

Minutes  
Special Called Meeting  
Aberdeen Board of Commissioners

May 8, 2012  
Tuesday, 5:30 p.m.

Robert N. Page Municipal Building  
Aberdeen, North Carolina

The Aberdeen Town Board met on Tuesday, May 8, 2012 at 5:30 p.m. for a Special Called Meeting for a Budget Work Session. Members present were Mayor Elizabeth B. Mofield, Mayor Pro-tem Robbie Farrell, Commissioners Pat Ann McMurray, Walter Wright and Alan Parker. Commissioner Jim Thomas was not in attendance for the meeting. Others in attendance were Town Manager Bill Zell, Finance Officer Beth Wentland, Planning Director Kathy Liles and Permit Technician Jenni Secrist.

Manager Zell stated he had estimated this upcoming year's property tax valuation at \$704,000,000 and the county's tax valuation for Aberdeen just came in at \$705,769,000, which is higher than estimated. Manager Zell stated this shows a 2.77% growth over the past year. Manager Zell stated some items that helped raise the expenses for this upcoming budget are the Main Street Program at \$96,802 with the majority of that amount being salary and benefits, the Fire Station additional debt which is \$64,000 (a penny increase tax would help offset this additional debt), and two capital items are four police vehicles and one knuckle boom truck. Commissioner Parker asked if the police vehicles that were discussed at the last meeting are these same vehicles being proposed. Finance Officer Wentland explained that the vehicles that will be considered for New Business on May 14, 2012 are for four police vehicles for the current budget year. Finance Officer Wentland stated an additional four police vehicles will be needed for the upcoming fiscal year's budget to continue with the current rotation cycle. Commissioner McMurray asked about the knuckle boom truck and if it is the work that beats it up so much and makes it only last for a short period of time. Manager Zell stated the knuckle boom truck has been used every day for the last 8 years and there are just starting to be a lot of maintenance repairs on the truck. Mayor Pro-tem Farrell asked if Public Works Director Monroe plans to keep the old knuckle boom truck. Commissioner Parker stated he would like to see the Town keep the knuckle boom truck for back up so if the new one breaks down, then the older one can be used.

Manager Zell stated there will be additional debt service of \$135,741. Manager Zell stated new employee positions proposed for the upcoming fiscal year are the one new

police investigator position and Main Street Director. Manager Zell stated he is proposing the same contributions we do every year which include Aberdeen Lion's Club, Postmaster's House, and Malcolm Blue farm. Commissioner McMurray recommended donating the same amount to each organization, rather than unequal amounts for each.

Manager Zell stated the medical insurance went up \$20 a month per employee. Manager Zell stated this is his 10<sup>th</sup> budget presentation, and the cost 10 years ago was \$47 more than the proposed increase for 2012. Manager Zell stated he is also proposing a cost of living increase for all employees at 2%. Commissioner Parker questioned why the worker's compensation amount went down. Manager Zell stated the rate went down because our experience modifier rate went down to 0.88.

Manager Zell pointed out some "big ticket" items. The sewer-vac machine is too heavy and will need a new truck to pull it, and another big-ticket item is removal of lead paint from some of the water tanks. Commissioner Parker asked what the decision was for the tank at the school. Manager Zell stated it is not cost effective to spend money on a tank with no water. Mayor Pro-tem Farrell questioned the cost to take the water tank down and Mayor Mofield asked what type of metal the tank is. The Board thought the type of metal is steel.

Manager Zell stated there will be a 5% increase on water and sewer rates. Manager Zell stated the biggest cost is for treatment. Manager Zell stated another consideration would be to charge a fee for sewer availability, and perhaps charge the base fee to those property owners that have access to sewer service, but do not tap on.

Manager Zell stated other than the penny tax increase on page 6 of revenues, sales tax and gross receipts and building permits are the only things different this year. Manager Zell stated the sales tax revenue is over 17.67% what we budgeted this year, which is because of Aberdeen's increased population. With gross receipts, it is unknown what will happen with the big box tax. Manager Zell stated building permits increased this year and are over projected totals.

Manager Zell stated one big ticket item that Planning Director Liles has is our comprehensive long range plan. Planning Director Liles stated it is a little tough working with the plan we have now because the projects are under what the projected numbers are. Commissioner Wright asked how long it would take to create an updated plan. Planning

Director Liles stated at least a 6-9 month minimum time frame to get public input, but would not be uncommon for the process to take up to a year.

Manager Zell asked if there were any other comments on revenue. Manager Zell went over the different grants the Town would receive during the upcoming fiscal year. Mayor Mofield asked where Manager Zell received the figures for the sales tax revenue from. Manager Zell projected what we would do for this year and that helped him come up with an amount for sales tax revenue for the upcoming fiscal year. Manager Zell stated his estimate is very conservative. Mayor Mofield asked what is it that is increasing Aberdeen's sales tax revenue? Manager Zell stated our increased population in Aberdeen is contributing to this increase in sales tax revenue.

