

**TOWN OF CAROLINA SHORES
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING MINUTES
Budget Retreat
March 26, 2024
10:00 a.m.**

Mayor Conte called the March 26, 2024, Special Called Budget Retreat meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence. Commissioners present: Greg Davis, Beverly Mayhew, Marlene Vandergrift, Debbie Watts, and Harry McClard. Also, present: Chad Hicks, Town Administrator; Nicole Hewett, Assistant Town Administrator/Town Clerk and Lori Frye, Finance Director.

Members Absent: None

Also Absent: None

Welcome and Opening Remarks:

Mayor Conte opened the meeting and turned it over to Mr. Hicks.

Town of Carolina Shores
Work Program Goals of the Board of Commissioners
FY 2023-2024

Updates on Progress from FY 23-24 – What was accomplished in current fiscal year, etc.:

Public Works Improvements

- Completed major canal cleanings
- Completed paving and sealing projects in various areas throughout town
- Will wrap up/complete first round of roadside ditch cleanings
- 2 PW employees received their CDL license
- Safety camera and lights installed at Recycle Center
- Replaced street signs in The Farm at Brunswick and Beacon Townes

Public Safety Improvements

- New speed signs

Parks & Recreation Improvements

- Pickleball court added
- Stage added behind Town Hall

Administrative Improvements

- Town Hall painted

Asset Improvement

- Upgraded Building Inspections Permit System

Personnel

- Recommend a 2.5% COLA to be applied to maintain the Town's pay plan. Merit pay will be governed per ordinance.
- Administration will propose no fee increases this year.

Potential Improvements for 2024-2025

Public Works Improvements

- Replace mower
- Replace Corrugated steel culvert at Golfview Court

Street Improvements

- Pave Captains Court, Calabash Drive, Swamp Fox Drive, Gates 1-12, Mashie Court, Courts 2-11

Review of the Budget Process – The anticipated timeline for budget ordinance adoption, conditions facing other localities, revenue discussion, etc.:

Mr. Hicks said we will advertise the Public Hearing for the budget ordinance adoption in June. Mr. Hicks said if the Board likes the budget and there are no changes, we have put together a balanced budget. Mr. Hicks said we are doing good and living within our means. Mr. Hicks said he reviewed the CIP and we are way ahead of that. Mr. Hicks said once we knock out the paving this year, we will be completely caught up. Mr. Hicks said paving includes Captains Court, Calabash Drive, Swamp Fox Drive, Gates 1 and 3-12, Mashie Court and Courts 2-11. Mr. Hicks said we are only a couple of marginal items this year which are a mower for Public Works and code books for Building Inspections when the new code comes out. Mr. Hicks said we don't need any vehicles and our culverts are in good shape. Mr. Hicks said if there is a storm, we have operating money and we are good. Mr. Hicks said if the storm is a small debris event, we will handle it in house but if it is a large debris event, we will activate those contracts. Mr. Hicks said he is not proposing any type of tax or fee increase. Mr. Hicks said he is recommending a 2.5% COLA for personnel. Mr. Hicks said if we go by the merit pay and we will do it according to ordinance, he will have a lot of people getting 7.5%. Mr. Hicks said he has a good group of employees. Commissioner Davis said the forms that get filled out, there are scores on there that are not applicable to some departments and those forms need to be revamped and only filling out the sections that are applicable. Commissioner Davis said budget 5% for merit pay and if people get a 6%, 5% or 7.5% raise, then so be it. Commissioner Davis said we have great employees. Mr. Hicks said that Building Inspections will be slowing down. Mr. Hicks said if you want, we can go through all the tabs or you can take it home and review it and come back with any concerns, changes, etc. Mr. Hicks said the only big change in the budget is the paving and you won't find any surprises. Mr. Hicks and Commissioner Mayhew said that Ms. Frye did a great job of putting all the information together. Commissioner Mayhew said she would like to discuss the Calabash Fire Department. Commissioner Mayhew said what she is about to say has nothing to do with the presentation that Chief McGee gave about their growth. Commissioner Mayhew said she wants to talk about the contribution that the town gives to the Calabash Fire Department. Commissioner Mayhew said she went back to 2018 and the amount given has stayed the same. Commissioner Mayhew said at that time, we had 6 developments and there has been growth at the community of Carolina Shores, The Village at Calabash, Lighthouse Cove has doubled, The Farm at Brunswick has doubled, and we have added two new developments. Commissioner Watts said she was going to bring that up as well. Commissioner Mayhew said her recommendation would be \$40,000.00. After further discussion, it was the consensus of the Board of Commissioners to raise the contribution from \$30,000.00 to \$40,000.00. Commissioner Davis said he is proud of the fact that in 13 years we have not raised taxes, not once. Commissioner Davis said as a matter of fact, we took a little bit off last year. Ms. Frye said she will have updated sheets for the Board at the next meeting. Commissioner Watts asked about the contract with the Brunswick County Sheriff's Office and Mr. Hicks said the town attorney is reviewing it. Mr. Hicks said they are a good group of people.

Adoption of Budget Schedule:

Mr. Hicks said we will proceed with the adoption of the Budget Schedule as we did last year.

Budget Retreat Workshop – Monday March 26, 2024, at 10:00am

Budget Presentation and Budget Message – Monday May 13, 2024, at 10:00am

Monday June 10, 2024 – Public Hearing and Adoption of the Budget Ordinance

COMMISSIONER DAVIS MADE A MOTION TO ADOPT THE 2024/2025 BUDGET SCHEDULE. COMMISSIONER MCCLARD SECONDED THE MOTION. MAYOR CONTE CALLED FOR A VOTE AND MOTION CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE.

Ms. Hewett said there is a copy of the proposed FY2024-2025 budget on file for the public.

Adjourn:

COMMISSIONER DAVIS MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS SPECIAL CALLED MEETING OF MARCH 26, 2024, AT 10:36 A.M. COMMISSIONER MCCLARD SECONDED THE MOTION. MAYOR CONTE CALLED FOR A VOTE AND MOTION CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE.

Mayor

Submitted by:

Nicole Hewett, Assistant Town Administrator/Town Clerk