plan updates; 2) departmental budget review; and 3) open discussion and follow-up items.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN REVIEW

The Board conducted a line-by-line review of the draft capital improvement plan. Major items included: 1) Police Department records management upgrade - \$100,000; 2) beach access trash can enclosures - \$100,000; 3) expanded holiday lighting (the Board discussed the proposed \$400,000 budget for this item and the consensus was to reduce to \$60,000 to fund additional pole-mounted lights on the island strand); 4) costs associated with outfitting the new Fire engine - \$250,000; 5) fleet maintenance equipment - \$107,000; 6) vehicle replacements throughout public works, fire and police - \$1.2 million; 7) dune walkover replacement - \$250,000; 8) Loop Improvement Design - \$300,000 (the Board discussed the separation of bikes and pedestrians and asked that the designers separate those uses wherever possible); 9) multi-use path extension - \$632,000 (the Board discussed concerns expressed by a resident regarding potential harm caused by erosion to the marsh and asked that Brigman obtain a letter from an engineer regarding any stormwater impacts of the proposed location); 10) Historic Square improvements - \$486,000 (after discussion, the consensus was to keep the project in the Plan, but to discuss prior to implementation); 11) softball field conversion to multi-purpose field - \$440,000; 12) Access 1 improvements - \$750,000 (it was noted that this project was dependent upon the Town Attorney's opinion regarding the Shell Island Settlement Agreement); 13) Town Hall renovation Phase 1 - \$877,212 (Brigman noted this was a placeholder item dependent upon completion of a master plan for the municipal complex); 14) relocation of the digital information sign on Salisbury St. (consensus was to remove this expenditure due to no available alternate location); and 15) park entrance signage upgrade - \$24,000. There was also a brief review of the 5-Year CIP, with it being noted that Brigman would be reviewing the plan prior to final presentation to the Board.

DEPARTMENTAL EXPENDITURE REVIEW

The Board then conducted a line-by-line review of departmental expenditures, with Brigman and department managers responding to numerous questions from the Board. Notable issues discussed were as follows: 1) CIP allocation was reduced from \$2.2 million to \$1.1 million due to the large number of projects included in FY25-26; 2) Brigman noted that in all departments, salaries reflected a 2.5% COLA (depending on the actual CPI number prior to budget finalization) and a 0-5% merit pool (based on annual performance appraisal); 3) Brigman reminded the Board that with flat revenues and increasing expenses, at some point in the future the Board will need to either address revenues or service delivery, or both; 4) the budget reflects a 10% increase in health insurance premiums, but the final figure is not yet known; 5) Brigman stated the Police Dept. budget included a night shift differential of 5% for those working the night shift, stating this was becoming prevalent with other local law enforcement agencies; 6) it was noted that, due to a change in vendor for merchant processing fees, operating expenses in the parking department had been reduced; 7) it was noted that permit fees generated nearly enough revenues to offset the expenses incurred by the Planning Department; 8) there was discussion regarding the loss of sponsorship for the summer concert series, with it being noted that the total cost was \$30,000, half of which was covered by the sponsorship in the previous year, however, the consensus was to continue the series for FY27; and 9) regarding the sponsorship of the NC Holiday Flotilla, Flotilla Chair Linda Brown stated that the request for funding from the Town would likely be reduced from the previous \$50,000 due to receipt of funding from a private donor, therefore Brigman stated that he would include an adjusted funding amount in the next budget draft.

OPEN DISCUSSION AND FOLLOW UP

With regard to the Parking Committee, DeGroot stated that he supported the Committee being a formal, Board-appointed standing committee in order to be completely transparent. Partin agreed and the consensus of the Board was that the Committee be Board established and appointed. As a result, meetings will be noticed, open to the public, with minutes being recorded. Brigman stated he would bring the formation of the Committee back to the Board at its April meeting.

It was noted that the next Budget Workshop will be held on 3-24-26 at 9:00am.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45am.

Respectfully submitted,

Lance G. Heater, Town Clerk