Manager Zell moved on to Planning's budget and more specifically the Main Street Program. Commissioner McMurray stated because of the rescheduling of the Spring Spree, apparently the Business Guild has split up. Commissioner McMurray stated there is a lot of frustration in the Business Guild, and she believes that is why a Main Street Program is needed. Mayor Mofield stated she thinks the Town would be making an error at raising taxes, and if this increase is because of the Main Street Program she recommends the Board reconsider. Mayor Mofield stated she would prefer to grow into this program, instead of doing it all at once. Manager Zell stated he does not think the Town should pay 100% for the Main Street Program every year, and rather set up a system for the downtown area to help take over the program. Mayor Pro-tem Farrell stated it is a lot of money to pay to put up a sign. Planning Director Liles recommended a steering committee be formed to have a stronger presence in the downtown area. Mayor Mofield stated she has found that in committees, the "alpha dog" tends to manifest and if you're not careful everyone will wait for the alpha dog's decision. Commissioner McMurray stated there was a certain prestige to being a Main Street community. She also felt Main Street will take away the "alpha dog" because it will be neutral, and it will get people talking and communicating. Mayor Mofield suggested as a compromise, the Town could use part of this money and hire a new Planning Department employee to help with this process. Mayor Mofield suggested applying for the Main Street Program next year pending approval, but does not agree with raising taxes. Commissioner Wright suggested a new employee for six months to set up something for the downtown area or the Town could use the new employee for grant writing.

Manager Zell stated legal services have been added to the Planning Department's budget, because Planning uses legal services most often. Commissioner Wright suggested

looking over the Planning budget to make sure no one had any more questions. Commissioner McMurray questioned the subscriptions and dues and if some of those were necessary. Planning Director Liles stated most of the dues and subscriptions are tied to certifications.

Commissioner Wright asked if we could cut the tax increase if we can work the numbers out. Commissioner Wright stated if Aberdeen went up on the tax rate, we may be the only other municipality in the area to increase taxes. Mayor Mofield asked what the difference was between legal services and professional services. Planning Director Liles stated professional services are for engineers and other specialized areas, whereas legal services are attorney fees. Manager Zell stated there is a full description on the yellow budget pages that break down the items for professional services.

Mayor Mofield asked if the Town receives a break from anyone in regards to fuel. Manager Zell stated the Town receives discounts from Exxon and the McNeils. Planning Director Liles stated the cost increase in fuel was to accommodate the inspection increase.

Manager Zell stated the separation allowance for Charles Campbell will discontinue in August 2012, but we will begin paying separation allowance for Dan Wilson in June.

Commissioner McMurray stated she would like to see reports from the Malcolm Blue Farm and Postmaster's House to see how contributions from the Town are spent.

Manager Zell stated an item not included in the budget which would be done in its own budget is the PARTF grant for Ray's Mill Pond. Manager Zell stated the grant has come in and Leigh Baggs is working on the RFQ. Manager Zell stated work on the houses, dams and spillway will begin in the new budget year. Manager Zell asked if the Board would like to see a committee for this grant. Manager Zell stated the plan is for a Ranger to live in one of the houses and help take care of the park. Manager Zell asked if the Board would like to see a committee formed to oversee the Ray's Mill Pond project. The Board stated they would like to see a three person committee. Mayor Mofield suggested that Leigh Baggs decide who she would like to have on the committee to help oversee this project. Mayor Mofield suggested the committee be comprised of Leigh Baggs, one person from the Board, someone from the McDonald family, someone from the Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee, and possibly Weymouth Woods in an advisory capacity.

Manager Zell moved on to Administration support details. Commissioner McMurray asked if the computer issues have been resolved. Manager Zell stated the computer situation is headed in the right direction and we are very pleased with working with Davenport Lawrence.

Mayor Mofield stated it seems the legal services are very high. Mayor Mofield asked why the Town uses the Brough Law Firm, as opposed to a local firm. Manager Zell stated with the UDO changes and zoning changes, this firm has experience with these changes that best accommodate our needs.

Mayor Mofield stated when a member of the Board goes to a meeting representing the Town of Aberdeen she would like those representing the Town to bring a report from the meeting to the Board.

Commissioner Wright pointed out that the charge-out from Water and Sewer, to the General Fund, has been increased \$20,000 this upcoming year. Manager Zell stated he thought it was needed since some positions work in both General Fund and Water and Sewer Fund and this helps to split the salaries.

A motion was made by Commissioner Parker, seconded by Commissioner Wright, to continue the budget meeting to Thursday, May 10<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m. Motion unanimously carried.

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Jenni Secrist, Permit Technician

Minutes were completed in  
Draft form on May 10, 2012

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Elizabeth B. Mofield, Mayor

Minutes were adopted  
May 14, 2012