

BOARD OF ALDERMEN MINUTES

JUNE 13, 2024, 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 David Haley, Associate Minister, Wrightsville Beach Baptist Church. The following were present:

Board of Aldermen

F. Darryl Mills, Mayor
Hank Miller, Mayor Pro-tem
Jeff DeGroote, Alderman (absent)
Ken Dull, Alderman (absent)
Vivian (Zeke) Partin, Alderman

Staff

Tony Wilson, Acting Town Manager
Lance G. Heater, Town Clerk
Brian Murray, Finance Officer
Brian E. Edes, Town Attorney

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Norman Akel, 1201 N. Lumina Ave., cited increasing problems with speeding vehicles and unnecessarily loud exhaust systems on vehicles, stating that there was a “drag strip” in front of his home and that this had never been allowed to happen in the past. Akel asked that the Town respond to this issue.

CONSENT AGENDA

Upon motion by Partin, seconded by Miller and carried unanimously, the Board approved the Consent Agenda. It consisted of: 1) approval of the minutes of the 5/9/24 meeting and 5/16/24 budget workshop; 2) approval of recurring special events as recommended by the Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee; 3) setting of special called meetings for 6/21/24 at 10:00am (CFPUA merger presentation and public hearing), 6/24/24 at 10:00am (closed session to review Town Manager applications), and 7/9/24 at 11:00am (closed session to select Town Manager finalists); 4) approval of Budget Ordinance (2024) 623-B (year-end budget adjustments); 5) set a public hearing for 7/11/24 on a Special Use Permit request by Tower 7; 6) adoption of Resolution (2024) 2323 adopting the WB Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan; 7) adoption of Resolution (2024) 2332 adopting the Hurricane Operations Plan; and 8) approval of commemorative bench sponsorship requests.

PRESENTATIONS – None.

PUBLIC HEARING

By consensus, the Board approved the continuation of a public hearing on a pier and dock exception for 502-504 N. Channel Drive.

The Board considered conducting a public hearing on the FY24-25 Town Budget and adoption of Budget Ordinance (2024) 622-B and the proposed FY24-25 Budget in its entirety. Wilson expressed appreciation to the Board and staff for helping him get through the budget process and noted six major budget priorities as follows: 1) public safety (addition of 2 police officers and other enhancements); 2) addition of Public Information Officer position; 3) capital improvements of \$1.68 million; 4) funding of two bulkhead repair projects; 5) addition of beach barrel trash collection; and 6) parks improvements. Wilson stated that the budget was balanced, totaling \$22,011,182. The budget included no ad valorem tax increase but did include a 5% water and sewer rate increase in order to parallel the rates charged by the CFPUA in anticipation of a successful merger.

Murray presented a summary of the budget as follows: 1) presented a summary of the budget process; 2) reviewed changes in the budget since the last budget workshop; 3) reviewed General Fund revenue trends; 4) summarized General Fund revenue sources; 5) reviewed General Fund expenditures; 6) noted that the unassigned General Fund balance was \$23,129,212 as of 6/30/2023; and 7) reviewed Water & Sewer Fund revenues and expenditures.

The Mayor declared the public hearing open at 5:56pm. Neal Briggi, 4 W. Henderson St., expressed appreciation for the budget process, characterizing it as more open than in previous years and also expressed appreciation to the Board and staff. Briggi suggested that, as public safety/quality of life concerns were a large focus of the budget, specific metrics be established to measure the results of the Town's efforts. Sue Bulluck, representing the Chamber of Commerce, stated that residents needed to be better informed about revenues brought in by tourism (such as sales tax and room occupancy tax) of which the Town does not get to keep a large part. There being no other public comments, the Mayor declared the public hearing closed at 6:06pm.

Miller stated that this budget process was the best he had experienced in his 11 years on the Board. Miller said that the budget addressed the quality of life issues of which the citizens have been expressing concern for years. Partin noted that later in the meeting, the Board would be considering an ordinance which would increase the penalties for noise violations, also in response to these concerns. Upon motion by Partin, seconded by Miller and carried unanimously, the Board adopted Ordinance (2024) 622-B and the proposed budget in its entirety. Mills noted that he had spoken with Aldermen Dull and DeGroote, who although they could not attend, were fully in support of the budget.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF THE FY24-25 MARKETING ADVISORY COMMITTEE BUDGET

Wilson stated that the proposed budget was developed by Wilmington CVB staff and the Marketing Advisory Committee, with funds being provided by the ROT. Wilson stated that the budget was divided into the following categories: 1) advertising/media/services--\$968,719; 2) online management--\$27,049.50; 3) fulfillment--\$2,000; 4) images and video--\$35,000; 5) research--\$6,000; and 6) contingency--\$10,709.50 for a total budget of \$1,049,478. Bulluck suggested some of the funds be directed toward a traffic study or to work with a committee to address the quality of life issues. Upon motion by Miller, seconded by Partin and carried unanimously, the MAC budget was approved.

CONSIDER APPOINTMENTS/REAPPOINTMENTS TO THE WB MARKETING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Upon motion by Miller, seconded by Mills and carried unanimously, the Board reappointed Ryan Smith and Lisa Corley to 2 year terms ending June, 2026 on the Marketing Advisory Committee. It was noted that Robert Huckabee had served 3 terms and was therefore ineligible to be reappointed and that the Board would consider filling that position at a future meeting.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF A LETTER OF INTENT TO LEASE THE BORDEAUX COTTAGE TO THE HARBOR ISLAND GARDEN CLUB

Wilson stated that the Town had received a letter of intent from the Harbor Island Garden Club to lease the Bordeaux Cottage. Wilson reminded the Board that it had approved a 3 month lease for the ground floor area of the Cottage to Camp Chris Stone, with an expiration of that lease on 8/15/2024. Wilson said that if the Board were inclined to lease the Cottage to the Garden Club, a lease agreement would be drafted according to the terms described in the letter of intent. Miller reviewed the proposed terms contained in the agenda packet. Upon motion by Miller, seconded by Partin and carried unanimously, the Board approved the lease, subject to a satisfactory lease agreement being drafted.

CONSIDER ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE (2024) 1860 INCREASING CIVIL PENALTIES FOR VIOLATION OF THE NOISE ORDINANCE

Wilson noted that the proposed revision would raise the fine associated with a noise violation from \$100 to \$250 for the first offense and that the fines associated with noise violations would mimic the fines currently associated with graffiti. Upon motion by Partin, seconded by Miller and carried unanimously, the ordinance was adopted.

OTHER ITEMS AND REPORTS

- A. **Alderman Partin:** reported 1) that the Ad Hoc Committee would be bringing a recommendation to the Board for a revised Lighting Ordinance in July; 2) she had attended a memorial service for former Mayor Fran Russ, the first female mayor of Wrightsville Beach; and 3) thanked the Harbor Island Garden Club for hosting a luncheon for Town employees in May.
- B. **Mayor Pro Tem Miller:** noted that the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge (toll option) had scored well in the State's priority system for replacement, thereby making the project eligible for federal funding.
- C. **Mayor Mills:** reported 1) that the Ports, Waterway & Beaches Commission had met and that the Mason's Inlet permit renewal process had begun; 2) Board members would be hearing from the firm preparing the public information plan to get their input; 3) the special called meeting to consider the CFPWA water and sewer merger would be 6/21; and 4) the special called meeting to consider Town Manager applicants would be 6/24.
- D. **Acting Town Manager Wilson:** nothing to report.
- E. **Town Attorney Edes:** nothing to report.
- F. **Town Clerk Heater:** nothing to report.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:40pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lance G. Heater, Town Clerk